

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

PROTEST AND POWER:
BRITAIN'S LABOUR PARTY
FROM BLAIR TO CORBYN

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Remarks:

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. WRIGHT: Good morning. My name is Tom Wright. I'm the director for the Center on the U.S. and Europe here at Brookings, and we are delighted to be gathered here today for a discussion of British politics.

We are very pleased to have David Kogan with us. He has a new book out. It's "Protest and Power: The Battle for Labour Party," which is a great history of the struggle within the Labour Party over the last 30 years, the rise of Jeremy Corbyn and what the future of the Labour Party is. So we will have him come up in a few minutes to give a short talk on his book, and then afterwards, Amanda Sloat, my colleague and a senior -- the Robert Bosch senior fellow here at Brookings, and myself, will join David in a conversation and then we will go to your questions as well.

David has worked in the UK and U.S. media as a journalist and as a senior executive at the BBC at Reuters, at Granada, Reel Enterprises, Wasserman Media Group, at Magnum Photos where he was CEO from 2014 to 2019. He was awarded the Order of the British Empire in 2014 for services to the UK at Foreign and Commonwealth Office. He lives in London; he's always worked here in the U.S. as a journalist in the 1980's and I think has many interesting thoughts as well on the parallels between what he writes about in this book and what's happened in the Democratic Party in the U.S. So we look forward to getting into all of that in the conversation.

So without further ado, perhaps, David, I can invite you to the stage, and then afterwards, Amanda and I will join. Thank you very much (applause).

MR. KOGAN: Good morning and thank you. It's a great privilege to be here seeking the footsteps of Mr. Bercow who I understand was here two weeks ago. So you go from the very short Speaker of the House of Commons to the slightly less short Pundit about the House of Commons (laughter). It's good to see the interest in British politics is so strong.

And I was reflecting actually, as I took my morning walk around the Lincoln

Memorial this morning that talking about the oddities and vagaries of British politics is a bit rich when you come to Washington D.C. at the moment. We are all living -- particularly people of my generation -- are living in a period that really one could not begin to have imagined only five years ago. I think somebody needs to do a book on 2016 and what on Earth happened.

In British politics, we are not facing a series of extraordinary events. The deep, dark cloud of Brexit, which no doubt we will talk about later, covers everything. But actually the story of the Labour Party goes back to an even more fundamental struggle.

Since 1945, there have been only three leaders of the British Labour Party who've won power from the Conservatives: Atlee did in '45; Howard Wilson did in in 1964 for the first time, and Tony Blair in '97.

Since 1979 when Margaret Thatcher had first been selected Prime Minister there have been 10 general elections in Britain and Labour has won only three. And so when we talk about a party of opposition within the British political system, the Labour Party's track record is that of, you know, the Red Sox (laughter), for what was it all those years -- 90 years -- always a great brand, but never quite winning.

And the reason I wanted to write this book was it posed the question as to whether Labour was a party of protest, or a party of power. It poses the question of whether the Left is a spasmodic response to the politics of the governing party, or actually has an agenda that can be implemented. And, of course, the parallels between what's happened in Britain are now beginning to be seen in American politics as well, and I'll make a couple of references.

I wrote my first book about the Labour Party in 1981 and the reason that's relevant is the Left in Britain, and in the Labour Party, has had two great moments of control within the Labour Party. The first was between 1978 and 1982 when a group of very young activists surrounded a man called Tony Benn, who was then the parliamentary leader of the Left, and challenged the political establishments of the Labour Party, and for a brief period of

three or four years they changed the way the Labour Party operated, they changed the way the leader would be elected, and they changed economic policy. And then suddenly in 1982, in the run up to Margaret Thatcher's second electoral victory in '83, it was all over.

And those young activists just went into the wilderness for 35 years. And the reason I was able to write that book -- the reason I was able to write this book -- was I wasn't one of those activists but I was a friend of many of them, and suddenly 35 years goes by and we are all relatively old men. And those old men in the Labour Left sat there for 35 years watching New Labour suddenly come to the floor, Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, winning those two general elections and they were completely out; out for the count. And even in 2015, when there was a leadership election that led to Jeremy Corbyn being elected, they never thought for one moment they could possibly come back to power. So the story of the book is both a chronicle of what happened, but it's also an attempt to analyzing where the Left is going to go now.

And most of you, I imagine, will know of New Labour; you'll know of Tony Blair, you know Gordon Brown; what was interesting for me when we reflect on that period of 80s, and 90s, and the early noughties going through to 2010, when Gordon Brown finally lost power is in the Conservative Party -- even the modern Conservative Party, with its numerous leadership candidates; not quite as many as the Democratic Party, but it's trying (laughter), even the modern Conservative Party, to call yourself a Thatcherite, to believe in neoliberal economic policy, to believe the sort of regressive international policy that Margaret Thatcher had is still a badge of honor.

In the modern Labour Party, to call yourself a Blairite is an act of treachery. The stain on New Labour is deep. And what is odd about that is that New Labour was incredible successful. New Labour's economic policies for 10 years between 1997 and 2007 changed the nature of Britain; child poverty was reduced dramatically, investment in education and the National Health Service rose dramatically.

I was in Belfast last week giving a speech very much like this one, and I was

in Belfast, in a hotel where music was being played until 4 in the morning, and students were getting drunk out of their brains; this is Belfast (laughter). It's like Dublin. I was there in the 1980s as a BBC journalist, and the same place, the same hotel I was staying in, in the 1980's you would not go out on the street. You would certainly not be drunk on the street, you know. And I said to people why Tony Blair needs to be regarded as a Prime Minister of fundamental importance, the Good Friday Agreement, if nothing else, justifies New Labour's role in the British political firmament, and everybody in Belfast nodded because they understood.

Well, the Left today traduced Tony Blair and New Labour. So when I interviewed Tony Blair I asked him why he thought he was hated, because I don't think anyone has ever actually asked him this. Everybody assumes he knows (laughter), and for two hours he talked about economic policy, he talked about he tried to introduce choice, private money into public services -- Donald Trump, as you may have seen a couple of weeks ago, tried to do the same thing to the NHS; that wasn't going to go very far, and for two hours he doesn't mention Iraq.

Now, for Tony Blair not to mention Iraq in the context of why he might have a problem with the modern Labour Party is a pretty remarkable form of self-deception if nothing else -- and, by the way, he didn't mention it so I sure as hell wasn't going to mention it (laughter). I was trying to get to why the democratic socialists, the center ground, the liberal Labour Party that I grew up in no longer had a place in the modern Labour Party.

And ultimately Tony Blair said, "Well, okay, I'll tell you why it was; it was all Gordon's fault." (Laughter), Gordon Brown and Tony Blair have spent the last 30 years wresting power from one another and fighting over control, and here we are in 2019, when they have both been effectively removed from the history of the Labour Party by their successors, and they are still blaming one another. And that was the fissure at the heart of New Labour that allowed their success in 2010, a man called Ed Miliband, the younger brother of David Miliband, who beat David Miliband for the leadership, fraternal fratricide in

the Labour Party as in the democratic party is as constant. This was actual fratricide, however, which is kind of unusual.

Ed Miliband basically disavowed his political masters, disavowed New Labour, and did exactly what the Democratic Party did in 1970. And I realize, thinking of this audience, most of you won't know what I'm talking about. It's a very interesting parallel I think.

In 1970, or '69, '70-'71, the Democratic Party changed the way in which primaries would take place and it allowed the insurgency of what was then the New Left; George McGovern, Gary Hart, names in the past came in and hence McGovern won the nomination in '72. Well, that's exactly what Ed Miliband did in 2015, 2014 in the Labour Party. He changed the nature in the way the Labour Party could elect its leader and how people could join it.

For 3 pounds you could join the Labour Party and vote for the next potential Prime Minister; 3 pounds. And nobody, nobody -- the Left or the Right -- believed that would have any affect at all on Labour's chances or membership. Nobody saw this was going to have a profound impact.

And when in 2015 a leadership election takes place there are two Blairites -- well, one Blairite, one Brownite candidate -- the Labour Party membership goes from 175,000 to 520,000 in 18 months, and vast numbers of people who had never been a member of a political party, but who believed in the new politics, particular of climate change, believed Jeremy Corbyn was -- even though he was 65 years of age -- was a different sort of new politician.

You have an incredible irony where you have the oldest man in the race, who'd been an MP since 1983, who'd never held office, who'd never done anything, who was never seen by his own supporters as being a winner; nobody on the Left ever thought they were going to win, though they thought they might stake a place in policy making.

