Rich Men and Brexit

In the early 80s I took up a new appointment as the Conservative Party's first Direct Mail Manager. I made regular trips to Nottingham to meet executives of **Experian**, a company, which in those days, was focussed on the capture of data from the electoral register. I studied the work they were doing of merging census data with the electoral register and quickly realised we could use what was then called socioeconomic demographics, to accurately identify those electors, whose lifestyles might make them more likely to contribute to the Conservative Party.

Later, I worked on merging data the Party held from every kind of election result, and from all polling data, both private and publicly published, and shortly before Polling Day of the 1986 General Election the 'data sandwich' was 'number crunched'. Just before taking Mrs Thatcher to her count in her Finchley constituency I was able to tell her our prediction from the 'number crunch' was that she would have an overall majority of 103 - the result was 102.

Fast forward to the Trump Campaign for President in the United States, and the EU Referendum in the UK in 2016. The first earth-shattering difference was the progression of social media, which enabled our socioeconomic demographics of the 80s to use 'Big Data' to accurately identify what individual electors are thinking as we near the third decade of the 21st Century. The other was the spectacular advances in all aspects of Information Technology - more powerful computers, running on ever more powerful programs - and - AI - Artificial Intelligence.

A key question for us now is: who is using our data, and what are they doing with it, in what is now known as 'Psychometric or Psychographic Profiling'? A term used to refer to data collected about groups of people which involves how these people think, feel, act, and believe.

Then, what about very rich men who are at the centre of this whole affair. First there is American billionaire hedge fund owner, **Robert Mercer**. A man described as a friend of **Nigel Farage**, and then to a millionaire on this side of the Atlantic, who was **Nigel Farage's** backer in both **UKIP** and in **Leave.EU**, **Arron Banks**.

So, I have assembled several facts, gleaned from everything which has been written so far, particularly by **Carole Cadwalladr**, **Peter Geoghegan** and **Paul-Olivier Dehaye**.

Look at these facts:

Fact 01   We know there were two organisations representing the Leave campaign in the EU Referendum of June 2016. **Leave.EU** launched on 18 November 2015 and was financed mainly by **Arron Banks** (£7.8m), with **Nigel Farage** as the spearhead; and **VoteLeave** launched on 8 October 2015, with **Michael Gove**, **Boris Johnson** and **Gisela Stuart** as the lead figures.

Fact 02   We know that the Electoral Commission selected **VoteLeave** as the official 'lead group' on 13 April 2016 for the Leave campaign of the EU Referendum of 23 June 2016.

Fact 03   We know both organisations stated there was no connection between them, with **Leave.EU** continuing to campaign in their own right.

Fact 04   We know **Cambridge Analytica** had a 'relationship' with **Leave.EU**. We know that **Leave.EU** said: *'Cambridge Analytica are world leaders in target voter messaging. They will be helping us map the British electorate and what they believe in, enabling us to better engage with voters.'*

Fact 05   We know that in his own memoir, *The Bad Boys of Brexit*. Under the entry for 22 October 2015, **Leave.EU's** founder and main backer **Arron Banks** (above), writes: *"We've hired **Cambridge Analytica**, an American company that uses 'big data and advanced psychographics' to influence people."*

Fact 06   We know what **Arron Banks** Tweeted: *"Our campaign is being run by **Gerry Gunster**, who won 24 referendums in the USA and **Cambridge Analytica** experts in SM"*

Fact 07   We know **Arron Banks** engaged the Washington campaign strategy firm **Goddard Gunster** to advise **Leave.EU**; it swiftly identified immigration as the critical issue and told him how to exploit it. **Gerry Gunster** (below), one of those flanking **Arron Banks** at the launch of **Leave.EU** told the gathering: *"The one thing that I know is data,"* he said. *"Numbers do not lie. I'm going to follow the data."*

Fact 08   We know from a **Leave.EU** news release of 20 November 2015 that: *'While **Cambridge Analytica** will be helping with the data, **Goddard Gunster**, who have fought some of the most contentious referendum campaigns all over the world (with a success rate of over 90%) will be helping us turn that data into a comprehensive strategy. Working alongside them will be **Ian Warren**, an expert on the issues that matter to people on lower incomes.'*

Fact 09   We know that in February 2017 **Arron Banks** Tweeted: *"Interesting, since we deployed this technology in **Leave.EU** we got unprecedented levels of engagement. 1 video 13m views. AI won it for Leave"*, and, *"… we have made no secret of working with **Cambridge**"*

