



Just Politicians in British Election

While no one yet knows how the British general election of 2010 will end, one thing is sure: there will be no powerful guiding principle which will emerge from the electoral chaos.

The Labor Party (or, rather, Labour Party) has ruled the United Kingdom since the 1997, when Tony Blair led Labour to regain power after almost two decades of Conservative Party rule. Blair resigned, and Gordon Brown, rather than call a general election, has continued as Prime Minister since 2007. During these three years, Brown has been enormously unpopular and his government has sustained heavy dissension and scandals. The traditions of responsible parliamentary government strongly suggested that Prime Minister Brown was obligated to call for a general election before the five-year mandatory period (which ends in June 2010.)



Holding on to power, however, appears to have overridden any other loyalty to government that Brown respects. The Conservative Party Leader, David Cameron, has tried hard to shape his image into a more modern, telegenic, and flexible Leader of the Opposition. What this means in practice is that Cameron has only a nodding belief in limited government, reduced public expenditures, relaxing regulations, and lower taxes. Cameron has been a big trans-Atlantic “fan,” for example, of U.S. Senator John McCain. He has tried to present himself as a “Green” politician. It looked for years like Cameron would simply swoop into Number 10 with a huge parliamentary majority. Now the general election looks like it could result in a hung Parliament, with the third party, the Liberal Democrats, holding enough seats to either form a coalition with Labour or the Conservatives (other minor parties, especially national parties, like in Scotland and Wales, will also have some seats.)

Nick Clegg, leader of the Liberal Democrats, long the third party in British politics, had been as critical as anyone of the ham-handed, big-government, deeply divided, tired socialism of Gordon Brown and his Labour Party. His comments recently seemed emphatic that if none of the three parties — Conservative, Labour, or Liberal Democrats — received enough seats to form a majority, then keeping Gordon Brown as Prime Minister was out of the question, particularly if Labour came in third in the voting, as polling data had suggested. The Liberal Party Leader even said it would be “preposterous” for Brown to continue to lead if Labour came in third in the voting. Now Clegg seems to have backed off that position. When asked if he had a problem working in the same government with Gordon Brown, Clegg stated that he would have no problem at all.

In fact, the major political parties in Britain all seemed to have descended into unseemly jockeying, with



Written by [Bruce Walker](#) on April 28, 2010

Cameron and Clegg trying to sound more appealing in the televised party debates, and with none of the three major parties promising much specific at all. Each party leader promises to be guided by the will of the people — but that, of course, will be open to interpretation after the election. The likely result of this general election will be a wobbly, bickering, coalition government with the party out of power waiting for conditions to get worse before pushing for another general election to “throw the rascals out.”

In Canada, where Prime Minister Stephen Harper has governed with a minority government for four years — and where the same sort of maneuvering for power has occurred among the Liberal Party, New Democrats and the Bloc Quebec — parties that together could force an election have instead, watching the polls, declined to do so. And parliamentary government seems to have broken down. The same could be said of Britain today. If Nick Clegg is the Great Hope of the British people, he appears more and more just like another politician.

Photo of Gordon Brown: AP Images



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