

CORBYN'S FIRST WEEK:

Negative Agenda Setting in the Press

CORB SNUBS THE QUEEN



By VIVEK PATRICK
KERRY Corbyn was last night accused of snubbing the Queen after he refused to attend the national anthem. The incoming Labour leader was criticised for his refusal to sing at the Battle of Britain memorial. Full story - Page 12 and 11 Song - Queen

LABOUR IN MELTDOWN

Pacifist Corbyn refuses to bow

As Corbyn becomes leader it is...

BYE BYE LABOUR!

RED AND BURIED

A shadow chancellor who hates capitalism, a vegan given the farming brief and an education spokesman who hadn't met him

CORBYN'S SHALLOW CABINET

As Labour plunges into bitter civil war

CORBYN UNION PALS PLEDGE STRIKE CHAOS

COURT JEZTER

Corbyn and comrades reveal plot to hammer middle-class with tax raids



Prime Minister Corbyn ...and the 1,000 days that destroyed Britain

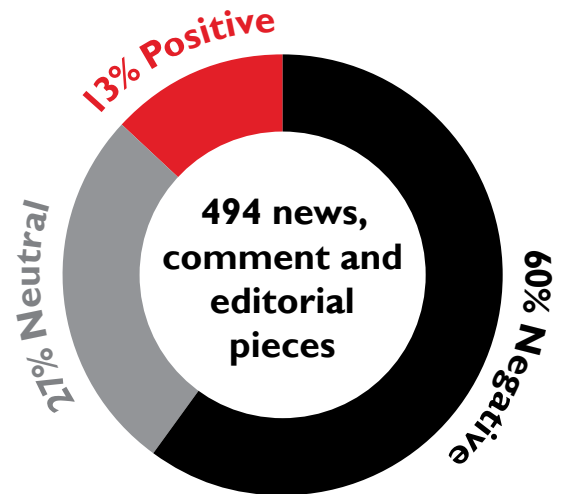
THE SUNDAY TIMES
Corbyn sparks Labour civil war

New leader's potty plan for world peace

Introduction & Reports

This new research by the Media Reform Coalition shows how the press set out to systematically undermine Jeremy Corbyn during his first week as Labour Leader with a barrage of overwhelmingly negative coverage.

Our research examined the coverage in 8 national daily newspapers and their Sunday publications from 13-19 September 2015. We found that out of a total of 494 news, comment and editorial pieces, 60% (296 articles) were negative, with only 13% positive stories (65 articles) and 27% taking a neutral stance (133 articles).



News Items

One might expect news items, as opposed to comment and editorial pieces, to take a more balanced approach but in fact the opposite is true.

A mere 6% of stories classed as news (19 out of 292) were positive, versus 61% negative stories and 32% taking a neutral stance. Any notion of simply 'reporting the facts' in straight coverage of breaking events appears to have had a restraining effect on positive stories only, suggesting that the default 'common sense' position is based

on overwhelmingly negative assumptions about the new Labour leader who, it should be remembered, secured some 251,000 votes in the leadership election, in contrast to David Cameron who received just over half this figure in the Conservative Party's leadership election.

This 'default' position is particularly significant given how these stories make up the bulk of the coverage during Corbyn's first week (59% or 292 articles).

NEWS ITEMS	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total Items
13 Sunday	11	30	19	60
14 Monday	4	33	26	63
15 Tuesday	1	37	15	53
16 Wednesday	2	20	8	30
17 Thursday	1	29	7	37
18 Friday	0	16	12	28
19 Saturday	0	16	5	21
Total	19	181	92	292

Comment Pieces

Among comment pieces, there was slightly more positive coverage (22% or 34 articles out of 155), but negative stories far outweighed these (57% or 88 articles) and their proportion fits the overall trend.

COMMENT PIECES	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total Pieces
13 Sunday	4	15	4	23
14 Monday	10	15	6	31
15 Tuesday	8	12	5	25
16 Wednesday	4	14	8	26
17 Thursday	3	10	4	17
18 Friday	3	12	2	17
19 Saturday	2	10	4	16
Total	34	88	33	155

Editorial Pieces

The picture was similar for editorial pieces (25% positive stories, or 12 articles out of 47, versus again 57% negative stories, or 27 articles).

