

A WELSH CONVERSION: Foreign Correspondent

Airs Tuesday June 6

Labour is praying for one of history's great comebacks in Britain's election. But something once unthinkable may be happening in tough, working class Wales. Could the Welsh be turning Tory? Philip Williams reports

If you suggest you're going to vote anything but Labour, they look at you like you're threatening to trash their car – Petrina Dendy, resident of Blaengarw, a traditional Welsh Labour stronghold

Come election day next Thursday, a few cars might well be metaphorically trashed in the streets of Blaengarw.

For nearly 100 years Labour has owned Wales. The Conservatives have been the anti-Welsh, English outsiders.

But now, if some polls are right, Wales may be turning Tory blue.

As Chief Foreign Correspondent Philip Williams reports, that would spell trouble for Labour MPs like 82-year-old Paul Flynn, who has held his seat since 1987.

According to the polls, I'm finished. I'd dead. I'm toast – Paul Flynn MP

The coal mines have mostly gone, along with memories of the anti-Thatcher battles that once bonded tribal communities. But that alone doesn't explain Labour's leakage.

Neither does the poverty that puts Wales near the bottom of the Europe heap, nor the anti-Europeanism that saw Wales narrowly back Brexit. There's something else...

The Labour Party has gone insane unfortunately. We've elected someone as leader who can never be elected as Prime Minister – Paul Flynn MP

From the obscurity of the backbench, Jeremy Corbyn was propelled to the Labour leadership by a vote of the party's rank-and-file members. It was not an entirely popular choice.

I compare him to your 1970s pot-smoking history teacher. There's no substance to him – Paul Praid, taxi driver

Local MP Paul Flynn has written off the election already. He dreads the next five years: *It's going to be hell.*

But never say never. Pundits suggest voters might belatedly be warming to Corbyn as the election nears. And that's just the news Labour stalwarts like 72-year-old Marilyn Owen want to hear.

Everybody's going to get a shock in the general election, this is my view now. If I'm wrong, God help us. That's all I can say, God help us – Marilyn Owen

Philip Williams takes the British political temperature in *A Welsh Conversion* - on Foreign Correspondent at 9.30 pm Tuesday June 6 and 10.30 am Thursday June 8 on ABC TV, and 6.30 pm Sunday June 11 on News 24. Also on iView.