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Corbyn Suspended

The accusation that the Labour Party, under Jeremy Corbyn's leadership, was a hotbed of Anti-Semitism, was made by a number of Labour Party officials in a BBC Panorama programme. The Labour Party commented that the individuals making the accusation did so out of political calculation as a move against the Party leadership. Those individuals then brought an action for defamation against the Party. The Party took legal advice and decided to defend itself against the action.

If that action had gone ahead, there would have been a thorough thrashing out of the issue in public, with the facts of the matter argued out under the rules of evidence before an impartial jury.

Jeremy Corbyn resigned the leadership. Sir Keir Starmer, who gave the Party membership to understand that he would preserve Corbyn's heritage, was elected leader. One of his first actions was to stop the Court action by throwing away the Defence, thus pleading guilty on behalf of the party, and paying out vast sums of money to the plaintiffs.

Corbyn commented that the decision to concede the case was taken as a political tactic by Sir Keir, and not on the basis of altered legal advice about the strength of the Defence. The Defence had not been tested by trial and he stood by it.

A barrister, speaking for the plaintiffs, said that Corbyn's denial that the Party had been found guilty at law was a repetition of the defamation and that legal action would be taken against him. If that had been done, then the trial of the action against Corbyn would have done what the trial of the action against the Party would have done, if Sir Keir had not aborted it.

But the threat of action against Corbyn led immediately to the setting up of a public fund for Corbyn's defence, and the threat was not put into effect. And there can be little doubt that the plaintiffs, if they went ahead with legal action against Corbyn,

would have brought about the very thing that Sir Keir saved them from by pleading guilty on behalf of the Party.

The meaning implicit in Sir Keir's action was that the Party under Corbyn's leadership was anti-Semitic. He made no clear statement about this at the time. He refused to answer the question whether he had called off the Defence under legal advice or for a political reason.

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The Deficit Myth

Can Labour present itself as an alternative to the Tory Party if it does not understand the reality of a currency creating state? The question is not idle speculation. In the Furlough scheme the state paid 80% of the wages of those in employment who could not work because of the pandemic. The scheme was described by many as generous. This misses the point. 80% was the rate necessary to ensure that all the industries that could still work throughout the pandemic would not experience any significant drop in demand for their produce. Such a drop in demand would have further exacerbated the unemployment problems directly created by the pandemic. Although the Furlough scheme was a move in the right direction it had some serious limitations which resulted in those claiming universal credit increasing from 1.2 million in 2020 Q1 to 2.7 million in 2020 Q3.

The chancellor, Rishi Sunak, had made clear he intended to end the Furlough in a speech on 8th July 2020.

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There was no realistic doubt that he did it as a political move to brand Corbyn an anti-Semite. He has now put that beyond dispute by suspending Corbyn from Party membership as an Anti-Semite because of a comment made by Corbyn :

“One antisemite is one too many, but the scale of the problem was also dramatically overstated for political reasons by our opponents inside and outside the party, as well as by much of the media. That combination hurt Jewish people and must never be repeated.”

Sir Keir is by profession a common law barrister, but as a political leader he prefers Inquisition to debate. It came to light after his election that he is a strong Zionist and it is therefore understandable why he preferred that the issue of Labour Party Anti-Semitism should not be tested in open Court, in which both sides would be represented, but should be passed judgment on by a Committee.

The detail of the Report will be considered in a future issue of Labour Affairs. But the most important thing about it is that the affairs of the Party have now been put at the mercy of an outside body, and that last year's Party leader has been indicted as an Anti-Semite by Sir Keir, who served with him last year, with all the appearance of being a loyal comrade.

It appears that the Labour Party is at another 1931 moment.

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In that speech Sunak also said “And we will deal, too, with the challenges facing our public finances. Over the medium term, we must, and we will, put our public finances back on a sustainable footing”. It was not the intention at that time to replace the Furlough with anything else. The Treasury's deficit fixated view was in the ascendant.

But by September it was clear that the pandemic was coming back. Sunak refused to countenance the continuation of the Furlough but announced on September 24th that it would be replaced by a ‘Job Support Scheme’ which was designed to significantly reduce government expenditure. As the pandemic spread it became evident that the Job Support Scheme would cause a massive increase in unemployment post Furlough. So, two further government schemes were announced on 9th October and 22nd October. In both schemes the pre-occupation with limiting the fiscal deficit is much in evidence. And now, as we go to press, Johnson has announced, that something close to the original Furlough scheme will be re-introduced. Details are unclear but it is likely that the self-employed will fare very badly under the revised Furlough scheme. Fewer businesses

will now cease trading but expect unemployment to rise significantly. And now evictions will be allowed.

Labour is struggling to respond to these government policies because its hands are tied by a belief that the size of the fiscal deficit (the difference between what a government spends and what it raises in taxation) should be a cause for concern. As long as Labour holds to this false belief the Tories will always be able to win the argument about government expenditure. Annaliese Dodds is Labour's shadow chancellor. She has strong socialist principles and, unlike many of her fellow MPs, worked hard to have a Corbyn government elected. But socialist principles are not enough. Dodds and the left generally need to understand much better how a currency creating state works if they wish to oppose the emerging Tory return to austerity.

Sunak justified the ending of the Furlough scheme by raising the issue of its cost and the consequent increase in the fiscal deficit and the national debt (cumulative government expenditure less cumulative taxation). According to Sunak the difference between government expenditure and taxation must be funded by borrowing from the private sector. This is not the case.

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The UK state is a currency issuing state. It simply instructs the central bank to pay those from whom it wishes to buy goods and services. It never has to check whether it has the money. As the monopoly issuer of the currency it has as much money as it wants. It has no need to borrow from the private sector to finance anything. To the extent that the state borrows from the central bank there is an increase in the national debt. But the state owns the central bank, so it is effectively borrowing from itself.

Since the government of a currency creating state can buy anything that is for sale in its own currency what should determine its spending? A government will clearly spend in pursuit of its policies around education, health, defence etc. Apart from that, unemployment and inflation should be the primary drivers of its spending. The government should make spending decisions because of unacceptable levels of unemployment or inflation. These spending decisions will have implications for the fiscal deficit and national debt. But it is most certainly not the size of the fiscal deficit or of the national debt that should drive the spending decision.

Unemployment occurs when the private sector, for whatever reason, does not wish to hire all those who want to work. In this situation the state should finance the employment of these people in doing work that their local communities think is valuable. In this role the state is not trying to compete with the private sector. Quite the opposite. It only employs those whom the private sector does not wish to hire. It would pay these workers a level of wages which meant that all their basic needs were met – food, rent, energy, health, education, holidays, etc.

Employment by the state while the private sector does not wish to hire would likely be a temporary phenomenon. The fiscal deficit and national debt would both certainly rise because the difference between what the state spends and raises in taxation would be increasing. But since the national debt of a currency creating state is effectively a debt owed to itself the matter is of little consequence.

Explaining why the fiscal deficit and the national debt are irrelevant is not however a simple task. We have all been taught to believe that the economics of a currency creating state and those of a household are identical. The idea achieved dominance in the 1970s. Thatcher promoted the idea with her endless references to “taxpayers’ money”. However, a household is a currency user. It must always finance excess expenditure by borrowing. It

cannot create money. All institutions, other than the currency creating state, are currency users. Councils are currency users. They raise a certain amount locally through council tax to fund their activities. If this is insufficient, they are dependent for the rest on central government finance. If that is not forthcoming there is little they can do.

This discussion may seem somewhat academic but in fact it is highly relevant to what is happening in Britain currently. Andy Burnham, the mayor of Greater Manchester, opposed implementing the governments restrictions on economic activity in that city unless the city was given greater financial support. But Burnham never directly challenged the basic premise of the government that the size of the fiscal deficit is of any consequence. Burnham should argue that as long as government spending into the economy is beneficial and not inflationary then it should be made. By continuing the Furlough scheme many workers could continue to live decent lives. Furthermore, if many of these workers were to lose their employment under the proposed ‘Job Support Plan’ this would have the effect of reducing demand in the rest of the economy. Workers who could continue working even in Pandemic conditions would find themselves being laid off due to a drop in demand for their products and services. But Burnham is unable to make these arguments because in his heart he believes the size of the deficit and of the national debt does matter.

Another example of the importance of grasping the irrelevance of the fiscal deficit and national debt is shown in the newly founded ‘Alliance for Full Employment’ formed by the elected Metro Mayors in England, the First Minister of Wales, the Mayor of Bristol and former Prime minister Gordon Brown. This alliance gets close to saying that unemployment is unacceptable. It’s most interesting demand is for ‘changing

the constitution of the Independent Bank of England to match the new priorities of the US Fed such that it targets low unemployment as well as low inflation’. But the ‘Alliance for Full Employment’ also holds back from boldly stating that the size of the deficit and national debt do not matter.

In Parliament on 14th October Annaliese Dodds, the shadow chancellor, called on Sunak to do whatever it takes. She was effectively telling him to ignore the size of the deficit and national debt without daring to use those actual words. She moved a motion:

That this House believes the Government should do what it takes to support areas with additional local restrictions, currently the North of England and parts of the Midlands, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, by reforming the Job Support Scheme so it incentivises employers to keep staff on rather than letting them go; ensuring no-one is pushed into poverty when they do the right thing; providing clear, consistent and fair funding that goes hand-in-hand with the imposition of new restrictions, including using the £1.3 billion underspend on the grants fund to support local jobs; fixing gaps in support for the self-employed; and extending the ban on evictions.

But again, Dodds, like Burnham and Brown, holds back from taking that breakthrough step and stating that the size of the deficit and national debt is not the issue. Unemployment is the only issue of importance. Dodds should be saying forget the deficits and public debt – focus on what the net spending is doing to advance well-being. Focusing on the financial parameters will just divert our attention away from what is important. Labour should seize this opportunity to reset the agenda to one in which unemployment is the main issue. If they do not, they will not win the next general election in 2024.

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The Burnham Ultimatum

By Eamon Dyas

In the 2007 movie the Bourne Ultimatum the central character Jason Bourne continues his quest to find out who he really was before going through a CIA black ops programme called Treadstone. The Treadstone programme required the elimination of the memory of the participants in order to remake them into CIA agents with high combat skills. Since the Brexit referendum and the December 2019 election, the Labour Party has been on a similar quest to rediscover what it actually is and just like Jason Bourne has had to respond to events outside its control that have been thrown in its path during that quest.

After Corbyn effectively lost control of policy between 2017 and 2018 the party entered a storm of incoherence on the issue of Brexit. Corbyn's sensible policy of respecting the result of the 2016 referendum was replaced by a convoluted and, to the electorate, incomprehensible policy that was captained by those who had no intention of honouring the result of the referendum. As that objective required a radical dismissal of the decision of the electorate that same electorate became invisible to them.

But the electorate refused to be made invisible and, determined to push itself into the faces of those who would deny their existence, produced the result of the December 2019 election.

It wasn't so much that the Conservatives won an 80-seat majority as to how it won that majority that remains an issue for the Labour Party. Central to it from a Labour perspective was the collapse of what had traditionally been known as the "Red Wall" of loyal and persistent Labour-voting constituencies. The Labour Party policy initiated at the behest of Sir Keir Starmer *et al* meant that it entered the 2019 election advocating a second referendum. This resulted in it gaining Putney but losing 40 traditional Labour seats in the Midlands and the North. On the morning after the election Boris Johnson acknowledged the significance of this switch in party loyalty when he stood outside

Number 10 Downing Street and declared that he would repay the sacrifice that the voters in these constituencies had made when they abandoned their traditional loyalty to vote Tory by ensuring that the people in the northern regions would enjoy the same level of prosperity currently enjoyed by those in the south.

But the outcome of the election was not an aberration or the result of a perverse whim on the part of the voters in those constituencies. The traditional link between the electorate in these constituencies and an increasingly southern-facing Labour Party was already evident at the time of the "successful" 2017 election. Although the "Red Wall" didn't collapse in that election the electoral tremors began to be felt - or at least should have been felt - by the Labour Party. In that election Labour made a net gain of 30 seats which although not enough to put Corbyn into Downing Street did ensure that the Conservatives no longer had a working majority. Yet, despite these gains the election also provided evidence that things were no longer healthy in the relationship between Labour and its heartlands. Although the Conservatives lost seats they did gain six previously safe Labour seats in the Midlands and the North. These included the constituencies of Mansfield in Nottinghamshire which had been Labour since 1923, North East Derbyshire which had been Labour since 1935, Stoke on Trent South which had returned a Labour member since its inception in 1950, Walsall North which, with the exception of 1976 had returned a Labour member since its inception in 1955. All of these traditional Labour constituencies that went to the Tories in 2017 had voted to leave by an overwhelming majority in the 2016 referendum (in the case of Walsall North by nearly 75%!).