And so he runs and you have the three accelerants of social media

suddenly driving the Left to a position of primacy. You could go onto the Jeremy Corbyn for Leader website and there was a button on it, and you would go there and he would say, "We're going to end austerity. We're going to repudiate the foreign policy that led to Iraq. We're going to repudiate America," -- no doubt we'll come back to that topic later -- "And if you want to vote for me just join the Labour Party by pushing this tab on my website." And they all did. Not a single one of the other candidates had that button on their website. Corbyn comes from nowhere and wins, and the book really looks at the four summers of Jeremy Corbyn.

So in 2015, the Left for the first time since 1981 are suddenly involved in the leadership election and they win it for the first time ever. So there is Jeremy Corbyn, a man who's politics have always been regarded as being entirely in the minority, suddenly becomes leader of the party, surrounded by a bunch of people who themselves never assumed they would have to take control of a political party, and in 2016, they are handed enormous favor.

And that enormous favor -- and it's the irony of the rules of politics, this -- is that when the Brexit referendum took place, and we are all in shock the following morning. And myself and my friend Antoine van Agtmael, who I thank for arranging this today, were both at a conference at Magnum Photos that Friday morning, involved in, actually, an extremely important decision about the future of the agency, except I was sending out photographers to cover what the hell was going on in Britain. I mean none of us had seen this happening. But what people didn't see was that that was the moment that Corbyn's opponents decided to mount a leadership challenge to him.

A leadership challenge rooted in the old style of politics, ignoring the new style of politics that had come through, where a leader would be elected by the membership and not by the parliamentary party. And those MPs -- and I interviewed many of them -- who decided that by resigning their post and by challenging Corbyn, they could basically embarrass him into resigning, entirely underestimated the fact that once the Left had power,

they weren't going to give it up.

So the second great victory of Jeremy Corbyn was in 2016 when he won the leadership election for a second time. The third was in 2017 when Theresa May -- I think the word hapless had yet to be coined for a leader of the Conservative Party and (inaudible) Theresa May became leader of the Conservative Party.

Theresa May fought the worst general election campaign that anybody has possible seen in modern British political history, and allows Corbyn to come back having been 15 points behind. And though the Conservatives win it, they win it as a minority government, as you know, and then we are plunged into three years of Brexit.

What's remarkable about the 2017 election is the two leading parties between them won over 80% of the vote. The center ground had gone. Jeremy Corbyn's campaign, rooted in anti-austerity, rooted in a new form of politics, rooted in a new form of socialism, actually gained a new audience that no one really believed existed, just as Theresa May managed to lose the natural conservative electorate that they'd always depended on.

Conservative Party is a ruling party in British political history. It only goes wrong on a very infrequent basis. It went wrong, Margaret Thatcher's first 18 months in office went wrong until the Falklands War, it went wrong over Europe in the early 1990s allowing Tony Blair to become elected Prime Minister, and it's gone wrong now.

But remarkably, Jeremy Corbyn turned out to be a rather good campaigner, and that high-point at 2017, where this old man appeared to be a young man, and captured the youth of Britain who voted for him, was seen as a platform that was going to lead to electoral victory for Labour now.

And then we have 2018 to 2019. And what has been remarkable about the last 18 months is, for the Conservative Party, Europe has always been an ideological battle going back for 40 or 50 years; it is almost a theological battle. For Labour, it has never been -- really, since the 1970s -- anything that anybody really cared much about. And it's a bad

smell that nobody wanted to deal with.

Corbyn didn't want to deal with it. Nobody on the Right really wanted to deal with it. It was assumed that Britain would be in Europe, it was assumed that it was something that would just troll on, along. And suddenly, in 2018, Corbyn is faced with -- and the New Left is faced with -- the challenge of how to deal with Brexit. And what may or not be represented over here as much as it is in Britain, is that if the conservative Party is split down the middle, the Labour Party is absolutely split down the middle over Brexit.

What is interesting about it is in 2016 it was the Blairites -- the supporters of Tony Blair, and Tony Blair himself, who is seen as the traditional supporters of Europe -- who with David Cameron fought a lousy referendum campaign. And Corbyn was able to sort of try and get aid around the fact that he didn't believe in Europe, he's a Brexiteer at heart, but he was able to kind of sit on the face; and he's been trying to do so ever since.

What nobody saw happening was, in fact, that all those new members of the Labour Party, the young, who believe in the new politics of gender fluidity, of climate change, also see Europe as their birthright. My 30 and 27 year old daughters don't think about being in Europe, about being in Europe as a political issue. They see it as an employment issue, as an economic issue. If you live in London you're as likely to have friends who come from all over Europe as you are simply to have friends from London.

We have kids knocking on our door on Halloween who speak French; seriously. It is seen as being the modern birthright of the modern 27 year old. And Corbyn, of course, never really saw this, so the challenge to Corbyn now about Brexit isn't coming from the Right of the Labour Party, it's coming from the Left. And this is an incredibly interesting phenomenon that the split on the Left, is now becoming great.

A year ago, those campaigners in the Labour Party who were campaigning against Brexit wore T-shirts at Labour Party committee that said, LOVE CORBYN/HATE BREXIT. Those T-shirts today read, LOVE SOCIALISM/HATE BREXIT. The Left is beginning to lose its support for Corbyn. Oh, because he's seen as having denied what they

want, and also seen as not listening to the membership, which is one of his great pleas.

The second issue that has darkened it is anti-Semitism. And anti-Semitism has become an incredible stain on this leadership in a way that almost nobody could have predicted. And -- we may talk about this a bit more later, if you as an audience wish to talk about it; I'm very happy to talk about it -- but, the Left that Corbyn came from and his chief policy advisors, Michael and Seumas Milne came from, was the Left that for 40 or 50 years, my political generation saw Gaza and a two-state solution as being critical as the future of Israel, and you can have a perfectly open and honest debate, and I say this as a lapse Jew about the state of Israel and about Netanyahu, and about what's going on in Gaza; that's a legitimate political debate. What has happened with the Left of the UK and has been accelerated by social media, is that has become translated into an anti-racism campaign, and therefore become translated again, as a form of anti-Semitism.

If you are seen as being an anti-racist as Corbyn is, then you can't possibly be an anti-Semite, that is his logic; except, Jeremy Corbyn track record, in the 35 years he was in the wilderness has enough in it that has raised serious questions. And those Labour MPs who are Jews, who have challenged him on this, are then subject to incredible levels of intimidation, and I've interviewed a number of them. And there's one perfectly irrelevant Labour backbench MP who decided to criticize something about Corbyn, and the following **day** she had 25,000 tweets and Facebook messages that are entirely unprintable and unsayable in front of you as an audience, except they all dwelt in her being an agent of MOSI and the CIA.

I mean she's a Labour MP for Stoke, CIA and MOSI, the last time I checked were not particular active in Stoke (laughter). One of Corbyn's Stoke-on-Trent, by the way, if you don't know where it is, I won't bother telling you; Corbyn's chief advisors last week, who is an eccentric as being on the Labour's ruling body, said that any accusation of anti-Semitism against the Labour Party were coming out of the Israeli Embassy in London that had planted a spy in the Labour Party headquarters and they were deliberately

manufacturing the stories. This man is in charge of the disciplinary processes within the Labour Party.

So this has become -- the two things at Brexit and anti-Semitism -- have now changed the debate for the Left in the UK, it is no longer a monolithic structure that's looking to win. And, of course, we are now waiting to see what happens next; great for me because there's another edition to the book (laughter). My publisher Stephanie is sitting here.

It is impossible to know if Boris Johnson is going to be the next Prime Minister Britain, but I can tell you that for those of us who have been around a long time, the concept of a Boris Johnson/Jeremy Corbyn race to be Prime Minister in the United Kingdom is beyond surreal (laughter). It is impossible for me to describe it because it's not just a rush to the extremes.

There is a kind of view -- I know there's a bumper sticker, when I was in Connecticut at my mother-in-law's memorial a few weeks ago, I saw a bumper sticker saying, "Any Adult 2020" right (laughter). Well, in Britain we might appropriate, "Any Adult 2019, or 2020" because we are going to be facing a situation where the Left has a unique opportunity to force policy that is extraordinarily radical. And we can talk about policy later, which I haven't really talked about.

The plans that the New Labour front bench have got for economic redistribution of wealth, for renationalization of major industries, for a fundamental shift back toward central government control, are most policies that most people in the Labour Party would agree with. They are going back to a set of policies bordering on 1970. For the first time a political party (inaudible) is looking to tax people more, not less. The consensus around taxation both in America and Britain has changed.

