



TRG and the Leadership of our Party

Two weeks ago, when the leadership election had just begun, the TRG wrote an open letter to the candidates asking them to highlight to our members what type of Government they would lead and asking them for assurances of continuing to govern in the interests of One Nation as our manifesto promised. Well the fast moving events of this leadership election now leave us with only one candidate, Theresa May.

We are delighted to publish Theresa May's response to our letter which we received on time from her last week whilst there were still two candidates left running. Her response is immediately below and our original letter at the bottom of this article.

Letter to the TRG Membership from Theresa May

This is a leadership election unlike any other, because this time party members are not only selecting a leader, but a Prime Minister. This is a special trust we hold on behalf of the country and it means that the winning candidate must be ready to lead the United Kingdom from day one.

I am standing for the leadership of our Party for three clear reasons. First, following the EU referendum, our country needs strong, proven leadership to steer us through this period of economic and political uncertainty, and to negotiate the best possible terms as we leave the European Union. Second, we need leadership that can unite our Party and our country. With the Labour Party tearing itself to pieces, and divisive nationalists in Scotland and Wales, it is nothing less than the patriotic duty of our Party to reunite and govern in the best interests of the whole country. And third, we need a bold, new, positive vision for the future of our country; a vision of a country that works not for a privileged few but for every one of us.

The country needs strong leadership and a clear sense of direction, to give confidence to investors, to keep the economy moving, and to keep people in work. Negotiating the best possible terms as we leave the European Union will be crucial to our future prosperity. That will require strong, proven leadership. In the negotiations to come, it must be a priority to allow British companies to trade with the single market in goods and services, but also to regain more control of the numbers of people who come here from Europe. Achieving that outcome will not be a brief or straightforward process. It is going to require significant expertise and a consistent approach.

This leadership election is being fought in the context of the EU referendum result. Throughout, I made clear that on balance I favoured staying inside the EU because of the economic risk of leaving, the importance of cooperation on security matters, and the threat to the Union between England and Scotland. But I also said that the sky would not fall in if we left. I was open about the costs and the benefits, the risks and the opportunities of continued EU membership. Now the decision has



been made, we need to make the most of the benefits and the opportunities, and we need to minimise the costs and the risks, that our departure presents.

But if we're going to govern in the interests of the whole country, we cannot allow the Government to be defined exclusively and indefinitely by the process of our withdrawal from the EU. Britain needs a Government that is capable of delivering a programme of serious social reform and realising a vision of a country that truly works for everyone.

In 2005 David Cameron set us on a One Nation course, which took us out of opposition and back into government. I was proud to work closely with David on every step of that journey, and to help lead the work in some of our Party's most important achievements, including the introduction of same-sex marriage, the first ever Modern Slavery Act, and the record reduction in stop and search. The pursuit of social justice has been a golden thread running through David's premiership, as it has run through our Party's history. If I am elected leader, I will build on that legacy, because when Conservatives have an open, inclusive, One Nation agenda of social reform, we win elections and we change the country for the better.

And the challenges to be faced are stark. In Britain today, if you're born poor, you will die on average nine years earlier than others. If you're black, you're treated more harshly by the criminal justice system than if you're white. If you're a white, working-class boy, you're less likely than anybody else to go to university. If you're at a state school, you're less likely to reach the top professions than if you're educated privately. If you're a woman, you still earn less than a man. If you suffer from mental health problems, there's too often not enough help to hand. If you're young, you'll find it harder than ever before to own your own home. These are all burning injustices, and I am determined to fight against them.

Our Party and our country needs a unifying candidate, who can bring us all together behind a common agenda of economic reform and social justice. There is no future for our Party in continuing the divisions of the referendum campaign. I agree with the TRG that we should choose our next leader on the basis of their suitability for office, and their vision for the UK and our fellow citizens, and nothing else. We need only look at today's Labour Party to see what happens when a party puts its internal divisions before the national interest.

