

ConDemNation

A Garland of
Scurrilous Rhymes, Parodies and Rants

To Greet our
New Political Masters

Composed “In the Nation’s Interest”

O for a Jonathon Swift to prick our P.R. Politicians with his pen. Maybe those Lib Dems chosen to make a deal with the Tories thought they were discussing *proportional representation*. They weren't: the letters P.R. only ever stood for *public relations*.

Here we humbly present some scribbling thoughts that you may in consequence be enlightened and relieved that you are not alone; whilst also being inspired by knowing that a standard of versifying has been set below which you, esteemed reader, could not possibly fall.

Some of what follows is best sung with gusto, particularly the two parodies of The Red Flag. Did you ever drive your Chevy to the levee? Can you detect the quotation from Fats Waller or the shameless theft from Milton or the touches from Shakespeare and Ben Jonson: the small Latin and less Greek?

Please join in. We are all in this together.

Contributions from Anon are also welcome.

Just remember the motto of ConDemNation: 'Bad politics begets bad poetry'.

Note from the editor of ConDemNation

Heraclitus told us that we could never step into the same river twice: we must learn to cope with change. Sisyphus, however, was condemned to atone for his sins by repeatedly pushing the same boulder up the same hill: some things never change. Meanwhile, Petronius (we like to think) warned us of the propensity of policy-makers to re-organise and engender a spurious sense of having captured and controlled change while actually causing costly confusion.

For the sake of our sanity ranting is an appropriate response to the changes presented to us. Read on to experience the satisfaction that ranting brings.

Warning and Lamenting

On the announcement of the General Election

Come, cheer up my lads 'tis to hell that we steer,
To add something worse in election year,
New Labour has taught you to worship greed,
We Tories are happy for that is our creed.

So bail out the banks and print money for bonuses,
Free the economy and see who benefits,
Let's bash a few gays and chase a few foxes,
Keep out the strangers, you know they're obnoxious.

We'll hear nothing more of this equality crap,
Build more tough jails, now there's a good chap,
As we drink to each other in our gated community,
And evade our taxation with easy immunity.

As the Bullingdon Club gets the prizes of gold,
The cost will be borne by the young and the old,
Of the classes that failed to rise to the top,
And go to Eton to be members of Pop.

Cliff Jones April 6th. 2010

Who will buy my sweet red poesy?

A lament for Labour

The peoples' flag is limp and pink,
No longer red as you might think,
Our martyrs' dead evoke no memories,
They left the field to our enemies.

So let us raise the banner high,
As we soar off in the sky,
We might as well be dramatic,
Flying to our flat on the Adriatic.

Or might someone wish to give us lolly,
To ply our skills within the lobby,
We really know how to spin for liars,
Just send the cheque to Hoon and Byers.

So what became of Atlee and Bevin?
Of free health care and nationalisation,
What price now a socialist heaven?
That all went with Aneurin Bevan.

Cliff Jones April 8th. 2010

Odes on the Nativity of our ConDemNation

Lines on the forming of a coalition

Gladstone, Asquith and Lloyd George,
William Beveridge and Maynard Keynes,
What think you of this alliance forged?
Your party imprisoned by Tory chains?

Heroic days of the Welfare State,
Of old age pensions and votes for women,
Values lost at an alarming rate,
In pursuit of power and a cabinet position.

How will you face the electorate next time?
Will you enthuse your grassroots mob?
Not sure you'll get this vote of mine,
Since your conscience was shed for the sake of a job.

Cliff Jones 12th May 2010

The Compromisers Chorus

Across these green and pleasant lands
Manifesto disassemblers
Work with soiled and grubby hands
For the prospect of a quick knee tremble.

Forgetting what was said last week
(a long, long time in politics)
Election pledges, with barefaced cheek,
Are ditched.
And now we all agree with Nick.

The procession of our principles
Marches onwards to the grave.
Grieve not, my friend! You can rejoice
For Nick agrees with Dave.

Chorus

Give up, give up your cherished views!
Cometh the man, cometh the hour.
There's nothing that I wouldn't do
To grab a little bit of power!

Nick Sorensen 13th May 2010

Davido and Nicolette

Kiss me quick
Said cleggy Nick
I'll do whatever you want-oh
I'll vote for you
I'll see it through
I'll do it all and pronto

I'll never fail
I'll land in jail
If that is what you want-oh
Shout the harshest word
That ever was heard
Just give me that portmanteau

I love you lots
I've got the hots
I'll worship at your **shrine-oh**
Our affair is cursed
But I'll put you first
Well - till you rue the day you became mine-oh

C Hayes.
By appointment 13th May 2010

Readers with memories of old parodies of The Red Flag may recall that one of them contains the lines....

***'The working clarse can kiss my arse
I've got the foreman's job at larst'***

What follows pays homage to that parody with a somewhat different aim in mind.

Nick's New Politics

The ruling clarse now has my arse
All David had to do was arsk
No more politics of envy
I'm in the team till twenty twenty

And when the ghosts of Liberals Parst
Come to haunt my dreaming sleep
I'll tell them they don't bother me
For I am now chief of the sheep

No more marching, no protests
Or 'Woolly Hats Against the Bomb'
Goodbye to the sandelled tendency
For I am now part of the ascendancy

Where does this leave old David Steel
Who told us to prepare for government
He little knew when he said those words
This would put Tories up my fundament.