And yesterday when I was reading the Washington Post and I see that Bernie Sanders was asked, "Are you a socialist?" and I read what's going on in the modern Democratic Party, you know, I think the parallels are becoming very interesting. Socialism in

Britain today, if it's not a dirty word any longer, it's almost becoming an acceptable word. The problem is that Jeremy Corbyn may be the person who ensures it never gets enacted because of his own particular political position over Brexit and over anti-Semitism, which is destroying the inherent management of the Left and of the party as it faces a divided Conservative Party. We truly live in extraordinary times. Thank you (applause).

MR. WRIGHT: Great thank you, David, thank you so much for that. It was a really terrific presentation, and I forgot to mention in the opening remarks the book is available outside and David will sign copies of it afterwards, just outside the entrance.

So I thought what we'd do is maybe try to cover the waterfall of issues that are raised because there are so many, I think, in the very rich and interesting talk, and even which just the sort of subject, projecting forward, looking ahead to the future books that you will write on this topic.

But we might start with the guts of the book, which is really this Corbyn revolution. I'd like to bring my colleague Amanda in, in a moment but I guess the thing that struck me the most was this role of, sort of, social media, that this was probably impossible sort of what I -- two things, maybe without social media and without the financial crisis in 2008 because what I do struggle about is why Blairism, and Brownism too, was regarded as sort of discredited by the time that Corbyn was elected because Brown, you know, has a legitimate claim to actually being a successful Prime Minister in terms of the handling of the financial crisis. Blair's economic legacy was fairly strong up until that point.

So the real, sort of, reaction I think, is still a bit of a puzzle as to why this sort of legacy was rejected, but before you comment on that, I'd just like to bring in Amanda for her thoughts on that part of the rise of Corbyn and any questions you might have, or thoughts and reflections on why we saw this really radical reversal that David describes in the book, of going back to the more harder Left in the Labour Party.

MS. SLOAT: I think that's one of my central questions, is well, as we had talked about before, I lived in the UK from 1997 to 2005. And so I moved there a couple of

months after Tony Blair was elected. I was there during the exciting period of cool Britannia, and you had Oasis playing in Downing Street, and Devolution, and movement on tuition fees, and it was this really exciting, energized period. And I guess I left in 2005, and so what I found interesting in reading the book was catching up on some of the details between when I had left and really what has happened since.

And I think that was essentially one of my questions as well, is how you move from a period where you have Tony Blair removing some of these socialist elements from the Labour Party constitution, really trying to modernize and move the party toward a much more centerous direction and then ending up now with a leader that, you know, I think is essentially a self-declared socialist and really has moved the party back in the opposite direction from where Tony Blair had taken it, which is a pretty extraordinary turnaround within about 15, 20 years.

MR. KOGAN: Well, I think -- let's talk about New Labour. I think what was extraordinary about Tony Blair, and I interviewed Tony Blair for two hours, there are three things that I think we really need to recognize about New Labour. Blair and Brown were incredibly inexperienced and young. Neither of them has ever held ministerial office. They come in as chancellor and as Prime Minister and they have a huge parliamentary majority and are prepared to do anything, and for those first three or four years they did.

So let's talk first of all about foreign policy. I mean, what's fascinating to me about Blair is that within 18 months of being Prime Minister he's already engaged in the Good Friday Agreement, which is a huge achievement. He's already engaged in trying to sort our problems of Europe, he actually is a British Prime Minister who can speak French; French good enough for him speak to the National Assembly. Well, no British Prime Minister has ever really gotten away speaking French to the French (laughter), so he really was a remarkable Prime Minister of his time.

But then we have Kosovo, and I was running Reuters Television then. I mean, for my generation, Yugoslavia was our war. It was the war that was inexplicable in so

many ways, and when Blair and Bill Clinton decided to intervene -- some might argue too late, over Kosovo -- and there was a bombing campaign undertaken by NATO; not the UN, because they couldn't get UN agreement because of the Russians. Blair and Clinton were united in this New World Order. And the speech that Blair gives in Chicago in 1999, which I'm sure is a speech you would know well, where he outlines the two great threats to world peace Milosevic on the one hand and Iraq on the other, and that was as early as '99, Blair gets a kind of messianic fervor that makes him a big player in the world stage, and makes him the ultimate interventionist.

They go into Sierra Leone and then you get the election of George Bush and then you get Afghanistan. And what people failed to notice was when Afghanistan took place, the Left organized the Stop the War Coalition, which got very little attention at the time, shared by Jeremy Corbyn. And whereas most people in Britain accepted Afghanistan was a necessary military intervention after 9/11, moving then into Iraq two years later, the Stop the War Coalition was putting a million people on the streets protesting against Tony Blair.

So Blair's right hand man, Peter Mandelson says in the book, Iraq destroyed the kind of compact between Tony Blair and the thinking middle class liberal element of the Labour Party. Labour's membership dropped from 405,000 to 190,000 into 2003 to 2004. And Blair himself, as I said earlier, doesn't really recognize that, so that was foreign policy.

MR. WRIGHT: He still won in 2005.

MR. KOGAN: Won with the majority of 66 because the Conservative Party was still in shambles and because New Labour still had enough traction on domestic policy to succeed. He certainly did, but it laid in within the party -- vast numbers of people had left - it laid in all of those people returned in 2015. They were waiting. They waited 10 years to rejoin. So that was the first problem.

I think the second policy was economic policy was working but the way in which Blair and the Blairites were obsessed by choice in public services, introducing the free

market into education and the NHS, the Brownites never really bought into that. Brown was much more of a traditional Labourite in that sense, and that was a fissure. But the biggest fissure of all was their relationship.

There's a great story in the book, in 2007 Blair stands down after pressure from the Brownites and Brown becomes Prime Minister, and I think this story sums up their relationship -- and this was really why New Labour ultimately failed. One of Brown key advisors says to him, "Let's have an early general election." David Cameron was unknown, new leader of the Tory Party, seen as being utterly light weight, had been in something called PR, nobody knew what that was (laughter), and Gordon Brown agonizes and agonizes about whether or not to call an election and ultimately he decides not to.

If he had, he had won and the polling was showing that he would have won a majority between 30 and 40, and his explanation for not running was Blair had got a majority of 66 in 2005, and he couldn't be seen to run and not win a bigger majority than Tony Blair. Now that just shows why New Labour was fundamentally at war with itself.

The other reason is they are all exhausted. Just like great governments, Atlee's government in 1950 had been in power for 10 years, they'd run out of ideas. And the crash funny enough, saved Gordon Brown's reputation. If the crash hadn't happened, Gordon Brown would have gone down in history as another failed three year Prime Minister. The crash has given him a degree of historical validity that he otherwise wouldn't have had. But in terms of policy, New Labour by 2007 was kind of out of time.

MS. SLOAT: So that explains the crash of New Labour, but how do you get from New Labour to then the pendulum swinging all the way back to a much more Leftist approach than Blair's sort of third way.

MR. KOGAN: So, both in policy terms and in practical political terms, in policy terms you then have 2010 Labour in opposition for five years under Ed Miliband, and within Labour, within those five years -- well, Conservative government, you have George Osborne and David Cameron who are now embarked on reversing the whole New Labour

economic strategy of the previous 15 years. You have austerity being brought in, substantial cuts to public services, the emphasis in reducing public debt, and absolutely rigorous return to economic thinking that Margaret Thatcher would have been proud of -- in many ways he went further than Margaret Thatcher -- and Labour didn't challenge it.

Those five years, Labour is divided by itself and that allowed the Left, who were not part of Ed Miliband's regime, that they supposedly heard Ed Miliband (inaudible) saying, New Labour, Austerity Light, is not what Labour should be doing, and this became particularly the case over certain issues that are part of the liberal Left in Britain; and the main one is immigration.

Ed Miliband, the son of immigrants, basically was producing mugs saying stop immigration now. Ed Miliband essentially -- Labour took a policy, because the threat of UKIP in northern Labour seats, was rising all the time and Labour could not stake out its position, both against UKIP, and in favor of an open immigration policy. And that is a problem within Labour then, it's a problem within Labour now. It's where the new Left sits.

The anti-Corbyn Left believed in free, open borders; believed in free movement. It's a fundamental moral issue for people on the Left. Ed Miliband was seen as somebody who moved away from that. So in those five years, the Left was able to challenge on policy grounds Labour's leadership as being nothing more than a light-Tory leadership.

In practical terms Ed Miliband decided to change the way the leader of the party was elected by opening up to all members, one member one vote as it became known. And as I say, it produced this policy of allowing anyone to join the Labour Party for 3 pounds to vote for the membership, never thinking, never thinking for one moment, it would have the effect that it did, nobody thought it.