The referendum result has exposed troubling divisions across our United Kingdom which it must be a principal task of our next leader to heal. With Scotland and Northern Ireland voting one way and England and Wales voting another, and with some of our most economically deprived areas voting differently to more prosperous places, the scale of the challenge is clear. Times like these call for the sort of One Nation approach which the Tory Reform Group has always championed.



I have never known the Conservative Party to be so alive with such creative policy thinking and such an obvious desire to improve people's life chances, and the Tory Reform Group is one of the clearest and most venerable voices in our Party's debates. It is the home of the One Nation movement in this country. I am proud to have received the support of TRG stalwarts like Damian Green, Robert Buckland, Neil Carmichael, Nicholas Soames and Robin Walker.

This is the kind of Conservatism I've always believed in and these are the principles which will guide me in office. At this most serious moment in our country's history, I hope you will give me your support and that together we can secure the One Nation future which our Party, and our country, so sorely need.

Theresa May

The TRG Membership asks Conservative Leadership Candidates to deliver the One Nation policy agenda.

We Conservatives are beginning the process of electing a new leader of our party and in doing so electing a new Prime Minister of our country. The Tory Reform Group is offering all the nominated candidates the opportunity to demonstrate to our membership, and the country, their One Nation credentials.

Our core belief, as members of the TRG, is that sound, market-led economic policy delivered with a social conscience is both truly Conservative and the only moral and effective way to lead our nation. We believe in confronting both economic and social injustice through a progressive, reforming policy agenda. We believe in breaking down barriers that prevent people from reaching their potential, and in being the champions of equality and opportunity for all. This is our One Nation core.

Just over a year ago, our party was elected as a majority government on a manifesto, which applied the One Nation principles of the TRG for the 21st century. The Prime Minister's Conference speech in October 2015 took this agenda even further.

In standing down as Prime Minister, David Cameron leaves a proud legacy on which his successor must build, in the centre-ground of British politics, and in the One Nation tradition on which this majority government was elected – investing in our NHS, continuing transformational reforms in education and welfare, and protecting the jobs and incomes of the poorest.



The next Prime Minister faces a challenging environment. They must bring the Conservative family back together; but more importantly bring our nation back together. Negotiating our future relationship with the EU, and our path to fruitful trading relationships around the world, is only one part of the task facing our next Prime Minister. As members of the Tory Reform Group, we know that only One Nation policies driving opportunity for all can deliver that successful future.

It is vital that as members of the Conservative Party, we do not base our choice of our future leader, and Prime Minister, on their position during the referendum campaign. We as a nation have taken our decision and it is incumbent on whomever we choose as Prime Minister to deliver the best possible outcome in our negotiations to leave the EU. Our next Prime Minister must be able to deliver that deal, but also a growing economy, a stronger society, a more prosperous, greener and fairer Britain for the next generation. We should choose our next leader on their suitability for office, and their vision for the UK and our fellow citizens, and nothing else.

Credible candidates have a responsibility to be clear and specific about their policy agenda, as they will take office as Prime Minister as soon as they are elected party leader. In times of great uncertainty, British voters have always turned to the Conservative Party to deliver the best for Britain; with a divided opposition and disparate views across the nations of our United Kingdom, it is more important than ever that the next Conservative leader builds on the One Nation core of David Cameron's legacy and our Conservative manifesto, and does not retreat into an ideological cul-de-sac of right-wing isolationism, from the world or from parts of our nation.

The Board of the Tory Reform Group therefore invites all nominated Leadership contenders to respond by way of an open letter, which we will publish on our website, setting out the key policy areas and priorities that they would deliver in furtherance of our manifesto commitments to a One Nation programme for government.

Signed on behalf of the Chairman, Board and Members of the TRG

Notes:

TRG is an independent group which brings together members and friends of the Conservative Party to promote the values of One Nation Conservatism.

First established in 1975 TRG seeks to ensure the Conservative Party governs within the One Nation tradition. TRG is recognised as the authentic and authoritative voice of moderate liberal Conservatism throughout the Party. It is home of the One Nation movement in Britain.

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