May 16th Cliff Jones

The place of women in this government

Women in government, whatever next
They should be home looking pretty
Or dusting the dado, looking *in* NEXT
Not thinking or planning the economy
A fresh G&T when I finish my day
Is what I want from my lovely
Not questions of fact on pensions and pay
Or the state of our new foreign policy

Good old Theresa, O how we tease her
For wearing such fancy footwear
Her pedal extremities couldn't be better
But I cannot think how she got here
Was she at Eton, was she a Wykehamist
Has she been out with the Quorn
There were no silver spoons as her head was kissed
On the day that she was born

Now we men have asserted our natural rights
To be in the cabinet dominant
We can bring in some ladies who eventually might
Show our desire to be tolerant
For we really do like them, honest we do
As long as they remember their place
Which is not at the top; that would *not* do
For even when clever, as some of them are, they're only a pretty face.

Cliff Jones 17th May

Commemorating

We have no rhyme to commemorate the passing of the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). In partial recompense we offer in memoriam a few lines composed on 18th June 2009 by Cliff Jones upon the passing of its former bedfellow the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS).

.....after many hours of starvation in a garret trying to capture the scansion, metre and poetic intensity of E.J.Thribb of Private Eye this has to be my Magnum Opus.....

So Farewell Then DIUS (an epic poem)

‘We shall achieve World Class Excellence’....

that was your catchphrase.....

‘We are building for the future’.....

that was another....

‘goodbye’....

that was your latest....

er....that’s it

Kevin’s mum says ‘What was DIUS?’....

Cliff Jones (67 and a bit) cont’d p94

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Ranting in Rhythm

A warning to the new Secretary of State for Education (also known as the S.O.S. for Education)

An ode on the passing of postgraduate professional development (PPD) and the onset of the official masters in teaching and learning (MTL)

So farewell then critical reflection

And goodbye Paolo Freire

No more problematising

No more seeking for truth

Hitting the target is now what counts

All for the sake of our youth

Teachers are coached and mentored

In order to learn to do right

Stop asking awkward questions

Dissent must remain out of sight

Every five years they'll be tested

To see if they've done what they should

And if they have not they'll be shunted

For the sake of the general good

Who now remembers de-schooling?

Or knows what was meant by Mode Three?

Maybe Ed Balls is just fooling

Maybe he'll listen to me

As I pluck up enough of my courage

To tell him to jump in the sea

Cliff Jones November 2nd 2009

Postscriptum:

Ed Balls, having been all at sea is, dear reader, now in the sea and sinking, thereby demonstrating the power of poetry. Now he really does know the meaning of S.O.S.

Post Postscriptum:

Garland has learned that despite the extensive professional efforts, huge financial losses, opportunity costs and psychological damage incurred by universities responding to the MTL madness it now joins that vast and numerous collection of soon to be forgotten official educational initiatives. What remains may become a proper degree. But I doubt it.

Semper eadem.

Balls has, meanwhile, emerged from under the sea like the Kraken waking to become Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer. We must hope that he is not another example of nominative determinism.

Post Post Postscriptum:

Now SOS Gove has told PPD that it too must go into the library where it will find a loaded revolver so that it can do the decent thing and stop bothering people by making them think.

There follows another rhyming rant about those consultants and agents of government that would tell us what to do

Lines on the Inaugural Meeting of the National Advisory Group for Professional Development for the Children's Workforce in Schools on the 24th September 2008 at 151 Buckingham Palace Road London

Born of the bullshit
Risen from the rhetoric
Smug in their certainty
The policy pushing people

Calling for coherence
Driving out dissenters
Keeping to the message
The policy pushing people

Lengthening the lever
Looking for the fulcrum
Applying the forces
The policy pushing people

Targeting the outcome
Measuring the impact
Climbing the league table
The policy pushing people

Following best practice
Hiring consultants
Dreaming of the honours list
The policy pushing people

Implementing strategy
Broadening the remit
Reforming and developing
The policy pushing people

Transforming the culture
Building capacity
Enforcing entitlement
The policy pushing people

Emphasising relevance
Embedding procedure
Committed to improvement
The policy pushing people

Going on for ever
Adapting to each minister
Seeking preferment
The policy pushing people

So it's....

Back into the bullshit
Returning to the rhetoric
Devising further strategies
The policy pushing people

Composed by Cliff Jones as he left the meeting

Message from S.O.S. Gove



26 May 2010

This email is an official communication to schools from the Department for Education.

Message from Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Education

Dear Colleague

I am humbled and delighted that the Prime Minister has appointed me Secretary of State for Education in the new coalition Government. Nothing is more important for our country than getting education right. Schools are where we introduce our children to the best that has been thought and written and education is the process by which we enable every child to take control of their destiny, and to become author of their own life story. That's why the first thing I want to do is to thank you for your work. Teaching is the most important profession in the life of our nation.

I am deeply grateful for everything the teaching profession has already achieved. But I want to go further, both in improving schools and closing the gap between the richest and the poorest. A key principle behind this partnership Government is trusting professionals. That is why this Government will give you more power and control and will trust you to get on with the job.

Your views are extremely important to me. I would welcome your thoughts on how you believe we can raise attainment, particularly for the poorest children, and how we might enhance the prestige and status of the teaching profession. If you would like to get in contact please contact me at feedbacktoministers@education.gsi.gov.uk.

