

# Labour Affairs

Incorporating the Labour and Trade Union Review

No. 275 March 2017

Price £2.00 (€ 3.00)

## Testing Times For Corbyn And Labour

The loss of the marginal seat of Copeland to the Tories was immediately added to the long-running story that Labour is doomed under Jeremy Corbyn's leadership. Much was made of the fact that Copeland, and before it Whitehaven, had been a Labour seat for over 80 years. Not since 1982 had a party in government gained a seat in a by-election. The fact that the Tories had been a strong second to Labour in every general election since 1983, when the seat of Copeland was created, was not deemed to be relevant. Labour's share of the vote, on the other hand, had declined in each election from a peak of 58.2% in 1997 to 42.3% in 2015. In that year the Tories' share of the vote was 35.8%; a huge improvement on a low of 29.2% in 1997. Given these facts and the circumstances faced by the Labour candidate, the signs of a potential Tory victory were already there.

The knives are now out for Jeremy Corbyn, with Labour MPs, backed by the anti-Corbyn media, saying he must accept the blame for the defeat or else the party faces disaster at the 2020 general election. His deputy Tom Watson has called for a change of direction, while reluctantly admitting that there is no appetite for yet another leadership election. Perhaps Corbyn's critics should take a step backwards and examine the real reasons for the loss of Copeland. It was not entirely due to Labour's leader.

Copeland, a largely rural constituency, which voted 62% to leave the EU, contains the Sellafield nuclear reprocessing plant, a key employer in the Cumbria region. Labour has been a strong supporter of Sellafield and of nuclear power for at least 60 years and current policy supports nuclear power as part of a balanced energy policy. Labour's clear position on this was deliberately distorted by the Tory candidate who consistently referred to Jeremy Corbyn's long held opposition to both nuclear power and the renewal of Trident, as if they were Labour's official position. This message clearly got through to Copeland voters, in spite of the efforts of the Labour candidate to put the record straight.

Additional reasons for Labour's defeat were the collapse of the UKIP vote and the perceived Labour split over Brexit. At the 2015 general election, UKIP won 6,148 votes with 15.5% of the total vote. At the 23 February by-election UKIP's share of the vote was 6.5%, a fall of 9%. Coincidentally,

the Tories' share increased by 8%. UKIP votes clearly switched to the Tory candidate who stressed that UKIP had achieved its purpose of a vote to leave the EU and only Theresa May and the Tories can deliver a safe, secure exit for the people of Copeland. It was also said that Labour could not be trusted to support the "will of the people" to leave the EU, given its lack of unity on this.

The perceived lack of unity on Brexit arises from the imposition of a 3-line Whip on the vote to support the European (Notification of Withdrawal) Bill. Bizarrely, Corbyn was blamed for the refusal of 52 Labour members, including shadow cabinet ministers, to support the Whip on the Third Reading of the Bill. But anything other than a 3-line Whip would have been seen as a sign of weakness by Jeremy Corbyn, as well as being potentially electorally disastrous for Labour in its northern heartlands, which voted heavily to leave the EU.

Labour was also expected to lose Stoke-on-Trent Central; a constituency that voted 69.4% to leave the EU, the 15<sup>th</sup> highest total in the UK. Given the heavy media focus on the party's turmoil over Brexit, Stoke should have been an open goal for UKIP. But Labour held the seat with a candidate who supported Remain in the referendum. Labour's share of the vote, on an historically low turnout of 38.2%, fell by 2.2%, while UKIP's share increased by 2%. A poor showing, given that its share of the vote at the 2015 general election rose by 18.3% edging the Tories out of second place.

The result for Labour was all the more remarkable following Tony Blair's call for an uprising against the referendum result, just a week before the two by-elections. It would appear that his interjection was designed to damage Labour's chances in constituencies that voted heavily to leave the EU. Blair clearly hoped that losing both seats would increase the pressure on Corbyn and force him to resign. Blair failed, but, one wonders, would he have made the same speech if the by-elections had been held in constituencies that voted to remain?

UKIP's failure to win Stoke was put down to its candidate Paul Nuttall being "economical with the truth" about Hillsborough, his academic qualifications and his

'appearances' for Tranmere Rovers Football Club. This dishonesty would have had a negative effect, but the more likely reason is that UKIP has been found wanting since it achieved its main objective last June. It is difficult to know where its future now lies. Nuttall claims that UKIP aims to replace Labour as the patriotic party of the English working class; and if Labour's current poll ratings do not improve, it could achieve partial success in the Midlands and north of England. At the moment however, it seems that the Tories are moving more quickly in that direction. The political cliché is in the ascendancy, and with her description of the Tories as "a government that works for everyone", repeated publicly at every opportunity, Theresa May is in a strong position.

With the recent sad death of Gerald Kaufmann, Labour faces another by-election in Manchester Gorton. Gorton is a Labour stronghold which it held at the 2015 general election with a 24,079 majority, an increase of 17% in its share of the vote over the 2010 election. All other candidates polled badly. On the face of it, Labour should

hold Manchester Gorton comfortably. However, circumstances have changed since the 2015 election when the Liberal Democrats polled just 1,782 votes, compared to 12,508 in 2010, when it ran second to Labour. The beneficiaries of the collapse in the Liberal Democrats' vote in 2015 were Labour and the Green party, the Tory vote having stabilised. Manchester voted 60.4% to remain in the EU, therefore making it reasonably fertile ground for the Liberal Democrats. They are unlikely to win the seat, but they could run Labour a close second.

The Manchester Gorton by-election, whenever it is held, will be regarded as another test of Corbyn's leadership. His project, to change Labour's and the country's political culture, is a long-term objective. He has recently asked for more time to develop the policies that will help to facilitate the change. If Labour is to mount a strong challenge to the Tories, Corbyn's colleagues must give him the support necessary for this. Anything less could result in the electoral disaster they currently predict.

## Gerald Kaufman MP (21 June 1930 - 26 February 2017)

*The following is from David Rosenberg, of the Jewish Socialists' Group:*

Very sorry to hear that Gerald Kaufman MP has died. Although in general terms he was more on the right wing of the party he rebuilt friendships with a number of Labour MPs and supporters on the left through his outspoken support for Palestinian rights.

This was very significant because for much of his life he had been a Labour Zionist and he had the courage to acknowledge that he was on the wrong side of history on that question. He had been a longstanding member of Poale Zion (which later became the "Jewish Labour Movement"). In 2002 he launched a blistering attack on Israel's then Prime Minister Ariel Sharon saying:

"It is time to remind Sharon that the Star of David belongs to all Jews, not to his repulsive Government. His actions are staining the star of David with blood. The Jewish people, whose gifts to civilised discourse include Einstein and Epstein, Mendelssohn and Mahler, Sergei Eisenstein and Billy Wilder, are now symbolised throughout the world by the blustering bully Ariel Sharon, a war criminal implicated in the murder of Palestinians at the Sabra and Shatila camps and now involved in killing Palestinians once again."

I had the pleasure of speaking alongside Gerald Kaufman just once. In 2009 in the immediate aftermath of Israel's War on Gaza, the Jewish Socialists' Group held a packed meeting in London where he and I were joined on the platform by an Israeli army refusenik and the prominent Palestinian campaigner and academic Karma Nabulsi who has held important positions within the PLO.

See [https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_GQDT9t21Rs](https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=_GQDT9t21Rs) and <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=jkh2kaAuI4M> and [https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=XgzLzDg\\_2EU](https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=XgzLzDg_2EU) for Gerald Kaufman's condemnation of Israeli war crimes.

# Labour Affairs

## Contents

No. 275 March 2017      ISSN 2050-6031  
ISSN 0953-3494

Testing Times For Corbyn & Labour (Editorial)	1
Jewish Socialist Group on Gerald Kaufman	2
Leaders in the heyday of Britain's unions: Walter Citrine and Ernest Bevin (Part 2) by Dr James Moher	9
<i>Poems by Wilson John Haire</i>	
Conditioning	6
Outlaw	6

## Regular Features

Parliament and World War One by Dick Barry	3
Views from across the Channel by Froggy	7
Notes on the News by Gwydion M. Williams	14
Diary of a Corbyn foot soldier (9) by Michael Murray	17
Parliament Notes by Dick Barry	19
Orecchiette	24

### Labour Affairs

Published by the Ernest Bevin Society

#### Editorial Board

Dick Barry      Christopher Winch  
Jack Lane      Madawc Williams

labouraffairs@btinternet.com

Website: <http://labouraffairsmagazine.com/>

#### Distribution

Dave Fennell

#### Editorial Address

No. 2 Newington Green Mansions  
Green Lanes  
London N16 9BT

# Parliament And World War One

by Dick Barry

## ENTRY INTO ALLIANCE

18 April 1917

### The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Bonar Law)

I beg to move, "That this House desires to express to the Government and people of the United States of America its profound appreciation of the action of that Government in joining the Allied Powers, and thus defending the high cause of freedom and the rights of humanity against the gravest menace by which they have ever been imperilled."

I deeply regret that, for the reason I announced yesterday, the Prime Minister is not able himself to move the Resolution which stands in his name on the Paper—a Resolution expressing the deep appreciation of the House of Commons of the greatest event which has happened during the War, the entry of the United States of America into this struggle. Not only the Members of this House, but the whole of the people of the British Empire and of all Allied countries, welcome the adhesion of our new Ally with heartfelt sympathy, not only as the greatest event, but, as I think and believe, the turning point in this War. The New World has been brought in, or has stepped in, to redress the balance of the Old. The United States possesses resources of all kinds—resources which in the long run are decisive in war—to a greater extent probably than any other nation. The quality of her people was shown nearly sixty years ago—their courage, their steadfastness, their devotion to a high purpose was then shown in a struggle which in its essence was not dissimilar from that into which they have now entered. Since then the American people have shown their qualities of resourcefulness, of energy, of readiness to adapt new methods to new situations, which have been conspicuously successful in the arts of peace, and these same qualities will now be directed, in no halfhearted way, and with equal success in the art of war. The United States has been "beware of entrance to a quarrel"; but, being in it, she already shows that her enemy must beware of her, and, in spite of the fact that the path which we are now travelling, which lies immediately in front of us, has never been more

difficult, I venture to express the hope and the belief that a change is coming, and that the long night of sorrow and anguish which has desolated the world is drawing to a close.

But we welcome the adhesion of our new Ally for another reason, not less strong—for the moral justification which it gives us for our own cause. America, like the British Empire, is engaged in war from no desire and through no fault of her own, but because she "could do no other." I have said many times since the War began—and I profoundly believe it—that the greatest of all the issues which will be decided in this struggle is whether or not free institutions on which the progress of civilisation and the welfare of mankind depend can survive against the centralised power of a military despotism. In this connection the entrance of the great Republic is a fitting pendant to the revolution which has brought the Russian people—whose courage and endurance we have so much admired, and whose sufferings have been so terrible—into the circle of the free nations of mankind. I have read, as I am sure every Member of this House has read, with deep admiration and profound agreement, the speech—a speech worthy of Abraham Lincoln—in which the President of the United States announced the entrance of his country into this struggle. I read the other day an extract from a German newspaper—a characteristic extract—in which it was said that "America was going to war for nothing." From their point of view the statement is true. America, like the British nation—I may make that claim—is animated by no lust for conquest, by no greed of territory, by no selfish end. The aims and the ideals to which President Wilson has given in that speech such noble expression are our aims and our ideals too; and, as we found earlier, so the American people have found now, that there is no method by which

these aims can be secured except by fighting for them.

**Mr. ASQUITH** It is natural and fitting that this House, the chief representative body of the British Empire, should at the earliest possible opportunity give definite and emphatic expression to the feelings which throughout the length and breadth of the Empire have grown day by day in volume and in fervour since the memorable decision of the President and Congress of the United States. I doubt whether even now the world realises the full significance of the step which America has taken. I do not use the language of flattery or of exaggeration when I say that it is one of the most disinterested acts in history. An inveterate tradition of more than 100 years has made it a cardinal principle of American policy to keep clear of European entanglements. A war on such a scale as this must of necessity dislocate international commerce and finance, but on balance it was, I think, doing little appreciable harm to the material fortunes and prosperity of the American people. Nor were distinctively American interests at home or abroad, and least of all what is the greatest of all interests in a democratic community—the maintenance of domestic independence and liberty—directly imperilled by the ambitions and designs of the Central Powers. What then is it that has enabled the President, after waiting with the patience which Pitt once described as "the first virtue of statesmanship," for the right moment, to carry with him a united nation into the hazards and the horrors of the greatest war in history? It is not, as my right hon. Friend has well said, a calculation of material gain. It is not the hope of territorial aggrandisement. It is not even the pricking of one of those so-called points of honour which in days gone by have driven nations, as they used to drive individuals, into the duelling

Editorials and older articles at our website,

<http://labouraffairsmagazine.com/>

This also has old issues of Problems magazine.

ground. No, it is none of these things; it is the constraining force of conscience and of humanity, growing in strength and in compulsive authority month by month with the gradual unfolding before the eyes of the world of the real character of German aims and German methods. It is that force and that force alone which has brought home to the judgment of the great democracy over the seas the momentous truth that they were standing at the parting of the ways, and that they had to make one of those decisions which in the lives both of men and of communities determine for good or for evil their whole future.

What was it that our kinsmen in America realised was at issue in this unexampled conflict? The very things which they and we—if we are to be worthy of what is noblest in our common history—are bound to vindicate as the essential conditions of a free and honourable development of the nations of the world—justice, humanity, respect for law, consideration for the weak and the unprotected, chivalry towards their enemies, the observance of good faith. These, which we all used to regard as the commonplaces of international decency, have one after another been flouted, menaced, trodden under foot as though they were the effete superstitions of bygone days. America sees that there is here at issue something of wider import than the vicissitudes of battlefields, or even than the rearrangement of the map of Europe on the basis of nationality. The whole future of civilised government and intercourse—in particular the fortunes and the fate of democracy—are brought into peril. In such a situation aloofness is seen to be not only a blunder, but a crime. To stand aside with stopped ears, with folded arms, with an averted gaze when you have the power to intervene is to become not a mere spectator, but an accomplice. There was never in the minds of any of us any fear, from the moment the issue became apparent and unmistakable, that the voice of America would utter an uncertain note. She has now dedicated herself, without hesitation or reserve, with heart and soul and strength, to the greatest of all causes. To that cause, stimulated and fortified by her comradeship, we here renew our own fealty and devotion.

