



LABOUR PARTY MARXISTS

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Anti-Zionism does not equal anti-Semitism



**ZERO
TOLERANCE
FOR
ANTISEMITISM**

Israel is a colonising-settler state

Submission by Labour Party Marxists to the Shami Chakrabarti inquiry into anti-Semitism and other forms of racism in the Labour Party.

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There is a well organised, well financed, utterly cynical, anti-left witch-hunt going on. Supporters of the Alliance for Workers' Liberty and Socialist Appeal have been targeted. But it is the synthetic hysteria generated over 'anti-Semitism' that has claimed by far the most victims. Obviously, this is part of the attempt to undermine Jeremy Corbyn. However, there is a bigger picture.

Read the Israeli press. It is clear that there is the coming together of two distinct offensives. The first has been going on long before anyone thought of Corbyn becoming leader of the Labour

Party. For those coordinating pro-Israel, pro-Zionist propaganda, a few cracks had started to appear in the edifice. This is noticeable mainly, but not only, in the United States - which is, of course, the main arena for the pro-Zionists - but here in Britain too. There has been a shift in public opinion regarding Israeli policy and the conflict in the Middle East and the legitimacy of Israel as a colonising-settler state.

Take, for example, the ongoing primary campaign for US president. Its most encouraging feature is that, of all the serious candidates, the one who is attracting the most support amongst

the broad left - especially among young people, including and especially among young Jewish people - and who happens to be Jewish, is the only one who refused an invitation to address the main pro-Israel lobby, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (Aipac).

Besides running as a socialist and gaining huge support, Bernie Sanders is the only candidate who has talked about the rights of the Palestinian people. He has not gone as far as we would like, but in the US context his success has been a potential game-changer. Opinion polls show he has gained support both amongst Muslims

and Jews, especially the young.

The campaign for boycott, divestment and sanctions has played a crucial role. When the BDS campaign was in its infancy there was some discussion about whether it could actually overthrow the Zionist regime - just as some people thought a boycott of South Africa could overthrow apartheid. Of course, direct analogies between South Africa and Israel are misleading, because they represent two different modes of colonisation. That said, while sanctions might help to produce favourable subjective conditions, those who think they are going to overthrow any such

regime that way are clearly deluding themselves.

The BDS campaign has though mobilised public opinion. Its advantage is that in CLPs, trade unions and professional organisations, in colleges and universities, there are people campaigning for BDS and this has provoked a very useful debate about the whole Israeli-Palestinian conflict. What is particularly notable among the BDS activists is the overrepresentation of young Jewish people.

That is very worrying for the Zionists. And if you read the Israeli press it is clear that there is a determination to take measures to halt the erosion of the legitimacy of the Zionist state and the move to brand anti-Zionism as the "new anti-Semitism". This was happening well before there was even a hint that Jeremy Corbyn could become Labour leader. Of course, his overwhelming victory has added to Zionist worries. For the first time ever a leader of the main opposition party in Britain is on record as championing the Palestinian people.

And so the Zionists and all their allies decided to target Corbyn. Accidentally or not, the current Israeli ambassador to London is a certain Mark Regev, who has in the past justified genocide. Regev is hardly a normal diplomat - he is a propagandist by trade. The campaign of branding people anti-Semites has merged with the efforts of those who have no particular pro-Israel sentiments, but are looking for ways to attack the Labour left.

So there is now a coalition between, on the one side, people worried about the rise in support for the Palestinian cause and those determined to discredit Corbyn and the Labour left for that reason; and, on the other, people like the vile blogger, Guido Fawkes, whose real name is Paul Staines - a rightwinger who would do anything to discredit Corbyn and the Labour left. He is using anti-Semitism smears for opportunistic reasons, not because he really cares one way or the other

about Israel/Palestine.

Four examples

So what have they come up with in regard to the accusations of anti-Semitism? A few essentially trivial examples and some non-examples. Most of what has been publicised in the press fall into the latter category. Let us deal with four examples - all have been widely publicised in the media.

First Naz Shah, one of the 2015 generation of new Labour MPs. Some years ago she shared a graphic of Israel superimposed on the United States. This was accompanied with the ironic strap that the Israel-Palestine conflict would be resolved if Israel could be relocated somewhere in the US deep mid-west. This image originated in the United States and was, obviously, a satirical comment on Washington's unstinting support for Israel - Norman Finkelstein, the well-known Jewish, anti-Zionist professor, prominently featured it on his website. And yet the image was supposed to reveal some kind of anti-Semitism. Anybody who thinks that this was anything but a piece of satire should have their head examined.

