

Voices

Mark Steel



They won't be happy with Ed Miliband until he's got a Dobermann



The Labour press office has presumably put in a bulk order for status dogs and England flags **GETTY**

It was obvious, from the moment that picture went on Twitter, that Labour has lost any connection with the common man and woman. Because if Emily Thornberry had retained a working-class outlook, she'd have added the comment: "Jesus Christ I don't fancy knocking here, it looks mental. And have you seen the bastard who lives there? He's HUGE. WTF?"

You don't have to be a member of the "metropolitan elite" to see a house covered in three giant flags of St George, one of which entirely obscures a window, and think: "Are you sure three is enough, mate? I mean, there's one corner of the kitchen not quite hidden behind a red cross. What are you, FRENCH?"

Because the true patriot has four flags, not three, one of which covers the garden and the internal plumbing system, including the inside of the radiators, otherwise you're insulting my granddad.

But apparently this is Labour's core vote, so much so that Ed Miliband has "never been so angry" as when he saw a sneery comment about the flags. I thought he was going to add: "How DARE she do that, this is my mate Terry's house. We went to university together, then I went on the politics course and he drifted towards cage fighting so we didn't see each other so much. Diamond, he is."

As this is Labour's target audience, by next

week, Miliband will turn up to Parliament with a Dobermann, and at Prime Minister's Questions he'll ask: "Given the alarming economic forecasts released today, does the Prime Minister not agree COME HERE Hercules, HERE, I said COME HERE, don't worry love he won't hurt you HERE you slag, GET HERE, that the strategy of the party opposite has failed and, oi Duncan Smith, what you looking at?"

His problem is if he does win the election he'll have to keep it up. On his first visit to Washington he'll yell: "Never mind your

He should have said: 'Are you sure three St George's flags are enough? Are you French?'

Presidential cavalcade, I've brought my van, hop in Obama," and travel to the White House with one hand on the wheel while eating a pasty.

It's fitting that the people most outraged by the condescending photo are the Conservatives and *The Sun*. I suppose David Cameron feels personally insulted, as this house reminds him of his own upbringing. No luncheon at Eton could start until Steve arrived, as he had the white van with all the sausages and lager. And his most treasured moment at the Bullingdon Club was when the toast was read out by Harry Redknapp.

At *The Sun*, it was revealed this week, they

routinely refer to their readers as "plebs", and you can't get more affectionate than giving someone a pet name. Rupert Murdoch's whole life screams: "I am at one with the man who lives in that house." His islands are always covered in a giant St George's flag, and he often goes to work in a white Transit yacht, because it's handy for carrying his tools.

Outraged concern from the rich at Labour's plans to ruin the lives of common people is likely to become regular over the next few months. For example, the proposed mansion tax is opposed by a growing grassroots campaign of ordinary millionaires.

The founder of this movement seems to be Myleene Klass, who harangued Miliband, saying: "You can't just point at something and tax it."

This is clearly how the policy came about, because if you randomly point at something, more often than not when you look to see what you've pointed out, it will be a mansion. She also said she opposed the tax on houses valued at over £2m because the people it will hurt are "little old grannies".

And this is so true. Go to any penthouse in Kensington, knock on the door and you'll hear: "Hang on dear. It will take a while to get down with my arthritis. I'm lucky Mohamed al-Fayed from next door popped in to help with the washing up or I'd be in a right pickle."

Drive up to any 500-acre farm in Wiltshire, and out comes a little old granny, who tells you: "When I bought this place in 1953 for 65

quid it was a terraced cottage with an outside toilet. Over the years it sprouted a grouse-shooting range and a trout farm and tennis courts and now it's worth £35m, I don't see why I should be penalised for that. Anyway, I've made some tomato chutney."

This seems all the more unfair when you consider the money raised from this mansion tax will be wasted on the NHS, which is the last place you'll find little old grannies, as it's used mostly by Russian oligarchs and Saudi princes.

Ex-footballer Sol Campbell, who owns a £25m house in Chelsea, also opposes the mansion tax, as do other owners of property worth tens of millions of pounds, who are all upset about the same little old grannies, all of a sudden, having never publicly expressed concern for this social group before. One of life's little coincidences, I suppose.

Miliband tried to mutter an explanation to Klass, but may have done better in the ensuing media storm by replying something like: "Do you even care about old grannies? You just want to keep all 11 million quid you're worth from presenting annoying adverts."

Perhaps he shouldn't merely apologise to people on that estate in Rochester, he should recruit some of them to run his campaign for the election.

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