**Mr. DILLON** It would be rather

strange if on this occasion the voice of Ireland were not heard. I have, therefore, been requested by the Irish Nationalist party to join most heartily in this welcome to the United States upon their entry into this great struggle. I regret that the Resolution, which expresses the sentiments of this House and of this nation, has not been drafted with a little more skill and a little more cordiality. It slightly reminds me—and I regret it—of an essay of Mr. Lowell in which he speaks of a certain condescension amongst foreigners. But the speech to which we have just listened redeems the Resolution and expresses, in the language which this great occasion deserves, what are the real sentiments of the nations which form the British Empire. The full meaning of the entry of America into this struggle it is difficult to describe. It is not like the entry of other Allies. It has a mighty significance to the whole civilised world. It is a breach with the unbroken tradition, as has just been said by the late Prime Minister, extending over more than 100 years since America first became a nation, during which time she has adhered, with almost vehemence and passion, to the principles laid down by Washington, that she should keep herself free from all entangling alliances and all interference in European quarrels. With the history of Europe behind her, is it any wonder that that principle should have been laid down? If we really desire to appreciate fully the significance of America's entry into this struggle, we should read and read again the addresses of President Wilson. His speech to the Senate on the occasion of the breach of relations with Germany and his first address to the Congress of America, when he asked them to authorise him to declare a state of war, are documents which, in my opinion, will go down to history as some of the noblest utterances ever spoken by a statesman. They are speeches which carry encouragement and hope to the heart and breast of every oppressed nationality and oppressed race in the world, and I trust that the people of this country will take some occasion of giving cordial expression to their acceptance of the great principles laid down in those immortal addresses.

There is one thing I miss from the speeches made here to-day and from the Resolution, that is, a recognition

of the difficulties with which President Wilson has had to contend during the last two and a half years. I must confess I have often thought that in some of the criticism which was levelled against America and President Wilson during the last two years there was much want of generosity and want of understanding. The task of President Wilson was one of unparalleled difficulty, based on two great facts; first, that his nation—a nation which it was vital, not only to America but to the whole civilised world, that he should keep united—is a composite nation. He had to deal with a people who numbered in its composition close upon 20,000,000 citizens of German blood and 15,000,000 citizens of Irish blood. The difficulties he had to deal with in keeping that nation united and in bringing them into the War were never fairly appreciated in this country. It is difficult for anyone who has not resided in America to thoroughly understand it. The second great difficulty with which President Wilson had to deal was this: He had to deal with a nation who have a deep-seated tradition and an ineradicable hatred of war, far beyond anything that is known among European nations. That nation of America was founded by men who fled from war and oppression in Europe, and it has been so regarded from generation to generation and from year to year by exiles and persecuted men from Europe, who had burned into their very souls and into their blood hatred of the wars of Europe and the oppressions which, unhappily, have so long characterised the annals of Europe. Therefore, to bring the United States of America into the War was to ask them to go against one of the deepest instincts of the soul of that race.

In the midst of all these difficulties, I have admired beyond my power of expression the skill, the great statesmanship, the courage and the patience of President Wilson, which have put him, in my opinion, in the very forefront of the great statesmen of the last 100 years. Amidst all these difficulties, President Wilson was able to count upon one thing at least, that when the banner of the Stars and Stripes was unfurled in war, when the United States was attacked, every man of Irish blood among the 15,000,000 of Irish in America would be a loyal supporter of the President. Amidst all

the humiliations and misfortunes of our people their record in connection with America is a great one. From the foundation of the American nation down to this hour, whenever America was assailed and in all her struggles, the fleets and armies of America were filled with Irishmen far in excess of their proportion to the population—filled with Irish soldiers, and commanded by Irish Generals and Irish Admirals on every occasion. In the War of the Revolution, one of the earliest acts of Washington himself, and of the first Congress, was to express their profound gratitude to the Irish of America for their invaluable aid in asserting the liberty of that country. In the Civil War, in the Spanish War, in the War of 1812, and in every other struggle in which America has been concerned, Irishmen were in the forefront of the American Army and the American Navy, and the day when the roll is called for battle the Irish will be there, and they will outnumber amongst the soldiers of the Republic the record of any other race in proportion to the number of its population.

The coming of America has a deep significance, because of its moral effect on the cause of the Allies. It has another value which was referred to the other day by the Prime Minister, when he said he welcomed the coming of America into this War because of the fact that it would bring America to sit at the Peace Conference. That to us in a special manner, and to every race in Europe that is oppressed today, is a blessed thing and a sign of hope and an assurance of liberty, for we feel certain that coming, as she has done, into this struggle unselfishly in the cause of liberty—at a most critical hour and probably with the turning of the tide of battle in favour of democracy and liberty throughout the world—her voice will be a weighty voice when the settlement comes to be made, and we Irish, at least, know that at the Peace Conference we shall have a friend who will not desert us. One sentence from the great speech delivered by President Wilson to the Senate has remained in my memory and will go down for ever as an immortal principle to be accepted and endorsed, I hope, by all statesmen who believe in liberty. He was dealing with the great question of the state of the world after the War and the settlement which was to come, and the

hopes which had been held out to the world of some League of Nations to maintain perpetual peace and banish the curse of war for ever from amongst civilised mankind. He said: No world's peace can be permanent, or ought to be permanent, which is based on the oppression of any race or nation of the world. That is an immortal principle. It is true in principle, it is true in fact. Justice to all small and weak peoples, as well as to great empires, must be the basis of any attempt to bring peace to the world. Let us all pray that America may have that blessed task of basing peace upon such a foundation.

**Mr. WARDLE** I feel that it is exceedingly difficult to follow the speeches which have been delivered, but I am quite sure the House will feel with me that this occasion ought not to pass without some spokesman for labour welcoming, as one should unreservedly, the entrance of the great democracy of America into this War. One thought that has come to me with regard to this matter is that the entry of America emphasises the fact that the days of isolation are entirely over, and that there is an interdependence of nations in the interests of humanity which is now emphasised in a manner which has never been emphasised before. The world, after all, is one, as well as being divided into nations, and it is the jealousies of nations and attempts on the part of some one or two nations at different periods in the world's history to dominate the rest which has been the cause of so much war and bloodshed and unhappiness; and if there can be, as I hope there will be, as the final result of this War and of the entrance of America of some such League of Nations, as the hon. Member has just referred to, which will be specially charged with keeping the world's peace against ambitious Powers, whether they be Principalities or Republics, I hope we may see it.

The most significant thing about the entry of America to me is that it is a sign that the great American nation has seen the real nature of the present War. They have been slow in making up their mind because of the immense difficulties of their domestic position, but I do not think there can be any doubt that from the very beginning of the War their real conscience and heart and moral has been on the side of the Allies. It is not, with them at

any rate, a question of nationality or of patriotism. This War, whatever other wars may have been, is not a question of patriotism in the ordinary sense of the term. This conflict is raised above questions of nationality. It is raised on to the high question of principle as to what is to be the future of the world and of civilisation, and, above all, of democracy. We are fighting, America is now fighting, for a real internationalism, for a real policy of good will and arrangement between the nations which has hitherto been impossible.

Once before in the history of the world the American nation, which was then not in the same position as it is now, an Anglo-Saxon nation at that time, has joined with this great nation in the fight against slavery. It is owing to the efforts of America and to Britain that slavery has largely, if not entirely, disappeared from the face of the earth. At any rate, it is discredited. If we can stamp out together, along with our Allies, militarism and despotism, and autocracy as well, then, great as the struggle has been, horrible as this War has been, it will fulfil a purpose which, in my opinion, has been worth all the struggle and all the sacrifice. The great democracies, including Russia, are fighting for the right of free peoples to develop in their own way. That is the real issue of the struggle. It is the character of the methods which have been pursued by the Central Powers which is bringing the world to see what the struggle really is. It is said that manners make men, and the methods of nations prove the character of their civilisation. It is the manners of the German people in carrying on this War which have revealed what is really behind the War, and have caused not only America but the moral conscience of the world to take up arms against a Power which is absolutely unscrupulous, which has no sense of justice, honour, or fair play, and against which the only method to adopt is to fight them until we have won a complete victory.

**Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER** The hon. Member for North Westmeath (Mr. Ginnell) has handed in two Amendments, which he proposes to ask leave to move. Neither of them can be taken. The first one is only an irrelevant negative, and the second one is irrelevant altogether to the subject-

matter of the Motion.

**Mr. GINNELL** On a point of Order. Surely that is an exceptional ruling? My first proposition is not a direct negative, and I say that with all due respect.

**HON. MEMBERS** Order, order!

**Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER** I can hear the hon. Member on a point of Order, but I cannot hear him, if he tries to dispute the ruling of the Chair. He is entitled to make a submission on a point of Order, and if he does that I will hear him.

**Mr. GINNELL** It is a misdescription to describe as irrelevant a Resolution or Motion proposing in recognition of the fact that this is a time-expired, unelected and, therefore, unconstitutional Assembly—

**HON. MEMBERS** Order, order!

**Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER** The hon. Member is simply persisting in challenging my ruling.

**Mr. GINNELL** Will you allow me to make my point of Order? I think a Parliament like this—

**HON. MEMBERS** Order, order!

**Mr. GINNELL** It is a misdescription—

**Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER** J. have given my decision. It is not open to the hon. Member to dispute my ruling in this way.

**Mr. GINNELL** I want, on a point of Order, to ask you by what authority you rule that an Amendment proposing that this matter be postponed until after a new Parliament has been elected is a direct negative?

**Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER** By the inherent right of the Chair I have given my ruling. The hon. Member has submitted to me an Amendment which is irrelevant to the Motion now before the House.

**Mr. GINNELL** How is postponement irrelevant?

**Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER** If the hon. Member persists in challenging my ruling after I have twice warned him, I shall be obliged to take notice of his conduct.

**Mr. GINNELL** I want on a point of Order to say—

**HON. MEMBERS** Order, order!

**Mr. GINNELL** I want to do it for the dignity of the Chair on this great occasion when not only Europe, but America, is looking on at this House—

**HON. MEMBERS** Order, order!

**Mr. GINNELL** On a point of Order. I should like to know why you rule that a Motion to postpone is out of order?

**Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER** I have ruled on the ground already stated that both the Motions handed in by the hon. Member are out of order.

**Mr. GINNELL** On a point of Order. I should like to ask you how—

**Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER** The hon. Member, on a point of Order, is simply trying to argue with the Chair. The duty of deciding these questions is imposed on me by the House, and I shall not permit the hon. Member or any other hon. Member to go beyond properly submitting a point of Order and to argue with me on my rulings.

**Mr. GINNELL** You have not answered the simple question whether the ruling that the Motion to postpone this until a new Parliament has been elected is out of order, without reference to the second.

**Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER** I have ruled that both Motions handed in by the hon. Member are out of order.

**Mr. GINNELL** It is a partial ruling.

Question put, and agreed to.

Resolved, “That this House desires to express to the Government and people of the United States of America its profound appreciation of the action of that Government in joining the Allied Powers, and thus defending the high cause of freedom and the rights of humanity against the gravest menace by which they have ever been imperilled.”—Mr. [Bonar Law.]

CONDITIONING

How immediate is war history  
history  
served with breakfast lunch and  
dinner and always the mystery  
of no victims  
it is the essence of cherubim  
embedded in the medium  
cryogenically applied to live again  
in some pandemonium  
don't stay too cosy with peace  
nor too humane with the rest of the  
world  
that touch of death increases  
since over-the-top they were  
hurled  
and hurled again on to that hotel  
reception board  
with its million white-cross keys  
each one fits a grave  
or opens a war memorial to its  
dead hoard  
live on myths live with death  
death  
as your only kith

Wilson John Haire

OUTLAW

Torn shirt, suit buttons gone.  
In Iraq where he belongs.  
Ripped flesh, broken bones.  
And he's all alone.

Two shoes on swelling feet.  
And still they beat.  
Black and blue on brown skin.  
Now not alone in the body bin.

Soaking shirt, choking collar.  
His life's work ends in squalor.  
An office in the High Street.  
All alone, near defeat.

The Army, the Government had its say.  
A civil rights lawyer flayed.  
From the liberals, not a peep.  
Society's frightened back to sleep.

Wilson John Haire.

# Froggy

## News From Across The Channel



The context of the presidential elections is years of deregulations and globalisation, and the discontent that has generated. Those years have also resulted in the weakening of the working class through deindustrialisation and the growth of services, whose workers are isolated and non-unionised, and the importation of an immigrant workforce. So the fight against liberalism is being fought without the working class. Marine Le Pen claims to fight ‘for the people’, but the unions have no place in her programme. The State under the National Front will protect and encourage entrepreneurs and that will automatically protect the workers at the same time, as they have the same interests, in the National Front scheme of things; there is therefore no need for working class organisations.

Macron, a minister in Hollande’s government until August 2016, favours more globalisation. Meanwhile the ‘left’ candidates are still full of liberal ideology. Melenchon ended his first presidential candidate speech with a call for freedom, spelled out as freedom of abortion and assisted suicide. Hamon, the actual socialist candidate, is already in the next historical period and will pay everyone 750 Euros a month regardless of situation, because ‘work is a thing of the past’. He also promotes ‘active euthanasia’.

### Presidential elections

The presidential elections will take place on two successive Sundays, 23 April and 7 May. The first round is likely to see Marine Le Pen facing probably Emmanuel Macron or François Fillon. The last time this situation occurred, the arrival of the National Front candidate in second

position was a complete surprise and the country united to keep him out, giving Jacques Chirac an 80% majority. This time the situation is expected, and the Banque de France is already counting the cost of implementing National Front policy. (“François Villeroy de Galhaum, the governor of the Banque de France, estimated that the Front National candidate Marine Le Pen’s plan for France to leave the euro would add €30bn to the country’s annual debt costs” according to the Financial Times of 13.2.17)

### National Sovereignty

National Sovereignty is the National Front’s main concern; they want to leave the EU and the Euro in order to regain the freedom to make laws and to set the value of the currency. On the contrary Macron sets little value on national sovereignty. He started his campaign launch speech with a genuflection towards the United States, world defenders of freedom and democracy, with France alongside.

He said also ‘There is no French culture, although there is culture in France’, which is a remarkable statement. All other candidates pepper their speeches with references from classical literature. But Macron addressed a Malian writer on the platform near him by his first name, telling him how much he admired him. Marine Le Pen had a black woman near her during her launching speech, but Macron went further than just establishing non-racist credentials: he established himself also as multicultural and universalist.

Macron, just after his declaration of allegiance to the US, raised the question of France’s supposed anti-Semitic guilt, which is, to say the least, peculiar in a presidential candidate’s launch

speech. This is the sort of dragging up of the past we are used to in the English press, to remind the French of their defeat in the war, and Britain’s ‘standing alone’ courageously. This is to be expected in England, but you don’t expect a French candidate to put France down on the occasion of an election.

### Patriotism the last refuge of the scoundrel?

Whatever was meant by this phrase originally, the idea today is that patriotism is a bad thing, a narrow minded, exclusive attitude that leads to hate and war, just like nationalism. We should wear our nationality discretely, like our religion, as something we are comfortable with at home but don’t mention when out with strangers. The 300,000 French people living and working in London today might agree with this. They are happy with speaking English and there are lots of things they prefer in England. Indeed they gave Macron a warm welcome when he had a meeting in London on 21 February.