Over the coming months our key priorities will include:

- reducing bureaucracy;
- giving teachers and heads more say over the curriculum;
- giving teachers and heads more power to ensure good behaviour; and
- giving all schools the opportunity to apply for academy freedoms if they wish to do so.

The Queen's Speech yesterday was the first step in making these changes a reality. It set out our plans to open up the academies programme to allow all primary, secondary and special schools to gain academy status.

If you would like to register your interest in doing this or would like to find out more information

please go to the Department for Education website www.education.gov.uk/academies.

Michael Gove

Invitation to rant in rhyme

Our new Secretary of State (S.O.S.) for Education is pinching an idea from Sweden to set up some costly 'free' schools so it is appropriate to pinch a sad song from that country in order to draw attention to some of his policies. We invite our vast and growing readership to contribute a song on the policies of Secretary Of State Gove to the tune of ABBA's S.O.S. Before sitting down to compose the words you might wish to consider including references to the following; but it's not compulsory.

S.O.S. Gove gave the name **'Troops to Teachers'** to his idea that former soldiers could instil discipline in schools. Maybe he could be more imaginative and, following the politically acclaimed New Labour programme called 'Teach First', name his idea **'Kill First'** or **'Shoot First'**.

He is also reported to be in favour of hanging and tie wearing. Maybe they go together.

You might also wish to reflect upon the last thirteen years wasted by New Labour.

The next bit you can skip as I am only wittering.

The mother of Ivor Novello persuaded him to enter a competition for a patriotic First World War song by writing a bad one herself. This stimulated him to protect the family name by writing the music for 'Keep the Home Fires Burning'. Following her example I have provided the beginning of my own attempt to parody Benny and Bjorn. Not only do I expect you to do better than me but I look forward to a version that also includes notation. And as further stimulus may I draw attention to the great comedian Jimmy James. In his day comics always finished with a song. It was his habit to call upon the conductor of the pit orchestra (known as 'maestro') to provide him with an 'A' so that he could tune in before singing. Being given the note Jimmy James would cup his ear, wobble around it and then utter the immortal words: 'near enough, that'll do'.

In other words, perfection is not only unwanted but it is to be regarded as detracting from the purpose of The Garland which is to match bad politics with bad poetry. This raises the question of when we might be called upon to write good poetry.

Now, surely, you can improve on the following. If unsure then search for the lyrics of S.O.S or listen on YouTube. You can gauge my age by references to the Mekon (the image of Gove) and Dan Dare. Feel free to find more modern references. In fact, feel free to write something entirely different on the theme of Education S.O.S.

Education S.O.S.

The cry of a lost educational soul

You seem so strange to me just like the Mekon was
We have no Daniel Dare for to save us now
And all because we lost our way
Forgot our faith while chasing wealth
ConDeming us to watching you destroy what's left.

Can you hear me wailing, am I really failing?
S.O.S.
Have you made up your mind, are you the nasty kind?
S.O.S.
Would you bring back hanging, soldiers in schools haranguing?
S.O.S.
Will you make the curriculum free for a few to climb the tree?
S.O.S.

Now over to you....

100 Days of S.O.S. Gove

And now for a carefully considered evaluation of Secretary of State (S.O.S.) Gove written to celebrate his 100 days in office. Please note the use of Brecht's alienation technique at the end.

In Hopes

**Michael Gove, the man who strove
So much to get things underway
Is now the buffoon who may very soon
Be spending more time with his family**

**The man is quite mad and awfully bad
At doing his sums at all accurately
Whatever he counts the numbers just mount
And the result is political fantasy**

**The educational desert is strewn with the bones
Of initiatives, quangos and agencies
And Secretaries of State who far too late
Discovered their own fallibility**

**So why does it happen, this failure to see
The faults and the flaws of their policies
Could it be that they might be ever so slightly deluded
Thinking they're right when everyone knows...**

They're wrong!

Cliff Jones

The Garland goes global

From the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education Garland has discovered the following gems.

Two limericks on the Professional Assessment for Californian Teachers (PACT)

There once was an assessment called PACT,
Which videotaped how teachers act.
They showed all their tricks
And were scored with rubrics;
And quality went up: that's a fact.

By Dr Linda Darling-Hammond

The sceptical student of PACT
Was not renowned for his tact.
He said, "I suppose
That nobody knows
If the measurements made are exact".

By Professor Gordon Kirk

The Book of Blair is titled *'Tony Blair, A Journey'*.

The missing sub-heading is *'From Illusion to Delusion'*.

*You are recommended to have a stiff G&T by your side if you intend to read it.
Failing alcohol a strong sense of irony will be needed. Meanwhile, a dose of doggerel
may help.*

Blair's Book of Condolence

Tony Blair the man who cares
And wants to share his agonies
Laments the dead but not what he said
About weapons of mass destruction
For he cannot see what you and me
And anyone else with half a brain
Knew all along was illegal and wrong
Leading to mass devastation

O Robin Cook we miss you so much
You might have prevented the worst of it
You were not always good but I know that you would
Have seen through the rags of his argument
And forensically shown us the folly of policy
Arrived at by cronies on sofa
People died for the sake of Blair's lies
While the cabinet slept and turned over

The puzzle for me is how Blair can be
So far from normal humanity
None of us like to be caught in a trap
Of our own awful moral turpitude
But he sees no wrong in breaking the law
Or going to war on grounds that were false
Surely Cheri should have pointed this out
Remembering her Old Labour values