And that's allowed the Left, through the Union movement, to really mobilize, but it also allowed large numbers of people who had left in 2003, and the new young, who had disavowed after the 2008 crash from any sort of political activity, apart from anti-

austerity and anti-climate change, it allowed them all to come into the Labour Party and that changed the economics and politics in the Labour Party forever.

MR. WRIGHT: Can we look at the 2017 election because that is a really interesting election that you write about in terms of saving Corbyn and Corbynism. I mean, most people you mention the choice that Gordon Brown had with a snap election --

MR. KOGAN: Yeah.

MR. WRIGHT: Theresa May's intent is looked far more favorable even than that. She was meant to come back with a majority of 150 and destroy Corbyn's Labour -- that Corbyn might be gone afterwards, it could discredit his movement, and course, he came back not winning, but coming fairly close and doing much better than expected.

I guess my question is partly your affections on that election but also, do you think that the way in which that has been interpreted by the Corbyn Left is accurate? Did he do as well as he thinks, or were people basically registering a protest vote against Theresa May because they thought he would never win, and they are going into the next election -- whenever that it -- assuming there would be a bump from 2017. But is it possible that actually the lessons of '17 are something very different; and Amanda maybe you could come in afterwards as well.

MR. KOGAN: Well the 2017 election -- I mean, I imagine all of you are pretty tired of the primary season already, right (laughter).

MR. WRIGHT: This is Washington; people love it (laughter).

MR. KOGAN: I have to say, I love it -- having covered two American Presidential elections, I love it too. I followed Geraldine Ferraro around (laughter). Geraldine Ferraro going to Chicago in '84 when the Chicago Democratic vote split down the middle between Howell Washington and Jane Byrne, if I remember that correctly, and Geraldine Ferraro walking into that mess was something to see.

Anyway -- ancient history, I know -- the point about primary season is those candidates who win the primary seasons have gone through at least a year of being put

through the mill, right. I mean, they have been put through the media mill, they've been put through the opposition mill, and they've been put through the mill of estimable think tanks and organizations such as yours.

Theresa May had never been through any mill. Theresa May had been, in my view, a disgraceful Home Secretary, and I know some of us regard Theresa May's policies on things like immigration as being absolutely deplorable. She kept vast numbers of police from the streets and we are seeing the effects of that now, but she was seen -- and this is the irony -- as a safe pair of hands who was going to guide the Conservative Party through a Brexit process, and was seen as being somebody who everybody regarded as being a perfectly capable Prime Minister, up against this lunatic bearded Leftist who had not been heard of by anybody 18 months earlier.

And it turned out that Corbyn ran a great campaign on the very simple message that austerity wasn't working. And Theresa May ran a highly confused campaign with two advisors who were fired the day after the election, who came up with a policy -- I won't bore you with the details of the dementia tax, but where the Conservative Party's membership is an average age of 58, people who they tend to vote for tend to be over 50, and they decided to bring in a policy which would basically make them pay for their own care as they got dementia, which if you're of the Conservative Party, it's not the world's greatest policy (laughter). God knows why.

However, you have this election of aberration and the two major terrorist attacks in the middle of it, and people forget that Theresa May as Home Secretary, up against Jeremy Corbyn -- Jeremy Corbyn, the friend of the IRA, Jeremy Corbyn, the man who had been a supporter of Hamas and Hezbollah, Jeremy Corbyn who has been tainted or accused of being a friend of a terrorist suddenly has two terrorist attacks, one in Manchester and one in London. And that was the moment when Theresa May could have used all her experience as Home Secretary with the Security Services to prove she was Prime Ministerial, and ironically, it's Jeremy Corbyn who makes a speech about it that

appears to be more in command.

Now, that was an extraordinary election. So, coming to the second part of your question, the current thinking within the Labour leadership about is how you triangulate the idea that they would borrow Bill Clinton's version of triangulation I find quite amusing, but there you go -- their view is those who voted for Labour in 2017 combined with those in northern constituencies that want the vote Leave, if you can combine those two groups, Labour can win a majority. Which is why Labour is sitting on the fence between Leave or Remain, okay.

The problem with the arithmetic about that is by doing so, they came fifth in Scotland. Labour came fifth in Scotland. I speak to someone who was at Edinburgh University, as Amanda was for three years. The idea that Labour would come fifth in Scotland, and third in Wales, and second in London in the European elections is absolutely seismic in terms of electoral arithmetic.

They are losing the young; Corbyn is losing the polling on things like trustworthiness because he is seen as not listening to the membership, but more than that, the electoral arithmetic of taking 2017 as your base line looks as if it's eroding. But that ignores one rogue factor that no one can answer at this stage, which is who is Corbyn going to be standing against? Because, as I said earlier, Corbyn standing against Boris Johnson - - I mean, I'm not clear where my money is going at the moment (laughter).

All the thinking, if you take one simple fact, Labour has seven seats in Scotland. On the current polling, the Scottish National Party would win all seven of those seats. The Scottish National Party would use as a price for going into coalition to put Labour into power, the price of having a second vote, a second referendum for Scottish independence.

And last week I was at dinner with a man who is featured in the book, a man called John Landsman who ran Corbyn's campaign, and I put this question to John Landsman -- we'd both been drinking so I got the truth, (laughter), and I said, "Don't you

care?" He said, "If we lose Scotland in order to get socialism in England, we are prepared to do that." That's the politics we are now in, so 2017 doesn't give you much messaging for that.

MR. WRIGHT: Amanda could you reflect on that and then maybe move to the Brexit question of today as well, because we have -- David mentioned Labour's calculations of needing to keep the pro-Brexit vote on sides, that they believe if they are anti-Brexit, the Corbynistas believe that they will lose the election. So how does that play out in the wider context? How significant is that, and where do you see it heading within the Labour party?

MS. SLOAT: Well, I think that is a good question for you. the other thing that I was just thinking in addition to that, but as you were talking and talking about the American primaries is, is this this whole selection of choosing party leadership, right.

MR. KOGAN: Mm hmm.

MS. SLOAT: I mean we're watching this primary play out in the United States where a bunch of people in Iowa stand in the corner of a gym to signify which of the candidates they support, we're watching the Conservative Party leadership play out now where MPs vote, and then you're going to have 120,000 paid up members, and there's of course been changes in the Labour Party in the way they've selected their leader from an electoral college system to -- I love the part in your book talking about this three quid idea where you sign up a whole bunch of members who pay 3 pounds and this gives them the right to vote, and this question of whether there's a disconnect between the leader, who is being chosen by a smaller number of party members, and then the broader party membership.

And then also, just to loop that back to where Tom was, I mean, one of the seeming disconnects between Corbyn and the Labour Party membership is on this question of Brexit, and specifically this question of support for a second referendum, that you seem to have a lot of people within the Labour Party itself oppose to Brexit quite keen for a second

referendum.

Corbyn is, of course, a life-long Euro-skeptic, has been fairly supportive of Brexit, really on the fence about the idea of a second referendum and seeming to prefer a general election because he believes he can negotiate a better deal. And so what that tells us about the selection of these leaders when we end up having these divides between the party membership and the person who is selected to represent them.

MR. KOGAN: Okay, I'm trying to think how I want to unpack both those questions (laughter). So let's talk about Brexit and Corbyn's leadership around Brexit which may sort of partially answer both sides of this.

Corbyn has never really cared about Europe apart from it being a capitalist conspiracy, and that is a direct quote. His view of Brexit was, and the view of Seumas Milne, his right hand man, and Seumas Milne has written many times about Brexit, or rather about Europe, and it's always about how Europe was crushing Greece. I mean, remember, this is in the context of what was happening in 2014 and 2015 in Greece, where the EU Commission and the Troika was seen as being as crushing a socialist government in Greece. This is the view that Milne took prior to becoming chief policy advisor to the leader of the opposition.

So it's no surprise that people like Jeremy Corbyn, who is 70 years of age, and who was a big supporter of Tony Benn and Ben Fort against Europe in the 1975 referendum, that he's against Brexit. The problem is that Corbyn stood as a member of the campaign for Labour Party democracy, which I write about in the book, in favor of listening to the membership. He was going to be the leader who was going to do a kinder, gentler politics, who was going to listen to the membership, and obey the membership. And the membership of the Labour Party -- the last poll -- 84% of the membership of the Labour Party was in favor of a second referendum and remain. It's a completely clear piece of policy.

I think it's very interesting that twice in the last week the question of the

leadership of the Labour Party has been raised in polling, in internal Labour Party polling. The idea that Jeremy Corbyn -- there'd even be the question of whether Jeremy Corbyn should be the leader of the Labour Party, is now being raised; and that is a seismic shift from six months ago.

