

# Is the Intellectual Momentum all with the Left?

**Introduction: Dean Godson** (Director, Policy Exchange)

Ladies & Gentlemen, any Lords in the House? So egalitarian, sign of modernisation that there's nobody from the peerage present! So the huge attendance, the queues snaking around here, are a sign that this is one of the most important, if not the most important, fringe of conference, and all of you know that this issue has been foregrounded, put front and centre of British politics today, the extraordinary set of developments whereby one of the most peripheral members of the Parliamentary Labour Party of the last thirty years now looks as though he's a serious contender for No. 10 Downing Street. The rise in the broader world of academic writing and general more popular writing of work such as Thomas Piketty's, and the feeling that the Right is generally on the back foot and that some of the most retrograde and backward-looking members of the Hard Left are now setting the tone of public policy with the theme of the seventies, of the idea of capitalism in crisis. And the common view has been expressed in much of the media that the Right generally is on the back foot, that we're back to that famous conversation between Bernard Donoghue, Jim Callaghan's Chief of the Policy Unit at No. 10 Downing Street and Jim Callaghan saying... Donoghue saying during the '79 Election, 'I think we might win,' and Callaghan saying, 'No, there is a fundamental zeitgeist shift and it is in Mrs Thatcher's direction.'

And that is the question which is before us here today. Now I think anyone looking at the vitality intellectually of many of the fringe meetings at conference would see something else and they'd certainly see something else in our star-studded group of panellists, which really is the A-Team. And in terms of the battle of ideas over recent decades, no one more so than our first speaker today, Sir Roger Scruton, who's written about so many of these issues in so arresting a way for so many of you –

Welcome to George Freeman, here at the last minute, George welcome onto our platform.

– but Sir Roger who's written most importantly, of course, about the New Left/ New Left thinkers and has many thoughts on the rise of the New, New, New Left, as we see it, with many people, many activists who've never even been

involved in politics before, mobilised by new groupings out of the traditional forms and formats of Far Left groups. So it's my great pleasure to welcome, first time onto a Conservative Party platform for Policy Exchange, Sir Roger Scruton. Roger, thank you for coming today.

<Applause>

### **Sir Roger Scruton**

Thank you very much Dean and thank you for organising this very important event. I wasn't planning on being the first to speak but I suppose I should have been.

I find it quite difficult actually to address the question, is the intellectual momentum all with the Left, because I distinguish intellectual questions from opinion questions. I think there is a tide of opinion which is going to the Left but the weight of argument is not with that tide, and I think as a philosopher my only concern is what is true, not what is influential. And after all, in the 1930s in Germany, the tide of opinion was overwhelming, the momentum, if you like, was overwhelming in a certain direction, a direction which threatened to destroy Europe (and indeed did), but the weight of argument was completely on the other side. So I think we should first of all address the question what this momentum actually is.

In my view Momentum movement has picked up some important ideas from the classical Marxist view of the crisis of capitalism, through to various more modern views about the disparities of income and so on, that have afflicted Western societies in recent years, and some of these ideas are certainly worth airing and addressing. But really the momentum of opinion behind it is not represented by any fully developed, theoretical critique of capitalism; it's much more to do with class war. And the real distinction in my view between the Right and the Left, not that I particularly like those labels, is a distinction between those who believe in government as a form of representation and those who believe in it as a form of war.

A representative democracy, such as we have, is one in which people enter parliament in order to represent their constituents, including those who didn't vote for them. I don't think there's any evidence in public statements of the Momentum movement under Jeremy Corbyn and his associates which suggests that they understand that idea of representation. They are in parliament to represent, if anything, the interests and views of themselves and of the people who support them. The idea that they should represent someone like me is, to them, laughable. Yet I think the great strength of the Conservative position in

our politics today, as it was in the nineteenth century, as it was for Edmund Burke, is the view that you're elected to parliament to represent the people in your constituency; they may have voted for you but they may not have done, but what matters is that you stay together under a common political system, supported by a common loyalty.

And what has come to the surface, I think, in recent events is the question of the nature of that loyalty, what is it that we share that makes class war look so dangerous to us and what makes most of us, and I think most of the British people, turn away from a movement which bases itself in class war? Of course, class war has a charm, the charm of the negative. It's very easy to hate, much more difficult to love, because when you love you have to take on board the defects of the thing that you love; you don't have to do that when you hate. So philosophy or political posture based on hating something has an instinctive advantage over one such as the one that I have, which is based on loving something, loving my country and the sense of identity that has grown in it. The thing that we share, or at least I hope that we share, which makes it possible for my representative in parliament, even if he is a Labour member, to represent me.

So I think that that idea of representative government is very strong in our country, that's where the real arguments are, what representation requires, and I think we have made huge progress, a huge step forward in the last two years, in recognising that representative government requires national identity; that we must belong together as a people under a shared first person plural that enables us to say we, and mean it, and mean with that pronoun not only the people who agree with us, but also those who don't. And only if we can say this can we tackle our real problems, immigration being obviously one of them, and it's a huge one, and the European Union's, in my view, largely negative effect upon our legal system and our sovereignty.

So I think we have made a great progress intellectually in bringing to the surface what is required for representative government, but meanwhile, people on the Left have made a huge progress in mobilising opinion around a set of largely false ideas. But the Left couldn't do that if there wasn't some truth in what they say as well, and I think they have rightly brought to our attention the fact that capitalism, whatever it means, is not the recipe for all our social, political and moral evils. On the contrary, it may be a contribution to some of them. The whole idea that a free economy, open to the world, will actually bring about the kind of stability and loyalty that we, in our crisis situation, actually need, that idea is, I think, a very foolish one, and it distresses me that the Conservative Party is toying with it again.

But what I would like to see is a cultural and patriotic Conservatism that reaches out to the values of ordinary people and has the courage to qualify capitalist enterprise whenever that is a threat to those basic loyalties. So there, that's my position on all of this and I leave it to you to decide whether it's right ...

<Applause>

### **Dean Godson**

Nicky Morgan, always welcome on our platform, we look forward to hearing ...

### **Rt Hon Nicky Morgan MP**

Well good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, and this has the feeling of *Question Time*, so Dean, I never thought of you as David Dimbleby but maybe they're looking for a replacement. And you talked about being the A-Team, so I'm going to leave it to you, ladies and gentlemen, to judge who is Mr T out of the panel. Now that tells me how old the audience is because did you watch the A-Team –

<Laughter>

There, you see, you did, there we are!

It is a pleasure to follow Sir Roger Scruton and let me answer the question: Is the intellectual momentum all with the Left? Well, momentum might be, as we saw last week; intellectualism certainly isn't; not judged by John McDonnell's speech or Jeremy Corbyn's or any of the other contributions we heard from the Labour Party. What appears to be some confidence following the election results, but what is with the Left at the moment is obviously as I say, a capital M, Momentum, as is the threats and unpleasantness that we saw. Those of us who were out campaigning in June realised that actually what's happened with the rise of certainly Momentum in the Labour Party is that politics has got a *whole lot nastier*, and that's something that I don't think is to be recommended or something to be welcomed at all.

