

## **SHOULD THE PERSON THAT SELLS YOU A CAR ENSURE THAT IT CAN BE SERVICED?**

**BREXIT is like the patients in a hospital declaring that they wish to be free of experts, disconnected from life support and to do without those pesky nurses that give them pills and wipe their bums.**

In 1979 Margaret Thatcher began to make the civil service with its experience and expertise more subservient to ministers. In 1997 Tony Blair, a man with zero experience of government, began to make the civil service accountable to his apparatchiks. He also contracted out much policy detail to private companies. I remember my first shock attending a meeting in a ministry to find that Pricewaterhouse Cooper were in the chair without a single civil servant in the room. Needless to say, all the money that they had been given to devise a policy that could have been written on the back of an envelop by experts came to nothing. Once the short-term contract was over there was no one in the building to take that policy further. In fact there was no one in the building with any knowledge of the work that had been done.

We would hear of 'efficiency savings' (loss of staff), 'regional devolution of civil servants' (that usually came with a huge turnover of personnel), and then in 2005 Gordon Brown swung a heavy axe when he got rid of 31% of civil servants. If we add to that Parliament's inability to carry out its major role of passing legislation that has been properly scrutinised then I fear that in terms of how government functions two things will happen. First, we shall be swamped with tasks that we have too few resources to deal with. Second, government will resort to more and more monarchical powers. We are, after all, subjects not citizens.

Much of my professional life was devoted to political education. Government replaced it with citizenship. Essentially they wished for the maintenance of a structural status quo. Young people studying government and politics might bring about change unwanted by the powerful. I make an exception for Politics, Philosophy and Economics (PPE) at the University of Oxford studied by people such as David Cameron, the progenitor of Brexit. So knowledgeable and devoted was he to his job that he first devised a referendum to maintain his hold on the Tory Party and then ran away when he lost control. So many politicians studied PPE that I wonder if its main purpose is to deaden their desire for change and heighten their lust for power.

Look at Boris. Look at Gove. Look at an entire array of them. They stand in the political showroom polishing a nice new shiny policy. They can tell you how fast it can get to 60 MPH and how many millions of miles to the gallon you will get. You buy it. Later you take it in for a service. They are not in the

oily workshop at the back. No one is. Those workers have all been made redundant. But Boris and Gove and Co are still in the showroom selling yet more shiny new policies.

For me it is BOLLOCKS TO BREXIT. We need politicians to spend less time in the showroom and more time in the workshop.

**Cliff Jones 28<sup>th</sup>. September 2018**