Obviously nobody was seriously suggesting that Israel should be physically relocated. But, despite that, it was claimed that the implication was that the entire Israeli population are to be 'transported' to the US, just as the Jews had been transported to Auschwitz. So the image must be anti-Semitic. In fact this is the sort of joke that is very popular in Israel, as well as in the US, because it says a lot about the relationship between the imperial sponsor and its client state.

Then there is Tony Greenstein, a member of the Jewish Socialists Group and the Labour Party, and an inveterate anti-Zionist blogger. One of the charges against him is that he wrote an article titled 'Israeli policy is to wait for the remaining holocaust survivors to die'. This was deemed a terrible accusation by the Labour Party's opaque Compliance Unit and presumably clear evidence of anti-Semitism. It is, of course, a terrible accusation, but exactly the same charge is made in Israel's Ha'aretz newspaper. It ran a piece, 'Israel is waiting for its holocaust survivors to die'. It is undoubtedly true that the Israeli state is parsimonious in the extreme when it comes to providing benefits to holocaust survivors. Thousands live in dire poverty, forced to choose between heat and food. Israel has, of course, received billions of euros in reparations from the German state. But it has preferred to spend the money on the holocaust industry - memorials, propaganda and well-paid sinecures - rather than on holocaust survivors.

Next there is an example - not from the Labour Party, but from the left more generally - of the president of the National Union of Students, Malia Bouattia, who co-authored an article five years ago saying that Birmingham University is "something of a Zionist outpost". If we said, rightly or wrongly, that University College London is 'something of a leftist outpost', so what? Of course, if you believe that 'Zionist' is a synonym for 'Jewish', then perhaps that does not sound good. But that is a Zionist conflation and there is no indication that this is what Malia Bouattia meant - her whole history contradicts such an assumption.

Finally Ken Livingstone. Speaking in defence of Naz Shah, on BBC London's Vanessa Feltz show, he said that Hitler "supported Zionism until he went mad". This is certainly inaccurate and Livingstone would have been well advised to have done a little more basic research. However, the point he was making is essentially correct.

Of course, he got the date wrong. Hitler was not in power in 1932. But, yes, when the Nazis did come to power, in 1933, they pursued a policy which, with this or that proviso,

"supported Zionism."

Drop talk of Zionism?

How should the left react under such circumstances? Jon Lansman, chair of Momentum, urges us to drop the "counterproductive slogan" of Zionism. Criticising this or that concrete action by the Israeli government is perfectly legitimate - but not Zionism. Comrade Lansman says we should not alienate those who might otherwise agree with us on austerity, combating inequality, etc.

Dropping all mention of Zionism just does not work. Even the Zionists accept that Israeli policy on this, that or the other can be criticised. Eg. Israel's continuing occupation and colonisation of the West Bank. But why does Israel persist with this policy? It has been condemned by Barack Obama and John Kerry. The same goes for David Cameron. The settlements are illegal, constitute an obstacle to peace, etc. So why does Israel do it? How can you explain it?

It can only be explained by the fact that expansion and colonisation are integral to Zionism. Understand that and you understand that there is nothing strange about what Israel is doing. It is not as if expansion and colonisation were a policy confined to the current government of Binyamin Netanyahu. It has been carried out by all Israeli governments since 1967 and it took place within the former borders - the so-called 'green line' - before 1967. There has been an ongoing policy of Zionist colonisation from the very beginning.

You cannot explain why Israel is continuing with a policy that is not winning it any friends without mentioning Zionism. On the contrary, far from dropping all mention of Zionism and retreating in the face of the 'anti-Semitism' smear campaign, we should go onto the offensive and be aggressive: Zionism must be fearlessly attacked.

And we can also attack Zionism precisely because of its collusion and collaboration with anti-Semitism, including up to a point with Nazi Germany. We should not respond to the witch-hunt by refusing to defend Ken Livingstone and confining ourselves to anodyne platitudes: "We stand against racism, including anti-Semitism" (Jeremy Corbyn, John McDonnell, Owen Jones, Liz Davies, etc). In effect this is to accept that anti-Semitism is actually a problem on the left. While, of course, we oppose all manifestations of anti-Semitism, the fact is that today those on the left who propagate a version of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion carry no weight and are without any intellectual foundation. They are oddities who exist on the fringes of the fringe.