This attitude is fine for people whose profession or social life requires that they speak English, in other words it’s a middle class attitude. Those below on the social scale do not speak English and have no prospect of a good job in England. Their feeling that they are French is stronger. Pride in their Frenchness is more important to them, because they do not have a high social status as an alternative source of pride. This is what the National Front exploits.

She is not the only patriotic candidate; Melenchon’s speech on 5<sup>th</sup> February was to the glory of France, first or second in the world for its literature, science, the seas, space exploration etc.

But the National Front candidate couples this patriotism with the question of immigration; this is both a strength, since white French people will support an end to immigration and a policy of ‘national preference’ and a weakness, since the population that comes from immigration is now French and will stay in France and must be included in the ‘national preference’. Marine Le Pen denies there is a problem. People can be French ‘whoever they are and wherever they come from’. That is, if they have French papers, it doesn’t matter where they or their parents come from originally. If they are Muslim, that makes no difference either, as Islam is compatible with the Republic—as long as it is private to the point of invisibility, like Catholicism or Protestantism.

But that answer is not reassuring. How do you distinguish between an Arab looking person who is French and one who is not?

### The banlieues

The word *Banlieues* (suburbs) is now short-hand for poor immigrant suburbs. Marine Le Pen promises to sort out crime in the banlieues with violent repression. Since the terrorist attacks, the banlieues are portrayed in the media as inhabited by Islamists who impose their laws on the local population. Previously, they were portrayed as inhabited by Arabs.

There is little mention in the media of the ordinary population of Arab origin who just want to get on with their lives in France like the rest of the population. Strangely enough, a youngish French rap artist, Kery James, gives expression to them in the text of his songs.

Some great names of French rap were MC Solaar and the group Carte de Séjour. Both were strongly connected with traditional French culture in their references. Carte de Séjour made a famous cover version of the great Charles Trenet song ‘Douce France’ (Sweet France), with an ironical but not a savage slant; the bridges were not cut. All this is not dead. Kery James, a French rapper from Guadeloupe who converted to Islam, can be said to be taking part in the presidential campaign in his latest album. His lyrics of the song *Racailles* (*Racaille* means ‘Scum’, the word used by the National Front to refer to the youth of the *banlieues* in trouble with the police, but here used in the plural to describe money grabbing politicians) describe the disillusion of the population at large with politicians.

James accuses politicians of not being disinterested, of not fighting for the common good, of being servants of finance, of not caring for what happens in the *banlieues*, and on top of that, or in spite of that poor record, of wanting to spread ‘democratic values’ all over the world ‘with bombs’. This piece is the equivalent of a speech for the presidential campaign, and it is better than Melanchon, never mind Hamon. In January 2017 James had a play performed at a well-known Paris theatre, on the subject of the *banlieues*, and who bears the responsibility for the state they are in.

James was interviewed on French state radio France Inter

in December 2016 in a programme repeated 14 February 2017. He was asked about Syria and the impotence of the UN; he said that the UN was perhaps not doing a lot for Aleppo, but it had in fact done a lot to create the situation. ‘terrorist groups financed by West have destabilized the country’.

One of his songs says:

“*De la Libye à la Syrie ils reproduisent les mêmes erreurs*

*Leur politique extérieure fait saigner de l’intérieur”*

(From Libya to Syria they reproduce the same errors,

Their foreign policy makes us bleed inside.)

[pun on ‘exterior’ and ‘interior’].

The candidate Emmanuel Macron went to Algeria in February and told an Algerian TV channel that French colonization had been a crime against humanity. He tempered that by saying that French colons had been a decent lot, who could not be accused of crimes. The main point however is that France should acknowledge present crimes and in particular the crime of killing Gaddafi. Direct colonization is not the way the West and France gather the wealth of developing nations today. It is done by destroying strong leaders, who could serve their country’s interests against predators. People like Kery James are aware of that. According to the interviewer, James is much listened to (*il est hyper écouté*). It is striking and encouraging that artists like Kery James, and presumably his followers, still have hope for France, and still feel connected to it. It is dismal on the other hand that the so-called left is still concentrating on marginal topics and ignoring the big issues, how to keep good jobs in France, how to integrate the immigrant population and how to achieve an independent and non destructive foreign policy.

The trouble with Mr. Wilson [the future President Woodrow Wilson] is that he is following an outworn philosophy and that the history of which he is thinking is the history of absolute monarchies and Oriental despotisms. He is thinking of government as embodied in an absolute king or in an oligarchy or aristocracy. He is not thinking of our government, which is a government by the people themselves.

The only way in which our people can increase their power over the big corporation that does wrong, the only way in which they can protect the working man in his conditions of work and life, the only way in which the people can prevent children working in industry or secure women an eight-hour day in industry, or secure compensation for men killed or crippled in industry, is by extending, instead of limiting, the powers of government.

*Theodore Roosevelt*

# Leaders in the heyday of Britain's unions: Walter Citrine and Ernest Bevin (Part 2)

by Dr James Moher

*This the second and final part of Jim Moher's assessment of the careers of Walter Citrine and Ernest Bevin. Part 1 appeared in the February issue of Labour Affairs.*

## New Unionism

The failure of the Comintern assault on the official union and Labour movement in Britain left the field clear for Citrine, Bevin and their General Council colleagues to strike out in a new direction.

Once installed as General Secretary, Citrine first set about modernizing TUC services and administration for the trade unions. They moved to Transport House, the T&GWU's fine new building, in 1928, where Bevin had all sections of the labour movement 'along the corridor'.

Citrine changed the TUC's ramshackle administrative system, symbolized by his renowned card-index system. He made sure that the more mundane but vital work of advising and assisting the two hundred or so affiliated unions was seen as an important service by them. Preparing submissions and lobbying government departments on general legislative policy issues. To get the government to ratify the ILO Convention, for example, for a shorter, 40 hour, week, became a key TUC objective.

He also led the strong campaign against the anti-union law of 1927, which became a much needed rallying point for the unions and Labour Party, culminating in the 1929 general election defeat of the Tories.

In all this he was fortunate in having the assistance of some very bright and committed senior staff, many of whom would later become TUC leaders. Citrine's style was very much to 'kick around' with them his ideas and to develop new thinking which would enable the General Council and Congress to recover. His Head of Research, Walter Milne-Bailey<sup>34</sup>

was an original thinker. But the more academic socialist intellectuals of the day, the Webbs, the Coles, Laski and Stafford Cripps, did not contribute much to their efforts.<sup>35</sup> The TUC soon developed a reputation for excellence, as the quality of their Annual Reports to Congress testifies.

Citrine explained his radical vision and sense of direction: "The principal lesson I had learned was that the trade union movement must exert its influence in an ever-widening sphere and not be contained within the traditional walls of trade union policy ... We must try to expand the activities of the TUC until we could establish an efficient system whereby the TUC would be regularly and naturally consulted by whatever government was in power on any subject of direct concern to the unions."<sup>36</sup>

This was a complete change in outlook from that which had led to the creation of the General Council just five years before. Though many of the same people were still on that body, they had adopted Citrine's new approach and persuaded their own unions and delegates to Congress. From a body whose rhetoric suggested that only the overthrow of capitalism would do, without losing their critical edge, they would now address the realities of this economy and seek influence in all spheres of the society. This would have profound implications for the entire world of labour from there onwards.

## The Citrine-Bevin partnership

The other key figure helping to bring about this transformation was Ernest Bevin and it is generally accepted that the partnership with Citrine from 1926 onwards was critical. However, it is wrong to see it as the work of two great men, but rather that of a formidable generation of union and TUC leaders generally. The likes of Arthur Hayday of the NUGMW (Municipal

& General workers), Alf Purcell of the Furniture trades, Arthur Pugh of the Steelworkers, 'Jimmie' Thomas of the NUR, John Hill of the Boilermakers and George Hicks of the construction workers (AUBTW).<sup>37</sup>

With the defeat of the General Strike, they had all learned that, as Lord Bullock put it, 'there were limits not only to their power but also to the use they could afford to make of it unless they were prepared to risk being carried much further than most of them meant to go.'<sup>38</sup> Bevin had also learned that 'the Labour Party is no longer a purely Trade Union party'.

## Political influences

It is likely that Citrine moved away from his earlier left-wing ILP socialism soon after the General Strike, as the ILP leadership moved closer to the CPGB/Minority Movement in their criticisms of TUC policy initiatives. By 1930 he openly criticized the fifteen or so ILP MPs for opposing the TUC/LP-supported Anomalies (unemployment insurance) Bill.<sup>39</sup> They were on the verge of being thrown out of the Labour Party.

Nor was he over-impressed by the influential intellectuals around the Socialist League in the 1930s. He felt that 'with rare exceptions', namely Laski and Cole, 'most of them never really understood the trade union movement' and were more concerned with 'discussing ultimate Socialist objectives of a theoretical character', when the real threat was fascism.<sup>40</sup>

He says that 'Bevin had little time for them' either, 'I know from his conversations with me that he resented their intrusion into trade union affairs'.<sup>41</sup> With his increasingly busy national and international schedule, Citrine preferred to rely on his own powerhouse of union and industrial ideas at Eccleston Square, where woolly theorising was not entertained.

They could also call upon some

of the best economic thinkers of the period, such as John Maynard Keynes, (1883-1946), who they regarded as 'Britain's foremost economist'. They would confer frequently on the National Economic Council and both Keynes and Bevin briefed Citrine from the MacMillan Committee on the credit and financial system, from 1929 onwards.<sup>42</sup>

### 'The Next Step' for the unions

In late November 1927, Citrine launched 'The Next Step in Industrial Relations' in a Manchester Guardian article. Now, 'the unions should actively participate in a concerted effort to raise industry to its highest efficiency by developing the most scientific methods of production, eliminating waste and harmful restrictions, removing causes of friction and avoidable conflict, and promoting the largest possible output so as to provide a rising standard of life and continuously improving conditions of employment.'<sup>43</sup>

It was a risky step. By appearing to abandon their traditional rhetoric of ideological opposition to capitalist-directed production, this 'New Unionism' incurred strong opposition from those steeped in Marxist or militant syndicalist psychology, such as A.J. Cook and Jimmy Maxton MP of the ILP. However, the vast majority of the General Council were prepared to try it as it offered the prospect of a recovery of union recognition for collective bargaining and serious engagement by managers with the many grievances of workers,

There was no response from the employer organisations, but the major industrialist Alfred Mond of ICI, brought a group of forty large industrialists to meet the TUC and to discuss their broader agenda.

They wanted union support for major rationalisation and modernisation plans to meet growing German, U.S. and Japanese competition. Citrine and Bevin convinced their colleagues that this would also protect British jobs, enable higher pay and strengthen union organization. As the joint Mond-Turner discussions embraced many

other long-sought union aims, the vast majority of the General Council agreed to the talks from January 1928.

These went surprisingly well, though the official employer organisations vetoed their more radical proposal for a permanent National Industrial Council (an Industrial Parliament in embryo). The NIC would have had equal union and employer representation and joint Conciliation Boards to act in disputes'.<sup>44</sup>

For Citrine, and Bevin, another attraction was that it enabled them to counter 'the resurgence of the hostility towards trade unionism' after the General Strike'. Even the employer organisations now felt obliged to confer with the TUC on 'matters of common interest' and many more employers were willing to recognize unions.

### The 1931 Labour movement crisis

The Great Depression from 1929 until the mid 1930s, put all such hopes on hold. The major unions had resumed their normal 'contentious alliance' with the Labour Party from 1927 and helped elect a larger, but still minority, Labour government in 1929.<sup>45</sup> Although not affiliated, the TUC were closely involved through a National Joint Council of which Citrine was secretary.

To begin with, relations with the TUC were much better than in 1924. Even Bevin invited MacDonald to address the TG&WU conference in 1928.

They got a Bill to repeal the 1927 Act in the 1930/1 King's Speech, and MacDonald invited Bevin and Citrine to sit on the Economic Advisory Council (EAC) with key ministers and sympathetic academics. John Maynard Keynes, the eminent economist and informal economics' adviser to Citrine and Bevin, chaired it. MacDonald also offered them both Peerages, which they refused, though not without hesitation on Bevin's part.<sup>46</sup>

Even so, there was little of the close liaison and interchange of views which the unions expected from 'their' government. MacDonald and especially his Chancellor, Phillip Snowden (1864-1937), were unduly distant and

the EAC came to be a 'talking-shop'.<sup>47</sup> The trade union repeal Bill was abandoned due to Conservative-Liberal opposition, without serious discussion with the TUC about how parts of it might have been salvaged. This did not go down well.

The TUC were also deeply suspicious of MacDonald's appointment of the May Royal Commission in January 1931, to 'examine' the workings of the unemployment insurance scheme', seeing it as an all-party plot to cut benefits.<sup>48</sup>

Their worst fears were realized as the financial crisis deepened, increasing City and global financier's pressure for heavy cuts in government expenditure.

Snowden and MacDonald were seen to be in thrall to these orthodox Treasury and Bank of England approaches which left Bevin and Citrine deeply unconvinced. Bevin's schooling in economics since 1929 from Keynes and the various financial committees he sat on, gave him the confidence to challenge Snowden.

When Bevin and Citrine met the Cabinet sub-committee, Snowden's brusque dismissal of their alternative 'equality of sacrifice' approach caused offence and they broke off the discussions, with the TUC going away to lobby MPs and Cabinet members. Bevin, the key TUC Board member of the influential Daily Herald seems to have made the running, with Citrine as General Council spokesperson.

Robert Skidelsky (biographer of Keynes and author of the in depth study of the 1931 crisis), concluded that Bevin was 'the dominant personality in the trade union movement, with an intelligence and breadth of vision far beyond those of his colleagues, with the possible exception of the general secretary, Walter Citrine, with whom he worked closely.'<sup>49</sup> Though more cautious in his approach, when it came down to it, Citrine backed Bevin and articulated the General Council's stance.

MacDonald, who had little grasp of economics, went along with Snowden, to prevent him deepening the crisis by resigning.<sup>50</sup> Being unable to get a

consensus in the Cabinet, though he had a 12 to 9 majority, they felt they must resign as a government. The shock came when it was revealed that MacDonald had been prevailed on by the Opposition leaders and the opportunities of the King, George V, to form in its place a 'National' government to carry through the cuts.

