



### **A Few Thoughts – George Stevenson.**

First, I wish to offer the sincere gratitude of all our family for the many messages of condolences sent by members of LI and friends following Pauline leaving us in April. All were much appreciated and will be long remembered.

We live in a time when the economic, social, and international morality of Britain is rightly being questioned and scrutinised. Inequality, discrimination, segregation, injustice, scapegoating of minorities, are the touchstones on which Britain is seen today. These Government created characteristics are corroding the very bowels of what we thought the country should stand for. We have created a society that is so fearful of itself, that it has developed a chronic paranoia of all other peoples. Individualism is the dominant creed, allied with rampant capitalism.

History holds some important lessons. The 'New Deal' Introduced by FDR in 1933/4 to begin to redress the catastrophic consequences of capitalism is illustrative. It was said at the time that the crisis had exposed one of the basic perversions of the much-vaunted celebration of individualism. This was the notion that all success can only be the result of individual striving. Therefore, any failure was due to individual inadequacies. The problems facing the country were not the product of rapacious bankers or social and economic policies, but solely the result of the shortcomings of those suffering grinding poverty and hardship.

Fast forward 85 years to Tory Britain; this doctrine is writ large wherever we look. It is cruelly manifest in the contempt daily poured on the unemployed, disabled, disadvantaged, immigrants, and the growing legions of people living in poverty. The creed of individualism was a perversion in those dark days of the 1930s and remains so today. This regressive dogma must be replaced by a political crusade to promote the common good. Common effort in all our doings will enhance individual attainment.

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels said in 1848 that 'the nexus between man has been reduced to naked self interest and callous cash payments'. Modern day capitalism has developed these truths into a power hungry financial behemoth that has an insatiable appetite for cash and profits

Governments, with Britain in the forefront, have for decades been eager to aggressively feed this monster. This dogma demands that cash and other resources are relentlessly funnelled upwards towards the rich and powerful, the working classes must be subjected to austerity and poverty, with vital public services destroyed or privatised with profits further provided to create further easy cash for the elite few. This situation has created an elite so powerful that they are now able to control Governments, thereby negating the fundamentals of democracy, and our destiny. Perhaps the greatest deception that the Tories and their allies have successfully perpetrated, is to convince the working class that all this misery, injustice, and gross inequality is for their own good.

It seems to me that the political, social, and economic battle lines between Labour and the Tories are the starkest since 1945. In many ways, the contemporary 'giants' are stronger and more corrosive

than in those dark post-war years. As in 1945, at the next election the people will be faced with the question as to what sort of country Britain should aspire to be. To confront this question. Labour will be required to present revolutionary policies to the electorate; this raises a number of crucial issues. May I present just a few.

We must confront the power and influence of the so-called defence industries. There is a mass of irrefutable evidence that British manufactured arms and equipment, particularly aircraft, are being used in Yemen, Syria, Iraq, to destroy thousands of innocent lives. Surely the Labour Movement can muster the courage and commitment to develop alternative policies that would result in these important sections of our economy do not rely on the destruction of people in far off lands.

We continue to transfer the cost of the privatised public services onto the consumer; this represents perhaps the most callous form of regressive taxation. The consequences and damage continue to fall on those least able to bear the cost. At the same time profits and shareholder dividends continue to expand. Public ownership of these vital services must be a priority.

How much longer can Britain acquiesce in the dangerous shambles that is represented by the current 'World Order'. A system established post war that attempted to foster cooperation and dialogue as the only sensible way to solve problems. These fundamental principles are now debased and abused by crude nationalism and naked self-interest. The UN and NATO dominated by the US and other nuclear powers are no longer fit for purpose.

The veto by anyone of the five members of the security council should be no longer acceptable. This power should be replaced by limiting the veto to a small number of narrowly defined areas. This would be just the beginning of a process of radical reform. I fully realise that there will be those who say such proposals are utopian nonsense, but the UN and NATO are bystanders as the geopolitical tectonic plates crash. Nationalism and self-serving capitalism are now determining crucial issues such as war and peace. Without changes, the UN will have no meaningful future.

The moral authority of Britain to spearhead such a momentous task would be enormously enhanced, if, as a prerequisite; we abandoned nuclear weapons, and renounced the nonsense of the 'special relationship with the US. The tragedies unfolding in the Middle East offers Britain an historic opportunity to be affective in beginning to transform the whole situation. Labour must reject the bomb first and talk later dogma of the US and others. We should make it clear to the international community that we as a country will no longer participate in the slaughter of innocent civilians as a means of solving disputes and bring 'victory'.

Warm Regards

GWS