

Notes for LICBN...George Stevenson

As it seems to me.....Brexit..continued reference to the vote on 23 June 2016 as 'the will of the people is increasingly discredited'

The country was led to believe that leaving the EU would allow Britain to negotiate something better is becoming exposed as a dangerous myth. The notion that the EU would concede a 'bespoke deal' for Britain that in any way would compromise the future and weaken the basis of the EU, is so much fantasy. No precedent will be set by the EU that would offer any encouragement to other EU members that may harbour thoughts of secession in the future.

Labour's position at the moment seems temporarily tenable. A two year transition period to remain in the single market and the customs union. But the crucial question remains transition from what to whatever? Aspirations such as 'the best deal for Britain' or 'a Brexit that puts jobs and the economy first' are wearing pretty thin. As the immense contradictions and the dire consequences of Brexit become more apparent, the public will rightly demand an end to clichés and will insist the Government face up to the facts. Labour will not be immune from that pressure.

The country has 15 months at most before the 'cliff edge' becomes our next step. It is politically implausible to opine that this historic issue can wait to be decided at the next General Election. That could be 2022 which is far too late.

There is a significant figure writing upon an immense wall, for us all to see...Labour policy that is not all that different from the Tories, cannot be sustained. The Labour Party Conference of 2018 will perhaps be the last opportunity to radically revise policy on Brexit. Be prepared to at least suspend Article 50, or even withdraw. Begin the process of re-building our fractured relationship with the EU. Be prepared to fight for a more transparent and accountable EU, fit for the 21st century and future generations.

It has become obvious that 'no deal is better than a bad deal' mantra is and never was a basis for meaningful negotiations. It is my firm belief time will expose that there is no deal available that could possibly improve upon that which already exists.

Little time remains to turn the country away from becoming an isolated, inward looking fearful nation. To Labour as in the past falls that momentous responsibility to turn the country away from the disaster that Brexit represents.

Tory Britain has become polarised and blighted by social and economic apartheid. Politics has become polluted in the eyes of the nation. We have become arrogant and selfish in our international policies, this is the baleful future xenophobic Tories have to offer.

Such a scenario is anathema to Labour, and we must re-dedicate ourselves to restore hope and progressive policies for the future. The challenge is upon us to lead in this historic battle. Fifteen years of Government imposed austerity, has led to a more unequal society. This holds out the prospect of a further resurgence of extremism and inward looking nationalism a la Trump.

The next election will be vital for Labour to re-direct our destiny. Best wishes, George Stevenson