Given that the Labour Party tolerates, even promotes, the so-called Jewish Labour Movement, things must be put in their proper perspective. Rebranded in 2004, JLM is the successor organisation of Poale Zion, a nationalist organisation which affiliated to the Labour Party in 1920. JLM is, in fact, not open to all Jewish members of the Labour Party. It only accepts Zionists.

Amongst its key aims is to promote the "centrality of Israel in Jewish life". It defines Zionism not as a colonial-settler project, but the "national liberation movement of the Jewish people". Despite this travesty, it is still an official Labour Party affiliate (it is also affiliated to the World Labour Zionist Organisation and the World Zionist Organisation).

For our part, we agree with the Labour movement conference on Palestine in 1984 (Jeremy Corbyn was amongst the sponsors). It denounced Zionism and called for a campaign for the "disaffiliation of Poale Zion from the Labour Party."

That Baroness Royall proposes to put JLM in charge of policing 'anti-Semitic' attitudes in the Labour Party must be rejected outright. The fact of the matter

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is that JLM, Labour Friends of Israel and fraternal relations with the Israeli Labor Party are a real problem. They are certainly not part of the solution.

Connection

We should take the side of the Board of Deputies of British Jews - not the current one, but the Board of Deputies of 100 years ago! It put out some very pertinent statements about Zionism and its connection with anti-Semitism. When the negotiations on the 1917 Balfour Declaration were taking place, a prominent member of the Board of Deputies, Lucien Wolf, wrote:

I understand ... that the Zionists do not merely propose to form and establish a Jewish nationality in Palestine, but that they claim all the Jews as forming at the present moment a separate and dispossessed nationality, for which it is necessary to find an organic political centre, because they are and must always be aliens in the lands in which they now dwell, and, more especially, because it is "an absolute self-delusion" to believe that any Jew can be at once "English by nationality and Jewish by faith".

I have spent most of my life in combating these very doctrines, when presented to me in the form of anti-Semitism, and I can only regard them as the more dangerous when they come to me in the guise of Zionism. They constitute a capitulation to our enemies, which has absolutely no justification in history, ethnology or the facts of everyday life, and if they were admitted by the Jewish people as a whole, the result would only be that the terrible situation of our co-religionists in Russia and Romania would become the common lot of Jewry throughout the world.¹

About the same time, Alexander Montefiore, president of the Board of Deputies, and Claude, his brother, who was president of the closely associated Anglo-Jewish Association, wrote a letter to The Times. They stated that the "establishment of a Jewish nationality in Palestine, founded on the theory of Jewish homelessness, must have the effect throughout the world of stamping the Jews as strangers in their native lands and of undermining their hard-won positions as citizens and nationals of those lands".²

They pointed out that the theories of political Zionism undermined the religious basis of Jewry, to which the only alternative would be "a secular Jewish nationality, recruited on some loose and obscure principle of race and



MODEL MOTION PROMOTED BY LPM

LABOUR PARTY 'ANTI-SEMITISM' SMEAR AND WITCH-HUNT

This branch/CLP/conference:

- Rejects the Zionist concept of so-called 'new anti-Semitism'. There is no basis for equating political criticism of the state of Israel with anti-Jewish racism. It is right to condemn the political ideology of Zionism and the ongoing colonisation of Palestinian land.
- Rejects the recent 'anti-Semitism' smear campaign prompted by the Israeli establishment and carried out by the mass media, the Tory Party and the Labour right. The claim that anti-Semitism - ie, anti-Jewish racism - is rife in the Labour Party, particularly in the left wing of the Labour Party, is simply untrue.
- Calls for the immediate lifting of all of the suspensions and expulsions from Labour Party membership in any way connected to the 'anti-Semitism' smear campaign. That includes Ken Livingstone, Tony Greenstein, Gerry Downing and numerous other supporters of the Palestinian cause.
- Calls for disciplinary proceedings to be instigated against John Mann MP. He publicly attacked Labour NEC member Ken Livingstone in front of TV cameras, calling him a "disgusting Nazi apologist". An accusation, of course, without foundation. Mann's attack played a key role in stepping up the 'anti-Semitism' smear campaign and could only but damage Labour's chances in the May elections. Presumably the aim is to create the conditions for the removal of Jeremy Corbyn as leader.
- Condemns the willing collaboration of the Labour Party's Compliance Unit and the Labour Party general secretary, Ian McNicol, in the witch-hunt. They have been more than ready to accept at face value obviously false and malicious complaints of anti-Semitism.
- Condemns the lack of due process in the suspensions and expulsions of Labour Party members. The failure to apply the principles of natural justice brings the Labour Party into disrepute.
- Calls for the abolition of the Labour Party Compliance Unit and for the establishment of democratic, transparent disciplinary procedures which follow the principles of natural justice, and in which disciplinary decisions are made by elected representatives, not by paid officials.