And if you are my friend John Landsman or John McDonnell, who's Corbyn's right hand man and chief economics spokesman, and you spent 40 years in the wilderness, there's a quote from John McDonnell in the book saying, "He blew it for 40 years, we're now back, we can't blow it again. The Left project is too important."

Yet, Brexit, the one thing none of them really cared about is blowing it for them, and they don't know what to do because the Corbyn private office, and some of the trade union surround him, don't believe in free movement of people, they are quite happy for Brexit, but their fundamental triangulation was, let the Conservatives take the blame. Their policy for the last 18 months is to do this (laughter) and let the Conservatives take the blame for screwing this up. Except now they are also getting blamed because Parliament hasn't acted because Parliament is just completely divided.

So Corbyn's lack of desire to come out for a second referendum of the people's vote is partially because he is afraid of alienating the Leave voters in the north, but it's also because ideologically, he basically is in favor of Brexit and still thinks that Boris Johnson, or whoever it may be, will get the blame from the electorate. And all the polling evidence in the electorate is that strategy is not working, which leads you as to what might happen next. And if anybody here knows, could they possibly let me know (laughter).

And my own view, which by the way, you know, if I get this right you can invite me back and tell me I got it right, my own view is -- I mean, you've got to look at the timing and what's happening within Parliament. If there's a new Prime Minister by mid-July, Parliament then goes into recess for two and half months, extraordinary; party conferences happen, there will be a huge fight within the Labour Party about Remain, but then we are four weeks off of the 31st of the Halloween deadline. Some odd sense of irony is terrific; I

love it, Halloween (laughter).

And the idea that Boris Johnson, if he is Prime Minister, can go back to Europe asking for 39 billion that we already owe Europe -- and are legally entitled to pay Europe -- he can ask for his money back, he can renegotiate, he will get an extension, and the European Commission -- which will be run by a new President of the Commission by then, because Juncker would have gone -- the idea that's going to happen, if Boris Johnson is Prime Minister, I find incredible having spent 20 years of my life negotiating as a European Commissioner, as I did as a commissioner negotiator. And Labour will sit there going, we want a general election which no leader of the Conservative Party would be stupid enough to do that quickly.

So we're going to be probably -- I think my money now is crushing out of the 31st and Boris Johnson running a shambolic government until they get a polling lead where he thinks he can beat Corbyn and they go for an election in 2020, and there will be no overall majority. But, you know something, that's a much more detailed prediction and I'm very unwise to make it because nobody could have predicted what's happened in the last 18 months.

MR. WRIGHT: Let's take a leap of imagination --

MS. SLOAT: There's something to look forward to --

MR. KOGAN: I mean, it's drama (laughter).

MR. WRIGHT: Let's imagine for the sake of argument that Jeremy Corbyn becomes Prime Minister --

MR. KOGAN: Yeah.

MR. WRIGHT: And that there is an election at some point, presumably it's a coalition government of some description, but and Amanda maybe you could come in in a moment on the foreign policy side, but I'd just like to start out in the domestic policy side, because you mentioned John McDonnell and others. I mean, it's not just Corbyn, and you mentioned socialism here. When people like AOC, or even Sanders say, Socialism Here,

they sort of mean something like social democracy in Europe, right.

MR. KOGAN: Mm hmm.

MR. WRIGHT: They mean healthcare, education, but when Corbyn says socialism, he actually means socialism (laughter), right. He means --

MR. KOGAN: What's your definition of that?

MR. WRIGHT: Well he means nationalization.

MR. KOGAN: Right.

MR. WRIGHT: Right, of significant industries, significant tax increases --

MR. KOGAN: Sure.

MR. WRIGHT: For the purposes of redistribution. I just mean he has a long track record, for better or worse, and McDonald too, of though different way of thinking about the economy. It's not a shift toward a Scandinavian model, right, or a European model as it is here.

So my question, I guess, is, how will that play out? If he is in a coalition, will he be forced and be willing to moderate that if he implements it? And are they prepared to execute it? If they face push back, as they surely will, are they prepared to overcome it, but as you project out sort of three, four years in a Corbyn Administration, is it likely to be competent and radical, or will it sort of fall apart very quickly because the scale of the ambition is sort of out of sync, maybe, with if the British people vote him in because they don't like Boris, that's very different than them voting him in because they want widespread nationalization.

MR. KOGAN: It's a very good question, and I think that John McDonnell, who is 68, 69 years of age, wants to be a great reforming Chancellor of the Exchequer. I've interviewed John McDonnell. John McDonnell is far smarter, far more astute than Corbyn and John McDonnell wants power, and when I talked to Labour front spokesmen in the various key sectors of the state that Labour believes in, they are absolutely committed to a set of policies they have already developed. And in that sense they are no different to the

way New Labour worked prior to '97 or indeed, Wilson worked prior to '64.

And it will be a radical shift back to policies of actually the 1960s more than the 1970s. But where I think it's getting interesting is the British electorate in polling isn't showing any signs of disagreeing with that. I mean, polling data when it comes to ending austerity, polling data when it comes to investing more in the NHS, or indeed, extending the highest rate of income tax back to people earning over 18 thousand pounds a year, this is not getting a negative response from British electorate in terms of polling.

There is a view, a widespread view, that child poverty, homeless people on the streets which in London is seen all the time, that there has been a fundamental failure in economic policy over the last nine years, and John McDonnell, more than Jeremy Corbyn looks like he may have ways of addressing it. Now that takes him to extremes of policy.

You know, nationalizing the water industry, renationalizing the water industry or the railways plays reasonably well because the railway system in Britain is a disaster and worthy of a 19th century -- actually it was better in the 19th century, it worked more efficiently (laughter). And the water industry can't (inaudible) vast amounts of profits and water rates have gone up. And actually, break to fast and actually Labour is not necessarily coming up with policies on housing that people disagree with.

And when it talks about a fundamental reshaping or redistribution of wealth, people are not seeing that as something that at the moment is necessarily a bad thing. The bigger issue is competence which you mentioned.

But here's the funny thing. Theresa May is handed the Labour Party an absolute gift when it comes to the issue of competence (laughter).

MR. WRIGHT: Politically she has, but not in absolute terms.

MR. KOGAN: No.

MR. WRIGHT: So, I mean, if they are in power, they can say well Theresa May was incompetent too, I mean, I guess the question is --

MR. KOGAN: True --

MR. WRIGHT: Will they been -- you know, New Labour for all of their faults

--

MR. KOGAN: Was a highly competent government.

MR. WRIGHT: As, depending on your point of view, had sort of prepared in advance of 1997 meticulously, and Brown had a particular formality for the economy, so I guess I'm wondering if McDonnell has done that, and also --

MR. KOGAN: McDonnell has done that --

MR. WRIGHT: Does he understand that if Britain leaves the EU, as seems to be Labour's preference, it will create headwinds in the economy that will be tough for any government. And all the projections are that this will hit Britain economically, so what's his plan, and why are they willing to tolerate Brexit to win power if Brexit is going to poison the economic environment once they are in power?

MR. KOGAN: Well that's -- okay, so let's deal with -- First of all, Sir Bob Kerslake, who used to be the head of the civil service, is a principal advisor to John McDonnell about how you manage government departments, Gordon Brown is now advising John McDonnell, which is remarkable. So they are trying to prepare for a 100 day budget.

What John McDonnell learned when he was in local government politics in the 80s and I was a reporter who covered it, is he hit the ground running. You have your first budget within 100 days, and that budget is radical because you've then got three or four years to get over it before the next election; and they are preparing for what is going to be a very substantial shift in tax and macroeconomic policy, which will then try and do things they think are attractive.

So I think -- and they will also, I suspect, bring back some of the New Labour ministers who are currently on the back benches, and they will bring back people with serious government experience under their belt -- but does that get you over the Jeremy Corbyn problem of looking like a man who is more obsessed by Gaza, than he is by economic policy in Coventry; it doesn't get you over that problem.

That really comes down to Jeremy Corbyn being judged against whoever is the Conservative leader. And my own view is Jeremy Corbyn will not stack up well in the next general election. The biggest problem that is being voiced now throughout the Labour Party is Jeremy Corbyn's capabilities as leader of the party in a tight general election. But McDonnell's preparations for government are well progressed, and they will definitely try and go in very hard, very fast.

The issue which you raised, which is what happens if there has been a crushing out of Brexit and a GDP drop of three to five percent. Now there is a -- I think you said 25 billion war chest that is currently being built up by the current Chancellor of the Exchequer, I think that was the number, but 25 billion in terms of a GDP drop of that scale, the way the economy will contract, the way that politics will be inferred, is something that neither political party is wishing to admit to at the moment.