One would have thought that this was something that might have had a sobering effect on everyone in the Labour Party who claimed to want a Labour government. In the absence of other distractions that may have been the case. But

the determination of an influential element in the Parliamentary Party to scupper the Brexit project and to damage Corbyn created a situation where sobriety was not the preferred option. The loss of previously steadfast traditional Labour seats in a situation where the party's overall increase in vote share was the largest since 1945 was not even worthy of consideration. Insofar as these constituencies came within the focal range of the EU-focused element in the party they were dismissed as a body of backward nationalists that sat uncomfortably with the forward looking, progressive, internationalist party that was Labour.

The mixed blessing of the 2017 election

The result of the 2017 election for Labour was been hailed as a great success and given the level of hostility from the establishment and the media it was indeed an amazing achievement. But that very success laid the ground for the eventual destruction of the Corbyn project. While the results should have garnered the party's strengths for a push for government in the next election, instead those results, in depriving the government of a working majority, served to energise the Remain element in the party to concentrate their efforts in achieving their primary objective of scuppering Brexit. Corbyn's instincts towards the EU were more in tune with the Labour electorate that voted to leave in 2016 but his parliamentary situation ensured that he was constantly placed on the back foot and forced to concede ground to an intoxicated Remain camp. Corbyn was also confronted by a general membership that did not share his attitude to the EU which meant that he felt compelled to represent the balance of opinion in his shadow cabinet. Ironically the man he put in charge of the party's Brexit strategy was Sir Keir Starmer - a Remainer who did more to undermine his coherent policy than anyone else and who would go on to succeed him as leader in April 2020.

For all his faults Corbyn was nonetheless a politician. The unfortunate thing was that he was a politician whose teeth were cut in the ideological left politics of 1970s. This provided him with an understanding of the critical role of the state in building a fairer and more equal society through nationalisation programmes and the dispersal of state aid. It also equipped him to respond instinctively to the requirements of the political situation in those areas of the country that had suffered the most as a result of the globalist policies of the previous four decades. Nonetheless, it hampered him in dealing with the changed nature of politics and society of the United Kingdom 40 years later. The political base that underpinned his leadership was not one that could sustain him through the tribulations of the Brexit ordeal as, aside from a minority, it did not reflect his classic left-wing adherence to the class struggle. Instead of the class struggle the political culture from which his young political base emerged viewed things like identity rights and climate change as being equal, if not more, important to social progress. Also, in terms of their attitude to the EU these members saw the means of achieving such things as better served inside the EU. To them the issue of state control of the economy was not the deal breaker it was for Corbyn and so what Corbyn viewed as a negative was not seen as such by this element among his supporters. This situation also meant that Corbyn's idea of welding these incompatible elements together in a united front against the common enemy of the Conservative party was ultimately doomed to fail as he had no effective strategy for dealing with those who either maliciously refused or were incapable of playing their allotted role. Essentially the topic that separated the elements proved to be incompatible with the task of getting Labour into government.

The party had been split irrevocably under Corbyn by the reality of the results of the Brexit referendum. That split may have been there in the background prior to the referendum and may once again have retreated into the background had the referendum resulted in a Remain vote. However, the vote going the

way it did only served to make it more visible and Corbyn's Brexit dilemma was exacerbated by those among the mandarins of the party who sought to use it as the means of destroying him.

Post-Corbyn Labour

With Corbyn gone and the decisive 2019 election result nailing down Brexit as an issue the party should now be in a position to heal itself. But can it? Can those in the party who are EU Remainers accept the situation? Can Starmer fill the role of the leader that brings the Labour Party back to itself? These are the crucial questions that will determine if Labour gets back into power anytime in the foreseeable future.

Starmer is not a politician in the sense that Corbyn was but that need not be a bad thing. The first thing that the party needs in the present situation is for it to regain its coherence. Starmer was elected on a ticket that claimed he would do precisely that. However, at his first speech as the Labour leader at the party conference in September he failed to even address the issue and refused to acknowledge the role he himself and the Remainers played in the 2019 disastrous defeat. Since then there have been enough incidents to reveal that what he means by reuniting the party was not reconciling the Corbyn wing with those who had worked to undermine him during his tenure. Instead his idea of reuniting the party seems to be based on a strategy of persecuting those who retain any loyalty to Corbyn's politics and marginalising them in parliament while at the same time driving Corbyn supporters out of the party. As for Corbyn's legacy in the party's socialist programme: in the context of his actions rather than his spoken positions Starmer's professed loyalty to that socialist programme would appear to be something that will eventually be jettisoned when he feels the time is right.

Then there is his performance in parliament as leader. So far that has been less than impressive. His training as a lawyer and the approach to parliamentary debate that goes with it may have been a useful skill in previous parliaments but the

nature of what is now required by a Labour leader in parliament requires something more. What impresses is not only the reasoning of a debating club or the legal skill of leaving questions hanging in the air. What is just as important is evidence of a passionate commitment to a policy. Starmer's approach lets him down on this front and his apparent lack of commitment to a coherent policy has led him to avoid taking up a clear position on important issues - something that seems to be borne out by persistent instructions to his MPs to abstain on critical votes in parliament.

On the question of the loss of Labour's "Red Wall" he is again incapable of seeing what is required. From someone who has been blinkered for the past two parliaments by his overwhelming desire to reverse the 2016 referendum result and his refusal to acknowledge that he contributed to the 2019 electoral catastrophe it would seem that he has nothing to offer them on the core issue that defines the voters of these constituencies. Instead his effort to regain the "Red Wall" has relied on his underlying belief that appealing to their sense of nationalism is the way to regain their loyalty. This is wrong on so many counts. The people of the north are no more nationalist or racist than those in the south. London dominates the cultural outlook of the south and it is a culture that is based largely on a constantly shifting demography. It is also far more affluent than the north and not as reliant on a sense of commonality to survive. Given similar circumstances in both areas there is no reason to assume that the people from the north are any more nationalist or racist than any other in the UK. Coming from London and Surrey and with the outlook he has, Sir Keir Starmer is ill-equipped to understand any of this.

The making of the King of the North

The one man who comes to politics from a completely different direction than either Jeremy Corbyn or Sir Keir Starmer is Andy Burnham. He is neither ideologically tied to the left nor to the EU. Nor are his

politics embedded in a southern perspective. He is a Catholic from Merseyside who was raised in the north and attended his local comprehensive school before going to university. He was the Labour MP for Leigh in Greater Manchester for his entire parliamentary career (2001-2017). Like the majority of his colleagues at Westminster he was pro-EU and campaigned for Remain in 2016. However, unlike those associated with Sir Keir Starmer, who were blinded by their ideological adherence to the EU, he did not cling to that position when it became obvious that it was time to move on. Prior to the 2017 election he indicated that he would resign from Westminster politics in favour of a return to his local political scene (having confirmed he was running for Mayor of Manchester in May 2016) and did not contest his seat in the 2017 election. But although he moved geographically he continued to take his national politics from the southern perspective of the party. In the weeks prior to the 2018 Labour Party conference the momentum for a change of policy in favour of a second referendum was making its eventual adoption inevitable. Burnham was asked about this in an interview on BBC Radio 4's Today programme in which he said:

"I have real concerns for a second vote. It would cause real unrest on the streets of Greater Manchester."

He then went on to explain the circumstances in which he felt a second referendum was appropriate. He saw it "as a last resort, when everything else has failed, when we have tried to extend article 50 to get more time, then and only then should we consider holding a second vote."

A year later his political position evolved in the context of the gulf between the national position of the party on Brexit and his own growing appreciation of the possible harm that would do in the Labour heartlands. In late November 2019, a month before the election that was to prove so disastrous for Labour Burnham became the first senior Labour figure to indicate that he would campaign for Leave if the party succeeded in forcing a second referendum. This at

a time when Corbyn continued in his futile attempt to maintain party unity by saying he would adopt a neutral position in the proposed second referendum. It was also at a time when close allies of Corbyn like John McDonnell and Diane Abbott had indicated that they would campaign for Remain.

When Burnham replaced the Brexit machinations of Westminster with the reality politics of Manchester in 2017 he immersed himself in the nitty-gritty of local politics and in the process assumed a deeper understanding of what it was that made them vote to leave the EU in 2016. This appears to have coloured his subsequent political position on the subject of Brexit. None of this however, had any bearing on national politics. Neither he nor his politics need have impacted on the wider issue of the day if it was not for the Covid pandemic. The pandemic presented a political opportunity for the new Labour leader. It was a more immediate national issue that had helped supplant the Brexit issue in the minds of the electorate.

One of the first and most important objectives of the new Labour leadership should have been regaining the trust of the "Red Wall" electorate. The first stage in achieving that objective was to undermine Boris Johnson's claim to provide a nurturing home for them in the Conservative party. Covid presented the ideal arena for this process to begin. But Starmer failed to provide the necessary leadership on this issue. In fact although he has visited Scotland and Wales since he became leader I don't think that, other than Stoke, he has visited the areas he lost in the December election. So it is no wonder that he has not been sensitive to the opportunities presented by Johnson's replacement of a national policy on Covid with a regional one. His mind and his political perspective were always somewhere else.

While Starmer may not have been willing to bring his understanding of national politics to the regions, the regions, as Greater Manchester under Andy Burnham was to show, were capable of bringing themselves to the attention of the nation. On 9 October Andy Burnham and the council

leaders of Greater Manchester held their first meeting with Government officials where they were told that the government intended to introduce tier 3 restrictions on the Greater Manchester region. The mayor and the council were told that the financial package associated with these restrictions would involve a reduction of the original 80% furlough scheme to 67%. This was rejected by Burnham and other council leaders despite being told that it was not open to negotiation. Rather than continue in a futile attempt to rely solely on gaining anything further from private consultations Burnham decided to make it into a national issue and used the media to broadcast the Government's treatment of his region to the nation. In making this stand Burnham gained the support of the Bishop of Manchester, all 10 of the regions Council leaders, and the 9 Conservative MPs of Greater Manchester. As a result it quickly became an issue that was viewed entirely as the Greater Manchester region's treatment by the Government and as such served to discredit the claims of the Government to nurture the "Red Wall" constituencies. While the Government went on to justify its actions it was always on the back foot and whatever credence it may have gained in other places it failed to jolt the feeling of unfairness that pervaded and continues to pervade the Greater Manchester region. From the point of view of Labour's need to regain the "Red Wall" it is the perspective of constituencies such as Greater Manchester that really counts and in this instance there is no doubt that the whole affair has dented the credibility of the Government's claim to nurture these constituencies. Burnham's strategy during that week in Manchester has done more in achieving that central objective of Labour than six months of Starmer's efforts at Westminster.

Listening to Italy

by Orecchiette

FEAR FOR THE FUTURE

The results of September's regional elections modified the Italian political landscape. The most significant change was for *The Five Star (M5S)*. Currently the largest group in central Government, their spectacular wipe-out is a clear threat to their future. Their defeat has been followed by the paralysis of a yet unresolved internal fratricidal struggle. Matteo Salvini, the *Lega* leader, saw his candidates suffer lower than anticipated votes. But the strong regional *Lega* leader Luca Zaia of Veneto was re-elected with a landslide (75.9%) raising questions about Salvini's position as the *Lega* leader. Particularly as Georgia Meloni, leader of *Fratelli d'Italia (FdI)* not only successfully had a candidate elected as Governor but is now increasing in popularity.

Political tensions continue but Covid has now returned to be an all-consuming country-wide preoccupation. Infections and deaths have escalated in all of Italy. The national economy was crippled by the first phase and the opportunity for an economic respite has not happened.

The Government under President Conte was generally seen as having made a steady and successful response to Covid 1. In contrast his response to the second wave has come under criticism for being unclear and slow. Recent restrictions were introduced by Government decree (*Dpcm*) but their publication was delayed because of consultations with the regions. Roberto Saviano, writing in *La Repubblica*, suggests that Conte's strategy of giving responsibility for additional restrictions to the regions is just "offloading it elsewhere".

Tito Boeri and Roberto Perotti (*La Repubblica* 27 Oct) develop the criticism further to point out an enormous error on Conte's part. To order the closure of 400,000 business (restaurants, bars, gyms, etc) which employ 1million workers should have been combined with a financial compensation package, not a promise of one in the future. This most recent *Dpcm*, issued on 26 October, will last until 24 November and orders all cafes, bars and restaurants to close from 6pm – 5am.

Osteria Plip in Mestre (opposite Venice) protested in its own way by organising a special dinner at 5am and a customer was reported to be wearing his brown pyjamas. *La Stampa* said that The Mayor of Venice was concerned by the paradox of being able to lunch with his work colleagues but not to take his family out to dinner at 7 pm.

The latest restrictions have obviously hit once again not only these businesses and their users but also the cinemas and theatres which are now completely closed. Peaceful and organised protests started throughout the country. For example, on 10 October there was a spectacular demonstration by the media industry who filled the area in front of Milan Cathedral with ranks of media workers banging in unison on their metal work boxes. An enormous banner stretched across the piazza: 'A Unique Sector A Unique Future'. This brilliantly choreographed event looked effective in publicity terms, but nothing is likely to change. The organiser Fabio Pazzini said that few of them had worked or had an income since February when Covid had hit Italy.

