

# The People's Vote meltdown: the feel-good story of the week

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**A**s I write this, MPs are arguing about whether a general election should be on 9 December or 12 December. One argued it must be the 9th because otherwise an election might get in the way of vital rehearsals for school nativity plays. I have long been of the opinion that our politicians are mentally ill and most stuff that happens these days seems to confirm it. The more salient reason for the opposition wanting the earlier date is that universities may have broken up by the 12th and the Lib Dems and Labour will therefore risk losing a tidal wave of support from voters who are pig ignorant, pay no taxes and who, when delighted by something, do not clap their hands but wave them in the air like Al Jolson singing 'Mammy'.

If you have a student son or daughter who's thinking of voting, shove some high grade skunk under their bedroom door the day before the poll. You can lace the skunk with horse tranquilisers if you wish — do anything, just stop them voting. Pay them not to vote, or organise a rave with banging chooms for polling day. It is your duty — and the kids will thank you for it in about ten years' time, when a semblance of sentence has established itself inside their heads.

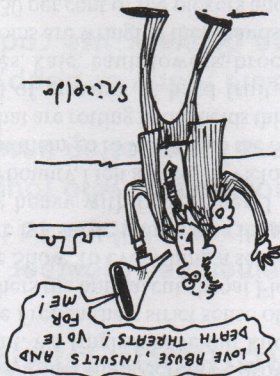
It was principally the student vote that won Canterbury for the sobbing and oppressed Rosie 'MeToo' Duffield. Please don't let that happen again. My own choice of election date would be a day when universities are closed and Muslims are forbidden to do anything on pain of hell, or something. There must be at least one day like that in the Muslim calendar, surely? That would deliver at least 40 seats to the Tories, I reckon. The better news this week is that the hilarious People's Vote has imploded, a consequence of the overweening hubris of one man. Roland Rudd is a public-school-educated and very well-heeled PR monkey who was one of the, uh, masterminds behind the Remain campaign. He now claims to be chairman of the People's Vote campaign — a referendum, although this is disputed.

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Whatever the facts, he has executed a purge of the predominantly Blairite big guns who either work for the organisation or sit on its board, in a manner of which Stalin might have approved. So campaign director James McGroarty and communications chief Tom 'I get no kick from champagne' Baldwin were summarily fired, leading to almost the entire staff walking out in sympathy and going down to the pub for a bit. Not just that, though. Rudd has also put down a resolution which would remove the reliably useless Will Straw, Lord Mandelson

and Joe Carberry from the People's Vote board. The only Blairite not to be ousted was the commendable Trevor Phillips

who responded with outrage, asking why he hadn't been sacked too. 'Is it because I am black?' he questioned, with a degree of irony, and demanded that his objection to being kept on be officially minuted. Quite what Trevor is still doing there with those revanchist and singularly undemocratic crowns escapes me: I have long suspected that, being a sensible bloke, his heart isn't quite in it. But he intends to remain a part of the People's Vote for now. 'I'm going to stick with it until I am considered important enough to sack,' he told me, giggling a little.



In the place of this lot come people described by another insider as 'Roland Rudd's fucking glove puppets': basically nice people who have never dirtied their hands in the political fray and are unused to hearing views that differ from their own — an important point to which I will return. In the meantime the People's Vote is in chaos. Matt Kelly, publisher of the hugely successful pro-EU newspaper the *New European*, responded by asking what I assume was a rhetorical question: 'Who gives a toss what Roland Rudd thinks of anything?' But this week of all weeks he's somehow contrived to make the campaign for a People's Vote look like a half-arsed shambles. Great timing, pillock? I never quite bought the notion that Brexit has divided the country down the middle. It seems to me that while the vast majority of those who voted Remain were saddened or even distraught about the vote, they still respected that democratic decision. The polls tend to bear this out. The split is between Leavers and disappointed Remain-ers on one side — maybe five-sixths of the country — and the liberal establishment and People's Vote legion on the other.

But I may have to reassess even that opinion. Phillips and Kelly, both staunch Remainers, nonetheless understand why people voted to leave the EU and might even have a degree of agreement with some of the reasons they did so. They do not see Leavers as an uneducated morass of racists and low achievers — even if they go along with the patently undemocratic idea that we should hold the vote again and this time get it right. Even within that thinish band of liberals who continue to rail against Brexit, there is a divide: between those who simply cannot comprehend why anybody voted Leave and have probably never met anyone who did — and the others, whose position is more nuanced and amenable and who know that people have to be won over to their cause, bereft though it may be.

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*The argument continues online.*