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## Full text: Jacob Rees-Mogg's Tory party conference speech

📅 29 September 2019, 12:00am



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**I**t is a great honour to be speaking at this conference. I, like many of you have belonged to this party since I was a mere youth – and I was once a youth. I have sat in these seats since the days conferences were held at the seaside and I am glad that the members are once again rightly the focus of these sessions.

It was here in Manchester that Disraeli captured the essence of Conservative

principles in his 1872 speech at the Free Trade Hall, when he set out our priorities for the constitution and the condition of the people, especially their health. He also noted that the audience he was addressing was of the highest intelligence, but not one that could compete with the brilliance, the luminescence of this gathering here today.

As he knew, the Conservative Party is a grassroots party. You are the source of all our energy and intellectual nutrition. And it is right that you – the members – are at the heart of our conference.

What a debt of gratitude we owe you for your robustness and resolve now as the constitutional storm clouds muster over our great nation.

Like Gulliver tied down at Lilliput, we are tied down by a ragtag, motley collection of feeble, fickle, footling politicians. All in desperate pursuit of a single ignoble aim – to renege on the solemn promise they made to the British people and try to cancel the largest single democratic mandate in our history.

On the left, we have Jeremy Corbyn, self-avowed Marxist, without doubt the most left-wing leader the Labour Party has ever had, who has achieved the remarkable feat of being even more unpopular on his side than ours.

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*David Abulafia*

Mr Corbyn would have the public believe that he is a man of principle. Jeremy Corbyn – a man who has spent his career in the division lobbies with our great heroes Iain Duncan Smith, Bill Cash and John Redwood voting against the European Union, only to campaign for Remain. And now Corbyn's Surrender Act simply offers more dither and pointless delay, at a cost of £250 million every week. This from the gentleman who has spent the last two years demanding an immediate general election, only now to run away from an election once it was offered, in his best impression of Georgie Porgie.

He is a man who claims to have spent his entire career fighting racism, only to allow such virulent anti-Jewish racism to proliferate in the Labour Party that under his leadership it has become the second party ever in this country after the BNP to be formally investigated for racism. I do not believe him to be a bad man, but he is a weak man. Too weak to lead his party, too weak to lead his country.

Behind him stands Sir Keir Starmer, poised, Brutus-like, three feet back, stiletto in hand, awaiting the moment to strike – striking being something the Left are quite fond of. The supposed mastermind of Labour's Brexit policy, whose much-vaunted helmsmanship has steered the Labour Party into the implausible straits of claiming they want to negotiate a new deal with Brussels – only then to campaign against their own deal in a second referendum.

In friendship false, implacable in hate, resolved to ruin or to rule the state. Truly statecraft unrivalled since the days of Charles II.

In the middle muddle, we have Jo Swinson, Liberal Democrat by name but not by nature. Liberal in accepting the yoke of Brussels. Democratic only in her own mind. It is they who have taken an extreme position – they want to cancel Brexit entirely without giving the people a say.

On the right we have Nigel Farage – supported by the finest politician we have sent to Brussels – my sister. However we must not delude ourselves into thinking that a vote for the Brexit Party does anything other than increase the risk of Brexit being cancelled entirely.

As a Parliamentarian, I have been a great admirer of the Speaker. He has helped MPs hold the Government to account and seek redress of grievance. But he has now flown too close to the sun.

As he comes to retire, let us hope that the good he has done is not forgotten, but his recent mistakes have damaged the standing of the House of Commons amongst the public, to my deep regret as its Leader.

So how can this current impasse – created by Mr Corbyn and those supporting him who want to cancel the referendum – be resolved?

It is simple. We must trust the people.

The people have spoken. Ladies and gentlemen, you have spoken. We are not your leaders, we are your servants, and it is our responsibility to do what you have willed. Parliament has promised to do it, over 80 per cent of Members of Parliament were elected on a pledge to respect the result.

The sovereignty of Parliament does not come to Parliament out of a void. It comes to Parliament from the people. Yet this Parliament is now holding the people in contempt. They are holding you in contempt.



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Hence we must have a general election. It is time for a new Parliament. A new egg must be laid that will not be addled. We trust the people. Our opponents do not.

Because it only a Conservative Government led by this great Conservative Prime Minister, which can get Brexit done and deliver on the people's priorities – boosting the NHS, providing more police on the streets, creating more good school places and cutting the cost of living.

So let me conclude with Disraeli. Disraeli set out the glorious balance of our constitution. That balance has been disturbed, distorted and displaced, it is our responsibility to restore that balance once more, and this will be done in a general election through the good sense of our masters – the British people.

WRITTEN BY

*The Spectator*

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