Then came the violent riots that broke out in Naples on 24 October. Pictures of smoke, flames and masked (for anonymity, rather than Covid) missile-throwing men, were widely published, even in UK's *The Sun*. Roberto Saviano, who has written about the mafia and region wrote, "*Naples continues to have this strange destiny, of being a territory that anticipates trends, like a laboratory in which one experiences what will happen elsewhere*" he went on to say that, "*What happened in Naples is a signal of what could happen in the rest of Italy and throughout Europe*". Tito Boeri and Roberto Perotti also explained it as: "*The riots in Naples and Rome were exploited by the Camorra and by extreme political factions but, as the protests yesterday from Turin to Catania also prove, the unease is profound in people who see themselves again brought to their knees by the pandemic after they had tried hard to get up.*"

An opposing view came from a cheerleader for violence on the right wing, Roberto Fiore. The leader of *Forza Nuova* and a self-identifying fascist was quoted in *La Repubblica*

(26 October) as saying: "*This is a strategic battle for us. We will respond to a new lockdown with a civil and uncivil disobedience*".

The riots and protests continued the next night in Rome, Turin, Milan and in many towns and cities from Sicily to Trieste in the far North East. Turin was particularly badly scarred with looting from high-end shops such as Gucci.

Matteo Renzi, a previous Prime Minister, and the leader of *Italia Viva*, a small, break-away centre left faction, always quick to make a negative remark against his old *Partito Democratico (Pd)*, protested against the closures of cinemas and theatres. His intervention was criticised by *Pd* parliamentarians who decided that he was being "irresponsible". Leader Nicola Zingaretti spelled it out: "*We are in an emergency. And we need an assumption of collective responsibility*" Renzi is actually a member of the Government.

Covid has pushed Italy to a crisis point economically and politically and coordinated action is urgently needed. Stefano Folli stated the obvious in a *La Repubblica* piece on 27 October. "*Ultimately, what many feel the need for is a government of true national unity with a prime minister and a high-profile ruling class*" but he goes on to say that it is not yet in sight. Conte, Zingaretti and Renzi can't work purposefully together, M5S are out of sight, and Folli says, "*it could be said that the premier (Conte) needs Salvini's radicalism to keep his coalition united, and Salvini needs Conte and his mistakes to feed the Northern League consensus.*" He then treats us to more political discord and blackmail: "*Giorgia Meloni (FdI) proposes an agreement between right and left on some points in exchange for a guarantee from the head of state that he will go to vote (i.e.: an election) as soon as the emergency is over.*"

Tommaso Ciriaco and Annalisa Cuzzocrea (*La Repubblica* 27 Oct) put the situation in bald terms:

"*The fear is that a political breakdown, accompanied by the ongoing social breakdown, could cause the country to collapse*"

Parliament Notes



The Agriculture Bill

[The Agriculture Bill has been going through Parliament for the last two years, to prepare for the end of Common Agriculture Policy after Brexit.

The main issues are financial support for farmers, food security, food standards, and health and environmental consequences of industrial farming.

At this stage neither of the main issues, funding farmer, and food standards for imports, are set in law. Measures to help farmers move to more ecological methods are not funded. Food security is not addressed, it is still taken for granted that the UK will continue to import 50% of its food, even when it has enough land, water and sun to grow e.g. apples and pears. The UK imports 90% of its fruit and 70% of its vegetables, horticulture is outsourced to Holland and Spain, together with the ecological cost in terms of land, water, fertiliser and pesticide use. The main concern is the immediate cost for the British consumer.

The tone of the bill is well illustrated by Victoria Prentis (The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) who said that “Clause 1(4) includes an important mention of the role of food production as part of what we do in our countryside.”

She says that “We want reasonably priced food, but produced to a standard of high ecological and animal welfare.”

In other words, food production is not central to ‘what we do in the countryside’, and this is because we import half of what we eat. The main concern is price, and the standards, not being legislated for, are a secondary preoccupation.

Labour MPs and some Conservative MPs are trying to force into the Bill a clear defence of standards for imports, and clearer funding for farmers, without success so far.

Amendments to legislate on standards have gone back and forth in the Commons and the Lords, to be defeated each time in the Commons.]

Here is a sample of the discussions.

25 February 2020 — Commons

Daniel Zeichner (Cambridge) (Lab)

Public Bill Committee

The Opposition seek to work constructively to improve the Bill, but also to tease out what we see as some of the underlying contradictions, not least by pointing out that the Government are proposing a framework system for agriculture that does not see food production as a key part of its role. I quite understand why those fighting for a shift to environmental goods—they have fought the good fight for many years—may be nervous about the risk of business as usual through the back door, but we must be aware that just exporting our environmental damage somewhere else does not help. I must say that the Secretary of State’s continuing refusal to put into law the standards we need to apply to imported food does little to assuage concerns, and his comments at the weekend did little to reassure us. We will return to that at a later stage.

Members do not just have to take my word for that. They might want to look, for instance, at the powerful response to the new immigration system from the British Poultry Council last week. Its chief executive, Richard Griffiths, said the proposals

“have shown a complete disregard for British food production and will have a crippling effect on our national food security”—a very strong statement from an industry leader. He continued, and this is the salient point for this morning:

“We cannot run the risk of creating a two-tier food system where we import food produced to lower standards and only the affluent can afford high quality British produce”.

That is the danger—some farmers paid via environmental land management schemes to do good things, with a bit of food production on the side, while the food that most people in our country eat is imported to lower standards. That is the risk, and we will not take it.

[...]

The Government’s White Paper “Health and Harmony: the future for food, farming and the environment in a Green Brexit”, which prefigured the Bill, highlighted the key links between our agricultural and food supply systems

and public health outcomes. Yet, as my predecessor pointed out, where has health gone in the Bill? It does not seem to be there, and we think it should be.

Amendment 34 would therefore include “improving public health” in the list of public goods for which farmers would be eligible to receive financial assistance. Amendment 35 outlines specific priority areas we believe should receive funding, including the key areas of reducing antibiotic use; reducing harm from the use of chemicals and pesticides, particularly pesticide residue on food; and increasing the availability and affordability of healthy produce such as fruits, vegetables and pulses to encourage healthier diets.

Reducing antibiotic use in particular is a clear global public good. We know that antimicrobial resistance is increasing across the world and that the United Nations has identified the overuse of antibiotics in farming as one of the biggest emerging threats to human health. In particular, routine preventive dosing of healthy animals with antibiotics has implications for the rise of potentially fatal viruses, and we have already seen outbreaks of viral diseases that have spread to people, such as bird flu and swine flu, which have been directly linked to intensive farming. [This was said before the pandemic.]

Over the last few years, our farmers have rightly cut back on using antibiotics. We appreciate that, but we believe that more needs to be done. We also think that moving outside the European Union and its rules has put a question mark over our position on that. At the moment, we have our UK voluntary standard produced by RUMA—the Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture alliance—which requires farmers to avoid routine use of antibiotics, but we still do not have legislation banning the routine use of preventive antibiotics on groups of healthy animals in the UK.

The European Union has seen the light and has agreed to end the use of all routine antibiotic use, including group preventive treatments, by January 2022. So far as I am aware, however, we have heard nothing from the Government on whether we will follow suit. I would

appreciate the Minister's observations.

We believe that we need concrete incentives in the Bill to reduce antibiotic use now. I am well aware that farmers operate in a marketplace and need to produce food at affordable prices, and indeed at various price points. That is why we believe that help for people is legitimate when we want to make that change. Finance should be made available to support farmers to make those changes.

[...]

We are using far less of our agricultural land to produce fruit and vegetables than we could—only 1.4% in England, when the Public Health Policy Evaluation Unit estimates that we could be using up to 19% of land to cultivate crops of fruit and vegetables. Looking back, we had a very different mix in past times. This is part of the wider discussion about the extent to which we are part of a global trading system and want to import things that we could very well produce here. Again, it is part of the economic trade-offs.

Ruth Jones Newport West, Shadow Minister (Environment, food and Rural Affairs)

The Bill talks a great deal about “powers” rather than “duties”, which is great if we have a Secretary of State who is completely committed. However, let us not rely on Secretaries of State as individuals; let us legislate, so that we have it in writing and know exactly what we are all working towards.

12 October — Commons

George Freeman (Mid Norfolk) (Con)

[After praising the Bill]

But there is a major problem: the Government, despite endorsing all of that vision, are today stripping out the proper establishment of the commission that the Secretary of State for International Trade herself agreed to, carefully negotiated in the House of Lords. They are asking us to rely on CRaG—a process agreed decades ago that was not designed for this purpose, and which will mean that this House will not have a say on trade deals—and asking us to rely on the WTO, which specifically prohibits animal welfare and food production standards as a legal basis for any trade restrictions. We are saying that we defend farming and the standards that we support, but denying this House the means to guarantee them.

20 October 2020 — Lords

[The Lords discuss an amendment to make food standards compulsory in law.]

Lord Grantchester (Labour) Shadow Minister for Environment, Food and

Rural Affairs

Without Amendment 16B under E1, the biggest threat is to the consumer, who will have to negotiate a minefield of food of differing standards, especially from potential US imports from the Government's imperative to align with America through a trade deal. We have heard of the practices undertaken there. In the US, there are 26,500 hospitalisations and 420 deaths a year from salmonella. Compare that to the EU, home of 120 million more people, where 1,766 hospitalisations and 10 deaths is the comparative figure. This would be a further challenge to the NHS.

I acknowledge that the Government are beginning to listen. Although in insufficient form, the Trade and Agriculture Commission has been set up and sector-specific trade advisory groups are now involved in the process. There is now the Select Committee on International Trade in the Commons and the EU International Agreements Sub-Committee in your Lordships' House. But the Government need to listen to the crescendo of voices that greeted the results of the Commons considerations with dismay: farmers;

chefs; environmentalists; welfare proponents; consumers, individually as well as through their organisations; the farming unions; Sustain; Green Alliance; RSPCA; Which?; and the Future British Standards Coalition. The Government need to move further.

In a conversation with the Minister and the Bill team on Monday, which we thank the noble Lord for facilitating, the Minister expressed the view that the Commons has rejected standard amendments three times already. [...]

Today, I call on the House to support the amendment in my name. It allows the Government to read their manifesto commitment again and to take action to fulfil it. As a nation, we cannot produce all the wholesome food we need. We wish the food that countries sell us to be at its best. In encouraging trade to supply our food, the Government must concentrate on promoting the best to come forward—*nil satis nisi optimum*. The Government's manifesto statement is not that old, so I ask the House to support this amendment with a resounding vote. Let us get standards done.

According to the Morning Star of 24th October, the Green Party has not signed up the IHRA definition of antisemitism.

“PRESS regulators have ruled that the Jewish Chronicle printed inaccuracies and misled its readers in a story about alleged anti-semitism in the Green Party.

The newspaper was forced to publish a full correction on Thursday after the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO) upheld a complaint by the Greens' home-affairs spokesman, Shahrar Ali.”

The article also accused several other Green candidates who were standing in the 2019 general election of breaching the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism, which the party has not signed up to.

Campaigners argue that the IHRA definition is being used to silence legitimate criticism of Israel and the ability to speak up for the Palestinian cause.

It is not the first time that the Jewish Chronicle has been rapped by the press regulator over articles about alleged antisemitism on the left and in the Palestinian solidarity movement.

Several people have successfully sued the paper. Earlier this year the Jewish Chronicle was ordered to publish a 1,300- word adjudication after printing a series of false allegations of bullying and antisemitism against Labour activist Audrey White, who also won “substantial damages,” over the issue.”

https://morningstaronline.co.uk/sites/default/files/Morning_Star_2020_10_24.pdf

Before we get too excited, some in the leadership of the Greens intend to sign up to the definition.

Notes on the News

By Gwydion M. Williams

“If It Prospers, It’s Not Socialism”

There’s an old saying about how politics adjusts to power-struggles:

“Treason never prospers.

“What’s the reason?

“Why, if it prospers,

“None dare call it treason.”¹

That was from Sir John Harrington, a courtier to Queen Elizabeth and then King James.² And under Elizabeth he had been close to Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, who actually was executed for treason after a foolish challenge to her authority. Harrington would have been aware that those who successfully broke existing rules create a new Normal.

Since World War One, almost all successful radical politics was identified as socialist or communist, before it won. Only when opposition became futile did the centre-right suddenly claim it was inherent in their notion of Freedom.

State intervention in the economy used to be socialist but now is normal. The New Right notion of eventually eliminating it has been quietly dropped. Instead the state owns as little as possible, but gives vast subsidies to private companies doing jobs that state corporations once did as well or better. Notably and disastrously with the Covid-19 crisis.

Ending Imperialism, enforcing equality for women and enforcing equality for non-whites were largely pushed by socialists and communists. With communists much more fervent, at least when they weren’t talking about Soviet failures to live up to the original ideals.