Please Labour Party go back to your roots
Back to belief in equality
Back to a time when you were not relaxed
That it was right for the rich to be filthy
I'll send a subscription if you'll only listen
As I react to Tony Blair's 'Journey'
But I guess that you'll vote for Miliband 'D'
And more of the same is the name of the game

While socialists become part of history

Cliff Jones September 4th

O brave new political world that has such people in't

**No more New Labour; no more Next Labour; now we shall have
Hard Labour and be led by Mr. Ed the only socialist talking horse
sponsored by the TUC**

*Dedicated to fans of that great television programme from the USA, Mr Ed
the Talking Horse and in memory of the wonderful cartoonist David Low
who always drew the TUC as a carthorse*

Mr. Ed

Mr. Ed is the leader of course
Though nobody thought he would run the course
Now he is the one with all of the sauce
The charming Mr. Ed

Real Lib Dems will flock to the cause
And join him in his new onslaught
Clegg will have some pause for thought
'Cos he knows whose in his bed

The Tories won't give a cuss of course
They're too busy establishing laws
To make the poor all go to the wall
And wish that they were dead

But maybe the mean Treasury Team
Will wish the poor to sweep and clean
As long as they remain unseen
And unsung by Mr. Ed

This is the man who certainly can
Bring us back from down the pan
And help us shed the Blairish cred
The charming Mr. Ed

**By Cliff Jones who acknowledges the critically crucial cultural
contribution of Helen Mitchell. September 27th 2010.**

Prize winning Blair

Garland has learned that Tony Blair's book *The Journey* is in the running to win the Bad Sex Award. If so it will be an exceptional performance because this award has, until now, been limited to works of fiction. Quite possibly the Literary Review, which decides who wins, understands more about how to classify political memoirs than many publishers.

Inspired by the Literary Review Garland has decided to commemorate Blair's huge literary achievement with its own award. It has to be acknowledged that the man's achievement cannot be limited to simply writing bad sex in the tradition of Melvyn Bragg and similar luminaries. In his book Blair has also given his readers Bad Politics, Bad Lavatorial Behaviour and Bad Religion (Bad Faith). In our opinion he is the clear Victor Ludorum of the 2010 Political Memoir Sports Day. No-one else comes close.

To celebrate his achievement we present a poem. Alas we have yet to decide upon a title. It could be one of the following. We suggest that you choose or propose one. Please turn over.

The Viagra Monologues

or

A Prophet Makes a Profit

or

God Does Blair

Speak to me only with thine lies
Said she to he in ecstasy
Give me some more of your big porky pie
You know just what it does to me

Forty five minutes he would keep it up
His weapon of mass reproduction
But in the end he had to admit
His claim lacked verification

O my darling I shall devour you
Just wait while I visit the bog
And take a call from my friend George W
And another from someone called God

They ask my advice: 'What shall we do?'
I am clear and emphatic
What you must do is call everything 'NEW'
I find it puts cash in my pocket

Now what was it I was going to do?
Oh, I remember, some devouring
What do you mean it will be without you?
My animal instinct's overpowering

I am the leader, I am Destiny
Oh, there's the phone; the Pope this time
Would I wish to join his company?
'Cos he knows that to God I've a direct line

My father's name was Leo
The leader of the pack
I am his son, Numero Uno
You cannot do better than that

Cliff Jones 21st October 2010

And now for a George W Special

Readers will have queued all night to get their hands on a copy of Bush's memoir. What a relief to know that we do not have to agonise any more about false imprisonment and torture because no-one was discomforted by any of it and we all benefited. Read on, think of Cuba in the sunshine and rejoice.

The Buena Vista Torture Club

The CIA comes out to play
Guantanamo Bay, Guantanamo Bay
They teach them all to obey
Guantanamo Bay, Guantanamo Bay
If not, their skins we shall flay
Guantanamo Bay, Guantanamo Bay
God tells me this is all ok
Guantanamo Bay, Guantanamo Bay
Tony and I had a very quick pray
Guantanamo Bay, Guantanamo Bay
Waterboarding is so gay
Guantanamo Bay, Guantanamo Bay
The World will thank me one fine day
For...
Guantanamo Bay, Guantanamo Bay

Cliff Jones 9th November 2010

Dear reader, I have tried to write more on this subject but the two verses below are as far as I have managed. I leave them here in case they inspire someone to do better but, for now at least, I find the subject too disgusting even for my level of versifying. It was trying to use 'extraordinary rendition' as an amusing rhyme that made me stop. Maybe I simply chose the wrong day (see below) to compose and I shall try again later. I apologise for this temporary loss of ranting confidence.

Torture, torture everywhere and no-one stopped to think

Bush and Blair, Blair and Bush
Why ever were you in a rush
To carry out your awful mission
Of extraordinary rendition

Amazing how you twisted meaning
And claimed such acts were not demeaning
Devoid of all humanity
Evil exposed for all to see

Cliff Jones, Armistice Day 2010, unfinished.

The day the educational music died

The Training and Development Agency for schools, having just completed its transfer from London to Manchester with a 90% turnover of staff, now learns that it need not have bothered. Many of its responsibilities are to be transferred to what used to be known as the National College for School Leadership. What remains goes back to direct control from London. Imagine, dear reader, what it must be like to be a public servant these days: your most prized possession being a suitcase and some pills to induce a feeling that the irrational can be made to appear rational. As ever, Garland was ahead of the game and penned this charming ditty the week before the White Paper.

