

## Notes from People's Vote National Groups Meeting, University of Westminster 02/02/19

### Lord Adonis:

- Conservative split into three; the People's Vote supporters (Grieve, Soubry and co), the May deal supporters, the ERG (Economic Ruin Group).
- Labour also split three ways; the People's Vote supporters, the rebel May deal supporters, the large 'wish it would go away' middle. Oh and one other group of one, Jeremy Corbyn.
- If the government can now find money for investment bribes for leave voting constituencies then why has it imposed austerity for so long?
- Mrs May could persuade Parliament to give her more time after 14<sup>th</sup> February but all efforts must be made to thwart yet more iterations of her deal.
- Three actions
  - Rally, no flagging, no giving up. The moment has not been lost. On Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> January, Parliament voted to tread water. Our argument is that the best way to end no-deal is not to vote for the PM's bad deal but to have a second referendum.
  - Mobilise our People's Vote army. Bring London to a standstill with a march even bigger than that of last October. Send the message to May and Corbyn that the push for a People's Vote is not going away.
  - Increase the membership of the European Movement and make it the largest non-party political force in the country.
- The battle is for the soul of England, not Scotland, not Northern Ireland, not Wales.
- An extension to Article 50 is a pre-requisite for a People's Vote.
- As and when we get to the point of campaigning to win the People's Vote the campaign will morph into something bigger than includes the current 200 groups plus the remain wings of all political parties and other institutions and organisations.

### James McCleary (Campaign Director, European Movement)

- We have a new Regional Campaign Manager, Daniel Purchase who lives in Rustington and will cover Kent, Sussex, Surrey and Hampshire.
- Polling of a 15000 sample shows:
  - 48% for remain, 38% for leave, 6% would not vote, 7% don't know.
  - 44% for a new referendum, 35% Parliament should decide, 20% don't know.
- The soft middle, disengaged remainers, soft leavers, must be our target. These are the "we are fed up with it. Just bring it to an end, I don't care anymore" voters.
- There are many who do not want to hear or know about the consequences of a no-deal Brexit or the arguments for why we should stay in the EU.
- Many of these soft middle voters see a People's Vote as being even more divisive and as dragging out the whole 'tedious' process for even longer.
- There is a conundrum. We know that a People's Vote is really a campaign to remain but being too overt about this is off-putting for many.
- A People's Vote will only happen when all other options are shown to have failed.
- But any vote for May's deal will instantly create a huge vacuum due to the complete lack of substance in the political declaration.
- Soft leavers hate being told about the probable corruption of the referendum vote because they read this as remainers telling them they were stupid for being duped.

- Some disengaged remain voters are under the impression that no-deal means that Brexit will be cancelled.
- For the record, the People's Vote campaign team was behind the Grieve, Spelman, Cooper/Boles and Reeves amendments on the 29<sup>th</sup> January.

### **Thomas Cole (People's Vote Head of Policy)**

- Highly unlikely that May will get anything of substance from Brussels.
- Will the 14<sup>th</sup> actually be a second vote on the deal or just another round of amendments? Could we win an amendment on the 14<sup>th</sup> that would put a People's Vote on the table?
- Realistically a People's Vote is the 'last man standing' option.
- But timing is paramount for tabling a motion for a People's Vote. Too soon and we lose would probably mean an even greater vote against at the second attempt.
- Therefore patience is needed to choose the right time when a majority of MPs see that a People's Vote is the best and only forward. It will be largely irrelevant why they give their support. The important thing is that they do.
- An extension of Article 50 beyond 2<sup>nd</sup> July will be difficult because this is the date of the inaugural plenary session of the new European Parliament.

### **Tom Brufatto (People's Vote Head of Campaigns) and David Gwyther (Open Britain Campaign Manager)**

- The next 'official' day of action, Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> February, will target twenty-one MPs, mainly Labour, who are wobbling and may vote with the government. Two of the twenty-one are Conservatives who may be persuaded to support a People's Vote. None of the twenty-one are in or anywhere near our area.
- If a People's Vote is granted then we will be overtly campaigning to stay in the EU.
- Brexit will be branded as the status quo while staying in the EU will be the change (think about that one).
- Messaging must turn positive e.g.
  - ~~9 out of 10 economists believe that leaving the EU will damage the economy~~
  - 9 out of 10 economists believe that staying in the EU will benefit the economy.
- One major difference from the 2016 Remain campaign will be that this one will not be run from Downing Street. It will be a people's campaign.
- Letterbox drops are the backbone of political campaigning. But the message on the leaflet is the key.
- The idea of People's Voice meetings was briefly discussed. This is where remainers come along to a local meeting with a friend or colleague who is a leaver and there is an open discussion about the different points of view. However, no-one in the audience has yet tried this out so no direct experience could be shared.
- The People's Vote campaign now has over 1 million followers on social media.

### **Addendum – Points from Conference call with Daniel Purchase 04/02/19**

- Next steps for campaigning will be determined after the vote(s) on 14<sup>th</sup> February.
- In the meantime campaigning for the granting of a People's Vote will continue.
- Constituency Group Leaders will be able to order new leaflets using this link <http://po.st/pvleaflets>. Group name will be EM Portsmouth-Chichester Branch (constituency name) e.g. EM Portsmouth-Chichester Branch (Fareham).