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**‘We don’t seem to have that many politicians who are even good at doing politics,’
says Sky News political correspondent Lewis Goodall.**

People who spend all their time in politics do not necessarily make bad politicians, but a clear problem in Britain today is that “we don’t seem to have that many politicians who are even good at doing politics,” according to Sky News political correspondent Lewis Goodall.

Goodall was speaking today at a sold out event at the Edinburgh International Book Festival, promoting his new book *Left for Dead?*, which charts the demise of New Labour and the rise of Jeremy Corbyn.

Looking to America, Goodall gave as an example former president Lyndon Johnson. “This was a man who never had a life outside of politics, but the fact was that he basically passed the greatest legislation since Roosevelt was because he had spent all his life in the Senate, and knew how to get the votes through. It could be argued that we need a few more people like that now in Parliament, people who can really do politics.”

Goodall shared the stage with Isabel Hardman, assistant editor of *The Spectator*, who argues - in her new book *Why We Get the Wrong Politicians* - that our current political system dissuades large parts of society from getting involved.

“It would be impossible for someone who runs a corner shop, a pillar of their local community, to stand for Parliament because it costs around £40,000 of your own money. Now that [figure] includes loss of earnings but I think, if you run a corner shop, that’s quite a big factor. We’re excluding a lot of people from the parliamentary process because they can’t afford to buy their job interview into it.”

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The current party political system also leads to problems, as can be seen with Brexit.

“It is really difficult; Jeremy Corbyn himself would support Brexit had he been an obscure backbencher rather than the leader of the Labour Party,” said Hardman. “But for Labour it’s not just about the pro-Remain constituencies in London, it’s also [about] the pro-Leave constituencies in, particularly, the North of England. Some Labour MPs were freaked out by the strength of the Leave vote in their seats.

“The party has to work out how to talk to both very disparate groups, though it’s not doing that particularly well,” she added. “It’s doing that sort of sitting on the fence thing where no one really understands what they’re saying and so don’t really listen to the party.” When the Whips are trying to persuade MPs to vote for something that doesn’t make any sense, they say: ‘We’ve got to keep the Party together.’ For Labour it’s all about trying to protect the Party, rather than the principles of Brexit. It’s not easy when you have both constituencies of supporters in your party; it’s not easy when you have a leader who has a different view to his own supporters.”

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