of ethnographic peculiarity".
They went on:

But this would not be Jewish in any spiritual sense, and its establishment in Palestine would be a denial of all the ideals and hopes by which the survival of Jewish life in that country commends itself to the Jewish conscience and Jewish sympathy. On these grounds the Conjoint Committee of the Board of Deputies and the Anglo-Jewish Association deprecates earnestly the national proposals of the Zionists.

The second part in the Zionist programme which has aroused the misgivings of the Conjoint Committee is the proposal to invest the Jewish settlers [in Palestine] with certain special rights in excess of those enjoyed by the rest of the population ...

In all the countries in which Jews live the principle of equal rights for all religious denominations is vital to them. Were they to set an example in Palestine of disregarding this principle, they would convict themselves of having appealed to it for purely selfish motives. In the countries in which they are still struggling for equal rights they would find themselves hopelessly compromised ... The proposal is the more inadmissible because the Jews are and probably long will remain a minority of the population of Palestine, and might involve them in the bitterest feuds with their neighbours of other races and religions, which would severely retard their progress and find deplorable echoes throughout the orient.³

This turned out to be highly prophetic.

Nazi collaboration

Let us turn now to the Zionist-Nazi connection. In fact it sounds more shocking than it is, because we are talking about the early days of the Nazi regime. Today the holocaust is taught in schools, so people may know that the policy of extermination of Jews actually started officially in January 1942, when a Nazi conference was convened in Wannsee under the chairmanship of Reinhard Heydrich. Heydrich was second in command to Heinrich Himmler, the head of the SS.

The minutes of this conference are actually online and in them a change in policy towards the Jews, ratified by the Führer, was declared. Although it is phrased euphemistically, it is clear that what was being talked about was both deportation to the east and extermination.

This change occurred following the attack on the Soviet Union, when the Nazis felt they had to find different ways of dealing with the 'Jewish problem'. Until that time the official policy was for the exclusion of the Jews from political and civic life, for separation and for emigration. Quite naturally the Zionist leadership thought this set of policies was similar to those of other anti-Semitic regimes - which it was - and the Zionist approach was not peculiar to the Nazi regime. The founder of political Zionism, Theodor Herzl, had pointed out that anti-Semitic regimes would be allies, because they wanted to get rid of the Jews, while the Zionists wanted to rid them of the Jews. That was the common interest.

In 1934 the German rabbi, Joachim Prinz, published a book entitled *Wir Juden* ('We, the Jews'), in which he welcomed the Nazi regime. That regime wanted to separate Jews from non-Jews and prevent assimilation - as did the Zionists.

So the Zionists made overtures to the Nazi regime. How did the Nazis respond? Here are two relevant quotations. The first is from the introduction to the



Being anti-Israel isn't the same as hating Jews - obviously

Nuremberg laws, the racist legislation introduced in Nazi Germany in 1935. This extract was still present in the 1939 edition, from which we shall quote:

If the Jews had a state of their own, in which the bulk of their people were at home, the Jewish question could already be considered solved today ... The ardent Zionists of all people have objected least of all to the basic ideas of the Nuremberg laws, because they know that these laws are the only correct solution for the Jewish people too ...⁴

Heydrich himself wrote the following in an article for the SS house journal *Das Schwarze Korps* in September 1935:

National socialism has no intention of attacking the Jewish people in any way. On the contrary, the recognition of Jewry as a racial community based on blood, and not as a religious one, leads the German government to guarantee the racial separateness of this community without any limitations. The government finds itself in complete agreement with the great spiritual movement within Jewry itself, so-called Zionism, with its recognition of the solidarity of Jewry throughout the world and the rejection of all assimilationist ideas.

On this basis, Germany undertakes measures that will surely play a significant role in the future in the handling of the Jewish problem around the world.⁵

In other words, a friendly mention of Zionism, indicating an area of basic agreement it shared with Nazism.