EDITORIAL PIECES	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total Pieces
13 Sunday	3	6	0	9
14 Monday	1	5	2	8
15 Tuesday	1	5	2	8
16 Wednesday	3	5	0	8
17 Thursday	1	1	1	3
18 Friday	1	1	1	3
19 Saturday	2	4	2	8
Total	12	27	8	47

Individual Newspapers

When we turn to individual newspapers, the results are even more striking. In the Sun/Sun on Sunday 32 out of 36 news stories were negative. While in the Daily Mail/Mail on Sunday, 50 out of 52 news stories were negative. With the largest and second largest share of circulation in the UK respectively, these papers' influence should not be underestimated.

As a point of contrast, news stories in the Guardian and the Daily Mirror were on the whole balanced. 21 out of 24 Guardian news stories took a neutral standpoint, while the Daily Mirror featured roughly as many positive news stories about Corbyn (3 articles) as negative ones (4 articles), with the rest being neutral in attitude (6 articles).

Quite amazingly, The Sun, Mail and Express titles (including their respective Sunday publications) were entirely negative in the editorial coverage they gave. All of their combined 17 editorials published during Corbyn's first week were negative.

Comment Pieces

NEWSPAPER	Negative Articles	Total Articles
Telegraph Group	13	15
Times/S Times	19	25
Observer	2	2
Guardian	5	25
Indie titles	6	9
Mail Titles	19	24
Express titles	14	18
Sun titles	10	11
Mirror Titles	0	16
Total	88	155

News Items

NEWSPAPER	Negative Articles	Total Articles
Telegraph Group	35	44
Times/S Times	36	54
Observer	0	4
Guardian	1	24
Indie titles	5	36
Mail Titles	50	52
Express titles	17	19
Sun titles	32	36
Mirror Titles	5	23
Total	181	292

Editorial Pieces

NEWSPAPER	Negative Articles	Total Articles
Telegraph Group	4	4
Times/S Times	5	6
Observer	1	1
Guardian	0	4
Indie titles	0	5
Mail Titles	6	6
Express titles	5	5
Sun titles	6	6
Mirror Titles	0	10
Total	27	47

Conclusions

Newspapers have every right to take a partisan line in their reporting and freedom of the press is a key component of democratic societies. What concerns us, however, are the ownership structures underlying this degree of political intervention. The risk of undue influence on elected politicians is high, and it's hard to see how democracy can flourish when the mass channels of debate are monopolised in the way that they are. When a handful of conglomerates and individual owners have such significant influence over the UK media environment, it becomes virtually impossible for progressive ideas to get a fair hearing.

Just three companies - Rupert Murdoch's News Corp, The Daily Mail & General Trust, and Trinity Mirror - control over 70% of the national newspaper market, a market that may be shrinking but is still crucial in setting the agenda for the rest of the media. Taken together, these factors constitute a profoundly anti-democratic force in UK society.

Among the remedies being proposed by the Media Reform Coalition are clear ownership thresholds, safeguards to ensure journalistic and editorial autonomy, and arms-length funding for community news and independent start-ups.

Definitions

All national daily newspapers and their Sunday publications were counted in the report, namely: The Times/Sunday Times, The Daily Mail/Mail on Sunday, The Daily Telegraph/Sunday Telegraph, the Sun/Sun on Sunday, The Independent/Independent on Sunday, The Guardian/Observer, The Mirror/Sunday Mirror, and the Express/Sunday Express.

In deciding whether a story was positive, negative or neutral, the research took into account the tone of a story as well as its overall narrative, including sources and quotes used.

Stories classed as **POSITIVE** were openly supportive; expressed respect, enthusiasm, or hope; chose to focus on positive events; or were dominated by overt praise.

Stories classed as **NEGATIVE** were openly hostile; expressed animosity or ridicule; chose to focus on negative events; or were dominated by overt criticism.

Stories classed as **NEUTRAL** did not necessarily display an equal balance or objective overview, but rather were neither overtly positive or negative, or sometimes expressed a 'wait-and-see' attitude.

Stories classed as **NEWS** were contained in the news pages rather than comment/editorial or features/business pages, and concerned events, personalities, ideas or policy, not expressed as personal opinion/comment.

Stories classed as **COMMENT** were opinion pieces expressly personalised from the perspective of the writer, involving their own ideas and views (this includes diary pieces).

Stories classed as **EDITORIAL** were leader/editorial columns setting out the newspaper's overview.

Stories excluded from the research were letters from the public and stories that only referred to Corbyn in passing. Stories from supplementary sections of newspapers, i.e. mainly Business or Features pages, are also not included here.

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