The reaction from the Labour movement could not have been imagined.<sup>51</sup> Although Citrine described himself as 'one of the Prime Minister's severest critics',<sup>52</sup> it was Bevin who really articulated the feelings of most in the Labour movement, leading the chorus of 'treachery' and 'betrayal'.<sup>53</sup>

This bitterness deepened as MacDonald led his 'National' government into a general election in which the divided Labour Party was slaughtered, holding only 46 from the 287 MP's seats it had returned with in 1929. Whereas the Conservatives got 471 seats.<sup>54</sup> It was a catastrophe whatever the rights and wrongs of how it was handled.

In his many subsequent references to it, Citrine gives the impression that he deeply regretted that they had not been able to reach a compromise with MacDonald and Snowden, whom he still blamed for their behavior in handling the crisis. As Prime Minister and TUC General Secretary, they continued to have dealings but MacDonald cut an increasingly sad figure, from the powerful orator and leader who had helped create the Labour Party. Citrine was one of the few in the Labour movement who had 'a good word to say' for MacDonald after 1931 and their relations remained civil.<sup>55</sup>

An important fall-out from the disastrous political rout of 1931 for Labour was that it completely changed the dynamic within the Labour movement. It was the TUC under Citrine and Bevin who now began to dominate Labour Party policy-making through a revitalized National Joint Council, of which Citrine was joint secretary. Their far closer liaison and relations with a new generation of Labour leaders - George Lansbury, Clement Attlee, Hugh Dalton, Herbert Morrison - would lead to electoral recovery

by 1935. More significantly, it would issue in a far more radical programme which reflected industrial as well as social objectives.

### **The international dimension**

More than most senior figures in British public life, Citrine's outlook was shaped by what was happening in the wider world at the time. As President of the IFTU, whose offices were in Berlin, he was a regular visitor for Executive meetings between 1931 and 1933 and so experienced at first hand the rise of the Nazis.

After Hitler inveigled his way to power in March 1933, the destruction of the huge German union movement and socialist parties quickly followed.<sup>56</sup> The IFTU President saw clearly what this would mean for the trade unions and socialists in the rest of Europe as Hitler's Fascists extended their reach there, over the following years.

The British TUC was then the premier trade union centre in the world with a major international influence as international issues came to dominate the political agenda at home. Citrine emerged as an authoritative voice seeking to alert the Labour movement and British politicians and society about the real nature and threat posed by German Nazism.<sup>57</sup>

In his report to the TUC Congress of 1933 on 'the situation in Germany', he analyzed the factors which had produced the Nazi dictatorship. He pointed up the activities of the Comintern-controlled German Communist Party as primary contributors to the divisions which had paralysed the German labour movement in the face of the Nazi threat.<sup>58</sup> He also criticized the Social Democratic Party leaders and its union allies for not resisting or allowing the IFTU to help.

Naturally, his bracketing of the Soviet 'dictatorship of the proletariat' with the Nazi dictatorship, caused considerable surprise and some opposition at that Congress. Aneurin Bevan, who was there as a Miners' Federation delegate, intervened to object to Citrine's 'most dangerous speech', but not even his own delegation supported him.<sup>59</sup> Citrine got across to the Congress

that the very survival of unions and fundamental democratic rights were under serious threat throughout Europe, and so this appeal to democracy versus dictatorship was plausible and his report was overwhelmingly adopted, with strong support from Bevin's T&GWU.<sup>60</sup>

From 1936 onwards, the IFTU and TUC pressed the British government strongly to supply arms to the Spanish government, but 'we utterly failed to move them' (Citrine was very close to Largo Caballero, the Spanish Republic's Prime Minister and a member of the IFTU Executive). This included meetings with Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden and public demonstrations and propaganda.<sup>61</sup>

Citrine also shared platforms with other anti-fascists of all parties, especially Winston Churchill, his old adversary in the General Strike. Little wonder that Sir Walter Citrine's name was on the Gestapo's list of 2,300 key British figures for immediate arrest in the event of a successful invasion of the island in 1940.<sup>62</sup>

### **Rearmament for World War 2**

Citrine's contribution to changing Labour Opposition policy on rearmament has been overlooked on account of Bevin's more famous verbal assault on the pacifist Labour leader, George Lansbury MP (1859-1940), at their Brighton Conference in October 1935. In fact, it was Citrine as TUC General Secretary with Bevin's strong support, who instigated the original TUC motion which started this process.<sup>63</sup>

As Labour leader, Lansbury had agreed not to speak against the new NEC line to change their policy in favour of League of Nations sanctions.<sup>64</sup> It was a foregone conclusion that the conference would support this change anyway, as Mussolini had invaded Abyssinia while the conference was on and they did so by 2,168,000 votes to 102,000.

When Lansbury deviated from his promise, Bevin reacted savagely with his famous put-down, telling Lansbury what to do with his pacifist conscience, which he had been trailing around.<sup>65</sup>

Bevin went further in his post-debate

remarks, saying that he had 'set fire to the faggots' for Lansbury's martyrdom', remarks he afterwards regretted.<sup>66</sup> Citrine, like many other leading figures at the time, regarded Bevin's 'brutal assault' on Lansbury as unnecessarily 'cruel' on the old Labour hero. This was 'the rough side of Bevin, the dockers' leader of the earlier years', as Lord Bullock put it.<sup>67</sup>

The differences between Citrine and Bevin were not just a question of their different styles- 'Citrine's precise, lawyer-like mastery of the facts to present a case and Bevin's larger, sweeping strokes to sketch a policy'.<sup>68</sup>

Citrine, as TUC General Secretary was privy to international union, social democratic leaders and British government intelligence on their 'dangerously run down' armed forces, and so was in the best position to brief the General Council and give the lead on policy.<sup>69</sup> But Bevin alone had the floor at Labour Conferences.

In 1934, it was Citrine who delivered the international trade unions' (IFTU) Vienna conference appeal to the TUC Conference, which raised £10,000 for the Austrian trade unions to buy guns to defend themselves from the fascists.<sup>70</sup>

In 1935, they both instigated the General Council's ultimatum to the Labour Party National Executive Council that they must abandon their opposition to rearmament. Up to that point, it is arguable that it was Citrine's authority as General Secretary of the TUC which carried most weight.

## World War Two

After the war came to Britain in 1940, Bevin became the more important public figure as Minister of Labour and National Service. Citrine wanted it that way and it was on his advice that Bevin was taken into the War Cabinet. But Chamberlain and Greenwood wanted to dump him for breaching government policy by bumping up the rail and agricultural workers, 'off his own bat'<sup>71</sup>.

What is less known is that Citrine was also offered a Ministerial post by Churchill when the coalition was first being formed. However, he decided that he could be far more effective at the TUC.<sup>72</sup> Instead, he was made a Privy Counsellor so that he would have direct access to all Ministers, not just the Ministry of Labour, and especially to the Prime Minister, on behalf of the unions. This gave Citrine immense influence throughout the war years. Consistent with his long-stated policy, he did not wish for TUC influence to be confined to narrow labour issues.

Together they helped mobilise the unions for the war effort through the Ministry of Labour and the TUC/production unions.

They addressed the General Council at Bournemouth on 12th May 1940, just as the army was being lifted from the Dunkirk beaches against the background of the threat of imminent Nazi invasion.

In this dangerous situation they got the unions to accept draconian emergency legislation, written mainly by Bevin, replacing strikes by compulsory arbitration, introducing labour direction and many other unprecedented relaxations of traditional union restrictive practices. In return, the unions were made central players in the war production effort. This was through consultative structures at every level on various joint committees.

It resulted in workers getting improved conditions like canteens, holidays and status. They also came to find the arbitration boards suited the skills of their officials, so much so that they did not complain after the war when they were retained until 1951.

Citrine had frequent 'one to one' meetings with Churchill, and a personal rapport that was envied by some Ministers, including Bevin. He recalled his visits during The Blitz and later representations about issues such as factory and public raid warnings and the impact of the flying bombs ('doodlebugs') on London, in terms of the workers' morale. He and Churchill often kept each other's spirits up during the darkest London Blitz nights reciting patriotic poetry, remembered vividly from their childhoods.<sup>73</sup>

Citrine's importance owed much to what Churchill saw as his international standing as IFTU President. It was Citrine who went to the United States in 1941 to persuade the American unions to back Roosevelt against the strong isolationist mood among the workers there. Churchill sent a personal note to Roosevelt urging him to meet Citrine, which he did. It was Citrine who argued for aid to the Soviet Union after the invasion by Hitler in June 1941 and who visited with a TUC delegation to reinforce the new British-Soviet alliance with the Russian unions.

Unfortunately, this very high national standing of Citrine with the Prime Minister seems to have been resented by Bevin. There are adverse references in his papers which suggest that he began to view Citrine as a rival, once remarking that 'he wants to be Foreign Secretary'. He was also critical of Citrine's absences abroad from his TUC job - his deputy Vincent Tewson regularly stood in for him - but that was hardly fair.

In fact, this bad feeling between them seems to have crystallised around one incident in 1941, which almost caused a rupture between the two. Bevin had

promised that the autocratic powers he had been given as Minister of Labour would be exercised in close consultation with the unions. In practice, things didn't always work so smoothly, as his officials or at least Bevin's idea of 'consultation', was not what the unions, or even employers, were always happy with.

Bevin's 'Napoleonic' tendencies came to the fore in his considerable efforts to direct manpower policy across all departments, often 'riding roughshod' over fellow Ministers, trade union officials and employers.<sup>74</sup>

As TUC General Secretary, it was often Citrine's lot to raise awkward decisions on behalf of union colleagues and employers, in 'one to one' meetings with the Minister. He was one of the few who could stand up to 'Ernie'.<sup>75</sup> However, their relationship deteriorated from 1941 onwards, when Bevin publicly denounced the TUC-owned Daily Herald editor, and by implication Citrine, as a key Director. Bevin claimed the paper was 'carrying on a Quisling policy' because of their 'opposition to his commandeering of skilled labour'.<sup>76</sup> It became so heated that the Evening Standard described it as 'open, if undeclared war'.

Attlee, as Deputy Prime Minister, was asked by Churchill to intervene, and wrote to both officially in these terms: 'I have for some time been distressed to observe what appears to me to be a growing friction between you and Bevin'. He told them both to cool it. They exchanged conciliatory, but by no means warm, letters.<sup>77</sup>

Citrine was deeply upset by this attack - to be called a Quisling i.e., traitor, was the worst thing anybody could be accused of at that time (Bevin claimed he had been misreported). He later referred to 'a certain side of Ernest's character',<sup>78</sup> but allowed for his former union colleagues' sensitivities better than most, because of his recognition of Bevin's enormous qualities and vital role.

However, their relationship, never close personally, did not improve. Nonetheless, by 1942, Citrine could justifiably say: "The influence of the trade unions has been enormously strengthened during the war and at no period in British history has the contribution which the organised workers have made to the success of their country been more widely or readily recognised."<sup>79</sup>

That owed much to the efforts of these two great union leaders and, of course, to the entire trade union movement-led working class. After the war, Bevin became Foreign Secretary and so their paths rarely crossed. However, they seem to have met occasionally at events in a more relaxed

atmosphere.

Sadly, Bevin had to resign as Foreign Secretary due to ill health in 1951 and died soon afterwards. Citrine was one of the first to convey his sincere condolences to Bevin's wife.

In 1946, Citrine decided to step down from his arduous, but not well-paid job. He was offered a safety and training role as a member of the new National Coal Board and he was active in this role until in 1947. Attlee offered him, now Baron Citrine of Wembley, a dream post, as a former electrician, to be Chair of the new British Electricity Authority. This was a role he performed with relish for another decade and part-time until 1960.

He retired finally in 1960 to his home in Wembley Park, and started to attend the Lords more frequently and take part in some debates, where his contributions were always keenly listened to. His wife Doris died in 1973 and he moved to Devon where he died in 1983 aged ninety five.

### Conclusion

How are we to view this labour partnership today? The events and years, national and international, during which they pre-eminently strode the union and Labour stage, make their careers of immense interest. Though Bevin is the best remembered, Citrine must surely be seen as of comparable standing? However, because of the serious fall-out during the war, and lacking the personal rapport to repair fences, their partnership seems to have faded. Bevin became Attlee's staunch ally, whereas Citrine was more friendly with another of Bevin's *bête noirs*, Herbert Morrison, who unsuccessfully challenged Attlee in 1945. This falling apart would have grave consequences for the trade unions and Labour, as they would lose both of them: one to high office, the other to the Central Electricity Authority.

This study recalls the heyday of the organised British Labour movement. Citrine's contribution sheds new light on the key turning points of that century, and not just its industrial history. Two points immediately occur. First, Citrine as the architect of the new TUC made it an independent force in British society, which it held long after Citrine had departed. Not for nothing was it regarded as another 'estate of the realm'. Secondly, after the catastrophic defeat of 1931, Citrine and Bevin helped the Labour Party to become a far more substantial social democratic party with a progressive alternative programme for government after 1945. Since then, with the left/right divisions of the unions impacting upon it, Labour leaderships in government have been a pale shadow of that 1945-51 administration.

Finally, Citrine's role as an international union figure and statesman, his anti-fascist and anti-appeasement/pro-rearmament contribution, was a crucial ingredient of that Labour substance, which ironically, Tories like Baldwin and Churchill recognized far more than Attlee.

Ernest Bevin appreciated it fully before the war, but unfortunately the immense pressures and strains of that global conflict drove them apart. Walter Citrine must rank as one of the British trade unions' finest products, which the unions today and wider society should recognise more fully. A better appreciation of his contributions, might also stir a more favourable reconsideration of the role of trade unions in society today.

Ernest Bevin's reputation as a union and Labour leader, has endured. From a union perspective, his finest achievement was undoubtedly the creation of the mighty Transport & General Workers Union (now UNITE). In the T&G, he bequeathed a powerful organisation to his successors and generations of ordinary workers. Through it, in partnership with Walter Citrine, he also played a leading role in the TUC and Labour Party from the General Strike to the Second World War, culminating in his vital role as Minister of Labour during that conflict. He used that influence to strengthen the role of trade unions and to improve the conditions and status of ordinary workers. As Foreign Secretary 1945-51, he was part of the most radically reforming post-war Labour

Government that Britain has had, though it was also the era of the Cold War. His achievement of that high position is testimony to the qualities both personal and of that union movement which took him from that of a carter to the pinnacle of political life in the British Empire.

34 D. Lyddon, *Walter Milne-Bailey, the TUC Research Department...* Historical Studies in Industrial Relations 29/30 (2010), 123-51.

35 *ibid.*, 139, 173, 235, 246.

36 *ibid.*,

37 Clegg, *A History of British Trade Unions*, has short sketches of all other General Council members. 572-81.

38 Bullock, *Ernest Bevin - Trade Union Leader*, 346.

39 R. Skidelsky, *Politicians and the Slump: The Labour Government of 1929-31* (1967), 324-5.

40 Citrine has an entire chapter about their dealings with the Socialist League in the 1930s, *Men and Work*, 293-309, especially at 300-301.

41 *ibid.*, 301.