Goodbye TDA

Goodbye my old TDA
Kicked in the belly in the Coalition way
Some people will shout 'hooray'
'This'll be the day that you die'
'This'll be the day that you die'

But I liked you, really I did
After all you taught me how to bid
To do what I wanted I needed a few quid
But this is now the day it all dies
This is now the day it all dies

What now happens to all that you did?
Some of it was great and some I can't forgive
But by and large you helped us all live
This could be the day we all die
This could be the day we all die

Gove inflicts death of a thousand cuts
Most of us think the man has gone nuts
He accepts no 'ifs' or 'buts'
No need to reason why
No need to reason why

The ConDemNation has a clear view
Not at all shared by me and by you
While most of us remain in a stew
The rich will always get by
The rich will always get by

Once upon a time collaboration beckoned
We could work together; well that's what I reckoned
Now I know what it's like below second
Life at the bottom of the pile
Life at the bottom of the pile

Training and Development Agency
Once it was about you and me
Working together and setting us free
Not like the TTA
Not like the TTA

Gove now says teaching is a craft
Not a profession; that would make him laugh
He does all his thinking sitting in the bath
Will he meet Charlotte Cordey?
Will he meet Charlotte Cordey?

What price now teaching qualifications?
In our differentiated nation
Gove's 'Free Schools': an abomination
The TDA has had its day
The TDA has had its day

Roll up now the map of education
Turn out the lights on civilization
Education, education, education
This is Blair's legacy
This is Blair's legacy

Legacy.....legacy.....legacy.....

Cliff Jones, the week before the White Paper.

Meanwhile, in March 2011 Gove seems to be having difficulty lighting his bonfire. In July 2011 he still is.

Ant and Dec

It has come to our notice that in some public houses in Liverpool, maybe elsewhere also, David Cameron and Nick Clegg are known as Ant and Dec. This conjures up thoughts of a television programme that might be called 'I'm a Politician, Get Me Out of Here' in which Coalition members could be put into the political jungle and made to eat their own words or to cook on an open fire of manifestos or share a sleeping bag with people whose policies they despise. The imagination does not have to work too hard to conjure up such scenarios. Meanwhile, Garland has tried to imagine the views of our political pairing and to put into rhyme their responses to recent student protest; and should you think that the government is out of touch and unable to connect with the hoi polloi let us point out that the Cabinet is reported to contain no more than a trifling nineteen or so millionaires.

Ant and Dec

What the heck, say Ant and Dec
Who gives a toss for student debt?
Nine K per year is chicken feed
We really do not see the need
For these protests and occupations
Can't understand their condemnations

Go back to school and learn to behave
Follow the example of Nick and Dave
Choose your family carefully
And live a life all debt free
Dec's dad had some very big wedges
Enabling him to break his pledges

Ant, as well, was a very big swell
The pong of privilege was easy to smell
In biker grove he pedalled faster
Than his chauffeur following after
Who now cares for promises past?
The working class will always come last

Cliff Jones December 1st. 2010

Political Chaos Theory in a Pickle

At last, dear reader, the Coalition is beginning to articulate a political theory to explain its policies. Garland wonders, however, if the ConDem government has quite got to grips with chaos theory, bifurcation and the dialectic. Still, Nick Boles, MP for Grantham and a former flatmate of SOS Gove, has made a start by telling us, at a time of pre-Christmas travel chaos, that it is useless to plan anything. The next stage might be recognition that all of their plans are, therefore, useless. Later on, maybe, they will decide that some plans are more useless than others. Garland encourages this journey to political wisdom and sees lots of opportunity for ranting coming up. It helps that one of the chief dismantlers of plans goes by the name of Eric Pickles. Could this be another case of ‘nominative determinism’?

Inspired by the famous palindrome ‘A man, a plan, a canal: Panama’ I have tried ‘A man, a plan, chaos: Policy’. No good is it? And somehow ycilopsoahcnalpanama does not quite serve as a catchy phrase. On the other hand, I can see that it might be very effective indeed as an impenetrable password for the political and educational resistance movements. We could shorten it to ycilopsoahc so that resistance cells would be at risk for shorter periods while making contact with each other.

And now for some jolly.....

Formation Politics

Vince Cable is very able at the paso doble
But his step wasn't quick and his fox did not trot
When the Telegraph entered his surgery
They got a good story and pleased all those Tories
Who wanted more power for Merdoch
But Jeremy Hunt could be mis-pronounced
If he comes down in favour of Rupert
I understand, I really do, why Vince won't go nuclear
They made an agreement despite all their values
And now they are simply stuck there
This is a dance without romance, not even polished footwork
The chassé of Vince has failed to evince
Applause from critical onlookers
Who hoped for more as he took the floor
As Parliament's noted high kicker
Is this the end? Will he go back in the chorus?
Maybe he won't though it is fair to say
His values are looking porous

Cliff Jones Boxing Day 2010

Editor's query

Is that a spelling mistake or should Murdoch really be spelled Merdoch?

New Year Greetings from Garland Commemorating our ConDemNation

Just before the start of the New Year, came the news that Simple Simon Hughes is going to show young poor people that going to university and becoming even poorer is good for them. After all, the poor are not merely needy; they are needed; absolutely! They must be cherished and preserved for without them the rich will feel less privileged. A question: how do you become an advocate for a policy in which you do not believe? Apparently he is not going to be paid for this role so greed plays no part in his decision: Simon Stultus Est.

