

**OPINIONS: Maverick Tory GEORGE TREMLETT on why he's biting the bullet and voting for Maggie; 20-year-old unemployed MARK PIGGOTT on why he isn't.**



***George Tremlett is 48, an author, journalist and bookseller and former deputy leader of the Conservative group on the Greater London Council. Mark Piggott is 20 and jobless. They explain who they will be voting for on June 11, and why.***

In May 1979 I stood among a crowd of school friends at my school, a 1500-pupil comprehensive near Halifax, West Yorkshire. At 12 years old I was still in my first year at secondary school. Memories of the previous winter, the 'Winter of Discontent' as the popular press so fondly called it, were fresh even in our young minds; the piles of rubbish, the power cuts, the strikes had touched us all.

Many of my friends were arguing the Conservative case, since there was no SDP in those simple days. 'Labour's had their chance,' they reasoned.

To which I, in my similarly naive opinion, ventured: 'No. The Tories are for the Rich. Labour, for all their faults, were for the Poor.' Or words to that effect. The Conservatives were elected.

In June 1983 I had just completed my education. Four years of the Tories - with all their cuts, unemployment and the Falklands - had done little to endear them in my 16-year-old mind. I faced a prospect of life on the dole, with no way out but the two alternatives offered by my career teacher - the army or the Youth Training Scheme.

The army I shunned immediately; kill or be killed was to me a poor choice. And the YTS? Slave labour! They'd never get me on that!

I walked the dark streets on my early morning paper round scanning the dailies avidly for news of the election. I remember *The Star* turning against Labour on the morning of the Great Day itself. Labour was divided by rifts. And old Michael Foot was 'in charge'. But surely we would vote out the Tories this time? Being still too young to vote I felt frustrated and

City Limits / 28 May 1987 / Opinion: why I won't vote Tory

helpless. The Tories were elected.

It is now May 1987. I am 20 years old. I have been on three Youth Training Schemes and a Community Programme; still no proper job. What next, the JTS? Frustrated in the North I came to London, but there's not much difference; poor housing, high unemployment and the cost of living have kept a decent existence out of reach.

In the last eight years I have grown up. I have seen unemployment treble, hospitals close, housing depleted, poverty and despair accelerate. Yet still people vote Tory, enticed by their offers of tax cuts, shares, and 'home ownership'. Some chance!

I am angry - my generation is angry. I express myself through writing. Others will do it in less subtle ways (yes, watch that Volvo!) We have wasted enough years at the hands of this cynical government. Now we must get them out before it is too late and build a better future.

And no, the way to do that is not to vote SDP - they will always side with the Tories.

Working class people who vote Conservative are betraying their class and our future. They are traitors. Or, as we used to say in Yorkshire: 'Scab'.