I did an article about this, *The Left Redefined ‘The Normal’*.³ But hardly anyone took notice.

The left made life easy for right-wingers, by seldom making such points. In the fervour of 1960s Radicalism, all existing systems were denounced as

1 <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/1298635-treason-never-prospers-what-s-the-reason-why-if-it-prosper>

2 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Harrington_\(writer\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Harrington_(writer))

3 <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/m-articles-by-topic/m99-topic-menus-from-long-revolution-website/998-from-labour-affairs/the-french-revolution-and-its-unstable-politics/against-globalisation/the-left-redefined-the-normal/>

Capitalist and Wicked.

It is foolish to talk about two rival abstractions, Capitalism or Socialism.

The reality in most of the world is systems where capitalism dominates, but many socialist ideas have been borrowed.

This began with Bismarck in the 1870s. Was expanded for economic management by ex-socialist Mussolini, who also opposed and even reversed the progressive social ideals that socialists shared with liberals. The same was done by Hitler and National Socialism, combined with many more anti-progressive ideas than Italian Fascism. And Roosevelt’s New Deal borrowed the economics of Fascism but was mildly progressive. Mild, because he could not get anything done without the votes in Congress of Southern Democrats committed to White Racism. But much good was done.

The West till the 1980s continued this pattern – mildly progressive politics, including tolerance for homosexuality, which the Soviets had rejected in the 1930s and held out against till the end. And the West overtook them on Rights of Woman in the 1970s.

The general Soviet failure from the 1970s opened the way for Reagan and Thatcher to reaffirm Capitalism as a virtuous system. To promise to purge the system of socialism and restore the pre-1914 pattern of a small state and low taxation.

Also a greedy and excessively privileged ruling class, though this was said quietly.

And after four decades of their power, we do not have a small state.

We do not have low taxation.

We do have vast gains by a greedy and excessively privileged ruling class. They have won back a lot of what they conceded from the 1940s to 1970s – excellent years for ordinary people.

The 1980s onwards have been an Economic Miracle for the rich. But their noisy claims that the economy as a whole would grow faster have been untrue.

Trickle-down proved false. And most left-wingers were timidly quiet on the issue.

‘Feed the Rich’ as a slogan would not have won elections – but right-wing politics has always been dominated by rich people. Mostly they chose to look after themselves and let small businesses perish. Let middle-class professionals suffer, trusting that most of them would remain scared of socialism. And trusting that most voters would be blind to how much socialism had been retained.

Most on the left were helpful by also not saying this.

Labour has been crippled by the notion that it either demands Instant Socialism or yields to every demand made by the rich. This included bailing out the rich after the 2008 crisis and dumping the cost on ordinary people.

Corbyn stood up against this, and got the votes of the discontented young. But also offended many Labour traditionalists.

Starmer promised balance.

So far, he has been weak about denouncing the rich.

Weak on saying that what Labour and Tories were agreed upon from the 1940s to 1970s was an excellent system. That though reforms were needed in the 1980s, those actually carried through were mostly a bad idea.

He could still mend this. Take advantage of probable chaos and misery after Brexit, especially if it ends as a No-Deal Brexit.

Or he could miss the opportunity, and become marginal.

And leaders can be replaced, if they are visibly doing a bad job.

[Written before Corbyn’s suspension.]

Democracy Restored in Bolivia

Last month, I reminded readers about the US-backed coup against Evo Morales in Bolivia.

Now the outrage has been reversed.

“The Bolivian left’s election win is a positive sign, but it inherits a dire situation...

“Racism against the indigenous majority became overt on the streets; [the] caretaker cabinet originally included not one indigenous minister.

“The ostensibly transitional government

also made major changes to policy. It cosied up to the Trump administration, deported 700 Cuban doctors who were providing public healthcare, and signalled its intention to pursue the old neoliberal policies of privatisation and austerity. Many doubted that the regime would ever allow a democratic election.

"Yet its power was limited. The working-class Bolivians who comprise the Mas base could still shut down the country with road blockades and strikes. The threat of mass disruption, combined with parliamentary pressure by Mas legislators and global scrutiny, ensured there would be new elections and Mas would be allowed to compete in them.

"Arce's landslide margin of victory left no room to contest the results...

"Even the Organization of American States (OAS), followed suit. The OAS had helped precipitate last year's coup with claims, based on suspect data analysis, that the Morales administration committed fraud in the October 2019 election."⁴

But will the new leadership be intimidated by the way the world ignored them after the seizure of power last year? Time will tell.

Trump and the USA's Losers

I write ahead of the election of 3rd November, which anyway may not be settled quickly.

But whatever the outcome, it is good to understand why Trump is where he is:

"For the past four years, I've followed a group of steelworkers in Indiana — men and women, Black and white — who had worked at a factory that moved to Mexico... I followed them as they applied for new jobs, some of which paid half as much as they made before.

"A machinist named Tim carried his steelworker union card in his wallet for years after the factory closed, just to remind himself who he was. Tim grew up in a union household. His dad had been an autoworker; his grandfather, a coal miner...

"Tim had such faith in Democrats that he didn't worry when President Bill Clinton pushed the North American Free Trade Agreement over the finish line in 1993. Nor did he worry when Mr. Clinton normalized trade with China in 2000. But then the factory where Tim worked moved to Shanghai. And the next one moved to Mexico.

"By the time I met Tim, he loathed the Clintons and the Democratic Party. Democrats had gotten in bed with

the corporations, while no one was looking. Tim felt betrayed, and politically abandoned — until Mr. Trump came along...

"About 55 percent of voters who expected to support Mr. Trump during the 2016 primaries identified as working class...

"Many of those same counties that hemorrhaged factory jobs also saw large increases in undocumented immigrants competing for the unskilled jobs that remained — cleaning hotel rooms, slaughtering chickens and mowing lawns. Their arrival fueled still more resentment of the world beyond America's borders."⁵

The US Democrats betrayed their people. Bernie Saunders would have corrected this, but he lost out in the primaries.

Assuming Biden wins, the problem will remain.

Hurricanes Annie and Able for 2021?

"Epsilon Becomes the 10th Hurricane This Season..."

"This year's Atlantic hurricane season is one of the most active on record, meteorologists said. So far, there have been 26 named storms, of which 10 were hurricanes. It's near the 2005 record of 27 named storms, 14 of which were hurricanes, according to the NOAA.

"Since the satellite era began in 1966, there have been only four other years with more than 10 hurricanes by Oct. 20, including 1969, 1995, 2005 and 2017."⁶

More records broken — but that's almost normal for recent years.

"Hurricane Delta makes landfall in storm-battered Louisiana..."

"This is the 10th named storm to make US landfall so far this year, breaking a record that has stood since 1916."⁷

But after Hurricanes Sally, Teddy etc., why do we suddenly have Hurricanes Delta and Epsilon? Could it be a leaking influence from the BBC's new version of *Brave New World*?

The rule from 1953 was that named storms in the North Atlantic Ocean got a woman's name, in alphabetic sequence. But leaving out Q, U, X, Y and Z: these have few common names for English-speakers.⁸

5 <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/16/opinion/trump-working-class-economy.html>

6 <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/21/world/americas/hurricane-epsilon.html>

7 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-54489432>

8 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tropical_cyclone_naming#North_Atlantic_Ocean

4 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/oct/21/bolivian-left-election-win-covid-luis-arce-bolivia>

Women found this unfair, so from 1979 the names alternated between female and male.⁹ But keeping the original 21 letters, so that when 2005 overran they used the English names for letters in the Greek alphabet.

Now 2020 has also outrun common names. Time, surely, to use both a female and a male name for each letter.

Snippets

Going Carbon-Neutral

"Xi Jinping's announcement last week that China would achieve carbon neutrality before 2060 was greeted with surprise. Few outside China expected this hugely important commitment so soon. But it reflects three motivations: awareness in China that climate change will cause it huge harm; a desire to be a responsible global leader; and growing confidence that technological progress can make net-zero emissions attainable without interrupting China's path to prosperity.

"That confidence is justified by dramatic global changes over the past 10 years. Solar electricity costs have fallen by 90 per cent, wind by 60 per cent and lithium-ion battery costs by 87 per cent. Initial public subsidies have created such strong economies of scale and steep learning curves that the need for subsidies is diminishing fast. Over the next decade, the cost of producing green hydrogen via electrolysis will also fall significantly.

"As a result, countries can now build zero-carbon electricity systems with total costs no higher than for fossil fuel-based systems. They should electrify as much of the economy as possible. In passenger road transport, that will be straightforward and cheap. In more challenging sectors, such as steel and cement, aviation and shipping, carbon capture and storage, bioenergy and hydrogen will also play a role."¹⁰

Australia Does Not Understand

'The Natural'

Australian politics can get rough — but no one expects a civil war there. The dominant white population has a federal system. And there are no gaps between potential Parties of Government that are large enough for many people to think about killing for them.

That comes from being an offshoot of British society, where the ruling class had a run of wars in the 17th century.

9 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_historical_tropical_cyclone_names

10 <https://www.ft.com/content/c5239cb9-6a18-4b76-b219-d8568fbc67fa>

These ended without a clear winner, so very few wanted further unofficial violence.

Or not for as long as the ruling class was secure.

In British North America, they rebelled because the London elite excluded their equivalents in North America from the sort of equal power they wanted. The original demand was 'no taxation without representation'.

In Ireland, Home Rule would have meant most MPs elected by Roman Catholics. So even though Home Rule or Independence parties had Protestants among their leaders, most Protestants were ready to start a civil war to stop it. And many Britons said 'Ulster Will Fight and Ulster Will Be Right'.

And that's with long-running traditions of rule by Parliament. China after overthrowing its Imperial dynasty had continuous civil wars from 1911 to 1949. The Communists did not allow open opposition, and peace has been maintained ever since.

Australia was one of several countries in East Asia and Australasia that borrowed Chinese methods and contained Covid-19. Though not as well as China.

But their multi-party democracy means the current government denies Climate Change, despite a bout of forest fires last time it was summer there. And perhaps again soon, since Britain's winter is their summer.

Yet Australia sees fit to tell off China for being an efficient government. And for stopping traditional moderate Islam in Xinjiang from lurching into violent extremism.

China is told off for successfully preventing the rise of a hostile version of Islam. One that the West has notably failed to keep control of.

Australians live in one of the most human-hostile parts of the inhabitable globe. The advanced mammals of Eurasia never got there. But it seems that they learn nothing from nature as they can easily observe it.

The West Failing

From a Cosmopolitan site called *Aeon*:

"Postwar prosperity depended on a truce between capitalist growth and democratic fairness. Is it possible to get it back?"

"The promise of the neoliberal era to unleash the power of individual incentives to spread prosperity has not been fulfilled. Average growth rates across the advanced capitalist systems failed to

match those of the postwar boom years. Since the 1970s, an increasingly unequal income distribution has meant that, for many, living standards failed to improve by much at all in subsequent decades. In the 1970s, strikes, demonstrations, riots and even terrorism expressed social tensions. By the 1990s, a resentful apathy, reflected in falling voter turnout and disengagement with formal party politics, signalled mass frustrations. The neoliberal revolution succeeded not only in shifting policy, but in fundamentally undermining the institutional preconditions of democratic capitalism. Governments progressively delegated important policy decisions to non-elected bodies, some of them supranational. Meanwhile, anti-union legislation and the declining bargaining power resulting from offshoring and heightened global competition took a heavy toll on worker rights."¹¹

Sadly, cosmopolitanism failed in the 1970s. Its remnants failed again in the 1990s, when liberals decided that privileges for the greedy rich were part of 'The Natural'.

Criminal Violence Found Slightly Naughty

I'd suppose you remember the dramatic toppling in Bristol of the statue that had held up an 18th century slave-trader as an admirable person.

Dozens of identifiable people were photographed in the mob action.

So what happened?

"Five men allegedly involved in the toppling of the statue of the slave trader Edward Colston in Bristol have been offered cautions by the police on the condition they explain the reasons for their actions to a history commission.

"The men would also have to pay a fine that would go to a charity supporting people from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities in Bristol."¹²

Britain's governing system has survived so far, because those in charge tend to remember at critical moments that it is *not* natural at all. That it depends on everyone seeing it as reasonable.

Theft by the Rich is Also 'Slightly Naughty'

"Africa has lost nearly \$89bn a year in illicit financial flows such as tax evasion and theft, amounting to more than it receives in development aid, a United

¹¹ <https://aeon.co/essays/postwar-prosperity-depended-on-a-truce-between-capitalism-and-democracy>

¹² <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/18/men-allegedly-involved-in-toppling-of-colston-statue-offered-cautions>

Nations study has showed.

"The estimate, in the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development's (UNCTAD) 248-page report, is its most comprehensive to date for Africa. It shows an increasing trend over time and is higher than most previous estimates."¹³

That was at the end of September. It got very little media attention.

It is safe to assume that nothing will be done about all of the things that make it easy for the rich to cheat and steal.