But the honest truth is, and I think we've probably had this discussion on a number of fringes this week, is that actually the social contract in this country appears to be broken. And that's the contract which says that we hope that the lives of our children and our grandchildren are going to be better and more prosperous than our own. Now that might apply for some people still in this country, if you're born into a certain social strata or you've got a certain type of family, parental support, but it doesn't apply for everyone. And the question is what is the Right, what is the Conservative Party going to do about that?

I don't particularly want to talk about Brexit although perhaps it will come up in some of the questions, but I think we just have to be very careful, those of us who are Conservative members and members of parliament, that we are not spending *so long* talking about getting out of the European Union that we are left not having enough time to talk about these very real issues which actually affect people's lives.

But for me I think one of the things that we can see in politics now is that not just the social contract is broken, but that element of trust that people had in their institutions, whether we're talking about parliament, whether we're talking about business, whether we talk about banking, and whether, dare I say it, we're talking about some elements of the media, there is a trust that has been broken in terms of these institutions having the answers to the problems that we face. And so I think we need to go back, before we talk about individual policies and before we talk about intellectual momentum being with the Left or with the Right, I think we, as Conservatives, need to ask ourselves some questions about the values that we are demonstrating in what we are saying.

Now some of you will know that I've just written a book, very kindly launched at Policy Exchange, on character education, because actually the values we want our young people to develop, the values we want to develop and exhibit as a society really, really matter. And they matter as a political party, it's not so much what we say, although that's of course important (that's why we're here, we want to debate ideas and policies), but how we say it, the tone that we use, the way that we come across, whether we're interested in the way people live their lives, I think is hugely important. And those of you who heard the interview this morning - I don't know if the young lady is back in this audience - but there was a fascinating interview on the *Today* programme this morning with two young people here at the conference who talked about why Jeremy Corbyn had come across well in June, and they used the word authentic because they felt that he was authentic. And I think what we've seen in terms of our public discourse about politics and about ideas is that more and more people are just saying things, and I think certainly those of us who have been ministers are guilty, promising *easy* solutions to *complex* issues. And when, of course, those solutions can't be delivered and those problems remain unresolved, people feel even more let down.

And the reason that I think that actually the momentum should be with the Right, with the Conservative Party, in solving these issues, is because actually the Left cannot address these issues because they don't understand that most conservative of words, aspiration. And we should be using that word at *every*

*single* opportunity between now and the next general election. And when I'm asked why I'm a Conservative, why I've been a Conservative for 28 years, it's partly because I believe in individual responsibility, I believe in the power of individuals, but I also believe that socialism is about setting a cap on people's aspirations. We the Left, we the socialists, we the Marxists, in the case of John McDonnell, will allow you to go so far and no further. But we, as Conservatives, I believe, believe in setting a floor, in the sense that we don't want people to fall below a certain standard, we believe in a strong welfare state for that reason, we want to give people every opportunity to absolutely lift themselves up, to make the most of themselves if that language... I'm not terribly keen on it but I know exactly what it's trying to drive about.

So we're not lacking momentum with a small m or a capital M, what we are lacking, I think as a Party at the moment and as a Right wing, on the Right of the spectrum, I agree with Roger, it's not always terribly helpful, those labels, is confidence. We're lacking confidence in what capitalism, what markets, what free enterprise, what entrepreneurship can do for people. And I think those are values and beliefs that chime really well with what young people actually want, when you ask them what they want in terms of their lives. So let's get that right, let's get our confidence back, let's talk about these issues and then we can make sure that we're actually developing policies that respond to what people want to hear from us and what we think is absolutely right to take the country forward on an aspirational pathway.

Thank you very much for your time.

<Applause>

### **Dean Godson**

It's my great pleasure now to call upon Jacob Rees-Mogg, first time on a Policy Exchange platform, welcome. I look forward to hearing what you have to say.

### **Jacob Rees-Mogg MP**

Thank you very much. Unfortunately I think the answer is yes, that momentum, in all senses, is with the Left, though I agree that it's not necessarily the most intellectual momentum. It's a momentum from principles. The great success of Jeremy Corbyn is that he has persuaded people that the policies he believes in come from the fact that he is a socialist and that therefore you see in what he is advocating, a golden thread of belief and principle, as Nicky was saying, authenticity, that underlines what the Labour Party is trying to do.

So, when you consider the conference that they've had at Brighton, you realise quite quickly that of course they want to renationalise the railways, they are socialists, that is what socialists do; of course they want to have free tuition for everybody because they're socialists and they like spending other people's money, that is what socialists do. And it gives a background to their individual, specific, policy precepts that they have clear principles. And that's *why* I think they have so much appeal, because many people, not just the young, are idealistic, and they want to think that there are politicians who will follow their principles rather than their major concern being -office, and that this has faced us with a real challenge, not because we don't have principles, but because they haven't been what we have been talking about in recent years.

And this has quite a long history, and I'm not going to give you a long history lesson, particularly not as Sir Roger knows much more about everything that I know about anything, so if we're going to have a history lesson, get it from Sir Roger, *but* if you go back to Tony Blair's Election victory, he wins on the basis that he has given up socialism, but that he will manage things a bit better than a worn out Conservative government will do. And we then carry on in 1997, '01 and '05, we are still fighting as clearly identifiably Conservatives but by '05 we lose very heavily again and we think that the answer is to be a bit more Blairite or else we'll never win. We think the Conservative ideas are *intrinsically* unpopular, so we come up with all sorts of nonsense. We want to share the proceeds of growth, we want to have 0.7% given in overseas aid, we want to do things that match Labour because we have given up in confidence of our principles. And unfortunately we do it at just the wrong time, because the financial crisis comes and as we were sharing the proceeds of growth we don't have a principle narrative explaining why it wouldn't have happened if we'd been in charge. So we have to carry on with this idea that what we're good at is being competent managers who will run things well but *not* that our policies flow one from another because of our underlying understanding of what it is to be a Conservative.

And this doesn't mean we don't do great things. We do really important and serious things, and I particularly highlight Iain Duncan Smith's welfare reforms and Michael Gove and, of course, Nicky's education reforms; these were very much important, successful policies and they had underlying principles themselves but there was no overarching Conservative basic principle that made you know what the policy would be. You just argued for it because it was a good idea. And this, I'm afraid, reached its apogee in the Election Manifesto, that as you read the Election Manifesto, which no doubt all of you did assiduously, page after page, I did and it won me one specific vote 'cause somebody came up to me and said, 'Is it Conservative policy to get rid of the tolls on the Severn Bridge?' and because I'd read the Manifesto I knew the

answer was yes, and that was one vote in the bag in North East Somerset! So it's a useful thing to do. But its flaw as a document was that as you turned the page you couldn't guess what the policy was going to be, because there wasn't that underpinning that made one policy flow from another. There were some good ideas, there were some bad ideas, but they didn't have an underpinning. And what I think is so disappointing about this is that Conservative values are enormously exciting for all generations. I loathe this idea that we've got to give baubles to young people. I think it is so desperately condescending. Young people are not some alien species who we have to treat differently from other voters. I'm sorry to say that I was young once ... I wasn't very good at it, but I was, at least technically ... I was technically a youth at one point in my life!