42 *ibid.*, 136-8, 240.

43 *Manchester Guardian (MG) Supplement*, 30.9.1927; Clegg, *History*, vol II, 463-4.

44 K. Middlemas, *Politics in Industrial Society*, (1979), 208-9. 45 287 Labour MPs, 261 Conservatives and 59 Liberals.

46 *Men and Work*, 31--2.

47 *ibid.*, 'Snowden whom I found to be unexpectedly pompous, rigid, devoid of imagination, and frigidly orthodox'. 281.

48 See Robert Skidelsky's detailed record of the bitter exchanges between Citrine and MacDonald and his Minister of Labour, Margaret Bondfield, in *Politicians and the Slump*, 262-70. Bondfield, (1873-1953), a former General Council member, is thought to have messed things up.

49 Skidelsky, *Politicians and the Slump*, 369.

50 *ibid.*, 366.

51 Marquand, *Ramsay MacDonald*, 620-23 and 646-7. Marquand's account captures the tense and bitter atmosphere of their exchanges.

52 Citrine, *Men and Work*, 287.

53 Bullock devotes an entire chapter to 'The 1931 Crisis' justifying Bevin and the General Council's part. *Ernest Bevin - Trade Union Leader*, 476-503.

54 See also Robert Taylor's account, *TUC*, 52-9.

55 *ibid.*, 291.

56 Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich in Power*, (2006), 456-7, 465.

57 *Men and Work*, 344-5 and 425.

58 A sympathetic biography, *Stalin*, (1952), by an Austrian friend of the Soviet Union in the 1930s, Nikolaus Basseches, 323-4, confirms Citrine's view.

59 John Campbell, *Nye Bevan - A Biography*, (1987), 58.

60 Citrine, *Men and Work*, 287, 347, 399, 549-50, 564 and 590. The full report to the Congress is in the TUC Annual Report, 1933. TUC Archive, HD6661.

61 *ibid.*, 357-9.

62 *Guardian Century*, 1940-49, Nazi Death blacklist booklet discovered in Berlin in 1945. Compiled by the Gestapo after France fell, for the invasion of Britain.

63 Bullock, *Ernest Bevin - Trade Union Leader*, 561-4.

64 He had indicated as much to Citrine in a private meeting at Brighton before the Conference debate. Citrine, *Men and Work*, 350-1.

65 Francis Williams, *Ernest Bevin, Portrait of a Great Englishman*, (1952), 190-96.

66 *ibid.*, 570-1.

67 Bullock, vol 1 *Ernest Bevin - Trade Union Leader*, 570.

68 *ibid.*, 564.

69 Citrine, *Men and Work*, 353.

70 Williams, *Ernest Bevin*, 190.

71 Citrine, *Two Careers*, 50-2.

72 Robert Taylor, *The TUC: From the General Strike to New Unionism* (2000), 76- 91. chapter 2, *Ernest Bevin, Walter Citrine and the TUC's War 1939-1945*.

73 *ibid.*, 198-9.

74 Citrine, *Two Careers*, 125-8, 132, 137-8.

75 *ibid.*, 45-55, The chapter is entitled, This Man Bevin!

76 *Daily Herald*, 29th September 1941. Citrine Papers BLPES, 10/3.

77 Citrine Papers, BLPES, 10/3.

78 *ibid.*, 10/2. Letter to Beaverbrook 12th November 1952.

79 Citrine, *Two Careers*.

# Notes on the News

By Gwydion M. Williams

## Malignant Populists

The New Right do for Western civilisation what Al Capone did for Valentine's Day.

The centre and centre-left hate the New Right, but lost out in opposing them. Lost out because they misunderstood the issues. Lacked a correct understanding, which would upturn most of what they think they know.

From 1945 to the 1970s, the world seemed to have to choose between the Soviet and Western models. In the 1980s, the New Right started tinkering with the Western model, thinking they were improving it. But pulled back sharply with the economic crisis of 1987, now largely written out of history.<sup>1</sup> Unlike the much bigger crisis of 2008, Britain's Tory government ignored New Right doctrine. Followed the 'Keynesian' system of massive government spending.

The 1987 reversal might have finished the New Right. John Major as Thatcher's successor looked back to traditional one-nation conservatism. This was undermined by Tony Blair in Britain and Bill Clinton in the USA. Correctly seeing the need to modernise the centre-left, they made foolish choices about *what* to adjust. Knowing that most voters did not want the immediate abolition of capitalism, they were confused by theorists of both left and right describing the highly successful post-1945 Western system as capitalist rather than Mixed Economy.

The sudden collapse of the Soviet Union also helped the New Right bounce back. But it was a victory for the Mixed Economy or Broad Capitalism. The Prague Spring had opened the way to Chinese-style reform for the Soviet bloc, but was crushed by Brezhnev in 1968. Meantime China is wonderfully successful with an authoritarian but popular version of the Broad Capitalism. But Blair and the two Clintons lost touch with ordinary people. Did excellent work in social liberalisation and modest welfare, but dared do nothing that the rich elite seriously disliked. They really did believe that wealth would not exist without the elite being left to do as it pleased.

The New Right have messed up massively. Fantasies of making the Islamic World into a docile and obedient copy

of the latest Western fashions have backfired. Failed because of a false reading of our own history. Western values were seen as a wonderful spontaneous outbreak of Freedom. They were actually imposed by an authoritarian elite with Enlightenment values. Controls were relaxed only after decades of hammering those values into a resistant population. The West attacked secular dictatorships doing the same thing in the Islamic world.

At home, they broke the informal Social Contract that had allowed enormous progress since the 1940s. Mass unemployment had boosted both Fascism and Leninism: the 1940s elite decided to avoid a repeat at all costs. In fact there was no cost. There were Economic Miracles in Japan, West Germany, Italy and France, which all moved closer to Anglo values. Britain and the USA grew faster than they ever had before or since. But the 'wisdom' of the New Right told them that this was a pure accident. On no account should they do the same for the collapsed Soviet Union.

George Soros, not then famous or influential, had a moment of wisdom when he urged a Marshall Plan for Russia. But he couldn't exactly say why. Despite his pretensions, Soros is not a philosopher, or even a systematic thinker. He keeps evading the logic of his own arguments. Will never say that the methods he used to grow rich were socially destructive and should be regulated against. Joseph Kennedy – father of the President – did just this in the 1930s, helping frame laws to criminalise the legal tricks he had used to grow rich. The man was a realist, even if some of his values were obnoxious by modern standards.

The Smart-Alecs of the New Right were sure that the methods that had actually weaned Western Europe and Japan away from fascism were a massive error. Their way would work *much* better in new and trusting post-Leninist Russia. This is as big a goof as their failure after shattering Iraq, but less recognised. The centre-left haven't moved on from the Cold War. They let the New Right explain their failures in Russia as a baffling outbreak of evil, blamed personally on Putin.

(I explained last month that Russia's wars beyond its borders have been

to give self-determination to peoples whom the USA wished to deny it to. The USA also enforced independence for Kosovo, insisted that majority-Serb areas must be part of it. And regarding suspicious deaths: there have been no killings of members of Yabloko, the biggest pro-Western party, except in North Caucasus which is dangerous for *everyone*.<sup>2</sup> Those killed elsewhere maybe had murky connections. Or else were honest crusading journalists who threatened mid-ranking crooks without good Kremlin connections.)

At home, allowing mass unemployment and the loss of good well-paid working class jobs was bound to produce a backlash. For now, Theresa May manages to sound sympathetic, while making things worse. Inequality in Britain increases.<sup>3</sup> NHS cuts caused 30,000 extra deaths in 2015:<sup>4</sup> things are now worse. A deregulated property market and hostility to public housing have killed the notion of a 'property-owning democracy'. Most young Britons will never own a home.<sup>5</sup>

Life for most people is also worse in the USA.<sup>6</sup> Bernie Sanders rightly noted that President Trump has appointed economic overseers who were part of the problem.<sup>7</sup> They plan even more deregulation: even greater freedom for parasitic finance.

How to end it? Corbyn should say that a return to wholehearted support for Broad Capitalism is the realistic goal. That complete socialism is a much more distant objective that could not be included in the actual program of a Labour government. Likewise Bernie Sanders, or whoever replaces him to lead the solid left of the Democrats.

If Corbyn is feeling bold, he might add that the Trotskyist movement as it emerged in the 1920s has a total lack of positive achievements. That it has never posed a significant threat to any government it hoped to overthrow. That its main threat was within the Soviet Union and within Global Leninism, where it certainly contributed to Stalin's harshness at a time when Global Fascism was a very real threat. And that Trotskyism stood neutral in the actual struggle against Global Fascism, thinking it could suddenly emerge as a functional Third Force if it opposed

existing anti-Fascism.

If speaking so means alienating the diverse Trotskyist sects, they are much safer to have as enemies than as friends. Only their would-be friends have ever taken any significant damage from them. Admirable intentions are ruined by their lack of realism. Trotskyists illustrate an old US saying: *it isn't ignorance that makes you a fool: it's what you know that ain't so.*

### Broad Capitalism

'Broad Capitalism' is any system where capitalism is permitted but does not dominate. Where the state machine can override the wishes of business people, and often does so.

Up until the 1970s, the Western or Keynesian variant of Broad Capitalism was called the Mixed Economy. Vast efforts by the Hard Left convinced most people that it was actually just capitalism. The vast differences from Classical Capitalism and other versions of Narrow Capitalism got overlooked.

There is also Imaginary Capitalism, where everyone is a law-abiding sociopath whose needs and desires are perfectly expressed by cold cash. Where each unit of an identical human individualist can perfectly calculate its financial best option, even when experts cannot do so reliably in the real world. It makes for some fine fancy maths, which intimidates most people. But such maths is lousy at predicting real-world events.

(It is sometimes called physics-envy. But for physicists, even the best mathematic models are thrown out if they fail to match the real world. In economics, never.)

Thatcher and Reagan hoped to restore Narrow Capitalism as it existed before the 1930s Great Slump. They failed: we have a new version of Broad Capitalism, where private companies make huge profits from tax-funded franchises. Where rich individuals and gigantic corporation pay far less tax than the working mainstream, the 99% whose income comes from their own hard work.

There are many possible types of Broad Capitalism. 19<sup>th</sup> century Tories kept the booming British economy healthy by factory regulations that stopped industrialists from working to death the British workforce. They tried but failed to preserve large numbers of small farmers with the Corn Laws. Then from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Liberals took over with the basics of welfare. Labour then replaced them. The system peaked between 1950 and 1970, which were also Britain's best years for economic growth.

China's own Broad Capitalism makes business people much more dependent on the state than has ever been true in the West. Foreign investors discover that you need 'contacts' at all levels to prosper. Most of the time, the central government first *permits*, but you also need a friendly regional government to *enable*. No one can get away with ignoring or defying the authorities, as sometimes happens in the West.<sup>8</sup>

The Soviet Union's failure was caused by a peculiar attempt to create a state-run market that mimicked the outdated realities of Narrow Capitalism and the seductive notions of Imaginary Capitalism. When this failed, the displaced persons often brought their 'wisdom' to the New Right, whose thinkers are very often ex-Marxists.

### China Narrowing Its 'Broad Capitalism'?

"The 20th anniversary of the death of paramount leader Deng Xiaoping passed quietly on Sunday without fanfare and little coverage by state-owned media."<sup>9</sup>

Chinese government intentions are always hard to read. But they may think that Deng made more errors than Mao. He repudiated and disgraced his first two choices for successor (though so did Mao). The Tiananmen Square protests in 1989 came closer to wrecking the system than Mao ever came: only the vile treatment of Russia in the 1990s restored the Party's credibility.

Deng also allowed vast inequality and widespread corruption. Got away with it because the West was so keen to win China

that it allowed China to take over enormous areas of low-cost manufacturing. This was much the same as the USA had earlier done for Western Europe and non-Communist East Asia.

Growth equalled the best years of Japan. The left-behind did OK, unlike the West:

Total cumulated real growth 1978-2015

	China	USA	France
Full Population	1081%	59%	39%
Bottom 50%	550%	-1%	39%
Middle 40%	1040%	42%	35%
Top 10%	1709%	115%	44%
incl. Top 1%	2491%	198%	67%

This is from *Global Inequality Dynamics: New Findings from WID.world*,<sup>10</sup> which includes Thomas Piketty. Like Branko Milanovic,<sup>11</sup> this report shows inequality rising fast under Deng and Jiang Zemin, but stabilising with continuing fast growth under Hu Jintao from 2002. The data stops just past 2014: we'll have to wait to see if Xi Jinping's successful drive against corruption has reduced inequality or just stopped it being flaunted.

Both studies fail to comment on what their own data shows about a stabilisation of inequality: much as I'd have expected. I was pleasantly surprised that they showed it at all. They and all other Western sources I've seen suppress the awkward fact that China under Mao saw economic growth that matched the world average and fast-rising life expectancy. Did this despite US hostility, international isolation and the need to be prepared for a superpower invasion?<sup>12</sup> Most Western writers on China mislead by only mentioning bold policies that went wrong, not the much larger number that worked well.<sup>13</sup>

I'm sure they'd also reject my Broad Capitalism / Narrow Capitalism / Imaginary Capitalism model. They have their own brand of Imaginary Capitalism, in which the rich are compelled to grab vast chunks of extra wealth thanks to economic abstractions beyond human control.

So, China rises with Broad Capitalism, with the socialist element maybe increasing. And if the West thought China would never move up-market, this was foolish. Under Mao, China got both H-bombs and rockets that could launch space satellites, with zero outside aid. After 1989, they absorbed knowledge from the former Soviet Union's space program, but improved on it. They are currently one of only two states that can independently put people into orbit. (The USA lost it when they retired the shuttles, and is still working on fancy replacement rockets.)

### Coolhearts, Immigrants and Brexit

1960s radicalism evolved into a Coolheart consensus. Everything was personal. Morality was oppression. The state was mostly bad news, though not when it came to enforcing rights for non-whites, women and gays. These are observably less discriminated against than they used to be, so state authority clearly *worked*. But on the less familiar matter of the welfare of the working mainstream, the working class and an unprivileged middle class mostly dependent on their salaries, they felt nothing could be done. Any state efforts to make things better would assuredly make things worse.

From the 1990s, it was obvious that a more-than-millionaire class had a growing share of the new wealth created by the entire society. In the USA, they got almost all of it. But if Coolhearts sometimes protested, they were also certain that neither trade unions nor state power could fix it. They asked overpaid managers to show better personal morality, and were astonished when this didn't happen.

This elite consensus is being rejected right and left. We have more of the negative types of freedom, but not the security we once had.

You may feel that people should not prefer security to freedom. But you can reliably predict that most will actually do so.

It is sad but understandable that the poor and neglected blame

immigrants. The well-off get benefits from immigration. Without proper state spending, costs are dumped on the poor.