Wicked Russians and Good Russian Gas

"Nord Stream 2 will be completed, timing is unknown - German Foreign Minister".¹⁴

They could almost say "my money and my mouth lead separate lives".

Talk as if Russians are tyrants and mad poisoners. But act as if they don't believe it.

And Yet We Change

"Human 'microevolution' sees more people born without wisdom teeth and an extra artery..."

"Australian researchers ... claim the human race is evolving faster than it has done at any point in the past 250 years."¹⁵

Imaginary Privacy

"The Police Can Probably Break Into Your iPhone

"At least 2,000 law enforcement agencies have tools to get into encrypted smartphones, according to new research, and they are using them far more than previously known."¹⁶

That's the USA, but Britain would have the same. And every other major power.

Poland Losing Catholicism

For centuries, remaining Catholic was part of being Polish.

But now they rule themselves, will this

¹³ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/9/29/illegal-money-flows-from-africa-near-90bn-un-study-says>

¹⁴ <https://tass.com/world/1213329>

¹⁵ <https://news.sky.com/story/human-microevolution-sees-more-people-born-without-wisdom-teeth-and-an-extra-artery-12099689>

¹⁶ <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/21/technology/iphone-encryption-police.html>

Continued On Page 13

Stephen Kinnock and the West Bank

The following is an edited version of a speech by Labour Foreign Affairs spokesman Stephen Kinnock MP on Israeli occupation and settlement in the West Bank, followed by my comments. He was opening a short debate in the House of Commons on 24 September 2020, which had been granted to him back in March 2020 before he became a Labour Foreign Affairs spokesman.

Read on:

I beg to move that this House has considered settlement and annexation of the Occupied Palestinian territories. ...

I start by setting out three core principles, which I hope and believe are shared by all who are taking part in this debate.

First, this is not about religion or ethnicity. It is not a question of Arab, Muslim or Jewish identity. It is about upholding the universal norms and values that we hold dear, and it is about working to constrain and reverse the actions of those who seek to undermine those norms and values. Nor is this about being pro-Israel or pro-Palestine. This is about striving for peace, justice and security for all.

Secondly, we condemn violence in all its forms, whether it is Hamas launching rockets or the Israel Defence Forces bombarding Gaza or bulldozing Bedouin villages to make way for illegal settlements. We oppose any and all actions that

lead to the death and destruction that have so tragically come to define this conflict.

Thirdly, we believe passionately in the rule of law. Indeed, our point of departure is that the rule of law is not up for negotiation. It is not some bargaining chip that can be tossed on to the table in exchange for concessions or compromises; it is the very cornerstone of the rules-based order and the bedrock of the norms, rights and values that we cherish and seek to defend.

I believe that our defence of the rule of law matters more now than it has done at any time since 1945, because we stand today at a moment in history when the rule of law is under threat across the world. The Chinese Communist party has breached the Sino-British declaration on Hong Kong, the Russian Government annexed Crimea in 2014 and, deeply regrettably, even our own Government are willing to renege

on their commitment to a legally binding treaty.

Israel's consistent flouting of UN resolutions and the fourth Geneva convention has undermined the rules-based order for decades, and the international community can no longer just look the other way. Both sides in this conflict have witnessed horrific bloodshed and both sides deserve an end to the fear and suffering that they have had to experience. That is why it is so vital and urgent that the rule of law be brought to bear as the foundation upon which a viable and sustainable Palestine can be negotiated and built—a Palestine that protects the rights of its citizens and lives in peace with its neighbours.

The illegal Israeli settlements undermine all three of the principles that I have set out. They drive and amplify the vicious identity politics that poisons this conflict. They cause violence on a daily basis and they are a flagrant breach of international law, yet they continue and expand.

In 2018, we marked 25 years since the signing of the Oslo accords. That moment in 1993 was meant to herald a new and lasting era of peace and co-existence—the beginning of a genuine two-state solution—but since then, the number of illegal settlers has increased from 258,000 to more than 610,000. Fifty thousand homes and properties have been demolished, and an illegal separation barrier has been built that carves up the west bank and brutally disconnects towns, cities, families and communities from each other. What have the Israeli people experienced in that time? They have experienced insecurity, fear of attacks through suicide bombings, rockets and mortars, knife attacks and car rammings. None of this will end while there is no proper peace and no end to the occupation. It has been a disaster for all sides in this conflict.

Responding to Jim Shannon (DUP) about the agreement between Israel

Continued From Page 12

hold?

Poland is also part of secular European culture, where religious authority is everywhere in decline.

"Surveys suggest that church attendance among the young in Poland is falling at the fastest rate in the world, with steep declines in trust in the church as an institution. A poll conducted last year for IBP suggested that 54 per cent of Poles do not trust the Church, against 33 per cent who do".¹⁷

Most of the priests support right-wing parties. But also parties that believe in helping the poor, while the rival liberals were determined to neglect them and trust New Right economics.

With time, things must change.

Disney Not Dumbo

"When played on the Disney+ streaming service, films such as Dumbo, Peter Pan and Jungle Book now flash up with a warning about stereotypes.

"This programme includes negative depictions and/or mistreatment of people or cultures,' the warning says.

"These stereotypes were wrong then and are wrong now.'

"The message adds that rather than remove the content, 'we want to acknowledge its harmful impact, learn from it and spark conversation to create a more inclusive future together'.¹⁸

I liked little from the actual Walt Disney era. But whoever runs it now is doing quite well.

Old newsnotes at the magazine website.

I also write regular blogs - <https://www.quora.com/q/mrgwydionmwilliams>

17 <https://www.ft.com/content/640bc895-8232-4225-9a95-363a779ff531>

18 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-54566087>

and UAE, he said:

We certainly welcome any steps towards peace and conflict resolution, but we should be realistic about what the so-called Abraham accords really signify. The reality is that the United Arab Emirates and Israel have never been at war with each other. They have pre-existing and long-standing relations. Indeed, they have co-operated on military matters, in counter-revolutions, and in coups in many of the Arab League states. We should be realistic that this is really more the formalisation of pre-existing relations, rather than something new. Nevertheless, it is to be welcomed.

Responding to Stephen Crabb (Con), who accused Palestinians of missing opportunities for a solution, he said:

I agree that opportunities have been missed on all sides—there is no doubt about that—but the reality is that the constant feature of everything that has happened since 1993 has been the expansion of the settlements, which are a flagrant breach of international law. Once we start to erode the foundations of international law on which all the negotiations are based, they are rendered effectively meaningless. We need to bear that in mind as we look back on what has happened since 1993, but it is also vital that we look to the future with hope and optimism.

It is against that backdrop that President Trump and the Prime Minister Netanyahu have come forward with their so-called deal of the century. This is not a deal. It is not a plan. It is not even a starting point for talks. It is a proposal that is fundamentally flawed because it has no basis in law. It is a land and power grab that would mean Israel seizing around 40% of the west bank, with full military and security control over the Palestinian people and their resources. Which Government, in their right mind, would ever agree to such terms? Why would the Palestinian Authority ever enter into talks on the basis of a document that effectively legitimises attempts to destroy any chance of an independent sovereign Palestine?

Responding to Christian Wakeford

(Con), who suggested that Trump's "deal of the century" could well be the starting point for a conversation, he said:

But if one is seeking to restart negotiations, one needs to do so on the basis of a plan that has legitimacy. It is not possible to move forward if the plan is actually based on breaking the law. Countless UN resolutions have pointed out that the settlements, as they stand, are illegal, so that has to be taken off the table before there is even a basis for starting to talk. That is why it is perfectly understandable why the Palestinian Authority is refusing to engage on that basis.

The Foreign Secretary and his Ministers continue to present the Trump-Netanyahu plan as a basis for talks. They ask the Palestinians to compromise, yet the Palestinians have already ceded 78% of their land to Israel. How much more can they be asked to compromise? ...

The Foreign Secretary and Ministers also say that the Palestinian side should make a counter-offer. Well, they have: a two-state solution, as already set out in countless UN resolutions and based on 1967 lines. That is the counter-offer. Prime Minister Netanyahu's coalition had agreed that Israel would begin *de jure* annexation from 1 July. Thankfully, the Israeli Government have rowed back on that for now, but what we are instead witnessing is more annexation by stealth. Netanyahu announced approval of preliminary plans for 3,500 new housing units in a new settlement in the E1 area between Jerusalem and Ma'ale Adumim, thus severing East Jerusalem's contiguity with the rest of the west bank. ...

If one looks at the map, one sees it is not really a viable geographical area anymore; it is an archipelago of patches of land that are no longer connected to each other. E1 and E2 would in many ways represent the final nail in the coffin of the two-state solution in my view.

Building on E1 is more of a danger to the two-state outcome than the formal annexation of parts of the west bank. It has long been seen by the UK, France and Germany as a red line. Another huge settlement plan of 7,000 units has been approved at

Efrat to the south of Bethlehem, often labelled E2. In both cases, the reality is that the Israeli Government hold all the cards, while the Palestinian Authority have limited power and must rely on international solidarity.

Those who take a more sympathetic view of the actions of the Israeli Government will no doubt point to the so-called Abraham accords, which were signed by UAE and Bahrain at the White House on 13 August, and which commit those states to the normalisation of relations with Israel. Yet the reality is that the Abraham accords are simply the formalisation of pre-existing and well-established relations between the signatories. Those states have been working together for years on joint military operations, coups and counter-revolutions. For the Palestinian people, nothing has changed. The reality is the creeping annexation of their land continuing and accelerating.

Actions speak louder than words. The question we must therefore address today is how the British Government can use their position as a leading member of the international community to press the Israeli Government to pull back from creeping annexation and to re-engage in talks on the basis of a viable two-state solution. The problem we face is that the deadlock will continue as long as Israel rejects any deal that includes Jerusalem and does not mean Israel keeps the Jordan valley, rejects a sovereign viable Palestinian state, and will negotiate only on the basis of a plan that annexes occupied territory and includes total security control on any Palestinian entity, including control of all borders. Israel must drop those preconditions. There have already been some attempts by European states to assert their influence. For instance, 11 states, including the UK, Germany and France, joined in a *démarche* to the Israeli Foreign Ministry on 1 May opposing Netanyahu's annexation plans. But together the international community must go further.

Responding to Matt Western (Lab), who suggested that the accords struck by Israel with UAE and Bahrain might provide an opportunity for the UK and Europe to gain extra leverage

to bring about some sort of change in Israeli policy, he said:

That is absolutely a step in the right direction, although I think it needs to be taken with a pinch of salt, for the reasons that I have set out. The reality is that as long as the basis for the talks is the so-called Trump-Netanyahu plan, it is a non-starter, because that plan violates international law.

We should explore the potential for the International Criminal Court to play a role. The Israeli Attorney General's office has already warned the Israeli Prime Minister that annexation could trigger an investigation of "senior Army officers, civil service officials and heads of regional councils of West Bank settlements".

It is essential that the UK condemns any further creeping annexation, but condemnation alone will never be enough. To this end, the UK Government must take the following steps with urgency.

First, they must immediately recognise the state of Palestine on the basis of the 1967 lines. The UK Government argue that recognition should follow successful negotiations, but the logic of this argument is deeply flawed and partisan. It suggests that we are happy to see a 53-year-old occupation persist, legitimising the illegal actions of the Israeli Government and contributing to the brutality and violence that shame us all.

Secondly, the Government must ban all products that originate from Israeli settlements in the occupied territories. Profiting from such products is tantamount to profiting from the proceeds of crime, and it must stop. When we trade with these settlements, we are essentially telling the world that international law does not matter, and such trade legitimises and facilitates the existence and expansion of the settlements. In 2014, it was right that the UK, as part of the European Union, prohibited trade with Crimea following its illegal annexation by Russia. It is crucial that we are consistent in our application of international law.

Thirdly, the Government must act to end the involvement of UK-based companies within the illegal

settlements. In March, the UN published a list of companies that are involved in the settlements, which included JCB, Opodo and Greenkote PLC. Charities actively involved in illegal settlement projects should not be eligible for the privileges of charitable status, including tax exemption. What steps will our Government now take to hold these companies and charities to account? I look forward to hearing the Minister's views on these points. These measures must be put in place immediately: no more excuses, and no more obfuscation from this Government.

Standing here in the Chamber today, it is easy to forget the human cost of this conflict. Visiting the west bank and East Jerusalem with Labour Friends of Palestine and the Middle East and the Council for Arab-British Understanding in 2014, I saw how the settlements touched the lives of those in the occupied territories. I think of the father from Gaza I met in Makassed hospital who was nursing his four-year-old double-amputee son and worrying about his wife in another hospital 20 miles away, who had also had both her legs amputated. I think of the Bedouin community of Khan al-Ahmar, whose residents live in perpetual fear of military demolitions and harassment. I think of the quarter of a million children across the Palestinian territories who the UN identifies as in need of psychosocial support and child protection interventions. What future can these children look forward to? What hope can we offer them? A 10-year-old child in Gaza will already have witnessed three wars and nothing but the siege.