But actually young people, old and middle-aged people want to understand what our principles are and our principles are really attractive. What do we believe *fundamentally*? We believe that individuals making choices for themselves build up society and that that making decisions for themselves is better decision making than can be made for them by the state.

And when you say to anybody that they can decide their own life, that's an attractive thing, isn't it? Particularly you say to people who have just left school and the authority of their schoolmasters and indeed, schoolmistresses, you say to them as they're leaving the authority of their parents, or you say to elderly people who don't necessarily want to have exactly the same nursing care as the next person, that they will have choices, that's really attractive. And the other thing we always believe in as Conservatives is that we want to help people lead their lives they choose for themselves, not tell them how they ought to lead their life.

So we're enabling people to buy their own home, we want people to keep their own money because we think they will spend it better than the government will spend it for them. We have enormous confidence in democracy, even when it doesn't vote in a way we like, because we think the mass, random decisions of individuals are collectively better than the wise old birds in Whitehall, or for that matter in Brussels.

So yes, I agree with the question that the momentum, let's say intellectual for the purposes of this debate, but in truth the view of *principles*, and what we need to do as Conservatives is recognise that being enormously competent is not enough. We need that golden thread running through that means that the voters can understand what the policy will be before we have enunciated it because it comes from first principles, and that this is actually more electorally successful in the end than being purely managerial, because ultimately, given the choice of liberty or control, most voters will choose liberty.



<Applause>

**Dean Godson**

Thank you.

George Freeman, I'm looking forward to... always welcome.

**George Freeman MP**

Well, thank you. Well, you've heard it, who knew... Jacob had a childhood!

There's a Conservative policy, a childhood for the many, not the few.

Jacob, the reason we love you is this party's open to people who believe in Conservative principles wherever you're from, whoever you are, from whatever social spectrum you're from and you speak to that, that's one of the reasons people love you, you remind us that those principles are universal.

Is the political momentum with the Left? Yes. Is the intellectual momentum with the Left? No. And I want to address why there's a gap between those two.

The intelligentsia are with the Left, that's a slightly different point and it's wonderful, Roger, to have you here, and I'm so glad you could come to the Ideas Festival recently. We need to nurture the intellectual support for Conservatism, the philosophical support for it, that broader understanding of the values that drive us on. Retail values, yes, but also the deep philosophical values that have made this the most successful Conservative Party, the most successful political party in the history of democracy, we have deep roots in heritage and we should draw on them and remind people that in times of turmoil, those values and that history and heritage are our great resource. But if we're not a forward-looking movement, speaking to the aspirations of tomorrow, if we're looking backwards all the time, we will lose that generation.

So let me talk a little bit about why I think the political momentum is with the Left but first of all why the intellectual momentum is not. It's with the Right. We are right on the basic intellectual thinking about 21<sup>st</sup> century society, let me give you some examples why. On education, it was *this* party, this movement that had the guts to speak out, take on the vested interests of lowest common standards for all, tackle the bog standard culture of municipal, dogmatic, political domination of education and liberate great teachers, great parents, great schools. And it was Nicky and her reforms, Michael Gove's political and intellectual courage to take on the vested interest and liberate free schools and

academies. That is a revolution in education that we should be proud of and continue to support.

In welfare, it's this party that said enough of the siloed model that just builds the dependency and traps the poorest in our society in a system designed for those in Whitehall to dispense it, not for those on the ground to receive it.

In health I would put it to you that Jeremy Hunt is setting out a vision of 21<sup>st</sup> century healthcare, active healthcare citizens, empowered to be the citizens responsible for their own health, to drive a health service for them, not for the people who provide it. A 21<sup>st</sup> century NHS that's at the heart of a 21<sup>st</sup> century UK research cluster, leading the world in developing the new medicines, the new diagnostics, the new devices, digitalising the NHS to be the world's greatest health system. It isn't at the moment, but it's this party that has a vision of 21<sup>st</sup> century healthcare; Labour simply want to tip more money into a broken model.

But it's more than that. Around the world capitalism, the values that we stood for, stand for, is transforming the life prospects of people in Africa, in South America, in the Pacific, it's the system that we fought for and took on and defeated communism to see thrive, that is changing the life chances of people around the world. They would be *amazed* if we abandoned this fabulous system. It's not working right, we need to tackle it and make sure it's working here in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but be in no doubt we're living through a period in which the prospects of the poorest people in the world are being transformed by the ideas and the values that we, as a party, have fought for.

But there's something else. Our movement is in touch with the zeitgeist, the spirit and the character of our times. Ask people under 25 whether they believe in a set of values to do with enterprise, to do with responsibility, to do with empowerment, to do with insurgency; are they on that side or do they want to be dependent? Do they want to be told what to do, do they want to be in a country where the government knows best? They're with us, they're with us in their character and their roar at this Election wasn't against capitalism, it was against the fact that they don't have a stake in our capitalism. Why would you be a capitalist if you don't have any chance of ever building up any assets? And our challenge isn't to embrace soggy, Corbynite socialism; it's to turbo-charge the markets so that they, the generation under 40 who've been locked out by the unfortunate consequences of QE, have a chance and a stake. And if we don't, I fear we will lose both their support for Conservatism but also their support for capitalism. Don't take it from me, take it from Legatum's Report this week, it makes for chilling reading. 17% of the young think socialism is dangerous, that's a very low number. I've got a worse number for you, 18%

think capitalism is not in their interests. That is a challenge to all of us to get up and leave this conference and make sure next year that number is higher.

So why is the political momentum with the Left? Well, it's partly a campaign that broke pretty much every rule in the book of modern campaigning. Our Prime Minister was let down terribly by a campaign, that 20 point lead was real, the inspiring speech she gave on the steps of No. 10 last year did capture the imagination, a woman driven by values to tackle the tough causes of social justice in our society. We abandoned that in a campaign that assumed if you voted Brexit you're now going to vote for us, and the public wanted more than that.

It's also, I think, there are three cohorts in that group that Jeremy Corbyn mischievously managed to jump on the bandwagon of and mobilise. There's a generation in the public sector who've been with us, they've tightened their belts, they've led, they've done the things we wanted, they're *exhausted*, and they don't hear from us a vision of modern public services. I think we need to say, 'Listen, the heroes who run into the bullets and the burning buildings for us, the people who earn £18-19,000, deserve a pay rise in this cost of living.' But the people who earn a quarter of a million, get a golden-plated pension and are supposed to be leaders and managers driving productivity, they've got to *earn* their pay rise with productivity and let's reward the great public sector leaders who deliver it, let them take over the failing ones. We need to be champions of good public sector leadership; if we are not, they'll leave us behind and if we lose the leaders of good public services we'll never get out of debt.

