

A TORY TRASHES THE TORIES

THE ASSAULT ON TRUTH

Boris Johnson, Donald Trump and the Emergence of a New Moral Barbarism

by Peter Osborne (2021).

This is a book by a life-long Conservative. The ascension of Boris Johnson to the leadership of the Conservative Party is not the only reason for Osborne's dismay. He wrote *The Rise of Political Lying* in 2005. Tony Blair was then Prime Minister. Neither Blair nor any of his associates sued Osborne for what he wrote about them. Earlier generations of politicians probably would have done. Reading his latest book I believe that it is Osborne's argument that lies no longer count. Neither does truth count. We now exist in an Orwellian world in which the people of power can construct whatever narratives they like confident that, as long as they have the mass media on their side, we, the people, shall acquiece.

The book is, as they say, 'a good read'. And it is not long. 'Unputdownable' might be a good word for it. I was particularly struck by his notion that the the Conservative Party no longer exists. It has become a Donors' Party. How do you get the ears of powerful politicians? You pay for those ears. In return policies are constructed or amended to suit you and a knighthood or peerage may follow. Osborne refers to the similarities between Trump and Johnson. Truth matters to neither of them. I have long thought that the only difference was that Johnson could do semi-colons.

In his diaries Alan Duncan cannot resist slagging off Bercow as Speaker of the House of Commons for showing so little respect for tradition and authority. To read Osborne is to come away yearning for more of Bercow. The lack of respect that we are witnessing is a governmental lack of respect for democracy. We learn from Osborne that the referendum on membership of the EU was nothing more serious for Johnson than a jolly jape that would, win or lose, advance his climb to the top. Winning, in fact, has been a problem for him. It has meant hard work, complicated work, the sort of work that he prefers to avoid.

I have merely written my impressions. Osborne reminds me that journalism demands a very high standard of writing. You must never try to deceive your reader. This is why he has so carefully cited detailed evidence for his writing. Yes, it is an exciting read but built upon strong foundations.

I said that he was a life-long Conservative. Who did he vote for in the last general election? He voted for Corbyn. He shrank from dishonesty and chose, instead, a decent and honest politician.

Cliff Jones 1st. May 2021

www.criticalprofessionallearning.co.uk/