I therefore rise today to convey this simple message to the Minister: act now. Act now to show that Britain is still a country that will give voice to the voiceless and stand up for the rights of the oppressed. Act now to show that Britain is still a beacon of

hope and a country that stands tall in the world and strives relentlessly for peace and justice. Act now to help us to believe that yours is a Government who still believe in the rule of law.

Reply to the debate by Stephen Kinnock:

I thank all right hon. and hon. Members present for what has been a rich and multifaceted debate. If I had to distil it, I think there are five really important points that we need to take away from it.

First, the UAE deal has not stopped annexation. The settlements continue. Planning has been approved for 3,500 new units in E1 and 7,000 in E2. It is blatantly not the case that annexation and settlements have stopped, so we should shoot that fox.

Secondly, the Trump plan has to be taken off the table. It is not a viable basis for negotiations. It represents the breaking of international law.

Thirdly, the British Government must recognise Palestine immediately, on the basis of 1967 lines; otherwise, we are simply not having a realistic or constructive engagement in this process.

Fourthly, on banning trade in products, the Minister kept saying that this is about banning trade in products from Israel, but it is not Israel that we are talking about. The illegal settlements are not Israel. They are illegally occupied territory that should belong to the Palestinians, as my hon. Friend the Member for Coventry South (Zarah Sultana) correctly pointed out.

Finally, we need to act against those British companies that are involved in the illegal settlements. It is all very well having guidelines and encouragement, but that is clearly not working. It is time for the British Government to step up to the plate. It is time for tangible action. Hand wringing and expressions of outrage will no longer cut it. We need to see action, and we need to see it now.

Comments by David Morrison:

According to the Jewish Chronicle (25 October) [\[1\]](#), the Labour leadership was hauled over the coals by the Board of Deputies and the Jewish Leadership Council because of Stephen Kinnock's speech. Shadow Foreign Secretary Lisa Nandy had to meet them and explain that Keir Starmer was "infuriated" with the tone of Kinnock's speech and that he had been given "a dressing down" as a punishment, though he was being allowed to retain his position as a shadow foreign affairs spokesman (for

Asia and the Pacific) under Lisa Nandy, At the time of writing he is still listed as such on the Labour Party website.

Keir Starmer objected to the “tone” of Stephen Kinnock’s speech, not to any specific element of its content otherwise we would have heard about it – and most likely Kinnock would no longer be a Labour spokesman. The central message of his speech was that Israel’s construction of settlements in territory it occupies on the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) is contrary to international law. Starmer couldn’t possibly object to that because it is true: colonisation by an occupying power is contrary to Article 49.6 of the 4th Geneva Convention, which states:

“The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies.”

Israel has been engaging unceasingly in colonising activity in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) for over half a century since 1967.

In September 1967, the Israeli Prime Minister was informed by the Israeli Foreign Office legal adviser Theodor Meron that:

“civilian settlement in the administered territories contravenes explicit provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention” [2].

So from the outset of its colonisation project Israel was fully aware that the project was in breach of international law.

(Meron later emigrated to the US and went on to become President of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia).

Israeli war crimes

Stephen Kinnock could have infuriated Keir Starmer further if he had quoted the words of ICC Prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, when she announced her decision last December to open a preliminary examination into the “situation in Palestine”. On settlement building, she said:

“There is a reasonable basis to believe that in the context of Israel’s occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, members of the Israeli authorities have committed war crimes under article 8(2)(b)(viii) [of the Rome Statute of the ICC] in relation, inter alia, to the transfer of Israeli civilians into the West Bank since 13 June 2014.” [3]

Article 8(2)(b)(viii) of the Rome Statute defines

“the transfer, directly or indirectly, by the Occupying Power of parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies”

to be a war crime.

In the light of this, there is a prima facie case that Israeli individuals responsible for this colonisation project, including the present Israeli Prime Minister, are guilty of war crimes. And it may be that Americans and others who provide funds for the project could be prosecuted for aiding and abetting their war crimes. Both the present US Ambassador to Israel, David Friedman, and the US President’s son-in-law, Jared Kushner, have provided funds for settlement building.

There is little doubt that war crimes as defined in the Rome Statute have been committed by Israeli individuals in implementing Israel’s colonisation project. Whether the ICC will succeed in indicting any of them is another matter.

Israel let off lightly

All in all Kinnock let Israel off rather lightly in his speech. What was missing? Here are a few examples:-

First, although the annexations which were agreed between the US and Israel last January have been suspended for now, long ago Israel annexed other territory not its own, namely,

- (a) East Jerusalem in 1967, and
- (b) the Syrian Golan Heights in 1980.

Second, Israel holds the world record for violating Security Council resolutions. It is in breach of around 30 Security Council resolutions that require action by it and it alone, dating back to 1967 (See Sadaka Briefing **UN Security Council resolutions contravened by Israel** [4]). If it had implemented those resolutions, it would have removed all Jewish settlements from the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, reversed its annexations of East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, and allowed the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to inspect its secret nuclear facilities.

Third, Israel lies about its nuclear weapons.

Unlike Iran’s nuclear facilities, Israel’s are shrouded in secrecy and not subject to IAEA inspection (apart from a 5MW reactor supplied by the US in 1955, which has been under IAEA safeguards since the early 60s). This remains the case despite the fact that as long ago as 1981, the UN Security Council called “upon Israel urgently to place its nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards” in resolution 487, which was passed with the support of the US after Israel bombed Iraq’s nuclear reactor. However, Israel has ignored the resolution and the Security Council has taken no action to compel Israel to comply.

Unlike Iran, Israel has nuclear weapons and a variety of delivery systems: land-based aircraft and ballistic missiles and cruise missiles, based on submarines built in Germany and subsidised by the German tax payer (see **Israel’s Deployment of Nuclear Missiles on Subs from Germany**, Spiegel Online, 4 June 2012 [5]).

Unlike Iran, Israel continually lies about its possession of nuclear weapons. On 1 May 2018

Benjamin Netanyahu gave an interview to CNN [6], during which he was asked by Chris Cuomo: “Does Israel have nuclear capabilities and nuclear weapons, yes or no?”, he replied: “We’ve always said that we won’t be the first to introduce it, so we haven’t introduced it”. That’s a lie.

That wasn’t the first time he trotted out that lie: in an interview on CNN on 17 March 2011 [7] Piers Morgan asked him: “Do you have nuclear weapons?” to which he replied: “... we have a long-standing policy that we won’t be the first to introduce nuclear weapons into the Middle East and that hasn’t changed”. And Ehud Olmert trotted out the same lie on 12 December 2006, telling a press conference with Angela Merkel that “Israel will not be the first country to introduce nuclear weapons into the Middle East” [8]

Just think how infuriated Keir Starmer (and the Board of Jewish Deputies) would have been if Stephen Kinnock had included all that in his speech.

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A piece of history

We reprint below a letter from the English economist John Maynard Keynes to Franklin Delano Roosevelt in December 1933, some 8 months after FDR had become president of the United States. Keynes is advising FDR about his New Deal policies to combat what would later become known as the Great Depression and in particular Keynes focusses on the National Industrial Recovery Act of June 1933 (NIRA).

This letter is interesting because it was written some 3 years before Keynes would publish his magnum opus "The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money" in 1936 which would completely change people's understanding of how a capitalist economy works. In 1933 his ground breaking ideas are still not yet fully formed, but this letter clearly shows the way his thinking is going when he insists that "public authority must be called in aid to create additional current incomes through the expenditure of borrowed or printed money".

An Open Letter to President Roosevelt

By John Maynard Keynes.

Dear Mr President,

You have made yourself the Trustee for those in every country who seek to mend the evils of our condition by reasoned experiment within the framework of the existing social system. If you fail, rational change will be gravely prejudiced throughout the world, leaving orthodoxy and revolution to fight it out. But if you succeed, new and bolder methods will be tried everywhere, and we may date the first chapter of a new economic era from your accession to office. This is a sufficient reason why I should venture to lay my reflections before you, though under the disadvantages of distance and partial knowledge.

At the moment your sympathisers in England are nervous and sometimes despondent. We wonder whether the order of different urgencies is rightly understood whether there is a confusion of aim, and whether some of the advice you get is not crack-brained and queer. If we are disconcerted when we defend you, this may be partly due to the influence of our environment in London. For almost everyone here has a wildly distorted view of what is happening in the United States. The average City man believes that you are engaged on a hare-brained expedition in face of competent advice, that the best hope lies in your ridding yourself of your present advisers to return

to the old ways, and that otherwise the United States is heading for some ghastly breakdown. That is what they say they smell. There is a recrudescence of wise head-wagging by those who believe that the nose is a nobler organ than the brain. London is convinced that we only have to sit back and wait, in order to see what we shall see. May I crave your attention, whilst I put my own view?

You are engaged on a double task, Recovery and Reform;--recovery from the slump and the passage of those business and social reforms which are long overdue. For the first, speed and quick results are essential. The second may be urgent too; but haste will be injurious, and wisdom of long-range purpose is more necessary than immediate achievement. It will be through raising high the prestige of your administration by success in short-range Recovery, that you will have the driving force to accomplish long-range Reform. On the other hand, even wise and necessary Reform may, in some respects, impede and complicate Recovery. For it will upset the confidence of the business world and weaken their existing motives to action, before you have had time to put other motives in their place. It may over-task your bureaucratic machine, which the traditional individualism of the United States and the old "spoils system" have left none too strong. And it will

confuse the thought and aim of yourself and your administration by giving you too much to think about all at once.

Now I am not clear, looking back over the last nine months, that the order of urgency between measures of Recovery and measures of Reform has been duly observed, or that the latter has not sometimes been mistaken for the former. In particular, I cannot detect any material aid to recovery in N.I.R.A., though its social gains have been large. The driving force which has been put behind the vast administrative task set by this Act has seemed to represent a wrong choice in the order of urgencies. The Act is on the Statute Book; a considerable amount has been done towards implementing it; but it might be better for the present to allow experience to accumulate before trying to force through all its details. That is my first reflection--that N.I.R.A., which is essentially Reform and probably impedes Recovery, has been put across too hastily, in the false guise of being part of the technique of Recovery.

My second reflection relates to the technique of Recovery itself. The object of recovery is to increase the national output and put more men to work. In the economic system of the modern world, output is primarily produced for sale; and the volume of output depends

on the amount of purchasing power, compared with the prime cost of production, which is expected to come on the market. Broadly speaking, therefore, an increase of output depends on the amount of purchasing power, compared with the prime cost of production, which is expected to come on the market. Broadly speaking, therefore, an increase of output cannot occur unless by the operation of one or other of three factors. Individuals must be induced to spend more out of their existing incomes; or the business world must be induced, either by increased confidence in the prospects or by a lower rate of interest, to create additional current incomes in the hands of their employees, which is what happens when either the working or the fixed capital of the country is being increased; or public authority must be called in aid to create additional current incomes through the expenditure of borrowed or printed money. In bad times the first factor cannot be expected to work on a sufficient scale. The second factor will come in as the second wave of attack on the slump after the tide has been turned by the expenditures of public authority. It is, therefore, only from the third factor that we can expect the initial major impulse.

Now there are indications that two technical fallacies may have affected the policy of your administration. The first relates to the part played in recovery by rising prices. Rising prices are to be welcomed because they are usually a symptom of rising output and employment. When more purchasing power is spent, one expects rising output at rising prices. Since there cannot be rising output without rising prices, it is essential to ensure that the recovery shall not be held back by the insufficiency of the supply of money to support

the increased monetary turnover. But there is much less to be said in favour of rising prices, if they are brought about at the expense of rising output. Some debtors may be helped, but the national recovery as a whole will be retarded. Thus rising prices caused by deliberately increasing prime costs or by restricting output have a vastly inferior value to rising prices which are the natural result of an increase in the nation's purchasing power.

I do not mean to impugn the social justice and social expediency of the redistribution of incomes aimed at by N.I.R.A. and by the various schemes for agricultural restriction. The latter, in particular, I should strongly support in principle. But too much emphasis on the remedial value of a higher price-level as an object in itself may lead to serious misapprehension as to the part which prices can play in the technique of recovery. The stimulation of output by increasing aggregate purchasing power is the right way to get prices up; and not the other way round.

Thus as the prime mover in the first stage of the technique of recovery I lay overwhelming emphasis on the increase of national purchasing power resulting from governmental expenditure which is financed by Loans and not by taxing present incomes. Nothing else counts in comparison with this. In a boom inflation can be caused by allowing unlimited credit to support the excited enthusiasm of business speculators. But in a slump governmental Loan expenditure is the only sure means of securing quickly a rising output at rising prices. That is why a war has always caused intense industrial activity. In the past orthodox finance has regarded a war as the only legitimate excuse for creating employment by governmental expenditure. You,

Mr President, having cast off such fetters, are free to engage in the interests of peace and prosperity the technique which hitherto has only been allowed to serve the purposes of war and destruction.