Secondly, we alienated a generation under forty who feel that we're not speaking to their priorities, their difficulties of getting onto the housing market, their difficulties in the private rented sector, the way that the student tuition fees' debt is compounding. The Prime Minister has rightly signalled this week she's serious, she's starting and we're going to start to tackle them, but there's something else; they don't feel we're speaking to their aspirations as a generation. And Jacob, I agree with you *profoundly* on the need for coherence, for spirit, for soul. Where we disagree is that I think Brexit at the moment is looking, to that generation, like an insult; it's looking to them like a moment of cultural disconnection from their own heritage. I know it's not what you want. Brexit is supposed to be, *has* to be, a moment where *we* speak to that generation and seize the domestic reform agenda and electrify them with our energy, our commitment to using these freedoms that you persuaded people we should vote for, let's use them and show them now that we're going to start using them, inspire them with this moment so that in twenty years people look back and say, 'You had to be there. We became sovereign and we used it.' At the moment it looks, I think, as though all we're interested in is political debate

about that sovereignty; we don't have a vision for how we intend to use it for the people here.

I could listen to you Jacob all night long but I –

**Rt Hon Nicky Morgan MP**

That's an offer!

**George Freeman MP**

But I don't think talking about Agincourt and Crecy is going to bring the millennial generation with us to the ballot box. I want to start the campaign for Jacob to be Speaker. I think we need your brilliance at articulating the importance of parliamentary sovereignty and that beautiful idea that you elect people to go to London to work for you. At the heart of this is something you touched on, that golden thread, I think it's a golden thread of citizenship.

My Conservatism boils into one word: responsibility. Responsibility taken by those who can and must, given to others so that they can too, responsibility taken for those who can't. Responsibility and trust are two sides of the same coin and I loathe the intellectual foundation of the Left. Tony Giddens put it in his defining book on New Labour, he wants and believes that the Left is dominant because it has a beautiful idea: the dependency of the citizen on the state. It's an idea that chills me, it's an idea that disempowers, it dispirits, it makes people dependent and depressed. That golden thread of citizenship, let us be a country with a contract of citizenship for you, whoever you are, a Britain that means something to you, gives you something, but Britain a citizen in the world as well, that gives people a sense of a moral purpose, they're part of a nation that stands for something.

Yes, we should put the Great back into Britain but it isn't just about pulling out, it's about reconnecting that generation with a global mission, and I think our chance is now. It's not to wait until Brexit's done; we need to do it *now*, start now, to show what we're going to do, make Brexit a moment of national renewal.

Thank you.

<Applause>

**Dean Godson**

Owen Jones, as some of you will know, is not able to make today because of a bereavement, so I had to scramble and find the next most available Left wing person. It turns out to be David Goodhart ... of this Parish, but certainly not a Tory. David, as you know, is author of this great, recent, best-selling work, a paperback of which has just come out, copies of which are on sale here, I encourage you all to read. And picking up on Jacob Rees-Mogg's point, I think you always, although you are now, the *oldest* employee of Policy Exchange of all time, older than even me, you'll remain a teenager forever, and rebellious at that! And that is why I think you're on my left flank, at least, in this debate, so over to you David.

### **David Goodhart**

Good, well thank you very much Dean. I think, like Roger, I will remain seated as a non-politician, but yes, I am rather improbably standing in for Owen Jones. I am actually technically still a member of the Labour Party but I am very happy to work at Policy Exchange, a Centre-Right think tank.

The intellectual momentum I don't think is with the Left in any significant way but what is very clearly with the Left is the cultural, the broader cultural momentum. And I just want to read the most brilliant brief account of Corbyn's success from *The New Statesman*, John Gray writing in *The New Statesman*. (Jason Cowley's over there, Jason Cowley's *New Statesman*.) John Gray said this:

Corbyn has brought together some of the most vital forces on the contemporary scene: the anti-capitalist, radicalism of young people who are innocent of history; a bourgeois cult of personal authenticity; a naked self-interest expressed as self-admiring virtue.

I think that sums it up absolutely brilliantly. I mean the Corbyn electoral success, I think, is almost certainly an extraordinary one off, the result of Brexit, the result of one party being twenty points ahead in the polls when the election began, which seemed to relieve many people of the responsibility of voting responsibly! And undoubtedly the mobilisation of the youth vote. But I don't think it expresses in political economy, in socioeconomic themes, I don't think there is any great departure from disaffection with the broad model that we live in and tinker with, which is essentially still Thatcher tempered by Blair: a highly regulated market economy with a pretty large stake, by historic standards, and a pretty egalitarian spirit in the public sphere. And actually on the socioeconomic themes, what we've seen is convergence across classes and

value groups in the last generation or so. The middle class has become somewhat more egalitarian in its assumptions. I think the Conservative Party has reflected that, the Conservative Party now supports a reduction in equality. In Margaret Thatcher's time it was simply about having a high floor. Things have shifted. So we've seen convergence. And actually you saw that... I mean in some ways obviously the Corbyn phenomena represents a blip that suggests this isn't true, but actually if you read both of the party manifestoes, both of them are pragmatic, Centre-Left manifestoes in many ways, and there's a huge overlap, an extraordinary degree of overlap between them, that I was comfortable with and rather welcomed.

So we've seen this convergence on socioeconomic issues, but we've seen a *divergence* on sociocultural issues, on issues of open-v-closed, on national identity and group attachments, on immigration and integration issues, on security before liberty, on criminal justice and terrorism issues, a big divergence. I mean I've written about it and my book is partly about the divergence between value groups in modern Britain, with people I call the Anywheres, the liberal, highly educated people who value autonomy and openness and who are a big minority, 20-25% of the population; and the Somewheres, 50% of the population who are more rooted, less well-educated and value security, familiarity and so on. As Dean said, I've got 10 copies to sell afterwards!

I mean there are two caveats to this idea, you may think this is rather complacent, the idea that actually we've been seeing convergence on socioeconomic issues, but I would maintain that is the case, and that the Corbyn success is a kind of weird blip, but I think there are two caveats to that. One is there has been a delayed reaction to the financial crisis. I think the austerity fatigue is a real phenomenon and you can see it in the British Social Attitudes Surveys, there has been a small shift to the Left on tax and spend issues; not a huge one, I think 48% of the population now support increasing taxes to pay for higher public spending, but 44% still support the status quo, and even that 48% is a lot less than it was at the end of the 1990s when, I think, 63, 65% of the population wanted higher tax and more spend.

The other caveat is over people's extraordinary views about the utilities, the privatised utilities, which is a kind of flipside of the old hostility to the nationalised industries. People *hated* the old nationalised industries and they hate the privatised utilities for very similar reasons. And rail nationalisation is a very, very popular policy and I think despite the fact that the privatised railways have actually performed relatively well, and I think one just has to live with this rather peculiar trait of the public.

But the one point I do want to make that hasn't yet been made is that one of the things I think that has changed Britain in a very profound way that is under-examined and under-reported is the huge expansion of higher education in the last generation or so, and the extraordinarily cultural and political domination of higher education in our society. And we saw it actually at the last Election just in the political system. I mean when we used to talk about university seats we meant Oxford and Cambridge, now about 20% of all seats have a substantial input from universities, not just the students and staff, but also all those places where lots of mainly liberal-minded graduates have stayed behind, you know, the Bristol West, the Manchester Wythenshawes, the Brightons and so on. But this liberal blob, I mean I see it in my own family, my four children all went to Russell Group universities and they're all attached to this liberal blob, the liberal blob that basically says society is to blame. It says authority is suspect. It says freedom is lack of constraint. Just look at the latest *Captain Underpants* film and it is extraordinary, it is all there in the latest *Captain Underpants* film!