Come on 2011, you have started well.....the year looks like it will resonate with rants; keep it up.

Three Days into the New Ranting Season

and

ConDemned Consciences Continue to Shrivel

Garland presents a new contributor who warms up with a little nudge (nudge theory being all the rage) to the conscience of Simon Simplex followed by the induction of Nick Clegg as the butt of a variation on the oldest of jokes.

Good old reliable Simon

Simon Hughes
did not choose
to be a Tory
how he became one is another story

I pledge to thee my country

I say, I say, I say! Why did Nick Clegg cross the road?
Because he signed a pledge that he never would!

Both of these contributions come from the pen of Rick Nonsense, a man whose very name lives up to the Garland motto and evokes that memorable line..... ‘...but not necessarily in the right order’.

January 2011

Gove of Gove Hall
The
Driver of the School Bus
or
Educational A&E Here We Come

What on earth can be done about this man? Clearly he has adopted the worst attributes of Toad of Toad Hall and discarded any of his redeeming features. He has recently been found guilty by the High Court of breaking the policy-making speed limit but that won't stop him. Onward he drives scattering educational traffic wardens, brushing aside lollipops, ignoring red lights, all for the sheer exhilaration of exercising the power to put education and society to the sword.

With the pedal on the metal and his foot to the floor
On he goes to add some more
Chaos and confusion, commonsense eludes him
He will not be reined in, even if they chained him

We now hear that the President of the UK Literacy Association, David Reedy, while questioning SOS Gove's commitment to synthetic phonics, has asked the Department *for* Education to explain why the name of their boss does not rhyme with 'Love'.

Nice one David!

Meanwhile, a friend reminds me that Gove also does not rhyme with 'Move'; such a pity. He could follow the example of Caroline Spelman, the putative privatiser of forests who may very soon be spending more time with her trees.

'So, minister, what is your favourite Desert Island Disc?' 'I have chosen *I talk to the trees but they don't listen to me*'.

Cliff Jones February 2011

Being Remembered as a Joke

Who now remembers John Patten? As Secretary of State for, or was it *against* education, he inspired a great joke. On the Monday after Patten ceased to be the Secretary of State this bloke walks into the Department of Education (or whatever it was called at the time). He goes straight to the reception desk and asks, 'Is John Patten the Secretary of State for Education?' 'No', says the receptionist, 'John Patten is no longer the Secretary of State for Education'. Satisfied, the bloke walks out. But on Tuesday he turns up again with the same question and receives the same response; the same on Wednesday; and the same on Thursday. On the Friday, having already posed his question to the same receptionist four days in a row, the bloke does it once more. This time the exasperated receptionist says 'Look here, every day this week you have come in to ask me if John Patten is the Secretary of State for Education and every day I have told you that John Patten is no longer the Secretary of State for Education so why do you keep asking me?' "Because", says the bloke, "I just love to hear those words, 'John Patten is no longer Secretary of State for Education'".

Keep the faith. One day this story will be about Michael Gove.

Cliff Jones March 2011

Garland acknowledges that Andrew Lansley is, so far, the only member of the government to be immortalised by rap. As the latest contender for Anti-politician of the Year we celebrate him in verse.

Lansley the Great Listener mislays his NHS hearing aid

Andrew Lansley lets make it a wrap
We've been told you are such a nice chap
But you are heading for a big mishap
As Dave C awakes from his nap
Realising blame will land on his lap
He thinks you've given him political clap
So now you're searching for the knack
Of getting your way with some clever chat
But there is one thing that you lack
Its

The ability to listen to the voices of people who think that what you propose is utterly morally wrong and amounts to no more than

A load of old cack
Or
If you prefer
Crap

Cliff Jones April 2011

Have a look at

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DljPqqTdNo>

In homage to Jonathon Swift's proposal to solve starvation in Ireland by breeding babies to eat; and in commemoration of a prince eventually getting round to elevating to his station in life a rich commoner we offer these lines.

A Modest Proposal

Said William to Kate I know this is late
Would you like to mate and cut a cake?
You'll get a nice dress and no one will guess
The country paid for us getting laid
While the poor put up with distress

Serves them right said she to he
They've only themselves to blame
Having all those children by the million
While the rich work hard to give them scraps
To sustain them in their station

Too right, said Will, we'll send them the bill
And fly away on our honeymoon
Perhaps they will realise they have assets to sell
A child about eight makes a tender steak
And my stomach just has room

Cliff Jones May Day 2011

Intimations of Morbidity

The decision to award Henry Kissinger the Nobel Peace Prize helped to cause Tom Lehrer to finish his career as a satirist. There comes a time when making fun of politicians is not enough. We are now seeing so much nastiness from our government that even the low quality rhyming presented here becomes difficult to produce.

When a government adviser on the NHS celebrates its planned destruction as an opportunity to make *Loadsaprofit*; when SOS Gove talks about the gradual increase of Academies as being the same as selling council houses, with the consequent loss of the ability of local government to provide for the needs of people; and when the President of the USA offers fine words to unbuttered parsnips it could be time to give up.

But we won't!

Garland shall continue to poison pigeons in the park, to fight fiercely and, holding your hand in mine dear, to plagiarise, to dance the masochism tango and to be prepared to all go together when we go.