And certainly Labour's plans will be absolutely damaged if they are having to deal with what is essentially a siege economy, and it will become a siege economy. So I think we are in uncharted territory for which there has been discussion, but there is no real game plan because everyone in Parliament, and this is a bit I find remarkable, is they're also saying it will be all right on the night. And for two and half years, it hasn't been, and we're getting very close to the 31st of October and if Boris Johnson is elected on a No-Deal Brexit platform as Prime Minister, I think it's quite difficult for him to wriggle off that.

MS. SLOAT: I wanted to just pick up on the foreign policy side, what you think we in the U.S. would have to look forward to from a Prime Minister Corbyn, you know, his relationship with Donald Trump is not particularly warm (laughter), and when Trump was in London, Trump said he declined a meeting with Corbyn.

Corbyn was quite remarkably the headline speaker at the protest rallies in London against him. Trump has indicated that he might not share intelligence with Corbyn. Corbyn of course is very non-interventionist, so the U.S. would not necessarily be likely to count on British support, so I would be interested in what you think on that, and then just a

second tangential question that the book is clearly very well researched and lots of interviews, but given how much Corbyn dominates the last third of the book, I found it an interesting omission in your list of interviewees that Corbyn was not among them. So I was interested in why?

MR. KOGAN: That's such a mean question (laughter). I really, I think this is the 20th public meeting and you're the only one who's asked me that question (laughter) --

MS. SLOAT: It's the rigor we have here.

MR. KOGAN: Which I am very happy to answer. You know it's very interesting; you have on the Left in Britain two kinds of views about America. And for people like me who grew up on Bonanza and the Monkeys, and sort of 1960s American television, I first came here on a scholarship in '79 and worked on newspapers here and traveled by Greyhound because I fell in love with America; I'm married to an American, my kids have American passports, and I still regard myself as a member of the Left.

But then you have the other strain of the Left, the post-Vietnam -- this is Jeremy Corbyn's strain -- the post-Vietnam war and any form of intervention, including the big row over Kosovo, the big row over Yugoslavia, I had terrible rows with friends of mine on the Left because I was all in favor of intervention in Yugoslavia because I'd been there.

So, Corbyn is absolutely of the tradition that America is an imperial force that acts in the worst instincts of global interventionism. That is his absolutely political position and it has been for 35 years. It is also the political position of his right hand man Seumas Milne, and to answer your second question quickly, I was at the same college at the same university in the same year as Seumas Milne in 1976, when Seumas Milne's obsession even then about Israel came through; and if you happen to be a leader of the Left who also happened to be Jewish, as I was and am, and you had a Stalinist attacking you because he regarded as his positions that we're completely incompatible, you didn't get on; and we did not get on (laughter), and still do not get on.

And so three times Jeremy Corbyn agreed to give me an interview and

three times Seumas Milne ensured that didn't happen, and that's the reason he's not in the book. There you go; maybe they'll change their mind --

MR. WRIGHT: Badge of honor.

MR. KOGAN: Actually, I don't think Jeremy Corbyn about the way he's leader of the party now, is as interesting as what he was like in the wilderness years, which actually was the real reason I wanted to interview him. However, John McDonnell is in the book and so are the members of the Left.

I think it is very hard to see, given Jeremy Corbyn's personal track record or kind of spasmodic reaction over the last 35 years to events, so, you know Venezuela, I mean, none of this is a thought through a sort of macro-diplomatic strategy. This is about reacting to short term events because if you are of the Left and you're main output was on press TV in Iranian television and RT, Russian TV, those were the two outlets that Corbyn was always on.

You have to understand, Corbyn was never on mainstream media. Nobody ever interviewed him. He was entirely unknown but was always on Iranian television -- which was transmitted into the UK, and he was always on Russia Today for 15 years. And so those were his outlets and suddenly he's leader of the Labour Party.

And of course, the funny thing is that Donald Trump -- if you want a narrative that justifies Jeremy Corbyn's view of America, well at the moment, you've kind of got that narrative handed to you on a plate. I mean, I was watching the coverage this morning of the two tankers being blown up and thinking, it would have been an extraordinary thing a year from now, if this were to happen a year from now and America wanted diplomatic allies in the United Kingdom, the choice between Boris Johnson who is clearly physically attached to Donald Trump, or Jeremy Corbyn, you couldn't find two more diverse potential Prime Ministers at a moment of global conflict in which America would normally be able to count on its allies. And I don't think Jeremy Corbyn for one moment would reinforce an American military approach in Iran because it goes entirely against Jeremy Corbyn's

history.

MR. WRIGHT: I think that sort of the key point --

MR. KOGAN: Sorry, if that was your question --

MR. WRIGHT: And Amanda raised it as well, which is, for Corbyn, Trump is a huge opportunity, huge. But because -- if it was Barak Obama as President, it would be hard for him to make the case for fundamental break in the alliance.

MR. KOGAN: Sure.

MR. WRIGHT: Right, but he has an American President that as you say, fits his narrative; obviously Trump is not popular in the UK, obviously Trump will make demands of Corbyn that he won't cede too, and so I guess one thing we are thinking about here a bit is, how big a catastrophe is that. I mean, if you have Corbyn -- let's just say he's elected later this year. I know you think there probably won't be an election until next year, but let's assume there's one this year.

MR. KOGAN: Mm hmm.

MR. WRIGHT: And there's a full year, or maybe longer, of Trump/Corbyn relations; how bad does it get? Do we see an end to Five Eyes, do we see real hostility there, and I think this is an important point that it would be great if you address is: is there push-back within the British system --

MR. KOGAN: Yeah.

MR. WRIGHT: From within the intelligence community from the broader national security establishment, and how dangerous is that for Corbyn because that was a big issue for Trump. He did have obviously a huge concern about him as Commander in Chief, in my opinion, a very justified concern, but there was push-back, he had to bring in Mattis and others, so what does Corbyn do when he's confronted with the reality of power, and this countervailing pressure from the Foreign Office and MI6 and the lot.

MR. KOGAN: Well, as you pointed out, I have an award from the Foreign Office. I was a non-executive director of a subcommittee of the FCO for 10 years, and I

know a substantial number of diplomats. Let me tell you the biggest cheer I have heard from those diplomats in the last 10 years, and that was the day Boris Johnson resigned as Foreign Secretary. It isn't just Jeremy Corbyn about whom the foreign policy and security policy establishment has an opinion. They certainly have an opinion about Boris Johnson. I mean, it's just worth pointing out.

MR. WRIGHT: Yeah, but that's political --

MR. KOGAN: Well, no, but it's not just political, it's personal (laughter). So Jeremy Corbyn, I mean the truth is that, as you well know, the American political establishment and the way in which the Department of Defense, and the Secretary of Defense is appointed here is different.

Jeremy Corbyn has been a long standing opponent to Britain's involvement in NATO. That was part of his appeal in 2015. That has now been dropped. You do not hear that any longer. I think the probability of a Labour government trying to get Britain out of NATO is now nonexistent.

He was always the opponent of Trident, except unions whose members work in those shipyards that build the necessary equipment for Trident have said to him, "We want this because it pays for our members' jobs." So there are compromises of political reality coming in to some of his long held views as a backbench MP.

But he has never run anything, he's never been in power, he has never had the chance to meet the full establishment weight of the civil service and the security services who give prime ministers advice that sometimes is listened to and sometimes is not. And I suppose, when it comes down to it, given that Corbyn's whole campaign in 2003, you know, the Stop the War Coalition, was based on anti-Americanism over Afghanistan, anti-Americanism over Iraq, and his attacks on Blair have all been based on that; the probability is that you will see Britain taking much more of a back seat in all of these activities if Jeremy Corbyn is Prime Minister, but the truth is we don't actually know.

And the other thing, I think, is worth pointing out is if by that point Britain is

out of Europe, and presumably it will be, we're out of Europe and we have a Prime Minister who is an inactive supporter of NATO, an inactive supporter of the American Presidency, and it wouldn't necessarily just be Donald Trump, then I suspect what you will actually see is Britain becoming even more further relegated in the councils of state internationally.

Now, does that just mean we are neutralized, and Corbyn is neutralized, or whether he does something else that's more radical; I don't think we know that yet. I'm sorry; I know it's a bad answer. He's made very little commentary on international policy because he's suddenly facing up to the problem you've described. I don't know if you agree with that answer.

MS. SLOAT: No, I think that's right on --

MR. WRIGHT: Oh let's take a round of questions; oh, a lot of questions (laughter). Okay, I thought we might have that many, so let's take a whole bunch together so we will start with this gentleman here, then the gentleman behind, and we'll go from there.

MR. KOGAN: So I know this is all obscure stuff.

MR. WRIGHT: Well, a lot of interest, I think. Please state your name and also no biographies or stories, but just the questions, thanks.