The hegemony of this kind of liberal blob... and this, I think, makes it very difficult for Conservatives to take this on, is anyone under forty just instinctively feels this. I mean you can argue against them and you can sometimes win the argument but it is their default position on so many things. As I say, I found the Centrist Tory Manifesto very attractive and I think there was a big majority for it in the country. I mean it was obviously presented in a cack-handed way and so on, but I'm still amazed that despite the kind of communitarian, Leftish flavour of this manifesto, that you are still so easily caricatured as the party of the rich, as the bad guys, and I don't really quite understand that. I think these ideas that were contained in the manifesto need clearer embodiment in attractive policies and indeed policies and themes that can unite the Anywheres and the Somewheres. You cannot run a country either only on the basis of Anywhere priorities and institutions or Somewhere.

The task of politics is to bring these value groups back together again and I think that manifesto could have done it, it didn't, but that remains the task of politics.

Thank you.

<Applause>

**Dean Godson**

Thank you, David. Our panellists have very kindly agreed to answer questions, usual Policy Exchange house rules: no question too outrageous, you just have to state your name and organisation first.

I'd just like to get a feel of how many want questions. Gentleman at the very back. And questions – I will be ruthless with anyone who doesn't ask a question and uses it as a chance to make a floor speech.

**Dr Gordon Gregory**

I'm an NHS doctor and I stood for Sheffield Heeley at our recent election. I would say a point which had been hinted at by a number of the speakers, which I would ask about is just as a doctor if I were to give my patients an unrealistic expectation of what are the outcomes, then it would both be immoral and it would break down that doctor-patient relationship and it would lead them to find a different doctor who would promise more. Does the panel agree that a key concern that we have had is that we haven't managed expectations of the populace as to what government can do and we have just been trying to promise the most money and the most solutions from government as opposed to managing the expectations as to the limits of government influence?

**Dean Godson**

And one more question 'cause I think we'll take them as... Gentleman here in the front?

**Kieran Marshall, Party member**

I'd like to ask anyone on the panel here, when we talk about the intellectual momentum of the Left, what new ideas is Jeremy Corbyn actually proposing? All of his ideas have either been tried and tested or they are ideas which have been suggested on the Left for years now anyhow, what new ideas do they have, they have no intellectual momentum at all.

**Dean Godson**

Thank you. Who wants to take first question, which of the panel?

**Rt Hon Nicky Morgan MP**

Well, I'll take it. Firstly thank you very much for standing, I'll hope you'll be standing in future elections. In the nicest possible way I hope there won't be an opportunity for you to stand for at least another five years, so I think we're all hoping that. I think what you say is absolutely right and I've said this, I don't think we have managed expectations. We have some really complex issues facing us as a country and I think people are looking for good, strong, leadership to address those, whether we're talking about the aging population, whether



we're talking about opportunities for the young, whether we are talking about... I've just come from a seminar about getting tax policy right, to deal with the changing workforce and labour market, for example, so we haven't managed expectations. We promised easy solutions. Several elections ago it was the ever increasing numbers of police officers on the street, regardless of how we were going to pay for them. Unsurprisingly the only person who played that game in June was Diane Abbott and we know she couldn't remember what the numbers were, obviously.

And the second thing, Kieran you're absolutely right, which is that the reason that I said no intellectual momentum, there are no new ideas; it's all about going back. However, we as a party must not be lazy about constantly referring to the 1970s because to a lot of the people that we need to win over, the 1970s mean *absolutely* nothing at all, which is why we've got to make those arguments. I think we can make them with humour, I think that there are plenty of opportunities to do so, but we've got to take it on on a new basis and not keep harking back.

### **Dean Godson**

Any other panellists here want to cover that? Roger.

### **Sir Roger Scruton**

There is something new actually, in my view, in the Corbyn approach to politics. It may not count as an idea but he has latched onto the fact that young people gain their information in new ways from the ways in which our parents did and I did, and those new ways of gaining information don't merely make it possible to communicate across a large spectrum of the population, but they create a kind of horizontalisation of opinion, it all flattens out through social media and so on, and traditional hierarchies of authority, such as the one that I represent by being highly educated, don't matter anymore or they matter a lot less. And I think there is growing among young people what I would like to call a network psyche, that it's who's on your network who is going to be important to you, not who stands above it as a symbol of authority. And I think Corbyn has recognised that, partly because he doesn't have authority in the way that people on this panel have even.

I think it will be a great change in politics that will come from this. He's not the only one who's done this, I mean Trump did it too.

**Dean Godson**

George.

**George Freeman MP**

To Gordon's point, and by the way when we do have the next election, Gordon, let's have a manifesto that when you read it you recognise it as something that you can go and stand and fight for and sell on the doorsteps. I think you make a really good point not overpromising and it speaks to what Jacob mentioned: a need for a coherent response. It was dissonant to be talking about sharing the proceeds of growth when the world had just woken up to the fact that we were living in debt. And I think it was a moment, and possibly still is a moment, to be a bit more honest with the public about what's happened. I think they know that something quite profound has changed in political economy, that post-War model, the Macmillanite model of you never had it so good and politicians just dispense the goodies of growth until one is unlucky enough to be caught in a recession and booted out, that's completely changed. We're now in the process of managing deep, structural challenges in an old-fashioned model of government. The answer is out on the ground locally rather more than in London, and I think they're up for a more honest appraisal which speaks to that golden thread of our principle: we want to give people responsibility.

And Kieran, he hasn't got any new ideas. He talks about the rigged economy, which resonates with people, and that's why I'm so messianic about trying to make sure that we're the party of market insurgency and that we're the people who want to break open markets and give people choice and show that the market is there to empower the many, not the few.

**Dean Godson**

The gentleman there at the front, the lady there at the back.

**James Sproule, Legatum Institute**

Hello. One of the things that David talked about was the fact that this is a moment for Jeremy Corbyn and Jeremy Corbyn's really captured a bit of the zeitgeist; we might not like it but it is undoubtedly true, that's why we're all here. One of the things, of course, that the Labour Party is doing is putting Jeremy Corbyn very much on the campaign trail. Can you continue with a four year campaign or is he simply going to run out of steam some time before then?

**Dean Godson**

The lady there at the back.

**Dehenna Davison, Conservative Candidate, Sedgefield**

Hello, I'm Dehenna Davison, I was our candidate in Sedgefield this year which went well as you can imagine!

So one of the key things we heard post-manifesto on the doorsteps aside from, 'Oh, Theresa? The only message we have is she's not Jeremy Corbyn,' was, 'What's your message?' So my question to everyone on the panel is if there was a general election tomorrow, heaven forbid, what would your message be and for token Leftie on the panel, what message would you hate the Conservatives to come out with tomorrow?

**Rt Hon Nicky Morgan MP**

Good question!

**Dean Godson**

Jacob Rees-Mogg.