Fact 10   We know that **Cambridge Analytica** (CA) is a privately held company created in 2013 as an offshoot of its British parent company **SCL Group Ltd** to participate in American politics. The company is heavily funded by the family of **Robert Mercer** (below), an American hedge-fund billionaire who invested millions in **CA**. The Company maintains offices in New York City, Washington, D.C., and London.
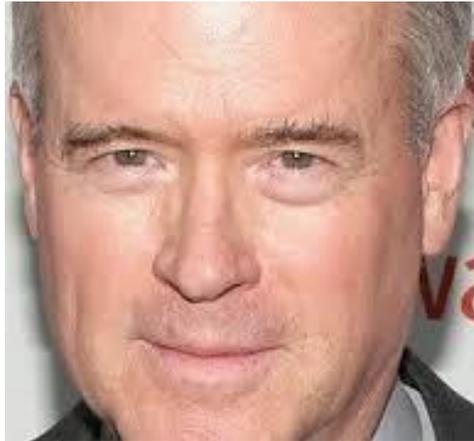
Fact 11   We know that **Cambridge Analytica** (**CA**) was originally known as **SCL Elections** and was 'spun' out of the **SCL Group Ltd**, and that **Robert Mercer's** Hedge Fund provided some $10m of investment to set up the company.

Fact 12   We know that In February 2016, **Cambridge Analytica's** CEO, **Alexander Nix** (below), told *Campaign* magazine: *"Recently, **Cambridge Analytica** has teamed up with **Leave.EU** - the UK's largest group advocating for a British exit (or 'Brexit') from the European Union - to help them better understand and communicate with UK voters. We have already helped supercharge **Leave.EU's** social media campaign by ensuring the right messages are getting to the right voters online and the campaign's Facebook page is growing in support to the tune of about 3,000 people per day."*
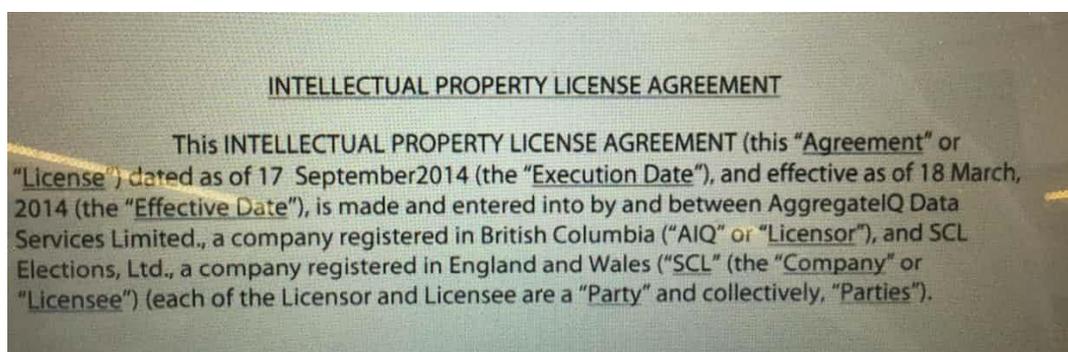
Fact 13   We know that a **Cambridge Analytica** spokesman said: *"Cambridge Analytica did no paid or unpaid work for Leave.EU."*, Just as we know that **Alexander Nix** the CEO of **Cambridge Analytica** told the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee in the House of Commons the same.

Fact 14   We now know that **Brittany Kaiser**, **Cambridge Analytica's** business development director until recently, has said, on the record, that the work with **Leave.EU** involved analysis of data provided by **UKIP**. **Brittany Kaiser** was on the platform alongside **Arron Banks** when **Leave.EU** was originally launched. She told The Guardian: she felt she had lied by supporting **Cambridge Analytica's** company line that it had done *"no paid or unpaid work"* for **Leave.EU**. *"In my opinion, I was lying,"* she said, *"In my opinion I felt like we should say, 'this is exactly what we did'."*

Fact 15   We know that **Robert Mercer** bought the 'Intellectual Property' Licence from **AggregateIQ**, which became effective as of 18 March 2014, shown by the copy of the agreement (below). This brought this small Canadian Company into the orbit of the **SCL Group Ltd**, its myriad of offshoots, and **Cambridge Analytica**. This created a binding "exclusive", "worldwide", agreement "in perpetuity" for all of **AggregateIQ's** intellectual property to be used by **SCL Elections** (the British firm spun off as **Cambridge Analytica** with **Mercer**).

