

## **Coalition Update: 11-17 January**

### **Distinctiveness in coalition politics in the light of the Oldham and Saddleworth by-election**

#### **[Clegg: We Must Distance Ourselves From The Tories \(Guardian, 11 January\).](#)**

Ahead of the Oldham by-election, Nick Clegg claims that the Lib Dems need to assert their distinctiveness in a new phase for the coalition government, in which disagreements are to be aired more regularly.

#### **[Oldham by-election: We will find out whether the Coalition looks Old and Sad \(Telegraph, 12 January\)](#)**

Benedict Brogan discusses the lack of effort by Tories at the recent by-election, claims they worry about Clegg's status within his own party and argues that with Vince Cable diminished, Clegg needs to distance himself from Cameron and provide more "grit in the oyster".

#### **[Are The Liberal Democrats Staring Into an Abyss? \(Guardian, 12 January\)](#)**

John Harris discusses the dilemma of being a junior partner, the switch from a cohesive strategy to one of distinction and the general unhappiness of the Lib Dem left.

#### **[Cameron failed Tories in Oldham \(Telegraph, 15 January\)](#)**

Cameron attacked for not campaigning to win in Oldham, whilst Sayeeda Warsi criticises the "Right Wing" of her party.

#### **[It's time to end rose garden politics \(ConservativeHome, 14 January\)](#)**

Paul Goodman argues that the Tories should distance themselves from the Lib Dems; and accept that the Coalition is a short-term arrangement.

#### **[Andrew Stunell reveals details of government plans to get empty homes put to use \(Libdemvoice, 11 January\)](#)**

Mark Pack notes that nowhere in a Sun article about this announcement does it mention he is a Lib Dem, highlighting one of the Lib Dems' key problems in government.

## **Differences on Bankers' Bonuses**

#### **[PM is protecting bankers bonuses, claim Lib Dems \(Independent, 14 January\)](#)**

Lib Dem Treasury minister Lord Oakeshott has been highly critical of the progress on bankers' bonuses. Lib Dems convinced that it is Number Ten, not the Treasury, that is blocking action against City excess.

### **Tory Disillusionment with the Coalition**

#### **[The Tories couldn't deliver the goods without the Lib Dems \(Sunday Telegraph, 15 January\)](#)**

Matthew D'Ancona claims that only thanks to the coalition can the Tories pass some of their more right-wing policies given the current state of the parties. Interesting discussion of Richard Reeves' (Nick Clegg's special adviser) argument that the coalition should be divided into three stages.

### **The Lib Dem Left**

#### **[Simon Hughes confuses by holding talks with Labour over EMA cut motion \(Guardian, 16 January\)](#)**

Simon Hughes is working with Andy Burnham on a Commons motion decrying the abolition of Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs). Danny Alexander dismisses Ed Miliband's calls for Lib Dems to work with Labour on this issue.

#### **[Five Lib Dem councillors have resigned from party in last 24 hours \(ConservativeHome 13 January\)](#)**

Three Lib Dems in Chris Huhne's constituency have become independents. Two defectors in Winchester.

#### **["Lib-Cons are like Maoists - they've made a right mess" \(Times, 15 January\) £](#)**

Interview with Lord David Owen. 1. Clegg should have taken a big department of state to support him. 2. Tories have a hierarchy, Labour have a sense of collectivism, but the Lib Dems have neither to bind them together. 3. Owen would vote for Miliband right now (whereas he would have gone Lib Dem for the first time in May).

#### **[David Owen's warmth towards Ed Miliband is a fig leaf for Labour's lack of success... \(ConservativeHome, 16 January\)](#)**

Tim Montgomerie discusses Ed Miliband's overtures to the former SDP leadership and questions why no senior Lib Dem has defected to Labour.

### **Coalition Comparisons**

#### **[The Lib Dems will gain strength through weakness \(Guardian, 13 January\)](#)**

Martin Kettle compares the Lib Dems dilemma with the German FDP, a junior coalition partner suffering electorally. The moral: smaller parties suffer more in

coalitions but they can survive. He also says that the coalition is likely to mark the end of two-party politics.

### **The AV Referendum**

[\*Conservatives act to stop Labour peers derailing voting referendum bill \(Guardian, 13 January\)\*](#)

The Coalition tables three days of debate in the House of Lords, including all-night sittings, after the Electoral Commission said that the AV referendum bill would have receive royal assent by 16 February in order to ensure the referendum can take place on 5 May. Labour peers highly critical of move.

### **Governance**

[\*Sorene appointed Nick Clegg's new head of communications \(Liberal Democrat Voice, 13 January\)\*](#)

The Cabinet Office has made the Department of Health's head of news Clegg's new Head of Communications (after eight months in office) in an attempt to bolster his position as DPM.