**Jacob Rees-Mogg MP**

OK, well, first of all Dehenna was also my intern for a year and is a great heroine of the Conservative Party, so I'm very pleased to see her here, and James, one of my very old friends, so I'm getting all the questions from old friends.

A four year campaign, yes, that's what oppositions do, that's the luxury of opposition and it means that they can say things from the platform that they know they're not going to have to deliver on, because by the time they get to write a manifesto events have changed. And to go back to the question on under delivering and over promising, that's very, very easy to do four years before an election, because you're very unlikely to be held to account for it when the election comes.

What would I least like the message to be if there were an election held tomorrow, it would be that we're remaining in the European Union and ignoring the referendum result, at which point I'd probably flee the country!

## **George Freeman MP**

Can Jeremy Corbyn last four years? I've got a horrible feeling he can. He's waited 45 years with the wrong ideas for a crisis so bad that he might look vainly legitimate. I think he's pumped up on the contradictions of his own movement and it seems to be energising him, and I think we're going to have to rediscover the art of campaigning with a spirit of opposition; opposition to the things that drive us on, opposition to the disempowerment, opposition to markets that aren't working. I think we need that energy of opposition in government as well and the energy on the back benches of our party and in the grass roots, the intellectual energy, and I've seen it as Chair of the Policy Board, it's phenomenal, I think we need to try and capture that.

The message I would like us, if there were an election, literally tomorrow, god forbid, would be, I think this: that we heard, we understand the roar that people are trying to send, the signal that they're sending, a weariness with eternal public austerity; a weariness from a millennial generation that we don't get why they're struggling, why people who should be voting Conservative are struggling; and an understanding that those who didn't vote for Brexit are worried that it's going to be something done *to* them not *for* them. And I think if we signal that we heard that message and we're using this conference as a moment to reboot our commitment, to make this a Brexit that works for you even *particularly* if you didn't vote for it, and that we are absolutely committed to making sure we connect with that generation.

Trusting in the future is never a bad thing to do in a company or in a family. I think if this party looked forward and said, 'We are here for you and we're listening,' I think they would back us.

## **Dean Godson**

Roger, it's hard to imagine you standing for parliament save for Old Sarum, pre the Great Reform Bill of 1832!

Nonetheless, if you can take that leap of imagination, a romantic interest in the kind of Toryism that you personify please!

## **Sir Roger Scruton**

Yes, what I would want is not what I would say, obviously; I would say the kind of things that George says, because those are the kind of things that attract people at that critical moment when they're making a decision as to which party they want to be in office! But actually what people *really* want is not necessarily

what is expressed then; what they *really* want is a country which is theirs. And to put that into simple language is extremely hard, but you have to create an identity over time which makes people know that that is true of you, even though you can't say it.

**Dean Godson**

Nicky.

**Rt Hon Nicky Morgan MP**

Well, I think, like George, I have a feeling that Jeremy Corbyn absolutely won't run out of steam. I think he's in a position he absolutely has grown to appreciate. I think he's got the stamina to keep going. I think the Labour Party hoped very much that a year of leadership would be more than enough for him and I think they've found, to their cost, that that absolutely is not the case. So the question's going to be how do we both be in government and use the machinery of government to make sure that we are showing what the Conservative answer is to the issues facing the country but also how do we maintain that campaigning?

What's been interesting about this conference and the fringe events has been the appetite for people to attend fringe events talking about campaigning, CCHQ preparation, what was wrong with the campaign, what we need to do. Early candidate selections, so we have focal points in our constituencies that we need to win and getting out there, and CCHQ, I think they know this, based on Sir Eric Pickles' review, have got to really beef up the operation significantly and very, very fast.

Now Dehenna, interestingly, I think Jacob answered the question that you meant for the token Leftie. Now I don't think that's saying anything about Jacob's politics, I don't think is it Jacob, no?

**Jacob Rees-Mogg MP**

I hope not!

**Rt Hon Nicky Morgan MP**

No, but I think it would be something along the lines of we want to help you live the life that you want, or we are here for you, because actually the difference between the 2015 manifesto and 2017 was that in 2015 I certainly felt, as a candidate, whoever opened the door, whether they were a working mum or a

pensioner or a student or a new business owner or anybody else, we had something specifically *for them*, whereas actually in 2017, although we had some good ideas, actually I was lost when somebody said, I'm a new business owner, I'm a pensioner, a mum, a student, I didn't actually have the sentence or couple of sentences to say to them other than, a), We're not Jeremy Corbyn and the Labour Party, and b), We're Conservatives and we're going to run the country better than the other lot. And that's why we have to do better with what we have to offer next time.

**Dean Godson**

David Goodhart I hope it's not an unfair question, but you are the son of a distinguished Conservative parliamentarian, an author and all that required from the 22 Committee –

**David Goodhart**

True.

**Dean Godson**

...and your life has been a rebellion against that since then!

**David Goodhart**

Yes!

**Rt Hon Nicky Morgan MP**

So kindly put!

**Dean Godson**

That's why he's here!

**David Goodhart**

Well, it was a rebellion until the last election actually, when despite being a member of the Labour Party I voted Conservative for the first time!

<Applause>

**Dean Godson**

Although we are a modernising think tank you weren't meant to out yourself at this juncture!

### **David Goodhart**

But I think the extraordinary thing is that... it's about political symbolism, you somehow, particularly the last election, didn't and still don't embody the sensible centrism that I think you, on the whole, represent. You somehow need to embody it more.

I think one of the expressions about politics that has most impressed me in the last few decades, Daniel Bell, the famous American sociologist, political scientist, talked about how... he was an American, he was a Social Democrat in economics, meaning he was in favour of a regulated market economy, like I say, he's American; he was a Liberal in politics; and in social and cultural matters he was something of a Conservative, a Social Conservative. Now, that is the hidden majority in our societies that, for all sorts of contingent historical reasons, the parties have not captured. But I think actually the Conservative manifesto at the last election came closer to that Bell combination than any manifesto of either party in recent years, and it's a shame that it has been tainted, I think, by the failure of the campaign.

In the inter-generational justice issue I think you had far better policies than the Labour Party. I mean you were effectively saying you wanted to reduce subsidies on the affluent old, effectively, and Labour were saying, 'We want to increase subsidies on the affluent young,' by abolishing tuition fees, even retrospectively, possibly. But somehow all of that was missed and you obviously do need a younger accent about you and that's very hard because you're an aging party, but there do seem to be lots of younger people at this conference.

But quite where this renewal is going to come from and how you can challenge that kind of liberal blob zeitgeist, because it is so entrenched, particularly amongst the growing graduate population. 30, 40% of younger people are graduates, they have been through these very, very culturally dominant institutions, the modern university, and actually I think you have a smaller proportion of your party members who are graduates than the Labour Party and that is such a good thing, you must try and keep that! I think only 38% of Conservative Party members are graduates, where it's 70% or something for Labour; and that means you are still closer to the mainstream population than everybody else.

**Dean Godson**

Just because it's a brilliant panel, because we're at the witching hour, can I just ask panellists would they be willing to stay just for five more minutes? I hope we're not being inconsiderate to anyone in the room who wants to get away, nor indeed to our brilliant events team, that we're preventing the next meeting from being set up here, five minutes, do I have a consensus? Brilliant! Thank you. Gentleman in the middle there, standing? Thank you, name and organisation please.