The World shall hear from us again!

(With thanks to Wordsworth, Ginsberg, Lehrer and Sax Rohmer)

May 2011

The ConDem government sends its own Bin Pledge to the Pledge Bin

The ConDem Pledge Bin is becoming so full that there may soon have to be a daily collection. The aptly named Eric Pickles pledged weekly household bin collections but that turns out to have been yet another temporary vote winning pledge now, in June 2011, destined for the incinerator. Soon we shall need suggestions for a suitable site for some landfill: the garden of Number 10 perhaps? Could that contain a hole big enough for all the broken pledges? Or might they be parcelled up for circulation to pensioners to burn in the winter to keep them warm?

On reflection, none of that will be necessary. Is not one of the pledges that this will be the greenest government ever? That's right, pledges will be.....recycled!!!

To the Barricades and Power to the People

The Great Education Strike of June 2011

Just before gallant sisters and brothers barricade the streets with desks and make bonfires of SATS and Ofsted reports SOS Gove announces that he wants teachers to be outstanding. Part of his plan to achieve this goal is to remove the existing funding for serving teachers to do masters and doctoral level work and replace it with a tiny amount that schoolteachers must fight over. This is the ConDem way: 'Power to the People'er.... *some* of the people. Still, it shows that Darwin is still in the curriculum; or at least a ConDem dog-eat-dog version of survival of the fittest.

Synthetic politics

Meanwhile, we feel that the ability of SOS Gove to combine chaos and confusion deserves commemoration in a little poem celebrating his dedication to.....

Sin thetik Ffonix

Michael Gove
(Such a cove)
A la mode
Fell in love
Made his move
As he strove
To dump a load
On the road
To find a lode
Of educational bullshit

He is tough
With strength enough
To bomb old Slough
Cards up his cuff
Earning lots of dough
Snout in trough
Will he luff
As he rounds the bluff
Avoiding rough
Words of critical commentary?

Composed by Cliff Jones on Shrove Tuesday 2011

Editor's Reminder

We did promise you, dear reader, bad poetry to match bad politics.

The Queen of Wapping (Per astra ad faeces)

Intro

Rebekah are you better, are you well, well, well?
Do your favourite newspapers sell, sell, sell?
When they feel your collar will you dwell, dwell, dwell
In an HM prison cell, cell, cell?

Ballad

Oh those Oxfordian days with Dave
And Clarksonian nights *watching* Dave
Life back then was one big rave
But you, I'm afraid, neglected to save
For those rainy days in the moral maze

Wade or Brooks you have the looks
Of pre-Raphaelite beauty
That is to say you're in the frame
For lasting fame
As a Merdochian lackey

Once you were a Cheshire Lady
Those fading cats could be terribly hazy
But you yourself were never lazy
And quickly climbed the ladder crazy
To the top of Rupert's family

Whatever next for the best
Ever tabloidian editress?
Will Dave now forget your address
When next, to his nest he invites friends best
To sample the flans of Sam?

Hillsborough revenge takes more than a moment
News International resembles a rodent
But surely a rat's worth more than that
It tells not lies like Kelvin McKenzie
A man with whom you remain friendly

I assure you Rebekah the shit won't stop
Not till it reaches the very top
Where Rupert presides o'er his Evil Empire
Casting no shadow as he leaves his coffin
To suck the blood from truth without stoppin'

Outro

Rebekah are you better, are you well, well, well?
Do your favourite newspapers sell, sell, sell?
When they feel your collar will you dwell, dwell, dwell
In an HM prison cell, cell, cell?

Cliff Jones 9th July 2011

Inspired by the RAF, Georgie Fame and Alan Price and the Bonzos.

Big Society Anarchists

(Letter from the Editor preparing for a new ranting season)

It's riot time again and we have another government determined to simultaneously light a fire under the social cauldron while trying to keep the lid on it. Thatcher told us there was no such thing as society and proved it by destroying as much of it and the industries that sustained it as she could. The biggest ship ever to enter the Tyne arrived last week importing coal to Newcastle. Do none of those sons and daughters of Thatcher in Parliament today feel any shame about this? Of course they don't, least of all David Cameron, the Prime Minister for Oxfordshire, the Home Counties and the House Party Circuit. He has probably very little experience of even lighting a coal fire. What is different this time round is that Thatcher understood that if she were to successfully lay waste entire communities and industries she had to ensure that the police and the armed forces were kept on-side so that dissent could be suppressed. Our ConDem government is, however, set upon weakening its own capacity to maintain order. The ability to promote quiet, below the radar, good police/public relations is especially being diminished by savage cuts and the result is confrontation. And confrontation breeds yet more confrontation.

It also breeds the kind of stupidity that saw the Metropolitan Police recently add anarchists to the terrorist list. What George Woodcock (anarchist and pacifist) would have had to say about that I would like to have known. Some silly bobbies seem to have stuck in their heads the late nineteenth century caricature of anarchists as people wearing cloaks, floppy hats and masks furtively stalking the streets at night carrying big round objects with the word 'bomb' written on them. The Yard's intelligentsia claim to be concerned that some people would like to see 'The State' disappear or wither away. Anybody even remotely advocating such a thing must be added to 'The list'. And it's not a little list. It is, however, a curiously mixed list. Sitting alongside each other we can find Karl Marx *and* David Cameron. The ConDem's slogans are *Big Society* and *We Are All In This Together*. The idea is that the bigger Cameron's Society becomes the smaller becomes The State. Marx and anarchists would have approved. The more *We Are All In This Together* the closer we get to fulfilling that good old communist ideal of *From Each According To His Ability: To Each According To His Needs*.