Of course, looking back at all this, it seems all the more sinister, since we know that the story ended with the gas chambers a few years later. This overlap is an indictment of Zionism, but the actual collaboration between the two was not such an exceptional thing, when you accept that the Zionists were faced with the reality of an anti-Semitic regime.

Incidentally, half of what Ken Livingstone said is not that far from the caricature peddled by Netanyahu last year in his speech to delegates attending the 37th World Zionist Organisation's congress in Jerusalem. According to Netanyahu, "Hitler didn't want to exterminate the Jews" until he met the grand mufti of Jerusalem, Hajj Amin al-Husseini, in 1941. Netanyahu claimed that "Al-Husseini went to Hitler and said, 'If you expel them, they'll all come here.'"

Of course, the allegation that the idea of extermination originated with the grand mufti has been rejected with contempt by serious historians, but

Netanyahu was at least correct in saying that emigration, not extermination, was indeed Nazi policy until the winter of 1941-42.

To repeat: we must go on the counterattack against the current slurs. It is correct to expose Zionism as a movement based on both settler-colonisation and collusion with anti-Semitism. We do not apologise for saying this. If you throw the sharks bloodied meat, they will only come back for more. At the moment the left is apologising far too much, in the hope that the right will let up.

They will not stop until they succeed in their aim of deposing Jeremy Corbyn and returning the Labour Party to slavishly supporting US policy in the Middle East ●

Notes

1. Reproduced in B Destani (ed) *The Zionist movement and the foundation of Israel 1839-1972* Cambridge 2004, Vol 1, p727.
2. *The Times* May 24 1917.
3. See www.godlikeproductions.com/forum1/message55570/pg1.
4. See M Machover and M Offenberg *Zionism and its scarecrows* London 1978, p8, which directly quotes *Die Nurnberger Gesetze*. See also F Nicosia *The Third Reich and the Palestine question* London 1985, p53; and FR Nicosia *Zionism and anti-Semitism in Nazi Germany* Cambridge 2008, p108. The latter cites a 1935 article by Bernhard Lohsener in the Nazi journal *Reichsverwaltungsblatt*.
5. *Das Schwarze Korps* September 26 1935.

1. The central aim of Labour Party Marxists is to transform the Labour Party into an instrument for working class advance and international socialism. Towards that end we will join with others and seek the closest unity of the left inside and outside the party.

2. Capitalism is synonymous with war, pollution, waste and production for its own sake. Attempts to rescue the system through Keynesian remedies are diversionary and doomed to fail. The democratic and social gains of the working class must be tenaciously defended, but capitalism must be superseded by socialism.

3. The only viable alternative is organising the working class into powerful and thoroughly democratic trade unions, co-ops, and other schools for socialism, and crucially into a political party which aims to replace the rule of the capitalist class with the rule of the working class.

4. The fight for trade union freedom, anti-fascism, women's rights, sexual freedom, republican democracy and opposition to all imperialist wars are inextricably linked to working class political independence and the fight for socialism.

5. Ideas of reclaiming the Labour Party and the return of the old clause four are totally misplaced. From the beginning the party has been dominated by the labour bureaucracy and the ideas of reformism. The party must be refounded on the basis of a genuinely socialist programme as opposed to social democratic gradualism or bureaucratic statism.

6. The aim of the party should not be a Labour government for its own sake. History shows that Labour governments committed to managing the capitalist system and loyal to the existing constitutional order create disillusionment in the working class.

7. Labour should only consider forming a government when it has the active support of a clear majority of the population and has a realistic prospect of implementing a full socialist programme. This cannot be achieved in Britain in isolation from Europe and the rest of the world.

8. Socialism is the rule of the working class over the global economy created by capitalism and as such is antithetical to all forms of British nationalism. Demands for a British road to socialism and a withdrawal from the European Union are therefore to be opposed.

9. Political principles and organisational forms go hand-in-hand. The Labour Party must become the umbrella organisation for all trade unions, socialist groups and pro-working class partisans. Hence all the undemocratic bans and proscriptions must be done away with.

10. The fight to democratise the Labour Party cannot be separated from the fight to democratise the trade unions. Trade union votes at Labour Party conferences should be cast not by general secretaries but proportionately according to the political balance in each delegation.

11. All trade unions should be encouraged to affiliate, all members of the trade unions encouraged to pay the political levy and join the Labour Party as individual members.