**Chin Kai, Party Member**

Thanks to all the panellists. I'm just a student who just finished my 'A' level courses and speaking from a young person's perspective, I really appreciate George and Sir Roger's point about the citizenship, the responsibility, and we have a representative democracy. And I think those are the core British values that the Conservatives built upon and I think that's the value we really should promote and I'm really sad this isn't reflected in our younger generation compared to the older generation, where it's the voting base of our party. They've been through world wars so they are patriotic and they have the idea of citizenship, whereas for our younger generation this is the part that's missing in our curriculum.

**Dean Godson**

What is your question?

**Chin Kai**

My question is should we include citizenship education more embodied in our curriculum, to take Conservatism forward with young people?

**Dean Godson**

Sorry, I'm going to have to be the abominable no-man and disappoint somebody, I'm just trying to, on completely opaque criteria, pick someone in the room almost at random. Yes, gentleman there..

**Lewis Goodall, Sky News**

I'm just looking at the title of this seminar: Is the Intellectual Momentum all with the Left? And thinking back to a year ago, if this question had even been asked in 2016, the answer would have just been laughter. So my question is,



was it the case that say last year and years gone by that everyone was just missing a new vitality among the Left and everyone was just ignoring that there was something bubbling away under the surface, or was this entirely contingent on an election campaign that was just the worst in modern history, and a manifesto that was widely regarded as equally risible; or was there something else going on under the surface that, frankly, the Right was missing? Because all of the talk this time last year was about a Conservative hegemony, it wasn't about Leftist momentum.

**Dean Godson**

Thank you. There was a lady who wanted a question... I can't see... yes, the lady there. Name and organisation please.

**Jessica Elgot, The Guardian**

It's astonishing that no one seems to have mentioned the difference between the Labour Party and the Conservative Party, given that the Labour Party's got 600,000 members and the Tory Party seems to be dropping to almost below 100,000. And one of the main reasons for those... possibly many people in the room weren't in Brighton last week, but the conference room was filled with people debating policy, voting on policy, talking about having more power to choose their MPs, to choose their party leader, and Jacob speaks very eloquently about giving power back to the masses, but this party doesn't seem to want to give any power back to their membership.

**Dean Godson**

Thank you. Would panellists care to answer all the questions and any summing up remarks? Sir Roger.

**Sir Roger Scruton**

Well, citizenship education is a very good idea provided it's in the right hands, but as Nicky Morgan knows very well, most education is in the wrong hands and so we might have to think of this as something we do, as it were, privately and on the side and perhaps don't confess to too openly.

On the question from the gentleman from *Sky News*, is this just an illusion created by the politics of the moment that there is some kind of increased intellectual activity, at least on the Left? I think it's not an illusion. If you look at the fate of Paul Mason's book on postcapitalism, *A Guide to our Future*, it's a very sophisticated and sophisticated survey of neo-Marxist ideas tailored for the

interests of the network generation and it's having huge influence in higher education. Also those continental people, someone like Žižek who looks like a dinosaur from the Marxist age, nevertheless, he's on the curriculum in all universities saying, for instance, that Lenin didn't pursue the Russian Revolution with a sufficient amount of violence and that's why it all went wrong. And this is said overtly in a university class and the students write it... well, they don't write anymore ... but they take it in! So I think we have to recognise that there is something going on there.

### **Dean Godson**

Thank you. Nicky.

### **Rt Hon Nicky Morgan MP**

Well, thank you. I think in terms of citizenship, it is taught; the question is obviously how well and how engagingly, but one of the arguments I'm making in this book I've written about character education and one of the virtues that the Jubilee Centre at the University of Birmingham talks about is about community. And actually rather than talking specifically about citizenship, first we should encourage every single schoolchild to visit the Houses of Parliament, it should be an absolutely rite of passage for everybody to come in and see the English Parliament and the seat of, one could argue, a critical part of democracy in this world. But also the appreciation of wider community and that means being involved in activities outside school, which might go some way, Roger, to dealing with some of the issues that you were talking about.

In terms of the debate... I suspect that some of this shift was already going on in relation to whether it was about the public sector pay cap or about the younger generation, how they felt about the world and about the trust that I would argue has broken down in certain key institutions, but undoubtedly the 2017 General Election has accelerated that. It would have been a *wholly different* Labour Party Conference had the result been different and I think there were people who were commenting on the fact that they had to remind the Labour Party they did not win the General Election and actually it is the Conservative Party that got the largest number of... the larger share of the vote, but that's why I argued about the confidence that we need to go back and to exhibit.

And the point about the members I think goes right back to the heart of what we're debating today; we can't magic up members, we've got to get the party right, we've got to talk about the right values, the right ideas, and then people want to join. I think actually it's probably symptomatic of socialism that they are so obsessed with process and taking control of the levers of the Party that

actually that's a big thing that's being talked about. Having said that, undoubtedly again at fringe meetings, there has been a demand from many members for there to be more to membership of the Conservative Party and I strongly suspect that's something we're going to hear a lot more of from CCHQ.

### **Dean Godson**

Thank you. The question, if I just interpolate Chairman's privilege for a second for both Jacob Rees-Mogg and George Freeman as the other two elected Conservative members here, picking up on the questioner from *The Guardian*, the question raised is there also a need for momentum of the Right and what might it consist of?

### **Jacob Rees-Mogg MP**

Well, I want to answer the other questions too if I may! First of all, sir, you opened your question by saying you are just a party member. *You* are the key person in this organisation. The party members are *everything!*

<Applause>

And one of my great bugbears is politicians talking about 'ordinary people'. There are no such things as ordinary people. We are not some priestly castes, we are just the same, members of the Conservative Party, members of associations. Over in the corner there I'm very pleased to have some members of my own association from North East Somerset who know the secret code that when I tug on my earlobe I need some applause, but you've been very kind this afternoon, so I haven't needed that! They are my electorate; without them I am not a Member of Parliament. The Conservative Party is what really counts, the membership is what counts.

And to come to the question on how we treat our members, we treat them *appallingly*. We expect them to do all the work, deliver all the leaflets, knock on the doors, go out in the rain, and then the CPF sends in its reports and they get ignored. And they come up with *brilliant* ideas and we used to have a system that took the policy ideas from our members seriously. When I first came to the Party Conference you went into the hall and there was a specific debate on a motion put forward by an association, and most of the talking was done by people sent from associations to represent their associations here, with the minister then summing up. It has now become like an American Presidential Convention where we're just expected to turn up and cheer the great and the good, and perhaps not even American, a sort of Kim Jong-un style! And watch out, if you don't clap for long enough you'll be in real trouble!

**Dean Godson**

Is he said to use his earlobe?

