

Abolition of Political Parties

Part 2

By John Vincent

My friend says “what do you think are the advantages of having political parties?”

“You didn't answer my question” my friend pipes up. “I did. I said nothing”

“OK. I will rephrase that. What are the disadvantages of the party system?”

“Would you be kind enough to pass me a new bottle of cyber-ink and my finest quill? Then I will begin.”

“The sole purpose of a political party is power. It has no intrinsic value. It is akin to a tribe or a gang where the weakest members are subservient to the party leaders, so most of our MPs are subservient, which means that they provide little added value to the electorate. This has never been more evident than now and during the Brexit debate when the party system brought the government to a standstill. The party has raised the MPs standing in the community and, in most cases, their salary. And the price is subservience. The whips will try to force the MPs to vote in such a manner as decided by party HQ whose sole interest is in maintaining or acquiring power.

The Labour party has 500,000 members and the Conservatives 150,000 out of an electorate of 50 million. Things have reached the farcical stage that, out of a constituency average electorate of 75,000, prospective candidates can be nominated by a majority of about 50 active members. The MP doesn't have to campaign at all assuming they represent the party with the most outrageous propaganda. That is democracy in a nutshell! That is why few people know the name of their MP. It really doesn't matter. What matters is the label.

The first day in Westminster after the election, they assume a veneer of hubris which will be protected by party HQ assuming they don't step out of line. They then assume a cloak of fear. Five years isn't very long! This leads to the inability of a party system to plan long-term (over 5 years) for fear of upsetting the electorate. This has been happening for many decades. Our health system is in a mess, education is so bad that, if I had children, I wouldn't send them to school. A frighteningly large %age of the population are not competent in the 3Rs. The police are not getting clear leadership, the judicial system is virtually non-existent. No plans for the care sector, prisons, power generation and our defence. We must act quickly.

Corruption is an obvious weakness since it is clear that subscriptions are insufficient so parties have to resort to money from unions, large corporations and rich individuals who can all influence party HQ.

Time-wasting is appalling. Take PM's question time. I estimate that MPs, who attend, waste nearly a whole day when they could be serving the electorate. This is the adversarial system at its nadir. The adrenaline rush from the cheering and booing is akin to soccer fans and players before the Saturday match. In the morning there is anticipation, then the match and they wind down for drinks afterwards. No productive work being done there!

Time-wasting in debates. The party consciousness is in play here because the debates are fundamentally for the benefit of the parties to impose their agenda and, as a result, are too adversarial and time-consuming. I would love to see a more studious and deliberative approach to parliament. Any time, any second, an MP is aware of the party that they serve is time wasted when they could be working on the country's problems.

The independence of the MPs will completely change the parliament's relationship with the MSM. Currently, MPs and those working in the party HQ are very sensitive to criticism from the MSM since it is a threat to their power base. Independent MPs will be able to move freely without fear amongst the electorate. They will have no reservation about expressing their views in public since these are personal views and not those of a party where discretion would be at a premium. They can be utterly themselves in front of the press or in a conversation in a pub. The "one-vote" lines encourage the electorate to speak freely so one can hardly deny the MPs free speech.

The "free" movement of MPs will be a great PR exercise since the electorate, who often see issues in black and white, will see that everything is a sea of different shades of grey and will be educated as a result. They will also see that their MP is reachable and cares about the constituents. They will not feel constrained by a more formal meeting at the MP's surgery. The MP will spend more time in the constituency than they do now under the current party system.

Political parties set themselves up to be shot down due to their arrogance which is why the adversarial interaction between the two major parties spreads to the government's interaction with the press, which too becomes polarised. This polarises the electorate but most of them are so apathetic about politics because they know they are completely disenfranchised. The press really are not very constructive since most articles are negative. The system with independent MPs will remove any control of the conduct of parliament from the MSM. There really is little mileage in a journalist criticising an MP for some minor behavioural issue when there are another 649 of them to pursue. Much better if it could affect 360 MPs from one party. The journalist, under the independent system, will have to produce well-researched, balanced articles on issues that benefit the UK population which could lead to them being asked to attend MP's research meetings on day rates. This will give kudos to the newspaper if their staff are advising parliament. The press will be working toward the same end as parliament – to improve our lot!