12. The party must be reorganised from top to bottom. Bring the Parliamentary Labour Party under democratic control. The position of Labour leader should be abolished along with the national policy forum. The NEC should be unambiguously responsible for drafting Labour Party manifestos.

13. The NEC should be elected and accountable to the annual conference, which must be the supreme body in the party. Instead of a tame rally there must be democratic debate and binding votes.

14. Our elected representatives must be recallable by the constituency or other body that selected them. That includes MPs, MEPs, MSPs, AMs, councillors, etc. Without exception elected representatives should take only the average wage of a skilled worker, the balance being donated to furthering the interests of the labour movement ●

Blue-on-blue power struggle



"They looked exactly like a couple of great schoolboys"

James Marshall calls for an active boycott

A floodtide of hyperbole has been generated by the stay-leave Euro referendum campaign. HM government's £9 million pamphlet ominously warns that an 'out' vote will "create years of uncertainty".¹ Building upon the doomsday scenario, the cross-party Britain Stronger in Europe implies that three million jobs could be lost.² For its part, Another Europe is Possible, a typical soft-left lash-up, is convinced that "walking away from the EU would boost rightwing movements and parties like Ukip and hurt ordinary people in Britain".³ Similarly, Mark Carney, Bank of England governor, maintains that a Brexit will put the country's vital financial sector at "risk".⁴ As for Christine Lagarde, head of the International Monetary Fund, she was widely reported as claiming that a 'leave' vote would have "pretty bad to very, very bad consequences" for Britain and could trigger another recession.⁵ For its part, Vote Leave trades on the politics of a backward-looking hope. It wants Britain to "regain control over things like trade, tax, economic regulation, energy and food bills, migration, crime and civil liberties".⁶ Same with the other 'leave' campaigns. Recommending the UK Independence Party's Grassroots Go campaign, Nigel Farage says that voters have a "once-in-a-lifetime chance to break free from the European Union".⁷ In exactly the same spirit Get Britain Out seeks to "bring back UK democracy".⁸ Not to be left out, the *Morning Star* patriotically rejects the "EU superstate project" and likewise seeks the restoration of Britain's "democracy".⁹ Hence both sides claim that some existential choice is about to be made. Yet, frankly, unlike crucial questions such as Trident renewal, climate change and Syrian refugees, the whole referendum debate lacks any real substance. It is not just the likes of me who think it is all smoke and mirrors. Writing an opinion piece in the *Financial Times*, Andrew Moravcsik, professor of politics at Princeton, convincingly argues that, regardless of the result on June 23, "under no circumstances will Britain leave Europe".¹⁰ The learned professor equates the

whole referendum exercise with a "long kabuki drama". Kabuki - the classical Japanese dance-drama known for its illusions, masks and striking make-up - nowadays serves as a synonym used by American journalists for elaborate, but essentially empty posturing. Despite the appearance of fundamental conflict or an uncertain outcome, with kabuki politics the end result is, in fact, already known. Eg, surely, no intelligent US citizen can really believe that a president Donald Trump would actually build his 2,000-mile border wall, let alone succeed in getting the Mexican government to cover the estimated \$8 billion price tag.¹¹ With Vote Leave, kabuki politics has surely been taken to a new level of cynicism. Formally headed by Labour's useful idiot, Gisela Stuart, and incorporating mavericks such as David Owen, Frank Field and Douglass Carswell, Vote Leave crucially unites Tory heavyweights, such as Boris Johnson, Michael Gove, Iain Duncan Smith, Liam Fox, Andrea Leadsom, Priti Patel and Dominic Raab. Yet, needless to say, their ringing declarations calling for British independence, an end to mass European migration and freedom from EU bureaucracy have no chance whatsoever of ever being implemented.

Illusory

Britain's second Europe referendum, in point of fact, closely maps the first. Harold Wilson's June 1975 referendum was staged not because he was unhappy with the European Economic Community. No, it was a "ploy" dictated largely by "domestic politics".¹² Ted Heath oversaw Britain's EEC entry in 1973, having won a clear parliamentary majority. Nevertheless, Labour could gain additional general election votes by promising a "fundamental renegotiation" of Britain's terms of membership ... to be followed by a popular referendum. Wilson also wanted to show Labour's Europhobes - ie, Tony Benn, Barbara Castle and Michael Foot - who was boss (he did so thanks to the *Mirror*, the BBC and big-business finance). On June 5 1975, 67% voted 'yes' and a mere 33% voted 'no' to Britain's continued membership.