Brexit is now irreversible. It was careless of Cameron not to set a voting threshold. In 1979, Scottish devolution got about the same majority as Brexit, but needed 40% of all possible votes.<sup>14</sup> Failed with 32.9%. Brexit got 37.47%, but everyone had assumed that a simple majority was enough.

Cameron might have demanded 60% for a massive upset to the *status quo*. He did not. British respect for democracy means that one extra vote is enough, without special rules. In 1989, Welsh devolution won by less than 7000 from more than a million votes. MPs since 1945 have won with majorities of 4, 3 or 2.<sup>15</sup> In 1886, an MP got zero and won with the Returning Officer's casting vote.<sup>16</sup>

Corbyn was quite right to insist that Labour accept the vote. Fighting for decent terms is another matter.

### A War Against Islam

Muslims in different traditions differ from each other just as much as a Roman Catholics, Greek Orthodox, Southern Baptists, Anglicans and Quakers. But it seems no one told Trump.

Islamic theology is immensely complex, with an ancient split between Sunni and Shia. Iranian hard-line Shia Islam has never included suicide bombers attacking ordinary Westerners. Very little encouragement of violence outside of majority-Muslim countries. Yet Trump has banned all Iranians from the USA, insulting surviving pro-Western elements.

Al-Qaeda and Daesh ('Islamic State') recruit mostly from Wahhabi Sunni Muslims, an extremist offshoot of the Hanbali school. This is the smallest of the four orthodox Sunni Muslim schools of jurisprudence. Most devout Muslims regard Wahhabism as an aberration.

Most of the 9/11 bombers came from Saudi Arabia, which has pushed Wahhabism all over the globe. The rest came from countries not banned by Trump.

Some Westerners say that Westernising the Middle East can't happen until Islam is abolished. It is certainly a barrier to Israel grabbing yet more territory inhabited by Muslims and often including Islamic holy places. But in as far as Political Islam could be weakened, this was being done by the secular dictatorships that the West has been targeting.

It is going to end horribly.

### Snippets

Aleppo – a Weird Silence

When the Syrian government recaptured East Aleppo, the Western media predicted a bloodbath. And then dropped the matter, apart from reports of the torture that Syria has *always* practiced, often while being courted by the West.

You have to look hard to hear of rejoicing by Syrian Christians, descended from some of the first Christians beyond Roman Palestine.<sup>17</sup>

Most people never learn that no Western reporters dared enter the anti-Assad zones, and so relied on one side's propaganda.<sup>1819</sup>

\*\*\*

Elites

"Monday, 13 April 2015 was a typical day in modern British politics. An Oxford University graduate in philosophy, politics and economics (PPE), Ed Miliband, launched the Labour party's general election manifesto. It was examined by the BBC's political editor, Oxford PPE graduate Nick Robinson, by the BBC's economics editor, Oxford PPE graduate Robert Peston, and by the director of the Institute for Fiscal Studies, Oxford PPE graduate Paul Johnson. It was criticised by the prime minister, Oxford PPE graduate David Cameron. It was defended by the Labour shadow chancellor, Oxford PPE graduate Ed Balls."<sup>20</sup>

\*\*\*

Libya Abolished

"Western-led regime change has produced a catastrophic breakdown: 400,000 people are internally displaced out of a population of six million; more than a million have fled abroad. Many layers of conflict – tribal, regional, ethnic, religious, for and against the old regime – are now superimposed, one on top of another. Libya is now a country of several governments and none, where rival entities with grand titles – the Government of National Accord, the Government of National Salvation, the House of Representatives – fight for the right to claim authority over a state that no longer exists."<sup>21</sup>

\*\*\*

2% of Climate Scientists Can't Be Wrong

When the vast majority of scientists move to a new view of the world, they have never yet moved away from the truth. Trump's rejection of Climate Change will get him branded as a fool.

2017 probably will be cooler: a major El Nino has ended. But there are fears another one is stirring unusually quickly. Fear or hope for 2018, which sees mid-term elections.

Trump is likely to marry Hillary Clinton as to be vindicated by climate events.

\*\*\*

Websites

Previous *Newsnotes* can be found at the Labour Affairs website, <http://labouraffairsmagazine.com/past-issues/>. And at my own website, <https://longrevolution.wordpress.com/newsnotes-historic/>.

### References

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black\\_Monday\\_\(1987\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Monday_(1987))
- <https://www.quora.com/Has-anyone-from-the-Russian-opposition-party-Yabloko-been-murdered>
- [http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/tories-overseeing-biggest-rise-in-inequality-since-days-of-margaret-thatcher-uk\\_5891aaa5e4b03ab749ddd808?utm\\_hp\\_ref=uk](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/tories-overseeing-biggest-rise-in-inequality-since-days-of-margaret-thatcher-uk_5891aaa5e4b03ab749ddd808?utm_hp_ref=uk)
- <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/feb/18/people-are-dying-at-the-hands-of-austerity-says-jeremy-corbyn>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/feb/06/home-ownership-tories-housing-crisis>
- <http://portside.org/2017-02-04/what-made-great-recession-%e2%80%98great%e2%80%99>
- <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/powerpost/wp/2017/02/05/after-trump-moves-to-undo-financial-regulations-sanders-calls-him-a-fraud/>
- This is drawn from several books by actual investors. Something I've not yet got round to writing up.
- <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/policies-politics/article/2072169/chinese-media-low-key-about-deng-xiaoping-20-years>
- Available free as a PDF at <https://www.aeaweb.org/conference/2017/preliminary/paper/en6b6859>
- See <https://gwydionwilliams.com/46-globalisation/degreded-globalisation/>
- <https://gwydionwilliams.com/99-problems-magazine/mao-and-china/>
- <https://gwydionwilliams.com/99-problems-magazine/how-chinese-communism-fixed-a-broken-society/>
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scottish\\_devolution\\_referendum\\_1979](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scottish_devolution_referendum_1979)
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_Kingdom\\_general\\_election\\_records#Smallest\\_majorities](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom_general_election_records#Smallest_majorities)
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashton-under-Lyne\\_\(UK\\_Parliament\\_constituency\)#Elections\\_in\\_the\\_1880s](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashton-under-Lyne_(UK_Parliament_constituency)#Elections_in_the_1880s)
- <http://www.ibtimes.com/christmas-aleppo-photos-video-show-christians-celebrate-assad-victory-syria-2464372>
- <http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/46082.htm>
- <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v39/n03/patrick-cockburn/who-supplies-the-news>, subscribers only
- <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2017/feb/23/ppe-oxford-university-degree-that-rules-britain>
- <https://www.lrb.co.uk/v39/n05/tom-stevenson/flip-flops-and-kalashnikovs>, subscribers only.

# Diary of a Corbyn foot soldier (No 9)

By Michael Murray

[murraymicha@gmail.com](mailto:murraymicha@gmail.com)

**Facebook: Michael Murray London** - a commentary/digest of political news for busy people.

**A dictionary definition of “foot soldier” “...a dedicated low level follower.”**

In this issue:

Stoke: “*The red and blue colours of politics*”

“*The Killing\$ of Tony Blair*”: review

100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Cooperative Party

This entry in the diary has to begin with the most significant event of the month, the Stoke-on-Trent by-election - and this foot soldier’s small part in it. Polly Toynbee, in the Guardian (Feb 6<sup>th</sup>) said it would be a calamity for Labour or UKIP if either lose... “*causing an existential crisis, and I use that word carefully. Watch the avalanche of political obituaries for the loser.*” No pressure there then. I was one of a delegation of 12 Hackney South Labour Party members led by Hackney Mayor, Phil Glanville, sent to help out in Stoke. Speaking for myself, not our delegation, I was going to support the Labour candidate despite his scurrilous abuse of Corbyn on social media, calling him an “*IRA and Hamas terrorist supporter.*” I was there to help to ensure that Corbyn would not be held to account in the event of a UKIP victory, buying a little more time for the Corbyn/McDonnell project. As we took our seats in the Euston to Stoke train, naturally, I looked around to see if members from other London parties were getting on.

What struck me most was the large number of people boarding, mostly adult male, wearing red, white and blue scarves. It wasn’t the BNP or UKIP, I realized, on their way to Stoke to do some canvassing; they were Crystal Palace supporters going to see their team take on Stoke. They were joined all the way by more Palace supporters. Bottom of the League Palace were going to attempt to move out of the relegation zone. Stoke needed to reverse a 4-1 defeat to Palace earlier in the season. Plenty to play for then. But how will the home game impact on our canvassing? Will anyone be at home?

We were allocated Hanley, one of Stoke’s six towns. But we weren’t reliving another election in another time, in the same Hanley, described by Arnold Bennet - he fictionalized his home town as “Hanbridge”: “*The streets were lively with the red and blue colours of politics,*” he wrote. But that wasn’t our experience. For an election being watched closely from all parts of the UK, Europe and further afield, I’d never seen such little evidence of electioneering, such as the minimal posters in front gardens or windows – except around the Labour election HQ.

As it was, we were doing a leaflet drop as well as canvassing so traipsing up and down Hanley’s hilly streets with an occasional doorstep conversation was as exciting as it got. But that’s okay. It was a cold, miserable, wet day with not much stirring. I found it a bit of a culture shock, compared to canvassing in London, to find myself talking to so many

UKIP supporters. And people who supported no party. One man, in his forties, matter-of-factly and pleasantly told me he’d never voted in an election in his life. Except once. The referendum on Brexit. Talk about a reality check. As it was, almost two out of three people did not vote subsequently on election day. There were three to four times more people at the Stoke home game mentioned than the entire number who voted Labour on the 23<sup>rd</sup> February. Parse and analyse the election results how you will: political apathy was the clear winner in Stoke, despite all the outside Labour support. And if UKIP candidate Paul Nuttall hadn’t been caught out in a series of “porkies” – more damning than any policy issue: claiming to have been at Hillsborough and having had friends die there, it would have been a different result. And Polly Toynbee’s worst fears confirmed.

Before leaving Stoke you might like to know that only 9 of Stoke City’s 33 man squad are English, and in a city marked by unemployment and low wages the Stoke City wage bill this season is £75.9 million – twice the size of the 2014-15 season’s bill, and, okay, peanuts compared to Man City’s £225 million this season. On line, tickets for the forthcoming home game against visitors Arsenal are selling at a start price of £167. God, I’m glad I had the opportunity of reading William Runciman’s “*Relative Deprivation,*” at a young age. I can listen with corbynic equanimity to gobshites talking football, about “our” team and of why “we” should be prepared to spend twenty to thirty million for a decent centre forward. And, yes, I had a pang of something between nostalgia and loss seeing the old Wedgwood factory in the train window as we pulled out of Stoke. I was thinking of Waterford-Wedgwood and more prosperous, and hopeful, times – in Waterford, my home town, and Stoke.

(2) “*The Killing\$ of Tony Blair: Review*”

London’s “Time Out” magazine describes this film as essential viewing:

“*If you need a nauseating reminder of why so many Brits feel alienated from the political centre. Here it is.*” This documentary, 90 minutes long, is written and produced by ex-MP George Galloway. George provides the “voice-over” link-up commentary but it is the testimony of an impressive collection of witnesses to aspects of Blair’s life and political career that gives it its substance and value. The witnesses include ex Blair minister, Clare Short who provides an insight into his manipulative, non-democratic Cabinet management style; and, a lengthy portrait of Blair from a surprising source – prominent, serving Tory Brexit Minister David Davis.

These are not the “usual suspects” you might expect to find in a “protest” documentary. Neither are Corbyn’s Communications man, Seamus Milne; political commentators Peter Osborne, Will Self, ex Diplomat Craig Murray; financial guru Max Keiser, currently campaigning for the Governorship of one of the US Southern states. Stephen Fry is featured also, as is Matthew Norman and Richard Brooks – and, last but not least, Naom Chomsky. Khofi Annan and Dennis Halliday bear witness against the legality of the decision to invade Iraq. For the real “inside” story none other than his sister-in-law is witness, Lauren Booth. The interviews between George and his witnesses is interspersed with lively video footage, some of it, from the Balkan and Iraq wars, of a nature.. well let’s say heavy - but not inappropriate to the subject matter or the title of the documentary.

The “killings” of the title refer, not only to the thousands of lives taken in the course of Blair’s military adventures, but the financial killings made along the way of his career and after stepping down from office. His dealings, while in office, with J P Morgan bank are probed, the Ecclestone Formula One scandal revisited and Blair’s relations with Murdoch, in every sense: I can’t elaborate here, that would constitute a “spoiler.” But she was feckin’ gorgeous, Murdoch’s wife. She’s now divorced. Another “spoiler” would be revealing here how much wealth Blair is now worth. But I will reveal that his creative accounting techniques, by which he hides his income from public gaze and the taxman are to be found in this video. Windrush, say no more.

Saudi arms deals are examined as well as other dealings with arms manufacturers, BAE Systems. As well, his speaking engagements where, according to George Galloway, he got millions for stating the “bleedin’ obvious. And the massive consultancy practice built up, as one witness says, “*from his prime ministerial contacts book.*” His work for various despotic regimes around the middle east, such as Kazakhstan and Egypt, “giving advice,”

as Peter Osborne says “to murderous dictators in return for hard cash”, also is covered. To be fair George lists Blair’s political achievements from Northern Ireland peace agreement to the National Minimum Wage to inequality reduction through social policies. This, though, is weighed against introducing PFI into the public sector, “*privatization by stealth,*” and the resultant, ongoing, spiral of debt in health and education; also, the reduction of financial regulation.

Though the DVD cover depicts Tony taking a “selfie” against the “*shock and awe*” backdrop of one of his wars, really the documentary, if it entirely omitted the Iraq invasion, would still be providing a public service. One of the best one-liners in the documentary is what Maggie Thatcher said when asked what was her greatest achievement in her political life: she replied: “Tony Blair.”

George was asked recently if he was afraid of being brought to court by Blair. His eyes lit up. “Him and me in a Court? Under oath? Bring it on!”

### (3) *100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Cooperative Party.*

The Coop Party marked its 100th Anniversary with a day-long economic conference in the highly appropriate setting of Coin St Community Centre, on the South Bank, London. Sessions included:

The role of Responsible Business in creating a Fairer Economy.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution: opportunity or insecurity ?

Financial services in the interests of families and communities.

Creating sustainable local

economies.

A host of speakers from across the Labour, Trade Union and Cooperative movement spoke to a very full house of participative attendees from around the country. Speakers included Frances O’Grady, TUC General Secretary, Tom Watson, Deputy Leader of the Labour Party and, I learned for the first time, Co-Chair of The Commission on the Future of Work, which is focused on the “Fourth Industrial Revolution”: Artificial Intelligence, Robotics and Automation and the impact on the relations *of* production as well as the relations *in* production. My words, not Tom Watson’s – though he did surprise and impress with the delivery of his paper and, more tellingly with the quality audience, who he engaged in debate.

