

Mocking Uniforms

by Fergus Downie

I've been trying very hard to take the Corbyn target practice saga seriously, but still can't quite summon the indignation. To judge by the breathtaking seriousness with which the *Independent* and *Guardian* are following this melodrama, you would think Corbyn himself had perished rather than a graven image. No one was harmed during the production and it is easy to see why paras, even more than most British squaddies, nurse a particular ancestral hatred for a politician who has spent his political career brown nosing to terrorists [waging real violence on British citizens.](#)

That young working class men from Glasgow or Leeds might use his picture for target practice is less offensive than the spectacle of the leader of [her majesty's loyal opposition paying homage to Hezbollah.](#)

That is a real 'culture of political violence' – high jinx in a barracks from teenagers is not and if you are genuinely worried about the politicisation of the army there are more serious things to be worried about. Moreover if you're really concerned about the politicisation of the military there are [more serious things to concern yourself with.](#)

And dare I say soldiers are not supposed to 'represent' the nation. They are there to defend it and effete well-bred opinion formers should honour their part of the social contract. Few of us are capable of spending a day fighting in Falluja or Helmand – that's why we outsource it meekly to 19 year olds who are entitled to a few passes for politically incorrect target practice.