MR. MARKS: Yeah, Howard Marks, thank you David. My question is, I think you just mentioned that Jeremy Corbyn was a supporter or is a supporter of Hezbollah. Hezbollah in his 1985 manifesto called for the destruction of Israel.

MR. KOGAN: Mm hmm.

MR. MARKS: I'd like you to comment on that, thank you.

MR. WRIGHT: Thanks, the gentleman behind, yeah.

MR. KOGAN: As did Hamas, of which he is also a supporter, sure.

MR. TOKOLA: Thank you, Mark Tokola from the Korea Economic Institution. It's hard to predict the future, so let's go back and predict the past instead. If John Smith had lived --

MR. KOGAN: Mm hmm.

MR. TOKOLA: Would Labour be the biggest party of the Scotland and would the UK be part of the Eurozone?

MR. WRIGHT: Great question, just behind again, and then we'll take these two, I think five together, and I think that will be on --

MR. KOGAN: Okay, I'm going to have to take notes because my memory is lapsing.

LEO: Hello, my name is Leo, thank you for your talk. Would you mind taking a moment to explain some of the sources of opposition to Corbyn within the Labour Party movement in the Left project, not just in terms of personalities, but sort of distinct identifiable groups?

MR. KOGAN: Sure.

MR. WRIGHT: Let's do those three and then we'll come back and we'll get over here too then.

MR. KOGAN: Israel, well, Jeremy Corbyn and Seamus Milne both have long track records and open support -- there's a YouTube video of them giving speeches in 2009 in Hyde Park, where they pledged support to both Hamas and Hezbollah in terms -- and both organizations are, as you are aware, pledged to not reach any diplomatic solution, but pledged to put Israel into the sea; I seem to remember is the statement. And there was a famous episode of Corbyn holding a wreath, as you'll probably be aware, in Tunis in 2013, as the first (inaudible) of Jeremy Corbyn being invited to a conference in Tunis by a bunch of Palestinian groups holding a wreath.

And the big row of a year ago, one of the many rows about his apparent anti-Semitism, is whether that wreath intending for 45 people being killed in Israeli airstrikes, or was it intended for the members of Black September who were responsible for the Munich Olympics massacre. And first of all he denied he was holding a wreath, which was slightly unfortunate because the thing was enormous (laughter); and secondly, he's standing next to the grave of Black September. But, actually, what I found more interesting about that photo

was the guy standing just behind him was the President in Exile of the PFLP, and the PFLP a month later killed four rabbis in Jerusalem, or was it Tel Aviv; and there was no comment from the then backbencher Jeremy Corbyn.

So now, I was at the Labour Party last year where the Palestinian cause is very reminiscent of some of my generation's of anti-apartheid, I was president of anti-apartheid at Oxford in the 70's and 80's where you believed in the end of apartheid in South Africa. It has now taken on that potency within the Left. But, the real division within the Left is whether you believe the state of Israel has the right to exist, and this was the row, I mean you can read about it in the book, the big row last year within Corbyn's Labour Party was about the definitions of anti-Semitism and the IHRA definition.

What is shocking now, is that the Labour Party is being investigated by the main statutory body in Britain for institutionalizing anti-Semitism based on their view of Israel as well as on anti-Semitism, so that's my comment. And my commentary is this is an iceberg that is getting closer and closer to the ship of the leadership, because that organization has access to all internal emails, all phone calls and it's going to be revealing some very ugly stuff. And for British Jury, this is a huge problem that's normally been a Labour supporting segment. It's a huge problem.

John Smith, I can remember when -- some of you won't know who I'm talking about -- when Tony Crosland died, who is the Labour Foreign Secretary in 1977, because I was at his last meeting, and the man closest in political age and ideology to me and I absolutely remember where I was when John Smith died.

And John Smith, and there's quite a lot about John Smith in the book because John Smith didn't approve of Blair and Brown, who were challenging him from -- the Right and Left is the wrong definition here -- but were certainly challenging his regard as too Conservative leadership. They wanted a modernized body (inaudible). If John Smith had lived, Blair and Brown would have had a huge falling out with him sooner or later. It felt like they were already aiming for it. But John Smith was a notable great politician who died

in 1994, which lead to the election of Tony Blair as Labour leader, and the rest is history.

Would the effect of John Smith winning -- as I'm sure he would've done -- the election of '97 have saved Labour in Scotland? Well, you look at what Labour did in Scotland with Donald Dewar doing the devolution bill, Donald Dewar becoming First Minister, and I actually suspect, part of your question, if Donald Dewar -- you may disagree with me about this -- the combination of John Smith and Donald Dewar both dying meant that Labour's dominance in Scotland suddenly disappeared because the leadership of Labour in Scotland became highly variable in terms of quality, and still is.

So, my suspicion is John Smith would have been great Prime Minister, and my suspicion is Donald Dewar and John Smith would have held Labour together a bit more in Scotland, but actually the truth is the SMP were already on the rise, and of course now they have a highly capable leader as First Minister in Scotland. I'm not sure the memory of John Smith, even as Prime Minister would have negated that.

Opposition of Labour to the Left in the Labour Party, well, there's very tired opposition to the Labour Party from the Blairites and the Brownites. The New Labour opposition has basically come to an end. It had its moment and it isn't really there.

The challenge in 2016 -- I'm sorry, I'm trying to see who asked the question -- I'm so sorry, I know I'm looking at the wrong person. The challenge in 2016 -- which I detail the Chicken Coup; you know why it's known as the Chicken Coup? Because they were all chicken (laughter), seriously, I mean, that's why it's known as the Chicken Coup. They failed to understand what they were challenging and it was their last hoorah.

The challenge now to Jeremy Corbyn is coming from the Left; it's not coming from the Right. It's coming and that challenge is going to be seen in two ways. One, what is the current membership of the Labour Party, because the strong argument and suspicion is all those people who joined in 2015 as Corbynistas are now leaving, disappointed by what he's not done. And the other challenge is over Brexit and over the fact that he appears not to be listening to the membership.

So the challenge is changing in a way that no one really would have expected even two years ago. And the fact that there are now discussions about challenging him for the leadership is interesting. The problem is who would challenge him, because nobody from the centering Right would win.

So at the moment Jeremy Corbyn is the leader they are stuck with, certainly into the next general election in my view.

MR. WRIGHT: Thanks, Amanda any thoughts?

MS. SLOAT: No, I agree on Scotland.

MR. WRIGHT: Okay, so we will take these two gentlemen here and then at least two ladies on the side and then we'll go back.

MR. KOGAN: You see in Britain now you have to have gender balancing on questions (laughter), I see you don't have that (laughter). I decided to throw that one in, which is fine.

MR. CHECCO: Thank you, Larry Checco, my brief story is my question. In 2004 when George Bush was reelected by America --

MR. KOGAN: Yeah.

MR. CHECCO: A friend of mine's mother was living in London. She called up her son the very next morning and said, "Jeff, yesterday the Iraqi war was George Bush's war, today it's America's war." Should we reelect Donald Trump, what would be English settlement making the parallel, between George Bush and what's going on here.

MR. WRIGHT: (Inaudible) disappointed but I don't want to prejudice. Yes this gentleman here and then we'll go along the sides.

MR. DOYLE: Peter Doyle, I want to follow-up about that question about the missing Right in the Labour Party now, and particularly ask your views as to why it's missing, and I'll explain my question in the following way. You've described the Blair Labour government as one of remarkable substantive success on a number of fronts.

MR. KOGAN: Mm hmm.

MR. DOYLE: But looking back, in fact even looking at the time, there were really major flaws.

MR. KOGAN: Sure.

MR. DOYLE: They took a far too generous view of the truth coming out of finance --

MR. KOGAN: Of?

MR. WRIGHT: Finance

MR. DOYLE: Finance, the financial sector.

MR. KOGAN: Yeah sure.

MR. DOYLE: Which produced the financial crisis.

MR. KOGAN: Sure

MR. DOYLE: They also took a far too glib view of the downsides of globalization. I mean, Blair said talking about questioning globalization is like questioning whether the sun should rise in the morning. Well as we know now, that is fundamentally wrong. There were real problems.

MR. KOGAN: Mm hmm.

MR. DOYLE: Which they overlooked. So there is a problem for the center Right in Labour now, which is they have to both address the problems which Blair got wrong, and distinguish themselves from Corbyn. So that's not impossible. There is a fervent view in academia, a debate, about what that is, what Blair got wrong and why Corbyn's answers are not right.

MR. KOGAN: Mm hmm.

MR. DOYLE: But they are not appearing in the center Right of the Labour Party. The question is why not?

MR. KOGAN: Okay.