Fact 16   We know that: The communications director of **Leave.EU**, **Andy Wigmore**, told the *Observer* that … *'he introduced [Nigel] Farage and Leave.EU to Cambridge Analytica: 'They were happy to help. Because Nigel is a good friend of the Mercers.'* - The Guardian, 25.02.2017 "

Fact 17   We know that **Christopher Wylie** (below), one of the 'whistleblowers', who had a long association with both **Cambridge Analytica** and **AggregateIQ**, sent a fateful email to **AIQ** co-founder **Jeff Silvester** in August 2013. He described **Silvester** as a long-time friend, colleague and mentor; the two had both worked for Canada's Federal Liberal Party. In the email, **Wylie** told him about his new job as director of research for a British political consulting firm called **SCL Elections Ltd**, the parent company of what would eventually become **Cambridge Analytica**. *"We mostly do psychological warfare work for NATO,"* Wylie wrote in the email. And he attached a brochure. Might **Silvester** want to join the cause? *"You need a Canadian office,"* **Silvester** wrote back later that night.


Fact 18   In November, **Jeff Silvester** (below on right outside No.10), and co-founder **Zack Massingham** (below on left) signed their first contract with **SCL**. They named their company **AggregateIQ** - and although **Chris Wylie** says it was technically separate from **SCL**, he says it was internally referred to as the British company's Canadian arm. **AIQ** disputes this. *"AggregateIQ has never been and is not a part of Cambridge Analytica or SCL,"* the company said, and *"has never entered into a contract with Cambridge Analytica."* For the next few years, **Wylie** says **AIQ** worked on projects for **Cambridge Analytica** around the world in relative anonymity - that is, until its work on Brexit became front-page news.

Fact 19   We also know from other information: **Paul Stephenson**, the Communications Director of **VoteLeave**, said: *"**Zack Massingham** and **AIQ** were instrumental in helping the Leave campaign win. Together with our digital director, **Henry De Zoete**, they transformed **VoteLeave's** digital offering and helped us to contact voters over one billion times online. Traditional advertising agencies wanted us to spend most of our money on expensive billboards but **AIQ** enabled us to reach our target swing voters online much more effectively and efficiently. **AggregateIQ's** address and telephone number corresponded to a company listed on **Cambridge Analytica's** website as its overseas office: '**SCL Canada**'. A day later, that online reference vanished."*

Fact 20   We also know that **Stephen Parkinson**, who was the National Organiser of **Vote Leave's** ground operations, and who is now the **Theresa May's** Political Secretary in the No.10 Downing Street Office, was the one who asked a volunteer at **Vote Leave** to go and work for **BeLeave**. **Shahmir Sanni** (below), another whistleblower, has now detailed how he was asked to deal with a huge donation from **VoteLeave** to **BeLeave**, and to spend it with **AggregateIQ**.
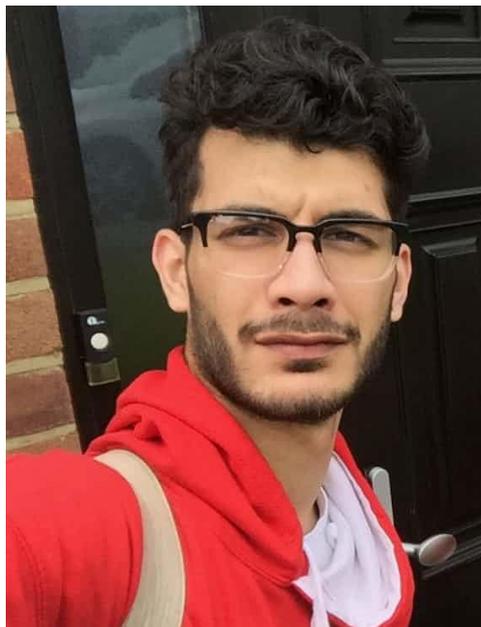
Fact 21   We know **Shahmir Sanni** told The Observer: 'Senior directors suggested to **BeLeave** that, if they set up as a separate campaign, they would receive a donation to spend on their own advertisements. The team drew up a pitch for funds.' *"On our proposal we wrote £10,000 would get you this much engagement on Facebook, and if you gave us £100,000 this is how much engagement we'd get,"* **Sanni** said. *"We were putting it there just in case."* 'Shortly afterwards **Vote Leave** drew up legal documents allowing **BeLeave** to create a bank account so that it could accept donations of its own.' *"Following our discussion, I attach a typed-up first draft of the constitution,"* '**VoteLeave's** legal director said in an email to **Grimes** in May, with **Watson** (**Cleo Watson**, **VoteLeave's** Head of Outreach, and now a political adviser in No.10) copied in.' He told **Sanni**, **BeLeave's** secretary and treasurer, to set up a bank account.