The set-back which American recovery experienced this autumn was the predictable consequence of the failure of your administration to organise any material increase in new Loan expenditure during your first six months of office. The position six months hence will entirely depend on whether you have been laying the foundations for larger expenditures in the near future.

I am not surprised that so little has been spent up-to-date. Our own experience has shown how difficult it is to improvise useful Loan-expenditures at short notice. There are many obstacles to be patiently overcome, if waste, inefficiency and corruption are to be avoided. There are many factors, which I need not stop to enumerate, which render especially difficult in the United States the rapid improvisation of a vast programme of public works. I do not blame Mr Ickes for being cautious and careful. But the risks of less speed must be weighed against those of more haste. He must get across the crevasses before it is dark.

The other set of fallacies, of which I fear the influence, arises out of a crude economic doctrine commonly known as the Quantity Theory of Money. Rising output and rising incomes will suffer a set-back sooner or later if the quantity of money is rigidly fixed. Some people seem to infer from this that output and income can be raised by increasing the quantity of money. But this is like trying to get fat by buying a larger belt. In the United States to-day your belt is plenty big enough for your belly. It is a most misleading thing to stress the quantity of money, which is only a limiting

factor, rather than the volume of expenditure, which is the operative factor.

It is an even more foolish application of the same ideas to believe that there is a mathematical relation between the price of gold and the prices of other things. It is true that the value of the dollar in terms of foreign currencies will affect the prices of those goods which enter into international trade. In so far as an over-valuation of the dollar was impeding the freedom of domestic price-raising policies or disturbing the balance of payments with foreign countries, it was advisable to depreciate it. But exchange depreciation should follow the success of your domestic price-raising policy as its natural consequence, and should not be allowed to disturb the whole world by preceding its justification at an entirely arbitrary pace. This is another example of trying to put on flesh by letting out the belt.

These criticisms do not mean that I have weakened in my advocacy of a managed currency or in preferring stable prices to stable exchanges. The currency and exchange policy of a country should be entirely subservient to the aim of raising output and employment to the right level. But the recent gyrations of the dollar have looked to me more like a gold standard on the booze than the ideal managed currency of my dreams.

You may be feeling by now, Mr President, that my criticism is more obvious than my sympathy. Yet truly that is not so. You remain for me the ruler whose general outlook and attitude to the tasks of government are the most sympathetic in the world. You are the only one who sees the necessity of a profound change of methods and is attempting it without intolerance, tyranny or destruction. You are feeling your way by trial and error, and are felt to be, as you should be, entirely uncommitted in your own person to the details of a particular technique. In my country, as in your own, your position remains singularly untouched by criticism of this or the other detail. Our hope and our faith are based on broader considerations.

If you were to ask me what I would suggest in concrete terms for the immediate future, I would reply thus.

In the field of gold-devaluation and exchange policy the time has come when uncertainty should be ended. This game of blind man's bluff with exchange speculators serves no useful purpose and is extremely undignified. It upsets confidence, hinders business decisions, occupies the public attention in a measure far exceeding its real importance, and is responsible both for the irritation and for a certain lack of respect which exists abroad. You have three alternatives. You can devalue the dollar in terms of gold, returning to the gold standard at a new fixed ratio. This would be inconsistent with your declarations in favour of a long-range policy of stable prices, and I hope you will reject it. You can seek some common policy of exchange stabilisation with Great Britain aimed at stable price-levels. This would be the best ultimate solution; but it is not practical politics at the moment unless you are prepared to talk in terms of an initial value of sterling well below \$5 pending the realisation of a marked rise in your domestic price-level. Lastly you can announce that you will definitely control the dollar exchange by buying and selling gold and foreign currencies so as to avoid wide or meaningless fluctuations, with a right to shift the parities at any time but with a declared intention only so to do either to correct a serious want of balance in America's international receipts and payments or to meet a shift in your domestic price level relatively to price-levels abroad. This appears to me to be your best policy during the transitional period. In other respects you would regain your liberty to make your exchange policy subservient to the needs of your domestic policy--free to let out your belt in proportion as you put on flesh.

In the field of domestic policy, I put in the forefront, for the reasons given above, a large volume of Loan-expenditures under Government auspices. It is beyond my province to choose particular objects of expenditure. But preference should be given to those which can be made

to mature quickly on a large scale, as for example the rehabilitation of the physical condition of the railroads. The object is to start the ball rolling. The United States is ready to roll towards prosperity, if a good hard shove can be given in the next six months. Could not the energy and enthusiasm, which launched the N.I.R.A. in its early days, be put behind a campaign for accelerating capital expenditures, as wisely chosen as the pressure of circumstances permits? You can at least feel sure that the country will be better enriched by such projects than by the involuntary idleness of millions.

I put in the second place the maintenance of cheap and abundant credit and in particular the reduction of the long-term rates of interest. The turn of the tide in Great Britain is largely attributable to the reduction in the long-term rate of interest which ensued on the success of the conversion of the War Loan. This was deliberately engineered by means of the open-market policy of the Bank of England. I see no reason why you should not reduce the rate of interest on your long-term Government Bonds to 2½ per cent or less with favourable repercussions on the whole bond market, if only the Federal Reserve System would replace its present holdings of short-dated Treasury issues by purchasing long-dated issues in exchange. Such a policy might become effective in the course of a few months, and I attach great importance to it.

With these adaptations or enlargements of your existing policies, I should expect a successful outcome with great confidence. How much that would mean, not only to the material prosperity of the United States and the whole World, but in comfort to men's minds through a restoration of their faith in the wisdom and the power of Government!

With great respect,
Your obedient servant
J M Keynes

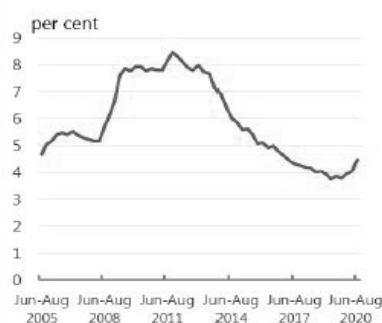
TUC Jobs and recession monitor October 2020

Labour Affairs comment: *The TUC is doing a valuable job collating these statistics, which are publicly available and which show the scale of the problems facing the British workforce as we head into a Covid winter. The comments by General Secretary, Frances O'Grady show an awareness of the kinds of measures that need to be taken to counter this growing crisis and reflect the kinds of measures that we have been advocating over the past months.*

On the precipice of an unemployment crisis

As fears about jobs and the economy grow, this is the first of a series of monthly reports aimed at informing working people about key statistics and policy concerns.

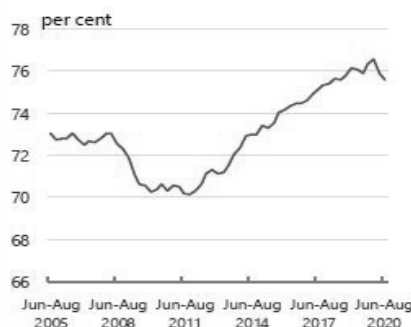
Figure 1: Unemployment rate



Redunncies doubled to 227,000 over the latest quarter, the steepest rise on record. Unemployment rose by 209,000 over the year. And employment is down half a million since the start of the year. Slow to emerge in headline figures since the start of the pandemic, an unemployment crisis may now be coming into view.

In parallel other measures – like hours and vacancies – that have tracked more closely the output of the economy appear to have bottomed out. But the future for workers and jobs is highly uncertain, with the pace of recovery already known to be moderating, the introduction of new restrictions, and government protections modified and reduced in size. Ministers need to act more decisively to protect and create jobs, and to pay attention to the IMF Managing Director's call for "stimuli for job creation, especially in green investment, and cushioning the impact on workers".

Figure 2: Employment rates

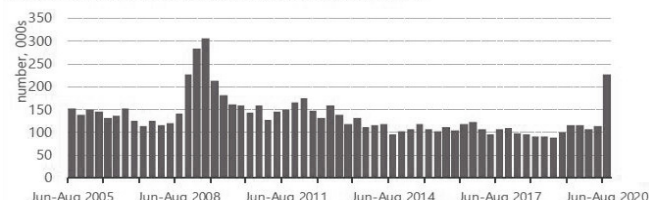


Unemployment and employment

The unemployment rate rose to 4.5 per cent in Jun-Aug 2020 from 4.1 per cent over the previous three months (Figure 1) and from a low of 3.8% at the end of 2019. A quarterly rise of this size last happened in the global recession of 2008-09. The employment rate is down 1.0 percentage points since the start of the year (Figure 2). In numbers, unemployment is up 209,000 over the year to 1.5 million, and employment is down almost 500,000 since the start of the year.

Redundancies

Figure 3: Change in redundancies on the quarter, 000s



Source: ONS

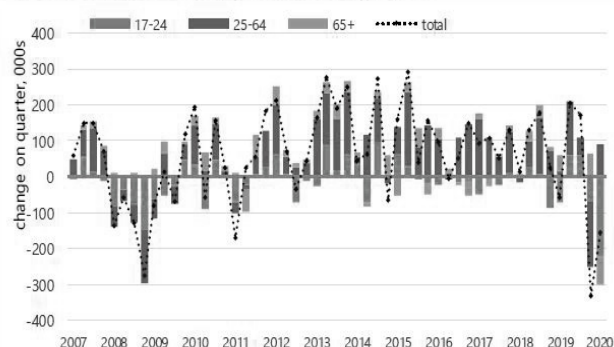
The fall in employment and rise in unemployment are matched by redundancies. Over the latest quarter, redundancies doubled to 227,000 (Jun–Aug) from 113,000 (Mar–May). This is the steepest quarterly increase on record, with the level of redundancies in the latest quarter close to the peak quarters of the global recession.

Age impact

While, in the most recent quarter, redundancies were split fairly evenly by gender, men accounted for three quarters of the rise in unemployment over the year. But the most striking feature is age, with young people so far hit hardest. Figure 4 shows the changes: while the data now show the 25-64 group (purple) hit hardest at the start of the pandemic, in the latest quarter there was a record fall in employment for younger workers (blue), while the 25-64 group bounced back a little. Throughout the recession of 2008-09 the employment impact was disproportionately on the young. Later editions of this report will look at how other equalities groups have been impacted.

Change in employment on the quarter, 000s

Figure 4: Change in employment on the quarter, 000s

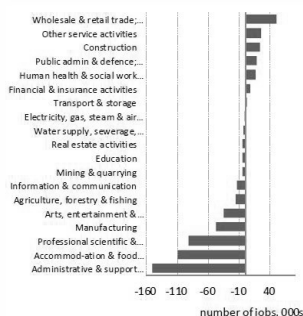


Source: ONS

Of the 480,000 reduction in employment since the start of the year, 470,000 are (full and part-time) self-employed and 240,000 part-time employee posts; conversely there has been a rise of 280,000 in full time employee posts. ONS note there may be some difficulties with this allocation,[i] which likely overlaps with long-standing controversies around the use of the self-employment classification among employers seeking to reduce labour costs.

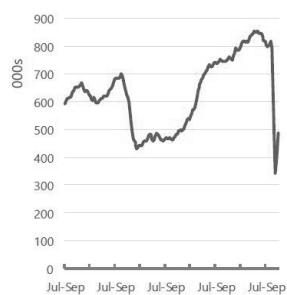
Industry allocation

Figure 5: Change in employment by industry (Q2-Q1)



Source: ONS

Figure 6: Vacancies, thousands



Source: ONS

A critical feature has been the differing impact according to industry, not least in terms of 'front line workers', the extent of use of the furlough scheme, and the ability of workers to work from home. Employment figures (which are based on information provided by firms) now extend into 2020Q2, and show employment falling in a majority of industries (Figure 5). The largest falls are in accommodation and food (though ahead of the impact of 'eat out to help out') and administrative and support services, which includes travel and recruitment agencies. The biggest increase was for retail and wholesale, likely reflecting on-line activities.[ii] Some new jobs will likely be insecure. We know that the number of people in employment on ZHCs rose substantially between

2019Q2 and 2020Q2, rising to over 1 million for the first time on record. Across this period, the number of those on ZHCs in wholesale and retail rose by 41 per cent.

Decline arrested

Over recent months the biggest declines have been across total hours, vacancies and a real-time measure of employees. Matching headline figures for monthly GDP, in each of these cases the declines have now bottomed out.

Hours fell from 1,050 million at the start of the year to 870 million in Mar-May 2020, and rebounded slightly to 890 million in Jun-Aug.

Vacancies fell from 800,000 at the start of the year to a low point of 340,000 in April-Jun and now back to 490,000 (Figure 6).

Employee jobs fell from 29,020 thousand in January to a low point of 28,310 thousand in August, and were up marginally to 28,330 in September.

Monthly GDP in fact was at a low point in May, and rebounded vigorously into June (9.1 per cent) and July (6.4 per cent). The August figure was more subdued (2.1 per cent), in spite of a big boost from 'eat out to help out'.

