

A dull sense of dread hangs over this election

Published: January 13, 2026, 7:49 am

I won't be the first, or last, to say this, but I wake this morning with a sense of dull dread.

The idea that we are to have a general election campaign that will inevitably lead to the election of a Labour government that is dedicated to delivering austerity and failed government services to the people of this country is not something to lift the spirits.

Of course we need to be rid of the Tories. After fourteen years they are beyond hope in their hopelessness. Bereft of talent and ideas, associated with corruption, racism, gerrymandering, culture wars, indifference to the rule of law and callousness to the least well off, of course they have to go.

But Labour is little better.

Its economic policies are identical to those of the Tories, and will fail us all at least as badly as they have done.

As with the Tories, they will outsource most economic decision making to the Bank of England, and they have proved themselves totally incompetent and utterly sadistic in undertaking that task.

When it comes to schools, education, social care, the justice system, the environment and anything else we care about the answer will always be the same. They will say there is no money, and they will wring their hands as talented people walk away, unable to tolerate for any longer the impossible task asked of them.

They will claim everything is contingent on growth but there is nothing in their agenda that will deliver it.

Most especially, they will not tax the wealthiest more, and redistribute the proceeds to those who need more money, which is the best possible way to inject growth into the economy. The result is that inequality will not be addressed and stagnation will continue.

They will not talk about Brexit. It is the elephant in the room at this election.

Nor will Labour restore our human rights, trade union laws, or go near electoral reform, all of which are essential if this is to be a proper Labour government.

As for the environment, nothing of consequence will happen. Labour now sings big business tunes, and tackling climate change is not on their playlist.

Nor is tackling sugar or ultra processed food going to happen for that exact same reason, and both are preconditions for improved health.

Meanwhile, the tackling of money laundering in the City will be as quietly forgotten as enhanced worker rights will be once Labour is in office. Starmer has the same memory capacity for promises made as former Post Office CEOs do for information they were given.

The LibDems remain neoliberal. They are better on Brexit than the others. They can be used to record a protest vote. But I am darned sure that everything they do and say will be designed to win wealthy blue wall votes in Surrey. There won't be much in the way of radicalism from them as a result.

The Greens have still not sorted out their economics, although that's not a major impediment when they have no chance of putting them into effect right now. At least they are biased to ordinary people.

And the SNP is in a mess. Let's not pretend otherwise. The most effective alternative political force in UK politics lost its way because of the comfort of its leadership in playing politics in Holyrood where, ultimately, all the odds are stacked against it. It should have continually told Scotland that its aim was to be rid of Holyrood, rather than enjoy the trappings of power it provided. No wonder that support for independence has remained solid but that for the SNP has not. What will happen in Scotland cannot be known, but Labour is not the answer to any known question in that country.

The situation is not much better in Wales. Plaid Cymru has created its own problems too, and Labour post Mark Drakeford looks out of touch.

In Northern Ireland Sinn Fein will be in the ascendancy. As in Ireland, there will be denial of that fact.

Troublingly, the public has rumbled all this. They say all the politicians are the same. They are right. Too many are. Almost all who will be elected are adherents to the neoliberal ideology that has spectacularly failed us all for decades. It will fail us again.

This election will see us rid of the Tories, probably forever in their One Nation pretence. But it will not deliver change. Things will not get better for most people. How can anyone get excited about that?