Fact 22   We know that **VoteLeave** revealed to the astonished young team of **BeLeave** that they would be getting a donation of £625,000.' *"To be at that age and to find out that my organisation, that the work that I've done, has received funding of almost £1m, I was elated,"* **Shahmir Sanni** said. *"It was amazing."* The donation never made it into the bank account. The money was passed directly to **AggregateIQ** - **VoteLeave's** data analytics firm - in its name, without ever coming under even nominal control of **BeLeave**.

Fact 23   We know that **Dominic Cummings** (below), who became the Campaign Director of **VoteLeave** in October 2015, and was, in effect, number two to **Matthew Elliott** in that campaign organisation, used his own long rambling blog (24/03/2018) to attack what **Shahmir Sanni** had claimed. In his blog **Cummings** has responded, to refute at length everything written by **Carole Cadwalladr** in The Guardian and The Observer, and he has denied all knowledge of any links between **Cambridge Analytica**, **AggregateIQ** and the **VoteLeave** campaign. **Cummings** also refutes the claims made by **Wylie**, including publishing emails between himself and **Wylie**.

Fact 24   We know that **Dominic Cummings** (above) the Campaign Director of **VoteLeave** ran this testament for a long time until it was pulled.

"WITHOUT A DOUBT, THE VOTE LEAVE CAMPAIGN OWES A GREAT DEAL OF ITS SUCCESS TO THE WORK OF AGGREGATEIQ. WE COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT THEM."

— DOMINIC CUMMINGS, *CAMPAIGN DIRECTOR, VOTE LEAVE*

Fact 25   We know from a recent **Channel4 News** piece into their investigation into **AggregateIQ**, that **Dominic Cummings** (below) boasted: 'we aimed it roughly at about 7 million people, 1.5 billion digital ads'. That's quite an admission, 214 ads on average per person, and that's 3.5 per day/per person for the campaign. Where did the data come from?

Searching for Aggregate IQ: What role did it play in Brexit?

YouTube Video of Channel4 News: https://youtu.be/O445jTgcpsU

Fact 26   We know that **Stephen Parkinson** (below), issued a 'personal statement' to Channel 4 News: *"I have seen the statements issued by **Shahmir** and his lawyers and am saddened by them. They are factually incorrect and misleading. It would be surprising if **Shahmir**, **Mr Wylie**, or those advising them thought I would be able to defend myself against those allegations without revealing my relationship with **Shahmir**. Sadly, the allegations they have chosen to make are so serious that I have been compelled to do so. I cannot see how our relationship, which was ongoing at the time of the referendum and which is a material fact in the allegations being made, could have remained private once **Shahmir** decided to publicise his false claims in this way."*

Fact 27   We know that the **Hon. Thomas Borwick**, a consultant for both **SCL** and **Cambridge Analytica** became **VoteLeave's** chief technology officer; and **Mark Gettleson**, a focus group expert, was also a consultant for **SCL** and **Cambridge Analytica** and became a core member of the **VoteLeave** team. So, here is evidence of **Cambridge Analytica** having a 'foot in both camps' - advising **Leave.EU** and having 2 former executives working for **VoteLeave** in the official EU Referendum campaign. Both were listed in **VoteLeave's** official documents lodged with the Electoral Commission.

Fact 28   We also know this crucial fact: during the US primary elections, **AggregateIQ** signed away its intellectual property (IP). It didn't own its IP: **Robert Mercer** did. For **AggregateIQ** to work with another campaign in Britain, the firm would have to have had the express permission of **Robert Mercer**.

Fact 29   We know there is evidence that **AggregateIQ** did work for **Cambridge Analytica** - a security researcher has discovered files online which confirm that **AggregateIQ**, developed the technology **Cambridge Analytica** sold to clients for millions of dollars during the 2016 US presidential election. Hundreds if not thousands of pages of code, as well as detailed notes signed by **AggregateIQ** staff, wholly substantiate recent reports that **Cambridge Analytica's** software platform was not its own creation. Software entitled Project Ripon, and something known as The Database of Truth, a system that 'integrates, obtains, and normalises data from disparate sources', was worked on by **AIQ**. If, as they have claimed, **Matthew Elliott** and **Dominic Cummings**, the two key figures in **VoteLeave**, there were no links, one must ask, was it kept from them?