MR. WRIGHT: Great thanks, and then two more, the lady here and then the lady behind.

SPEAKER: So my question is about the electoral math of the next general election. You mentioned that Labour would potentially be in a coalition, and the question is with whom; and so my question is about the liberal democrats.

You talked a little bit about the result of the European election and one of the beneficiaries of the fracture has been the liberal democrats; they did much better in that election, and so my question is what do you think will happen with the liberal democrats in the next election and how will Labour need to deal with them as potential partners?

MR. WRIGHT: Great question and then final question, yes.

MR. KOGAN: Thank you.

SPEAKER: Hi, actually my question is about gender balancing (laughter).

MR. KOGAN: Oops.

SPEAKER: I'm interested on hearing your thoughts on when there will be a woman among the leadership of the Labour Party?

MR. KOGAN: Okay.

MR. WRIGHT: And Amanda, do you have any final questions for David?

MS. SLOAT: I could keep him here all day asking questions (laughter) --

MR. KOGAN: Let's do that.

MS. SLOAT: But I think that's good.

MR. KOGAN: Okay, Donald Trump is not, I think I can safely say, the most popular of presidents in Britain. I think, in my own view, I put money on Donald Trump being reelected I think a month after he was elected the first time.

And my children, both of whom are American citizens, both whom intend to live in America, neither of them have come to America in their disgust at what's been going on; and I think in Britain, Donald Trump is probably regarded as an extraordinary aberration that is almost inexplicable (laughter). And therefore getting reelected would probably add to that. Nigel Farage is the exponent of Donald Trump, kind of sums him up as far as the UK is concerned, I think that's my politest way of answering your question.

I mean, it's a very interesting question you ask, and it's a longer conversation than we should talk about why the ideological and the sort of correct thinking of New Labour today, as we know -- by the way, my position on New Labour wasn't one of support. What I've tried to do in the book is New Labour is not completely condemned for all the reasons that you said, it's obsession with the financial sector. There is 240 billion of debt still owed for deals done on bringing in private investment into things like the NHS and education and (inaudible), and that was a huge error, and Brown's as well as Blair's obsession with the financial sector is certainly one of the problems I had.

What I am trying to do, however, in the book is counter the idea that everything New Labour did was entirely wrong and not in the traditions of the Labour Party because that is the current view. So I'm trying to triangulate between those two positions.

Why is the New Labour think tank, the New Labour ideology, the New Labour thinking that existed so well for 20 years, why are not hearing it anymore? Because it lost energy and faith in itself and also because a lot of the people who are involved in it, just in the way the Left went into the wilderness, are themselves being pushed into the wilderness.

I mean, part of the thing that's interesting to me is New Labour controlled parliamentary selections rigorously, its power was considerable. The Left are doing to it what it did to them, and so those voices are not coming through. and if you look at new MPs elected into the House of Commons, the new 95 Labour MPs in 2015, they were all being selected by the Left or by the unions to counter what would have been the New Labour theocracy of the previous years. And New Labour basically just died on its own feet. The roots of it have basically gone in my view, but we should have this conversation on a longer basis afterwards because I think it's a very interesting question.

The Lib-Dems, well, there's obviously a leadership election going on in the Lib-Dems at the moment, poor old Sir Vince has come and gone, leaving not much of a trace. And you've got a 38 year old female candidate against a former cabinet minister, so

you've got Joyce Vincent against Davey; Joyce Vincent looks like she's going to win it. But Lib-Dems are still basically -- and the center ground as we are seeing with the new political party that came and went without a trace and changed the UK, the center ground is being crushed by everything else.

And if you are the Labour Party and you have the chance of going into coalition -- and at the moment this week, Labour, and the Lib-Dems, and SMP are working together as a parliamentary block; but the ideas as the Lib-Dems are getting as many seats as the SMP, I actually just don't think that's going to happen. And actually the SMPs economic policies are somewhat closer to Labour's than the Lib-Dems have been. The Lib-Dems have very few policies and they are still being held accountable for tuition fees.

Now, Joyce Vincent was a minister in the coalition government, and believe me, she will be targeted on that basis, as only voted for increases in tuition fees, so I'm not convinced the Lib-Dems are coming back.

And on gender balance, when you talk to people in the Labour Party about who the next leader of the Labour Party is going to be, there is one view, which is it has to be a woman, because the Labour Party's embarrassed, the Conservatives have had two and they've had none. If the Conservative Party elects Sajid Javid as leader then they will have the first BMA candidate as leader as well. This is the Conservative Party we are talking about.

So Labour is kind of rocked to it's foundations by the fact that it appears to be electing an old white guy as opposed to Theresa May, who, if she had no other advantage, was at least, in fact, a woman (laughter).

The problem with that from a political perspective, is that the three candidates who are most likely to stand due and who happen to be women, Emily Thornberry who the Left are deeply worried about because she's now taking a very strong position against Corbyn on Brexit. And one called Rebecca Long Baily who is the darling of the Left and protégé of John McDonnell, and the third who is getting union backing is the

Labour's education spokeswoman, Angela Rayner, who has not got the weight you would expect in the leader of a political party.

The one candidate who does happens to be a white middle-aged man called Keir Starmer, who is currently the spokesman of Brexit, but he's neither of the Left and nor is he a woman, so I think you will get your wish. I think we will see, if Labour loses the election, there will be a female leader of the Labour Party.

The question is, for those of us -- just bringing us back to the cover of the book -- for those supporters of the Labour Party who wanted to win because 18 years of Conservatives being in power -- which is what it will be if Conservatives win the election, like Margaret Thatcher's and John Major's 18 years in power -- for those of us who want Labour to win, the gender of the leader is an issue, but it's a secondary issue to having a leader capable of victory.

And the real problem about what's going on in the modern Labour Party again, and the real problem for the Left is you would think, given what's happened the last few years, this was a moment when they should be 20 points ahead in the polls and this should be a straight path, in the way it was for Tony Blair, and that isn't happening.

And we now live at a time where Labour's decision about whether it's going to be a party of power or party of protest is as unclear as it has been at any time in the last 50 years. And for that, that is an extraordinary moment for those of us who are actually looking for change. And I don't think we know whether a woman is enough to change that.

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Amanda, any final thought?

MS. SLOAT: No, I think this was extremely thorough; covering Scotland and Brexit and relations with the United States. I am curious, and since you were sounding skeptical about whether or not Boris Johnson is in fact going to be the next Prime Minister, which we had Ed Lucas proclaiming on the stage yesterday, who your money is on?

MR. KOGAN: Well, I'll give you my views, as somebody like all good English liberals, I own a house in the country, because you know, you have to (laughter). So

I'm surrounded by my friends who are members of the Conservative Party and they are all farmers and business people, and I ask them as my little sort of focus group, who are they going to vote for because they are all members of this rather odd electorate, and not one of them is voting for Boris Johnson because he is not seen as being serious. There is in fact a rather general desire in Britain at the moment for "Any Adult in 2020", (laughter) Boris Johnson came out with a memorable comment about business, which I don't know you well enough to repeat, but you probably know what I'm referring to, when he says "F business", right. These people don't want another flippity-gibbet ego maniac as Prime Minister who might in fact blow up.

So I have an instinct -- and it's only an instinct and it's almost certainly going to be proved wrong, so I apologize now -- that actually whoever is the other candidate against Johnson on anything like a campaign with hustings, there is the possibility of Johnson blowing up and the Conservative Party membership deciding they want an adult, and that adult appears to me, is probably Jeremy Hunt. I also think Jeremy Hunt against Jeremy Corbyn in the general election is a very different prospect than Boris Johnson/Jeremy Corbyn.

Boris Johnson again Jeremy Corbyn, as I started off by saying in my earlier remarks, is an incredible idea (laughter), and you couldn't be confident of Boris Johnson winning. Jeremy Hunt as the adult in the room against Jeremy Corbyn, I think, if I were a Conservative voter, I'd be looking for an adult in the room. But it's an instinct, I have no inside knowledge. I think we wait to find out. It's going to be interesting.

MR. WRIGHT: Well we look forward to having you back here --

MR. KOGAN: Thank you.

MR. WRIGHT: In the future and then we can either gloat or concede on that (laughter), depending. But, David, thank you so much for coming and visiting us today. The book is *Power and Protest: The Battle for the Labour Party*, it's on sale outside and also on amazon and at bookshops -- maybe not that many bookshops in America, but certainly at

Kramer Books I'm sure, politics and prose, so I highly recommend it. Amanda, thank you as well.

MR. KOGAN: Thank you.

MR. WRIGHT: And I thank all of you for coming for the active questions (applause), and with that we'll adjourn.

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