**Jacob Rees-Mogg MP**

Probably, yes. He doesn't need to actually, he's probably got... Anyway, let's leave Kim Jong-un aside for the moment. I think this ties in with the point on what was happening last year. I'm afraid we've been in a deep sense of complacency. We thought we had won the battle of ideas and we thought that real socialism had gone, we thought that Tony Blair had won in the Labour Party and that we had won in the country and David's point that we were basically a society of Thatcherism tempered by Blairism and we thought that was a permanent settlement, and so we didn't really think it was *necessary* to put forward our ideas or listen to our members or *enthuse* our members to get them to join, to make them believe that being a Conservative's really important and exciting, which I think it is. And George's point on Brexit, we need to be saying to people, 'Brexit's a really exciting opportunity, it's not very difficult Sisyphean task that as soon as we get it almost finished it will collapse again,' which is basically the mood music round it. No wonder people are gloomy.

So we need more optimism, more positivity, we need to trust our members, we need to put into practice what we believe on the national scale and the local scale and give more authority to members, and then we're in heaven and it's all very simple.

**Dean Godson**

Momentum of the Right?

**Jacob Rees-Mogg MP**

Momentum of the Right is there if only we ask for it, but we've got to tell people what we believe in, that belief produces policy, not the other way round and that is how we energise people. And we've done it before, the Primrose League got the best part of two million members within about twenty years, Lord Walton got over two million members in a similar amount of time, and Walton did it mainly with young people. The Young Conservatives were the biggest movement of youth politics anywhere in Europe. We've done it before, we can do it again. And this hall is full of young people today and so it is encouraging. There are people who will come on board but it helps if you *ask*

them. And in the last General Election, dare I say, we didn't say anything to young people at all, we pretended they didn't exist because we thought they wouldn't vote and we were wrong.

**Dean Godson**

Thank you. George.

**George Freeman MP**

Chin Kai, thank you for your comments about citizenship. I think we should teach civics, we should teach people how you vote and we should teach them how tax works and how much the government spends on different things, but really what we need to do to teach citizenship, it's taught through families, through institutions, through being citizens, and the best way to teach citizenship is to allow people to *be* citizens, is to be a government that encourages citizenship, not dependency. I'd be cautious if we put it on the curriculum and told schoolteachers you've got to teach citizenship. That would be the wrong approach. The better way is to make it something that everybody knows in a conservative way because it's fundamental to how we live in our society.

To Jessica, this is a really important point. People have forgotten, this party used to be a very democratic party. Macmillan, when he launched the housing reforms, it was done with a vote, it was done with a vote in the hall and I'm old enough, like Jacob is, to remember coming to conference and the party came. People say now, 'What's the mood?' There's not that many people from my association here. It costs nearly the thick end of £1,000 by the time you've paid for transport and hotel and food, and that's partly why I've set up the Big Tent Ideas Festival. I think we've got to, as well as having this conference which is important, we've got to have the confidence, the intellectual confidence, the cultural confidence, to open up the tent, invite people in who don't share our views, have the confidence with humour and generosity, to share it with them and embrace the zeitgeist of 21<sup>st</sup> century. We look a bit, at times, like a besuited cliché of power people who are driven by power, not by those values, and I think going out and celebrating the locality and the diversity of Conservative values around the country is a really important part of it.

How can you be a party of Burkean, little platoons, of trusting people, of citizenship, of the revival of renaissance of responsibility if we don't practice it in our own party? We have to walk the walk as well as talk the talk and I think the mood of this conference from the grassroots is, 'Let us help drive grassroots renewal,' and I never want to be the Chair of the CPF reading a manifesto

wondering what's in it. This party is thinking and its ideas need to be fed in. And that's why we've launched this week – this gives me the chance to plug it – a new initiative, CPF Shaping Tomorrow, and we're appointing a series of young champions in policy areas to open up a policy conversation with people who are not party members, so that policy making isn't the preserve of us, the elite who are lucky enough to be in. It's our big offer. Anyone else can do cheese and wine, no Party can offer you solutions to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we can, and we should open up and offer that to others.

And I'll close on Lewis's point. I think Jacob's right, we were complacent, but there's something going on, there's a dangerous coalescence of critiques that in the waters of politics when it starts to happen it can build, and I think it's a sense of disempowerment, of an economics and a politics that isn't working, that isn't accountable to the people who are paying the bills. There's a sense of unaccountable elites in charge in Europe, yes, but also in Whitehall in our political system and it's starting to form into a coherent sense that the country's not being run for the people who pay the bills and do the work. And that, if it's allowed to take hold, is very powerful. And this is all linked, the golden thread; we should be an insurgent movement that is as frustrated about that as the people who sent us here, sent to London to clean out the Augean stables of a broken model of big government that's failing and be the champions of the consumers and the citizens of tomorrow.

### **Dean Godson**

David, the last word.

### **David Goodhart**

As I've already argued, I think politics is less based on economic interests than it used to be, it still obviously is partly based on economic interests, but it is now more about values, and those have become more divergent in recent times, as expressed by Brexit, Trump, etc. Out in the street, particularly outside the great metropolitan centres, in the Midlands and the North, a kind of decent populism is the dominant set of values in this country. And by decent populism I mean a populism that has accepted much of the great liberalisation of the last 30 or 40 years on race, on sexuality, on gender, but it is not 'liberal' in the way that the kind of liberal blob I talked about earlier that dominates higher education in so many of our institutions is liberal. It still places great value on national attachments, national social contracts and so on. One of the reasons why people voted for Brexit in such large numbers, the feeling that national social contract in employment, in welfare, had withered or had not been taken seriously enough.

And the Tories should be able to represent that decent populism better than any other party and actually the truth is, you do. You got the highest vote, you got almost as many votes as Blair got in '97. I mean it was this extraordinary confluence of factors that gave Corbyn his support, and I was just talking to somebody who'd been at the Labour Party Conference and Momentum is an extraordinary phenomenon, I mean capital M Momentum, and it seems to have at least three elements. There's the youth group that we associate most commonly with it. I can't remember ... How did John Gray describe them? 'Anti-capitalist radicalism of young people who are innocent of history'; then you've got this older group who are the sort of newbie Trots from the 1970s who have re-emerged from a deep slumber; and then you've got rather sentimental, retired teachers, who just like that nice Mr Corbyn 'cause he's a decent chap.

I mean I think they are probably going to implode at some point, but you can't rely on that.

And as more and more of their ideas get exposed in the public realm I think the internal contradictions... the extraordinary pragmatism of the manifesto will get blown apart too because there are many people in the Labour Party who don't really believe in the manifesto they stood on. I mean there was, for example, no mention in the manifesto about reversing the welfare cuts introduced by George Osborne. So on the one hand that tells you a lot about the modern Labour Party and where its interests lie, so they're abolishing tuition fees but they are leaving the welfare cuts as they were. *Extraordinary.*

I think you do need more intellectual confidence and we need a new rationality, not of either Left or Right particularly but to challenge the kind of nonsense that Roger was talking about that is coming out of higher education, that is coming out of many of our cultural institutions; we just need a new rationality to challenge that.

Thank you.

**Dean Godson**

Thank you.

<Applause>

It's been a brilliant event, I just want to say it was brilliantly organised by our events team, by Ralph Buckle, Amy Brecken-Simons, Martin Kendrick and

Charlotte Duthie. Please join me in applauding them and also our brilliant panellists, you've been a great audience.

<Applause>

**<End of recording>**