Fact 30   We know that the **VoteLeave** Campaign spent £3.9million (from Electoral Commission's published accounts) with **AggregateIQ**, this small Canadian Company. This is huge expenditure to spend with a small company - but - on what? The invoices displayed by the Electoral Commission are redacted but appear to be for *'Digital Media Spend ...'*. It is important to know what data they used, from where did the data come, and what **AIQ** actually did with it. Did **AIQ** use clever algorithms to place **VoteLeave** advertisements directly onto the Facebook pages of unsuspecting targets?

Fact 31   We know that **Matthew Elliott**, the founder and first Chief Executive of the **Taxpayers' Alliance**, became the Chief Executive of **VoteLeave** in October 2015. In that capacity he would have overseen and signed off on initial discussions; examination of the methodology to be used; and all the work carried out by **AggregateIQ**.

Fact 32   We know that **Matthew Elliott** (above), went from his success with **VoteLeave** to become a Senior Fellow with **The Legatum Institute**, a think tank also registered as a charity, which has regular high-level contacts with all Brexiteer Ministers, particularly those in the DExEU. In his Twitter account he also describes himself as 'Editor-at-large' for **BrexitCentral**, a Social Media pro-Brexit podcast and blog group, which also employs 5 other former **VoteLeave** staffers - must be well-funded!

Fact 33   We know that **Dominic Cummings**, a former Special Adviser to **Iain Duncan Smith** and to **Michael Gove**, the Campaign Director of **VoteLeave**, would also have played a pivotal role in the decisions, alongside **Matthew Elliott,** for the work done by **AggregateIQ**. **Carole Cadwalladr** reports: '*Cummings won't say who did his modelling.*'

Fact 34   We know that invoices lodged with the Electoral Commission show payments to a company called **Advanced Skills Institute**, described by **Chris Wylie** as a sub-contractor for **Cambridge Analytica** in his evidence to the Select Committee. The company **ASI** is usually referred to as **ASI Data Science**, a company that has a revolving cast of data scientists who have gone on to work with **Cambridge Analytica** and vice versa. There are videos of **ASI** data scientists presenting **Cambridge Analytica** personality models and pages for events the two companies have jointly hosted.

Fact 35   We know that **Dominic Cummings** has written thousands of words on his blog about the referendum campaign. After weeks of messages, he sent **Carole Cadwalladr** an email, and he wrote: *"Someone found AIQ [AggregateIQ] on the internet and interviewed them on the phone then told me - let's go with these guys. They were clearly more competent than any others we'd spoken to in London."*

Fact 36   We know that **Carole Cadwalladr** wrote: *"The most unfortunate aspect of that - for **Dominic Cummings** - is that that wasn't credible. It's the work of moments to put a date filter on Google search and discover that in late 2015 or early 2016, there are no Google hits for 'Aggregate IQ'. There is no press coverage. No random mentions. It doesn't even throw up its website. I have caught **Dominic Cummings** in what appears to be an alternative fact."*

Fact 37   We know that **Chris Wylie** gave evidence to the House of Commons Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee on 27 March 2018. We also know that **Damian Collins MP**, the Chairman of the DCMS Select Committee has published the first 122 pages of evidence given to the Committee by **Chris Wylie**.