Regional and national

According to ONS regional figures, employment was still expanding in London into Jun-Aug 2020: by 170,000 on the year (Figure 7) and 70,000 on the quarter (Figure 8). Conversely, employment fell over the year in all other English regions, except the North West. The deterioration in the South West was particularly sharp, with the employment rate down on the year by 4.2 percentage points. Scotland also bucked the trend, with a small rise on the quarter.

Change in employment by year and quarter

In her reaction to today's figures TUC General Secretary Frances O'Grady warned:

"We are on the precipice of an unemployment crisis. Ministers must act now to protect and create jobs. The expansion of the job support scheme is a step in the right direction, but it still falls short.

Wage replacement should be 80% for businesses who have to shut. We need a more generous short-time working scheme for firms which aren't required to close but will be hit by stricter local restrictions. And self-employed people in local lockdown areas need help too.

Ministers must do more to create good new jobs. TUC research shows that we could create 1.2 million new jobs in the next two years in green transport and infrastructure, and another 600,000 by unlocking

public sector vacancies.

These calls resonate with the remarks last week of IMF Director General Kristalina Georgieva.[i] Warning of the danger of premature withdrawal of government and central bank protection for workers and firms, she also addressed the creation of work:

... fiscal policy will be critical for the recovery to take hold. This crisis has triggered profound structural transformations, and governments must play their role in reallocating capital and labor to support the transition. This will require both stimuli for job creation, especially in green investment, and cushioning the impact on workers: from retraining and reskilling, to expanding the scope and duration of unemployment insurance. Safeguarding social spending will be critical for a just transition to

new jobs.

The stakes are getting higher and higher. With business and worker confidence in retreat, only the government is in a position to create work. Without decisive action, the threat of mass unemployment will become a reality.”

***All statistics taken from the
Office for National Statistics
(ONS)***

Labour Affairs Comment.

Frances O’Grady is absolutely right to demand that the government should act immediately to create jobs. As our editorial points out, there is no good economic reason why these should not be directly financed by the State straightaway.

However, creating ‘good jobs’ will take time and investment

and cannot be done overnight. This is no reason why it should not be started today, but the immediate need is for jobs that keep people in employment. For young people new to the world of work, mentoring may be needed to ensure that they adapt to the new environment and adults who can work sympathetically with young people will be needed for that. For the next year or two jobs should be created that address immediate needs such as cleaning the environment, carrying out essential repairs and keeping retailing and leisure ticking over. We need jobs now which require a few weeks, not a few years training. When the training system has gained the capacity to do so then we can start to create good, skilled longer term jobs organised around well-established occupations.

Continued From Page 24

of immigrants with a legal claim to land used by the rich and romanticised cattle ranchers. It was a financial disaster, and since then most film-makers have avoided things that would offend the rich and powerful.

None of this involves Jews as such. Jews are found on both sides, and most are not involved. But those teamed up with the rich and powerful have the loudest voices, naturally.

Back at the dawn of the 20th century, Russia’s well-known offences did not prevent Britain and the USA doing their best to keep out displaced Jews. Nor Britain joining World War One, which was started because Tsarist Russia would not let Serbia be punished for the assassination of the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne.

There was shameful neglect by most Western government of Hitler’s extreme hostility to Jews. Boycotting the 1936 Berlin Olympics might have changed everything. Instead most of those who’d attended other Olympics were there. Including Harold Abrahams, Jewish hero of the 1924 Paris Olympics and the film *Chariots of Fire*. He reported it for the BBC. Someone should make a film called *The Hitler Games*, showing the general acceptance of Nazism in Britain and the USA in those years.

Mass extermination was not suspected in those years. But it could be argued that it would not have happened without Britain’s refusal to make peace after the Fall of

France.

When the Polish Underground took great risks to report mass killings, the simple measure of bombing the railway lines leading to the Death Camps was not done. Note that Germans had been told that Jews were being deported for resettlement. Mass killing was kept secret: there is an excellent French film called *The Round Up* that shows this.⁵ But somehow most people think that almost every German knew about the Death Camps and consented to them.

The SS estimated that their policies had killed off six million Jews, which they saw as too few. Several million others exterminated for racial reasons, separate from unavoidable war deaths. 11 million is a common estimate for the extermination. Long-term plans for changing Europe’s whole racial balance would have killed many more, had they won.

If you hold Hitler wholly responsible for the European war that began with Britain and France declaring war on him, then he’d be guilty of 45 to 52 million deaths.⁶ Including seven million non-Jewish Germans, plus millions more of what he’d have defined as part of the superior Nordic race.

Anti-Semitism is irrational. It blames Jews for the collapse of traditional values that most people see as

5 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Round_Up_\(2010_film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Round_Up_(2010_film))

6 <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/m-articles-by-topic/m99-topic-menus-from-long-revolution-website/44-fascism-and-world-war-2/deaths-caused-by-hitler/>

Continued From Page 22

caused by the rise of modern industry. That and Enlightenment values. And those values had begun within Latin-Christian Europe. There was very little Jewish input until the second half of the 19th century.

Britain's Industrial Revolution is normally dated from 1760 to 1830, and I've been unable to find any significant Jews involved in it. They were present among merchants and bankers in London and the South-East. But the new industries grew mostly in Northern England, Lowland Scotland and Wales. Those involved had little liking for London values, and saw nothing significant in whatever Jews might be doing.

Science undermined traditional belief – first through geology, that demonstrated a world vastly older than the Bible allowed for. But there were no European Jews significant in science until well into the 19th century. No Jewish involvement I'm aware of, in the rise of Darwinism.

It is also always untrue to speak of 'The Jews' doing anything. It is common to find an unusual number of Jews in any new thing. This includes Subatomic Physics, Experimental Art, Experimental Literature and Science Fiction in the USA, but not Britain. But they are also there as individuals, with varied and sometimes mutually hostile views.

Jews are an ethnic-religious minority, and it is generally agreed that a Jewish atheist remains a Jew. Likewise converts to other religions, at least for the first couple of generations.

The Official Narrative is now that Jews are hated for no reason, not from a false view of the cause of real social ills.

It would not suit the rich to note that hostility to Jews declined when the West was doing nicely in the 1950s and 1960s. Or revived in the 1980s, when New Right policies started doing damage.

Promises of a small state, low taxes, faster growth, flourishing small businesses and more personal

freedom were all false. And early discouragement of social housing and the spread of home ownership has caused inflated prices that mean that most young people either cannot leave home or become homeless. Seldom have homes of their own.

The one policy that worked was the one mentioned only very quietly to the general public. It was held that the very rich had been treated unjustly and deserved more.

The share of the social wealth going to the very rich has indeed shot up.⁷ They have also learned all sorts of new ways to manipulate the public and get sympathetic politicians elected.

The rich use their control of the media to defend their unfair share of wealth that the entire society has helped produce. And very successfully, so far.

Riding on a wave of popular discontent, Tony Blair did manage some useful social reforms. This was safe: it was only normalising things the very rich were mostly doing behind closed doors. But he never dared touch the inequality of wealth.

This continued until Corbyn was unexpectedly elected.

'Feed the rich' is not a slogan that would win elections. So fear was tried. But Labour under Corbyn did unexpectedly well in the 2017 election.

The response was to make an enormous fuss about fairly mild remarks made by Corbyn supporters. Loud demands to investigate anti-Semitism in the Labour Party, **and only in the Labour Party.**

I said at the time that Labour should have insisted that anti-Semitism in Britain was rare by global standards. And that even if you lumped hostility to Israel in with hostility to Jews as such, there was not more of it in Labour than in other parties or in British society overall.⁸

Sadly, Corbyn and others with the status to be heard failed to do this.

⁷ <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/problems-magazine-past-issues/the-mixed-economy-won-the-cold-war/>

⁸ <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/m-articles-by-topic/m99-topic-menus-from-long-revolution-website/048-anti-semitism-and-zionism/fewer-anti-semites-in-labour-than-tories/>

There was an honest attempt to root out occasional anti-Semitism within the Labour Party. But since no one discussed anti-Semitism outside of the Labour Party, this could then be taken as proof of general Labour guilt.

If the media punish people for being honest, they should not be surprised at a decay in Public Life.

Continuously 'gaming' the electoral process gets it discredited, naturally.

Starmer has said he does not want Civil War within Labour.

If you don't want a Civil War, don't fire on Fort Sumter. (The Confederate aggression that turned a political dispute into an armed conflict.)

Lincoln said of their Civil War that no one wanted a war as such. But both sides thought a war less bad than what the other side demanded for peace.

Here, Starmer did not make good his promise to keep up the demand for social justice.

And has instead found weak excuses for sacking the two main figures on the Labour Left.

In Mainland Britain, unlike the current USA, hardly anyone would consider getting seriously violent. Demolishing stone statues is as far as it has gone.

But Labour Party members have a perfect right to challenge their leader. To vote out a bad leader.

In the recent election, Starmer got the votes of those who supposed that he was speaking the truth. Dropping the Palestinians and anything that could be seen as anti-Patriotic, and being lukewarm on sexual issues that put off some voters. But continuing the demand for social justice.

But he's been attacking the left, and showing minimal concern for social justice.

If Starmer is honestly mistaken, then he has an appalling lack of political insight. Not fit for any sort of leadership.

Unless he can be forced to a quick U-turn, he has to go.

Britain's Labour Left Unfairly Bad-Mouthed Over anti-Semitism

By Gwydion M. Williams

Hostility to Jews is a global offense.

So is hostility to all other groups that are recognisable minorities within any society.

Guilt varies, but I don't think there are any innocents. Not unless you count tribes that have no minorities: and those are often at war with their neighbours.

A film called *Article 15* deals with horrifying violence and prejudice among Hindus.¹ People that most outsiders would just lump as South Asians. But a low-caste majority get the same bad treatment from higher castes as non-white people where White Racism flourishes.

Yes, Jews are often victims of appalling hate and violence.

But acting as if Jews merited special protection not needed for 'lesser breeds' is not likely to ease this.

The growth of Parasitic Finance since the 1980s does not help. Most of those involved are not Jewish, and many Jews have always opposed it. But when was hatred ever rational?

Being irrational is not the same as being disconnected from real events. No one has ever claimed a grand Irish conspiracy to rule the world, for instance. But Jewish religion meant they never merged with those they lived among, as most minorities do. And when a society is under strain, everyone who does not conform comes under suspicion.

Before the Russian Revolution, the major anti-Jewish offender was Tsarist Russia. Which is somehow overlooked when

the Russian Revolution gets denounced as evil and pointless.

It is true that there were a few months of well-meaning liberal and moderate-socialist rule, before the Bolsheviks took over. Similar regimes did get established in other countries east of Berlin. But almost all of them had lapsed into right-wing authoritarian rule even before Hitler came to power. Most of them hostile to Jews. Bulgaria, which protected its own Jewish minority, showed no compassion for other Jews its armies encountered.

No Western historian doubts that in the run-up to 1917, Nicholas II of Russia was a major offender. He encouraged the irrational anti-Jewish feeling that had flourished ever since Alexander II was assassinated by an anarchist group that included one woman of Jewish origin. In a sadly typical way, the involvement of one individual who had no interest in remaining distinctly Jewish was somehow transformed into a Global Conspiracy run by Jews.

It was among admirers of Nicolas II after 1917 that the notorious *Protocols* flourished, even though he himself had decided it was a forgery. Not until later did a fleeing White Russian notice that it had borrowed heavily from a French work written against Emperor Napoleon III.

The *Protocols* is a vastly better criticism of liberal values than the typical Far Right junk. Better because it plagiarised a French book written as a left-wing criticism of the corrupt but effective liberal regime of 'Napoleon the Little'. And the author says nothing about Jews. As a French Republican, you'd expect him to accept the standard

view that Jews were just fellow-citizens.

I've done a study of all this and its wider context: *The 13th Chancellor. Hitler's Organic Links with British & Wider European Culture*.² Mentioning Henry Ford's involvement, which is too little known. And the shocking willingness of the *London Times* to take the *Protocols* seriously, which has been successfully lost into obscurity.

Another thing I've noticed is that Nicolas II is popular among Russians today. Amidst the flood of anti-Russian reports, this is never mentioned. People are also given the impression that pro-Western politicians are the main alternative to Putin, rather than a pathetic remnant getting about one vote in twenty in most elections.

A host of similar strange lapses in our Free Communication are remarkably common for well-established facts that do not suit the British Establishment. Likewise historic dramas: not many Britons would have seen a well-made German film about the young Karl Marx.³ Or *Black '47*,⁴ an excellent thriller about British neglect of the Irish during the potato famine: the shameful shipping-out of grain that the hungry peasants had grown but were not allowed to eat.

In the USA, *Heaven's Gate* exposed the shameful ill-treatment

² <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/problems-magazine-past-issues/hitler-the-13th-chancellor/>

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Young_Karl_Marx

⁴ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_%2747_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_%2747_(film))

¹ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Article_15_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Article_15_(film))

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