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General Election Special



On the eve of the General Election *The Grey Matter* takes a critical look at our so called democracy and asks why it is that the main parties seem so similar. Can you really trust the 'change' on offer?

This illustrates how the discourse in the elections is set by corporate agenda, which means maintaining the current situation by which business and finance markets are deregulated for ease of manipulation and lowering their own contributions to the state to maximise profits. In fact, legally under our system of profit motive they can do nothing else, and these policies are never going to be what's best for the people or for the world, as doing good things like providing proper conditions and pay to workers, or seriously addressing climate change are not only expensive and opposed to the corporate agenda but also practically impossible under a capitalist system where profit is prioritised over people or the planet.

Another result of this process is that there is little real difference in party lines. No one is, for example, suggesting changing the Neo-Liberal economic agenda set up by Thatcher, and Regan in America, despite the fact that its systems of business rights and deregulation has lead us into the largest financial collapse in nearly a century. Nor is any major party, even the Liberal Democrats, who were party to vote against the war in Iraq, suggesting full immediate withdrawal from Iraq or Afghanistan, despite the many voices from the population that have been telling them that it is illegal since the war began, and anyone who asks the Afghan or Iraqi people will hear that, obviously, the longer our troops keep occupying those countries the more people will be radicalised and driven into violence by their presence.

When it comes to big issues like foreign policy or economics, the ground is set, and the major parties are too concerned with maintaining the system. We are not even allowed to hear from people with alternative views. The real debate is decided for us, it is not on the agenda, even when opposing views are offered by some of the most intelligent and informed people on the planet, such as MIT professor Noam Chomsky, one of the most highly commended academics alive, with many serious ideas for genuine systemic changes to provide the masses with meaningful democratic control and self determination that remain unrecognised in the mainstream (Chomsky's speeches are widely available on you tube). There is no real choice; really we are not being offered a change of course, but more a choice in how the seats are arranged on the Titanic.

Our apparently democratic system thereby becomes a polyarchy; a system by which a prevailing ideology is exercised by a small group of parties which alternate in power, but whose differences only extend to micromanaging the specific prevailing system, with the population given a token choice of these micro-managers every few years, which serves to justify the systems continued existence.

We know there are clearly huge problems which are not discussed, but to talk about it seriously would highlight the fact that there is no real choice in our system, and therefore may risk people exercising their limited democratic right in an unpredicted way to call for a real change. And of course the real issues are not discussed, it leaves the door open for many people to get manipulated into far worse positions,

such as those of the BNP, who offer hateful answers, which push the wider political discourse into even worse positions.

On a more positive note, though, think of what happened when the usually under-publicised Liberal Democrats got some equal airtime and were allowed to show that they had, if only moderately, an alternative view. Perhaps it would have a similar effect if someone who had a real alternative view was allowed that time. It certainly shows there is an appetite for change in the population, if only we had someone who could really offer it to us.

ST. GEORGE'S DAY ANTI-RACISM GIG A GREAT SUCCESS!

Grey's Monument played host to an event which showed that Geordies are proud to be black and white.



On the 23rd of April (St. George's Day) a highly successful event called 'Newcastle Unites!' was held at the Monument in the centre of Newcastle, celebrating our multicultural town. This was welcomed by passers by (from multi-ethnic backgrounds) who stopped to watch and listen to the many performers, all responding with great positivity. After the negativity of last year when the Monument was taken over by a group of chanting fascists who racially abused passers by, this was event was welcomed, except by the three or four skin heads who stood opposite the gig holding St. George's flags looking vaguely annoyed that they hadn't managed to hijack the day.

This year a large number of EDL were present in a city pub and the event therefore created a safer space for everyone in the centre of the city. Many different groups/individuals contributed to Newcastle Unites. Geordies are proud to be black and white and the success of the anti-racist/anti-fascist gathering proved that!

GET INVOLVED!

Someone once said, "If voting changed anything they would ban it". *The Grey Matter* is an independent newsletter, free from party political ties. Who you vote for is up to you, and if you want to spoil your ballot in disgust, that's your choice (a friend of ours is going to draw a massive penis on his- nuff said). But we would encourage you not to see voting as the be all and end all of your political involvement- that's what those in power want you to do, so they can carry on getting away with murder.

EVENTS LISTINGS:

Tues 4 May, 11am

Tyneside Claimants Union meeting.

We meet to act collectively to solve problems with the benefits system all welcome.

Tynesideclaimantsunion@googlemail.com

Star and Shadow Cinema, Newcastle

Tues 11 May 19:30 - 22:00

Asylum Dialogues

Newcastle STAR presents Asylum Dialogues, a play exploring the experiences of asylum seekers and the British public through real life stories.

Star and Shadow Cinema, Newcastle

Thursday 27 May 19:00 - 20:30

After the elections: strategy for the left

John Rees, Stop the War national officer (pc) and a member of Counterfire's editorial board, will talk about the political situation after the general election and the challenges facing the left. There will be plenty of time for questions and discussion to explore the issues.

Salsa Cafe, Wesgate Road, Newcastle

Friday 18 June, 5.30pm

End the War on Terror - and defend Muslim communities

Public meeting with Yvonne Ridley

Organised by Tyneside StWC

Curtis Auditorium, Herschel Building, Newcastle University

TO GET YOUR EVENT ADVERTISED

HERE FREE CONTACT:

THEGREYMATTERNEWSLETTER@

GOOGLEMAIL.COM

The Grey Matter is an independent newsletter about politics in Tyne and Wear, based in Newcastle. It is not affiliated to any political party. It is run entirely by volunteers. We want to expand our operation and are constantly looking for more people the help out. Got a story? Want to help out? Have a suggestion? Contact:

THEGREYMATTERNEWSLETTER@GOOGLEMAIL.COM

SAVE COURAGE FROM DEPORTATION

A Newcastle University student is under threat of deportation from Nigeria. Courage Idiagbonya, currently being held in Dover, came to the UK following death threats he received for his work on human rights.

There is no evidence to suggest that it is safe for him to return to Nigeria- he faces imprisonment, torture, or even death. Nevertheless the UK Border agency callously want to send him back.

Nigeria has an appalling human rights record and Human Rights Watch has expressed concerns that 'extra-judicial' executions remain a chronic problem'. Moreover, Nigeria was listed by Crisis Watch in February 2010 as a country that had "deteriorated". The political situation in the country is volatile.

Since being taken into detention on 11 March, Courage has been refused bail – most recently on 15 April. He had made application to the European Court of Human Rights under Article 8, but was recently informed that it was not considered that his rights are breached under this Article- but MEPs can challenge rulings made in their Parliament just like Westminster MPs can and do.

Courage is now hoping to put in an application under article 3 ("...no one shall be subjected to inhumane and degrading treatment...").

Take action!

Write to your local MEPs about Courage's disgraceful treatment. Contact details and template letters are available at:

www.thegreymatter.wordpress.com

ADDITIONAL CONTENT

There's coverage of the election from *The Grey Matter's* network of writers and activists, along with other news, views and events listing at

www.thegreymatter.wordpress.com

To see more doctored Conservative posters go to www.mydavidcameron.com

WWW.THEGREYMATTER.WORDPRESS.COM