The British cooperative movement at the moment has total assets of around £37 billion; larger than most would imagine but only a fraction of the cooperative activity in Germany, Italy, France or Spain. For example, Mondragon, just one cooperative corporation, based in Basque Spain has assets equal to all of Britain’s – and much of their activity being in leading edge technology, in cooperatively owned and managed enterprises. The cooperative section is still small in Britain as a percentage of GDP, but it will become more important in post-Brexit, or prolonged Brexit Britain, as some significant new community-based cooperatives begin to emerge, such as in Preston, interestingly, inspired by Mondragon and its US offshoot in Cleveland. More about that in a later *Labour Affairs*.

The right man is the one who seizes the moment.

*Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*

The Prime Minister tells us she has given the French president a piece of her mind, not a gift I would receive with alacrity

*Denis Healy on Margaret Thatcher*

The Prime Minister should give an example of sacrifice, because there is nothing that can contribute more to victory than he should sacrifice the seals of office.

*David Lloyd George On Neville Chamberlain*

# Parliament Notes



Dick Barry

## European Union (Notification of Withdrawal) Bill

**[Relevant document: The First Report from the Committee on Exiting the European Union, The process for exiting the European Union and the Government's negotiating objectives, HC 815.]**

On 31 January MPs debated the Second Reading of a Bill notifying the UK's intention to leave the European Union. We publish below Keir Starmer's speech on behalf of Labour, followed by the speech from Ken Clarke, the only Conservative to vote against the Bill, and Labour member Kate Hoey's speech in support of the Bill. The Bill was carried on Second Reading by 498 to 114 votes.<sup>47</sup> Labour members defied a 3 line whip to vote against the Bill. The Third Reading of the Bill was carried on 8 February by 494 votes to 122. On that occasion 52 Labour members defied a 3 line whip and voted against the Bill. Ken Clarke was again the only Conservative to vote against the Bill. Clive Lewis, Labour's Shadow Business Secretary, voted against the Third Reading and resigned from the Shadow Cabinet. All amendments to the Bill were either withdrawn or defeated in the Commons. The Bill is now with the House of Lords, where amendments are expected to be carried.

**Keir Starmer (Holborn and St Pancras) (Lab)** We have before us a short and relatively simple Bill, but, for the Labour party, this is a very difficult Bill. [Laughter.] I ask that hon. Members be courteous as I try to set out the position of the Labour party in what are very difficult circumstances. I will try to set that out clearly, and I expect people to be courteous.

We are a fiercely internationalist party. We are a pro-European party.

We believe that through our alliances we achieve more together than we do alone. We believe in international co-operation and collaboration. We believe in the international rule of law. These beliefs will never change. That is why we campaigned to stay in the EU. We recognise that the EU is our major trading partner and that the single market and customs union have benefited UK businesses and our economy for many years. We recognise more widely the benefits of collaborative working across the EU in fields of research, medicine, technology, education, arts and farming. We also recognise the role that the EU plays in tackling common threats, such as climate change and serious organised crime. We share values and identity with the EU.

But we failed to persuade. We lost the referendum. Yes, the result was close. Yes, there were lies and half-truths—none worse than the false promise of an extra £350 million a week for the NHS. Yes, technically the referendum is not legally binding. But the result was not technical; it was deeply political, and politically the notion that the referendum was merely a consultation exercise to inform Parliament holds no water. When I was imploring people up and down the country to vote in the referendum and to vote to remain, I told them that their vote really mattered and that a decision was going to be made. I was not inviting them to express a view.

Although we are fiercely internationalist and fiercely pro-European, we in the Labour party are, above all, democrats. Had the outcome been to remain, we would have expected the result to be honoured, and that cuts both ways. A decision was made on 23 June last year to leave the EU. Two thirds of Labour MPs represent constituencies

that voted to leave; one third represent constituencies that voted to remain. This is obviously a difficult decision. I wish the result had gone the other way—I campaigned passionately for that—but as democrats we in the Labour party have to accept the result. It follows that the Prime Minister should not be blocked from starting the article 50 negotiations.

That does not mean, however, that the Prime Minister can do as she likes without restraint from the House—quite the opposite: she is accountable to the House, and that accountability will be vital on the uncertain journey that lies ahead. She fought to prevent the House from having a vote on the Bill until she was forced to do so by the Supreme Court last week. She resisted Labour's calls for a plan and then a wider White Paper until it became clear that she would lose any battle to force her to do so. Just before Christmas, she was resisting giving the House a vote on the final deal—a position that she has had to adjust.

That is why the amendments tabled by the Labour party are so important. They are intended to establish a number of key principles that the Government must seek to negotiate during the process, including securing full tariff and impediment-free access to the single market. They are intended to ensure that there is robust and regular parliamentary scrutiny by requiring the Secretary of State to report to the House at least every two months on progress being made in the negotiations and to provide documents that are being given to the European Parliament. The amendments would also require the Government to consult regularly the Governments of Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland throughout the Brexit negotiations. I have recognised on numerous occasions the specific

issues and concerns of those living in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, and I support the proposition that they should be absolutely consulted throughout the process and that their interests should be borne in mind.

The amendments would also ensure that this House has the first say, not the last say, on the deal proposed at the end of the article 50 negotiations. We also support amendments in relation to workplace rights and environmental rights, and we will be making the case that the legal state of EU nationals should be resolved before negotiations take place. I recognise the Government's position on EU nationals and the work done to try to ensure that there is a reciprocal arrangement, but that has not worked, and now the Prime Minister should act unilaterally to give assurance to EU nationals living in this country. I am sure that all hon. Members will have had, in their surgeries, EU nationals in tears over the uncertainty of their situation. I have seen it at every public meeting I have attended on the topic and at every surgery. I understand the constraints, but we must now act unilaterally to secure their position.

Taken together, the amendments would put real grip and accountability into the process, and the Government should welcome them, not reject them out of hand. I am mindful of the fact that 99 Back Benchers want to speak, and it is important, on such an issue, that I set out our position.

It is important to remember what the Bill does and does not do. It empowers the Prime Minister to trigger article 50—no more, no less. It is the start of the negotiating process, not the end. It does not give the Prime Minister a blank cheque—and here I want to make a wider point that has not been made clearly enough so far in any of our debates: no Prime Minister, under article 50 or any other provision, can change domestic law through international negotiations. That can only be done in this Parliament. If she seeks to change our immigration laws, she will have to do so in this Parliament in primary legislation. If she seeks to change our tax laws, she will have to

do so in this Parliament in primary legislation. If she seeks to change our employment laws, our consumer protection laws or our environmental laws, she will have to do so in this Parliament in primary legislation. If she seeks to change our current arrangements in Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales, she will have to do so in Parliament in primary legislation.

**James Cleverly (Braintree) (Con)** Does the hon. and learned Gentleman not realise that the very point of us leaving the EU is to ensure that this place can make decisions on those very points?

**Keir Starmer** Yes. When the Secretary of State last week said there would be many votes on many pieces of legislation in the next few years, he was not wrong. In each of those votes, at every twist and turn, Labour will argue that jobs, the economy and living standards must come first. We will argue that all the workers' rights, consumer rights and environmental protections derived from EU law should be fully protected—no qualifications, limitations or sunset clauses.

**Catherine McKinnell (Newcastle upon Tyne North) (Lab)** My hon. and learned Friend rightly points to the very necessary consultation that must take place with the devolved Administrations, but on 17 January I asked the Secretary of State what discussions he had had with the north-east about the impact of leaving the single market, given that 58% of our exports go to the EU. Does my hon. and learned Friend share my concern that we still do not have an answer to that question—whether the Secretary of State has even had those discussions—as well as many other questions?

**Keir Starmer** I agree, and I urge the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State to ensure that there is the greatest consultation in relation to Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. They each have specific areas of concern, which are well known to this House.

**Anna Soubry (Broxtowe) (Con)** Does the hon. and learned Gentleman share my concern that if no deal has been struck at the end of this process, all options must remain open and it will

be for this place, not the Government, to decide what happens next?

**Keir Starmer** I am grateful for that intervention. It is to ensure that this place has a meaningful role that Labour has tabled these amendments, in relation to the final vote, to ensure that the issue comes here first, rather than later.

**Ms Angela Eagle (Wallasey) (Lab)** In that spirit, does my hon. and learned Friend agree that it is astonishing that the Government have not told us when they will publish the White Paper? Does he agree that it should be published ahead of the Bill's Committee, which is scheduled for next week?

**Keir Starmer** I am grateful for that intervention. My view is clear: the White Paper ought to be published as soon as possible, and before the Committee stage is concluded, and I hope that it will be. More broadly, Labour will be arguing for a strong, collaborative future relationship with the EU. In her Lancaster House speech, the Prime Minister said that she does not “seek to hold on to bits of membership as we leave”.

That is short-sighted, as we are now finding in relation to Euratom. Why would we want to be outside the European Aviation Safety Agency, which certifies aircraft before they are allowed to fly? Why would we want to be outside the European Medicines Agency, which ensures that all medicines in the EU market are safe and effective? Why would we want to be outside Europol and Eurojust, which, as the Prime Minister and I know, are agencies that work closely together in the prevention and detection of serious crime and terrorism? The same goes for the European Environment Agency and Euratom. We challenge the Prime Minister on these fronts and ask that consideration be given to finding ways to ensure that we stay where we can within those agencies, for the obvious benefits that they bring, and we will absolutely challenge any suggestion that the Prime Minister has any authority whatsoever to rip up our economic and social model and turn the UK into a tax-haven economy.

I come back to the vote on this Bill.

It is a limited vote: a vote to allow the Prime Minister to start the article 50 process. It is not a vote on the outcome, nor is it a vote on wider issues, which will fall to be voted on separately, but it is a vote to start the process. I know that there are some colleagues on the Benches behind me who do not feel able to support the Bill. I respect their views, just as I respect the views of constituents who feel the same way. I also understand and recognise the anxiety of so many in the 48% who voted to remain about their future, their values and their identity. They did not vote themselves out of their own future, and their views matter as much now as they did on 23 June last year.

I hope that the respectful approach that I have tried to adopt to colleagues and to the anxiety among the 48% is reflected across the House and that we will see a good deal less of the gloating from those who campaigned to leave than we have seen in the past. It is our duty to accept and respect the outcome of the referendum, but we remain a European country, with a shared history and shared values. It is also our duty to fight for a new relationship with our EU partners that reflects our values, our commitment to internationalism and our commitment to an open and tolerant society. Above all, it is our duty to ensure an outcome that is not just for the 52% or for the 48%, but for the 100%. That we will do.

**Mr Kenneth Clarke (Rushcliffe) (Con)** Mr Speaker, you will not be surprised to hear that it is my intention to vote against the Second Reading of this Bill, if a vote is called, and to support the reasoned amendment, which I think will be moved very shortly by the Scottish nationalists.

Because of the rather measured position that the hon. and learned Member for Holborn and St Pancras (Keir Starmer) had to present on behalf of the official Labour party, it falls to me to be the first Member of this House to set out the case for why I believe—I hope that I will not be the last such speaker—that it is in the national interest for the United Kingdom to be a member of the European Union, why I believe that we have benefited from that position for the past 45 years

and, most importantly, why I believe that future generations will benefit if we succeed in remaining a member of the European Union. It is a case that hardly received any national publicity during the extraordinary referendum campaign, but it goes to the heart of the historic decision that the House is being asked to make now.

It so happens that my political career entirely coincides with British involvement with the European Union. I started over 50 years ago, supporting Harold Macmillan's application to join. I helped to get the majority cross-party vote for the European Communities Act 1972, before we joined in 1973, and it looks like my last Parliament is going to be the Parliament in which we leave, but I do not look back with any regret. We made very wise decisions. I believe that membership of the European Union was the way in which we got out of the appalling state we were in when we discovered after Suez that we had no role in the world that we were clear about once we had lost our empire, and that our economy was becoming a laughing stock because we were falling behind the countries on the continent that had been devastated in the war but appeared to have a better way of proceeding than we did.

I believe that our membership of the European Union restored to us our national self-confidence and gave us a political role in the world, as a leading member of the Union, which made us more valuable to our allies such as the United States, and made our rivals, such as the Russians, take us more seriously because of our leadership role in the European Union. It helped to reinforce our own values as well. Our economy benefited enormously and continued to benefit even more, as the market developed, from our close and successful involvement in developing trading relationships with the inhabitants of the continent.

The Conservative Governments in which I served made very positive contributions to the development of the European Union. There were two areas in which we were the leading contender and made a big difference. The first was when the Thatcher Government

led the way in the creation of the single market. The customs union—the so-called common market—had served its purpose, but regulatory barriers matter more than tariffs in the modern world. But for the Thatcher Government, the others would not have been induced to remove those barriers, and I think that the British benefited more from the single market than any other member state. It has contributed to our comparative economic success today.

We were always the leading Government after the fall of the Soviet Union in the process of enlargement to eastern Europe, taking in the former Soviet states. That was an extremely important political contribution. After the surprising collapse of the Soviet Union, eastern and central Europe could have collapsed into its traditional anarchy, nationalist rivalry and military regimes that preceded the second world war. We pressed the urgency of bringing in these new independent nations, giving them the goal of the European Union, which meant liberal democracy, free market trade and so forth. We made Europe a much more stable place.

That has been our role in the European Union, and I believe that it is a very bad move, particularly for our children and grandchildren, that we are all sitting here now saying that we are embarking on a new unknown future. I shall touch on that in a moment, because I think the position is simply baffling to every friend of the British and of the United Kingdom throughout the world. That is why I shall vote against the Bill.

Let me deal with the arguments that I should not vote in that way, that I am being undemocratic, that I am quite wrong, and that, as an elected Member of Parliament, I am under a duty to vote contrary to the views I have just given. I am told that this is because we held a referendum. First, I am in the happy situation that my opposition to referendums as an instrument of government is quite well known and has been frequently repeated throughout my political career. I have made no commitment to accept a referendum, and particularly this referendum, when such an enormous question, with

hundreds of complex issues wrapped up within it, was to be decided by a simple yes/no answer on one day. That was particularly unsuitable for a plebiscite of that kind, and that point was reinforced by the nature of the debate.

Constitutionally, when the Government tried to stop the House from having a vote, they did not go to the Supreme Court arguing that a referendum bound the House and that that was why we should not have a vote. The referendum had always been described as advisory in everything that the Government put out. There is no constitutional standing for referendums in this country. No sensible country has referendums—the United States and Germany do not have them in their political systems. The Government went to the Supreme Court arguing for the archaic constitutional principle of the royal prerogative—that the Executive somehow had absolute power when it came to dealing with treaties. Not surprisingly, they lost.