Fact 38   We know those pages of evidence confirm a close business partnership from March 2014 between **AggregateIQ Data Services Ltd** (**AIQ**) of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, and **SCL Elections Ltd** of New Bond Street, London, which later became **Cambridge Analytica**. **Chris Wylie** told the DCMS Select Committee that **AggregateIQ** was deliberately set up as the face of **SCL Canada**, but since the IP was owned by the **SCL Group Ltd**, it becomes clear that **AggregateIQ** was in fact an integral part of the complete set up.
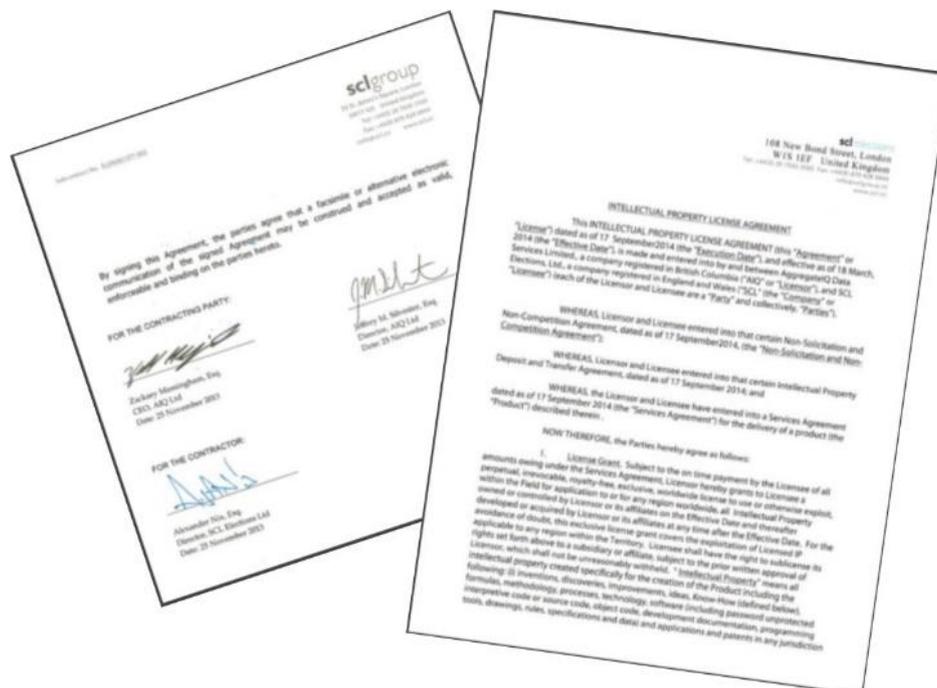
Fact 39   We know from the evidence released by **Damian Collins MP**, and the 4 hours of verbal evidence given to the DCMS Select Committee by **Chris Wylie** that the close business partnership between **The SCL Group**, **Cambridge Analytica** (**CA**) and **AggregateIQ** (**AIQ**) existed from March 2014 until after the election of **President Trump** in November 2016. This timeline fully embraces the timelines of both **Leave.EU** and **Vote Leave**.

Fact 40   We know from this information that **Alexander Nix**, a **Director of SCL Group Ltd**, **Matthew Elliott**, the former CEO of **VoteLeave**, and **Dominic Cummings** the Operations Director of **Vote Leave**, are now shown to be telling untruths when they all denied any connections between those companies.

Fact 41   We know that the **SCL Group Ltd** continues to expand, and that **Julian Wheatland** is listed as the Chairman, with **Alexander Nix** as a Director; we know that **Nix** was also CEO of **Cambridge Analytica**, until his recent suspension by the Board of **Cambridge Analytica**.

Fact 42   We know that **Alexander Nix**, his sister, **Samantha Boote**, and his mother, **Catherine Nix**, are all shareholders in **SCL Group Ltd**, as well as the many offshoots of the **SCL Group** which have grown up and been 'spun' off in recent years. All seem to have benefitted from 'investments' by **Robert Mercer**.

Fact 43   We know that **Alexander Nix** is the CEO of a new company registered in the UK, entitled **Emerdata Ltd**, together with **Julian Wheatland** as the Chief Operating Officer, working alongside two of **Robert Mercer's** daughters, **Jennifer and Rebekah Mercer**, as Directors, who were both appointed as recently as 18 March 2018. **Emerdata Ltd**. It has been reported that this new company looks like a reincarnation of **Cambridge Analytica** and **SCL Ltd**!

NOTE: the photographs and illustrations in this article have been taken from Twitter Feeds and Accounts.
We couldn't identify the original photographers,
to enable us to apply accurate attributions.
Please get in touch if we have used a photograph in error.

It is hard to draw conclusions from this collection of facts, other than to say that there are far too many unanswered questions to get anywhere close to a definitive conclusion. There are, of course, many possible theories to draw out of what has happened, but as each new revelation shows, there must be some form of official enquiry to get at the truth. I am not going down the 'stop Brexit' path, but I do believe there are a considerable number of individuals who have a lot to answer, from Robert Mercer and Arron Banks, through to Chris Wylie and Shahmir Sanni. Brexit was not a consequence of wanting honest political change for a country. Brexit, and the demands for Brexit, are a consequence of advertisers using massive data platforms to promise a very specific bit of the Earth to a certain demographic. They found a message and they played it over and over.

ROGER BOADEN 07/04/2018