Despite that overwhelming mandate, given the abundant promises that joining the EEC would bring substantial material benefits, it is hardly surprising that Europe became a "scapegoat for economic malaise": the 1974-79 Labour government could do nothing to reverse Britain's relative economic decline.¹³ The illusory nature of Britain's second Euro referendum is no less obvious. The European Union Referendum Act (2015) had nothing to do with David Cameron having some grand plan for a British geopolitical reorientation. By calculation, if not conviction, Cameron is a soft Europhile. And, despite tough talk of negotiating "fundamental, far-reaching change" and gaining a "special status" for Britain, just like Harold Wilson, he came back from Brussels with precious little. Apart from two minor adjustments - a reduction in non-resident child benefits, which Germany too favoured, and a temporary cut in tax credits - what Cameron secured was purely symbolic (ie, the agreement that Britain did not necessarily favour "ever closer union"). Transparently Cameron never had any intention of Britain leaving the EU. His commitment to holding a referendum was dictated solely by domestic considerations - above all, remaining as prime minister. By holding out the promise of a referendum, Cameron - together with his close advisors - figured he could harness popular dissatisfaction with the EU - not least as generated by the rightwing press. Moreover, in terms of party politics, Ed Miliband could be wrong-footed, Tory Europhobes conciliated and Ukip checked. However, Cameron's expectation was that he would never have to deliver. Most pundits predicted a continuation of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition after the 2015 general election. With Nick Clegg, Vince Cable and Danny Alexander still sitting around the cabinet table, there would be no referendum. They would have blocked such a proposal with threats of resignation. Yet, as we all know, despite the opinion polls, the Tories secured a narrow House of Commons majority. So Cameron was lumbered with his referendum. As could easily be predicted, the 'remain' camp is nudging ahead: a recent Survation

poll published in the *Mirror* has 44% for 'remain' and 38% for 'leave' (the 'don't know' figure is 18%).¹⁴ Backing from big business, international institutions, celebrity endorsements ... and fear of the unknown is swinging popular opinion. Nevertheless, establishment critics are undoubtedly right: Cameron is gambling on an often fickle electorate. Referendums can go horribly awry for those who stage them, especially when issues such as austerity, mass migration and international terrorism are included in the mix. Yet, as Andrew Moravcsik stresses, the danger of losing would be a genuine worry for the ruling class "if the referendum really mattered". But it is highly "unlikely" that there will be a Brexit, even if a majority votes to leave on June 23. Sure, David Cameron would step down - but not to be replaced by Nigel Farage. There will still be a Tory government. It could be headed by Boris Johnson, Theresa May, George Osborne or some less obvious contender as of now. The chances are, therefore, that a reshuffled cabinet would do just what other EU members - Denmark, France, Ireland and Holland - have done after a referendum has gone the wrong way. It would negotiate "a new agreement, nearly identical to the old one, disguise it in opaque language and ratify it".¹⁵ Amid the post-referendum shock and awe, the people would be scared, fooled or bribed into acquiescence. Boris Johnson has already given the game away. He is now using the standard 'leave' rhetoric: eg, the sunlight of freedom, breaking out of the EU jail, a once-in-a-generation opportunity to "take back control over our borders and control over our democracy".¹⁶ But he readily admits that his support for Brexit only came after Cameron's final EU deal failed to include his proposed wording enshrining British "parliamentary sovereignty". Just the kind of meaningless drivel that could easily be conceded in future negotiations and be successfully put to a second referendum - an idea originally mooted by former Tory leader Michael Howard. Naturally, Cameron dismisses the second referendum option. He is in no position to do otherwise. But if Johnson were to become prime minister we know exactly what to expect. Obeying the US, he would

get an EU agreement to a highfalutin phrase that he could sell to the British electorate. As with Harold Wilson in 1975, the chances are that there would be a clear, two-thirds majority. Anyway, what the June 23 referendum boils down to is a blue-on-blue power struggle. Under such circumstances for socialists to take sides is to play a fool's game. No, what is needed is an active boycott. Go to the polling station and spoil your ballot: write 'For a socialist Europe'.

Notes

- HM government, 'Why the government believes that voting to remain in the European Union is the best decision for the UK'.
- www.strongerin.co.uk/get_the_facts#QAmHJOIGfmYbztJ.97
- www.anothereurope.org
- The Daily Telegraph, March 8 2016.
- The Daily Telegraph, May 13 2016.
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