What about the position of Members of Parliament? There is no doubt that by an adequate but narrow majority, leave won the referendum campaign. I will not comment on the nature of the campaign. Those arguments that got publicity in the national media on both sides were, on the whole, fairly pathetic. I have agreed in conversation with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union that he and I can both tell ourselves that neither of us used the dafter arguments that were put forward by the people we were allied with. It was not a very serious debate on the subject. I do not recall the view that £350 million a week would be available for the health service coming from the Brexit Secretary, and I did not say that we going to have a Budget to put up income tax and all that kind of thing. It was all quite pathetic.

Let me provide an analogy—a loose one but, I think, not totally loose—explaining the position of Members of Parliament after this referendum. I have fought Lord knows how many elections over the past 50 years, and I have always advocated voting Conservative. The British public, in their wisdom, have occasionally failed to take my advice and have by a majority voted Labour. I have thus found myself here facing a Labour Government, but I do not recall an occasion when I was told that it was my democratic duty to support Labour

policies and the Labour Government on the other side of the House. That proposition, if put to the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr Skinner) in opposition or myself, would have been treated with ridicule and scorn. Apparently, I am now being told that despite voting as I did in the referendum, I am somehow an enemy of the people for ignoring my instructions and for sticking to the opinions that I expressed rather strongly, at least in my meetings, when I urged people to vote the other way.

I have no intention of changing my opinion on the ground. Indeed, I am personally convinced that the hard-core Eurosceptics in my party, with whom I have enjoyed debating this issue for decades, would not have felt bound in the slightest by the outcome of the referendum to abandon their arguments—[Interruption.] I do not say that as criticism; I am actually on good terms with the hard-line Eurosceptics because I respect their sincerity and the passionate nature of their beliefs. If I ever live to see my hon. Friend the Member for Stone (Sir William Cash) turn up here and vote in favour of Britain remaining in the European Union, I will retract what I say, but hot tongs would not make him vote for membership of the EU.

I must move on, but I am told that I should vote for my party as we are on a three-line Whip. I am a Conservative; I have been a decently loyal Conservative over the years. The last time I kicked over the traces was on the Lisbon treaty, when for some peculiar reason my party got itself on the wrong side of the argument, but we will pass over that. I would point out to those who say that I am somehow being disloyal to my party by not voting in favour of this Bill that I am merely propounding the official policy of the Conservative party for 50 years until 23 June 2016. I admire my colleagues who can suddenly become enthusiastic Brexiteers, having seen a light on the road to Damascus on the day that the vote was cast, but I am afraid that that light has been denied me.

I feel the spirit of my former colleague, Enoch Powell—I rather respected him, aside from one or two of his extreme views—who was probably the best speaker for the Eurosceptic cause I ever heard in this House of Commons. If he were here, he would probably find it amazing that his party had become Eurosceptic and rather mildly anti-immigrant, in a very strange way,

in 2016. Well, I am afraid that, on that issue, I have not followed it, and I do not intend to do so.

There are very serious issues that were not addressed in the referendum: the single market and the customs union. They must be properly debated. It is absurd to say that every elector knew the difference between the customs union and the single market, and that they took a careful and studied view of the basis for our future trading relations with Europe.

The fact is that I admire the Prime Minister and her colleagues for their constant propounding of the principles of free trade. My party has not changed on that. We are believers in free trade and see it as a win-win situation. We were the leading advocate of liberal economic policies among the European powers for many years, so we are free traders. It seems to me unarguable that if we put between us and the biggest free market in the world new tariffs, new regulatory barriers, new customs procedures, certificates of origin and so on, we are bound to be weakening the economic position from what it would otherwise have been, other things being equal, in future. That is why it is important that this issue is addressed in particular.

I am told that that view is pessimistic, and that we are combining withdrawal from the single market and the customs union with a great new globalised future that offers tremendous opportunities for us. Apparently, when we follow the rabbit down the hole, we will emerge in a wonderland where, suddenly, countries throughout the world are queuing up to give us trading advantages and access to their markets that we were never able to achieve as part of the European Union. Nice men like President Trump and President Erdogan are impatient to abandon their normal protectionism and give us access. Let me not be too cynical; I hope that that is right. I do want the best outcome for the United Kingdom from this process. No doubt somewhere a hatter is holding a tea party with a dormouse in the teapot.

We need success in these trade negotiations to recoup at least some of the losses that we will incur as a result of leaving the single market. If all is lost on the main principle, that is the big principle that the House must get control of and address seriously, in proper debates and votes, from now on.

I hope that I have adequately explained

that my views on this issue have not been shaken very much over the decades—they have actually strengthened somewhat. Most Members, I trust, are familiar with Burke’s address to the electors of Bristol. I have always firmly believed that every MP should vote on an issue of this importance according to their view of the best national interest. I never quote Burke, but I shall paraphrase him. He said to his constituents, “If I no longer give you the benefit of my judgment and simply follow your orders, I am not serving you; I am betraying you.” I personally shall be voting with my conscience content, and when we see what unfolds hereafter as we leave the European Union, I hope that the consciences of other Members of Parliament will remain equally content.

**Kate Hoey (Vauxhall) (Lab)** I will, not surprisingly, be wholeheartedly voting to trigger article 50 tomorrow evening. I have also used my judgment. I accept that Lambeth voted overwhelmingly for remain but, as I have made it very, very clear, this was a United Kingdom referendum, not a constituency or borough-based referendum. I welcome the many letters that I have received from my constituents—a lot were very pleasant—regretting that I will vote to trigger article 50. I have also had many nasty, venomous letters, not necessarily from my constituents, but from across the country. I resent and deplore the language that has been thrown around over the past few months. It comes not just from one side. There is a tendency to think that it is only the remainers who have had some pretty awful things said about them. Pretty dreadful things have been said by some who voted to remain against people such as me who stood out against our own party. None of it is acceptable. Members all need to do their bit to ensure that we seek to improve the level of political discourse, especially over the years when we are involved in our negotiations.

Like the hon. Member for Stone (Sir William Cash), I remember the Maastricht treaty debate, when I was a relatively new Member of Parliament. Time after time, the Labour party made us come along to vote against all the amendments but then, when it came to the final vote, we were ordered to abstain.

I welcome the speech made by my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Holborn and St Pancras (Keir Starmer). I welcome his tone, the graveness of the way in which he put his argument, and his

honesty about the difficulty that Labour faces on this issue. I am very pleased that my party has decided not to block the referendum decision; it would be a travesty if we did.

I wish to raise a couple of annoying things that people keep saying. One is that people did not know what they were voting for. It is said that those who voted to leave did not understand what that meant. That really is patronising, and it shows part of the reason why so many people voted to leave—they were fed up being treated as if they knew nothing and as if those in power knew more than them.

**Mr Duncan Smith** I am grateful to the hon. Lady for giving way, which means that I have secured her a bit more time. Does she recall that during the course of the referendum—this was certainly my experience, and I hope that it was hers—there was much more engagement, much more questioning, much more interest and a bigger turnout than at any general election in which I have ever been involved? People were really trying to find out what this was all about.

**Kate Hoey** The right hon. Gentleman is quite right. At the many meetings I spoke at all over the country, there was a fervent interest in the issue. People wanted to know more. I remember hearing the former Prime Minister and the former Chancellor of the Exchequer very clearly warning—not just warning, but threatening—people that if they dared to vote to leave, the consequences would be our leaving the single market. Let us not call it the single market; it is an internal market. If we are leaving the EU, of course we have to leave the internal market. I am sure that, like any other country outside the EU, we will be able to get a deal that allows us to have access to that market.

The other matter I want to raise is this idea that if someone voted to leave, they are, if not an outright racist, an indirect racist. It is ridiculous and appalling that the 17 million people who voted to leave are being treated in that way. We know that those people were against not immigrants, but the idea that people from 27 other countries—26 excluding the Republic of Ireland—could come into our country for no other reason than that they could do so. That did not apply to people outside the European Union. We betrayed the people from the Commonwealth so badly back in 1973, yet they had no right to come here. It is all about getting back control. I know that that

sounds like a cliché, but it is what we are doing—taking back control of our own country.

Once we have left the European Union, we will probably have sharp disagreements in the House and not so many cross-party views on a lot of the issues. We want to build—I certainly want to build—a post-Brexit UK that looks at spending priorities that might be very different from those proposed by Members on the other side of the House. I want to look at how we can use new freedoms on state aid in our country, and in order to do that, we must trigger article 50 and get into the negotiations. Our businesses and the country generally want us to get on with it. We have left ourselves in a situation in which we are spending two days of debate on a very simple Bill. The amendments will be considered next week, one or two of which I hope the Government will accept, but the reality is that this is a process that needs to be triggered. We need to do it soon, and the public expect us to do that. I have hope that we can look forward to negotiations that will take this country not to the foreboding place that the right hon. Member for Sheffield, Hallam (Mr Clegg) mentioned—I have no foreboding about our future outside the European Union—but to a bright future. That will happen tomorrow night when we vote to trigger article 50.

### Continued From Page 24

is envisaged. The title is uncertain. It could be *Article 1 – Movimento di Democratici e Progressisti, Mdp*. There are prior claims to parts of the title, so it may change. Massimo D’Alema (53<sup>rd</sup> Prime Minister 1998 – 2000) suggested the reference to Article 1 of the Constitution: “*Italy is a democratic republic founded on work*”.

On 23 February Myrta Merlino blogged in *huffingtonpost.it* saying that Italy has successful strategies to appoint women to political posts, indeed there are 8 women and 7 men in Renzi’s cabinet. Why are no women involved in these new developments? Do they have “*less muscle and more brain, make less noise and more mediation, less grandstanding and a greater propensity to listen? More political in fact. And I know it seems to be a paradox to ask for more politics in politics. But it shouldn’t be a paradox,*

# Listening to Italy

by Orecchiette

## ITALIANS DON'T SIT ON THEIR HANDS

Matteo Renzi resigned as Prime Minister in December following his defeat in the referendum on constitutional changes. He had staked his political future on a successful outcome promising to “*withdraw from public life*” if he lost. The outcome was seen as a clear personal rebuff to the centre-left leader. President Mattarella then chose Paolo Gentiloni to lead the government through a series of changes to modify, and render legal, the currently unconstitutional electoral system. Elections must be held by the Spring of 2018.

Renzi's period as leader of *The Partito Democratico (Pd)* has been riven with discord. Renzi is popular nationally, being seen as young, energetic and keen to deliver, rather similar to the young Blair and now Macron; attractive but vacuous politically. His legacy was neatly summed up by Stefano Folli in *La Repubblica* (22 Feb) who quoted the very venerable left-wing political commentator Emanuele Macaluso asking “*what are the politico-cultural principles of the Pd?*” Well replied Folli: “*No one knows with clarity*”.

By mid February Renzi's retreat from public life still hadn't included relinquishing the leadership of the *Pd*. Polls were showing that 86% of voters still had confidence in him. But 76% of self-declared *Pd* voters thought that the party's internal schisms were sufficiently serious to warrant a party split. Renzi chewed over his options, saying that he preferred to resign rather than to continue putting up with continual sniping. His preferred path was to see Gentiloni (someone called him Renzi's “*photocopy*”) prepare for elections while he stood against any contenders for the party leadership. It could then be possible to hold a general election at the same time as the Municipal elections in June 2017.

Long-serving *Pd* members believed that Renzi's tactic was misguided. It was crucial to remember that the party had been formed by an amalgamation of leftist groups in order to provide

Italy with a strong party to oppose the right. Walter Veltroni, the *Pd*'s first leader and Secretary, believed that the disparate ideas and points of view of “*comrades and friends*” were enriching and necessary.

There was a short period of activity when attempts were made to unify the party, talks about a split occurred and it was suggested that this would be avoided if Renzi agreed not to stand again as Secretary. It was obvious that Renzi was undeterred by the prospect of the party dividing. He stated that this was not only undemocratic but “*blackmail*”.

The district of Testaccio, in southern Rome, a centre of the left-wing *intelligenza*, was the venue for two important rallying meetings where the “*red flag*” symbolically stirred or didn't stir the factions to unite. Pier Luigi Bersani, former *Pd* Secretary (2009 - 13) explained the position of the left in a television interview. He was adamant that the fault lay with Renzi who he accused of “*raising the wall*”. He went on to say that Renzi needed to appreciate that the party was at a delicate point and there needed to be a change of course on Renzi's part. Fruitful discussions would be impossible if Renzi insisted on rushing.

Bersani mentioned the doomsayers who predicted that Italy itself would “*crash*” if the *Pd* “*crashed*”. Renzi gave another view, that the talk of splits was just giving a gift to the opposition, particularly Beppe Grillo's *M5S*. The *Pd* and *M5S* are approximately level in the polls. Even though, said Renzi, they have trouble with their life insurance policies; always good to include a laugh. Grillo is pointedly avoiding criticism of Virginia Raggi the *M5S* mayor in Rome, for fear of denting the Movement's popularity. One of her progressively unpopular administration's many difficulties is that she is under investigation for “*abuse of office*”. One of the issues is that she made a senior appointment to her team, tripling the appointee's salary. It was later found that he had taken out three life insurance policies naming Raggi as beneficiary.

The *Pd* split occurred. Bersani, quoted Enrico Berlinguer (significant one-time Secretary of the Italian Communist Party) at a rally in Testaccio. “*One needs to be faithful to the ideals of your youth. When you do not know what to do, do what you must*”. The new party will be led by Enrico Rossi, currently Presidente della Regione Toscana, and Roberto Speranza previously group head of the *Pd* in the Lower House. Rossi expressed his criticism of the direction of the *Pd* - “*We are not disposed to participate further in the transformation of the Pd into the party of Renzi*”, with a “*Leaderism*” similar to Macron in France. “*We need a partisan party that is clearly on the side of the workers*”.

The dilemma of whether to sit on one's hands or to act with conviction and optimism was summed up in Senator Manuela Granaiola's resignation from the *Pd*. “*The bitter debate within the Pd is a political symptom of a long-announced heart attack, probably little understood by our voters.*” She goes on to say that this political crisis is causing confusion “*throughout the “democratic” West*”. It will mean something if the new and dangerous neo-nationalism manages to unite the large sections of the electorate that previously supported the left. For her there are three issues for which solutions have urgently to be found....” schools, work and poverty”.

Paul Pombeni, Emeritus Professor of the School of Political Science at the University of Bologna envisages that Gentiloni's *Pd* Government will be unlikely to be able to continue if the party “*is plunged into the vortex of a split*”. The new group have stated that they support the continuation of the Government until 2018, but Pombeni questions whether that is realistic in practice?

On 25 February 2017 the new break-away party was formed, comprising (on 2 March) 36 members of the Lower House and 14 in the Senate. A future tie-up with other left facing groups

Continued On Page 23