

Weekly Blues – Dispatches from the Conservative Frontline

By [Oliver Wilson](#)

Monday 26 October 2015



Image: York Tories

It's been a relatively active week for conservatism, both on campus and nationally. Here in York, a fierce but amicable battle has been raging over who holds the title of 'largest political society on campus' – the contenders, despite new media cries of plurality, have been the traditional ones; Labour and the Conservatives. It's been entertaining to watch this quiet fight rage, as though we may sit on opposite sides of the dispatch box, many of the party politicians at the University count themselves as personal friends. Indeed, your columnist has been speaking to his Labour counterpart and housemate about the concerns of new membership in a carefully calculated manner, waiting for the other to give a (no-doubt inflated) figure, and then responding with an air of cool indifference, five points higher. This being a game of student posturing and clamouring to hold an ultimately meaningless title, the actual figures, then, are notwithstanding.

Which, dear reader, brings us neatly and in not at all a calculated manner on to the issue of national politics. The Chancellor and his Shadow counterpart, John McDonnell, have been locked in a political conflict where the figures barely need to be mentioned, it seems. This has been perhaps the first test of a post-Cameron Conservative age (I shudder at the thought), where Osborne, determined to widen his stance from Prime Ministerial heavy to political heavyweight has pushed through his Bill In Defence of the Surplus, as I am reliably informed it's called in the corridors of power. This has brought him, with a slap and a bang, up against the 6th-Form Maths teacher-cum-Second Lord of the Treasury McDonnell, who, in a brief break from agitating for class war, lost his first major political battle. Perhaps best described as not u-turning but walking around in circles, the Shadow Chancellor bowed to pressure to agree a budget surplus, and then de-bowed, and then bowed again, and was last seen doing an accurate impression of the Roman god Janus, who had two heads looking in different directions at once. Classical allusions aside, the confrontation certainly left Osborne looking better, but whether that was due to his own expedience or the incompetence of the Labour Party it is hard to say. I can't help but feel that, should leadership

ambitions play out, that phrase might come to define him.

So at home and in London, Conservatives have been active with Machiavellian schemes, and although ours in York are a of a little less import, one feels that they perhaps more closely resemble Corbyn's "kinder, gentler politics" than either party's activities in Westminster.

Oliver Wilson is the Internal Vice Chairman of the York Conservative and Unionist Association.



2 comments

Anonymous

27 Oct '15 at 12:32 pm

How things have changed.. When I came to York in the 1970's it was imperative to be able to refute the iron logic of Marx or join the Socialist Worker Party...

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Ayex

29 Oct '15 at 1:03 am

This reads like you wanted to parody yourself but didn't have the guts. I feel like it'd be very amusing if you did, but until then your unabashed high-and-mighty over-articulate tone is a little cringey.

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