Somehow I don't think that former member of the Bullingdon Trashing Tendency David Cameron sees things like that. For the moment ranting has become concrete. We shall have to see if the ConDems turn to thought or to knee jerks in response.

Normal Ranting Service will be Resumed Shortly

10th August 2011

The Bullingdonian Trashing Tendency

Oh we were smashed on the nights that we fled
The places we trashed while evading the Feds
No oiks and no chavs were permitted to join
Our club of the haves and of the wellborn
We are entitled to do what we will
For we are well off and can settle the bill
The poor underclarses who have no breeding
Must kiss our arses and go on bleeding

Cliff Jones 13th August 2011

One outcome of the recent riots was the re-emergence of Tony Blair providing us with his wisdom on matters social and moral. We now imagine the great delusionist pondering on the time when, as the great *illusionist*, fate itself was bent to his will. He now awaits the call to once again save the nation.

New Labour's Lost

All my years of endeavour
Of gaining approval
Of convincing charisma
Of smiling inanities
Of earnest expression
Of doing my best
To build a World with no trace
Of Bevin and Bevan

O Brave New Labour
That had such people in't
I called them from the vasty deep
To follow my lead and do my will
But now I sleep under the hill
And await their call to further my destiny
Resurgam's now my watchword
I have not finished making history

But I do dread that Mr. Ed
In my old bed where I did lie
Will dream up schemes to hurt dear Rupert
And frighten bankers of blessed benevolence
Who I treated with great reverence
They do a lot for Aston Martin
Workers there must be so grateful
That the rich are still in business

I am the once and future king
In me I trust while on my journey
Only I can save the nation
'Bring back Tony' I hear them cry
'Be tough on crime and on its causes
We love you still and we will thrill
To hear your voice as you expound
Your views on life and social mores'

Stay! Who's this that from the mist emerges?
A team methinks: white-coated nurses
Waving needles, clutching bottles
Have they come from Andrew Lansley?
'What?' I ask 'is your intention?'
'Relax' they say 'and roll your sleeve up
Our policy for you is just three words:
Sedation, sedation, sedation'

By Cliff Jones, 28th August 2011

Editor's note

Cramming in the quotations and references aren't we? I spotted two from Shakespeare, one psalm, T H White, David Brown, an early submarine, an old television series from the USA, Welsh legend and Blair himself. Try not to over do it.

And now for a comment on the unspeakable in pursuit of the uneatable.... please turn over.

Werrity's verity gives a fox the pox

Or

Do buy arms in Dubai

Poor old Liam Fox now has time to reflect on a career of considerable achievement: all those Nimrods and Harriers destroyed and discarded in favour of stuff from the USA; aircraft carriers with no planes; training programmes stopped prematurely; Atlantic bridges built then burned; and all that work with American companies to turn poor health into much wealth. Thatcher's standard-bearer must now pay his own way. Now we know that 'NeoCon' translates as just another new con played on the public by a politician and cronies tunnelling beneath the foundations of democracy.

Perhaps the most enduring picture of this episode will be that of the **Prime Minister for Oxfordshire** standing on a railway platform reshuffling his cabinet by mobile phone surrounded by morris dancers. If only Bill Tidy was still doing *The Cloggies* in the pre-Maxwell Daily Mirror. He would have had them perform a Flying Arkwright with bone crushing follow through. In the eyes of Fox our press is unspeakable but when they spot a wrong'un and get their teeth into his heels they are to be commended.

As for Adam Werrity, the expert advisor on anything Fox happened to be doing at the time, how will he manage now? Possibly he was already tired of the Dubai life style and being taken for what he was not. Maybe he and Fox wish for a life of atonement working free for the Citizens' Advice Bureau. Or they could run a soup kitchen and become the Little and Large of the charity world. Just realised that they have already had a run in with the Charity Commissioners so that won't do. What is the useful future for these two creatures? How about jobs with sex and travel? They already have relevant experience and proven expertise.

So who will tell them to rearrange this well-known phrase or saying: 'off fuck'?

Cliff Jones 24th October 2011 (United Nations Day)

Synthetic education from Michael Gove the synthetic politician

Now we hear that S.O.S. Gove's tests for six year olds include sudo words (Geddit?), sound being regarded as more important than meaning. Lets try to think of some suitable words and phrases and decide if they really are meaningless no matter what they are supposed to sound like.

Pledge

This is a word that I think we can all agree is meaningless. Unless it is a kind of P.R. polish.

There will be no top-down reorganisation of the NHS

I think that we can say that this is also meaningless.

The greenest government ever

If green means gullible and refers to the government's supporters then this has to be close to 100% meaningful.

Modernisation

This is a tricky one because it actually means turning back the clock to a more stratified society. So it's definitely not meaningless. It's just that it means the opposite of what it says.

Reform

The same applies here with an added twist. People learning to read by Gove's preferred method have to guess that the **R** has to be replaced by a **D** in order for the true meaning to emerge. Clever one that.

Readers are now encouraged to work out the synthetic meanings of the following.

We are all in this together

Big Society

One percent