

Oxford talk Friday 17 May “We dont believe you” The assault on establishment views

On Friday 17 May at 2 pm I am giving a talk on the collapse of great parties and the rise of scepticism about establishment opinion at All Souls College, High Street Oxford.

All those interested in coming should email myles.larrington@parliament.uk so we can tell the Lodge at All Souls to let you in.

I am happy to take questions on anything from migration to climate change, from Brexit to the trade war.

All change for the trains? Further evidence for the Williams Review

I wrote the minority report on how to introduce private capital into the nationalised railway when I was in government. I proposed keeping track and trains together. The majority went with the idea of splitting the ownership and management of track from trains. This just happened to be the EU view, which became a requirement. My main objection to the split was it created a massive monopoly track and stations provider which would be unresponsive to the ultimate customers, the passengers, and not especially responsive to the smaller and temporary franchise companies running the trains.

It was bound to lead to rows over who was to blame when a train is late. Was it poor track, bad signals, the requirements of the network provider? Or was it poor trains, driver problems or other issues from the operating companies? As I feared there were plenty of delays and plenty of disputes about who was to blame. Poor signalling and network management was often the cause, but so was poor labour relations by the train companies.

It was also likely to push the network provider back into the public sector. Such a large concentration of power invited Ministerial intervention. The perceived need to continue to subsidise the railways meant a stream of cash going from taxpayers to the industry, with the network provider likely to be lobbying. One of the main reasons nationalised monopolies often served their customers badly was the perception of their Boards and senior management that their customer was the government, not the people using the service or buying

the product. They looked upwards for taxpayer cash and Ministerial directives. They did not look down to find out what customers wanted and to treasure their financial contributions.

I recommend that the government examine ways to reconnect track with trains under common management. That way the investment programmes can be compatible and co-ordinated, and passengers know who to blame for poor or insufficient service. The train company can be responsible for the whole experience, on the station, on the train and the train's performance on the track. They would have more incentive to make those smaller but timely investments in better signals, better information systems, short passing places and the like that could revolutionise train service reliability and add to capacity where needed. One of the big constraints on train traffic growth today is the nationalised network providers inability to supply sufficient train slots at busy times for more popular services.

The integrated companies in turn must not be unchallenged monopolies otherwise they too will be less responsive to customers and more minded to play political games around subsidy and government led structural decisions. The main rail company owning a given line or region of track would have to treat the track as a common carrier and be prepared to lease train spaces to rival companies. There will need to be an independent access regulator to ensure this is observed and practised fairly. Challenger companies should also have the right to add track to the existing network, again with suitable regulatory supervision of revenue sharing, safety and other matters. It is possible to design decent sized integrated companies that leave open competition between lines and services. The obvious case of East coast versus West coast mainline is not the only one. These lines should be owned by different companies.

Train companies will need subsidy in some cases. There needs to be clear rules over subsidy allocation. The things to avoid include a subsidy system which protects a fossilised service, keeping routes which would be better replaced by new services. It is also a danger that the maximum subsidy goes to the least used service, providing a perverse incentive to run unpopular services because they have always been services.

(to be continued)

Book launch – how great parties can be destroyed by close association with the EU project

At the launch of “We don't believe you” yesterday I stressed the way most Christian Democrat and Social democrat parties on the continent have ceased

to be serious challengers for power, giving way to new parties that are usually more critical of the EU scheme, of austerity economics, the Euro, migration and benefit policies, dear energy and the rest. I pointed out how Conservative and Labour detached themselves from decline and fall on the continental model in the 2017 General election, achieving 82.4% of the vote between them.

More recently with the Conservative government delaying Brexit and Labour going towards a second referendum and dumping Brexit altogether, they have slumped to just 56% together in the local elections, with worse polls for the European elections so far. The message is clear – leave the EU quickly and popularity is likely to return, stay in and get sucked into the continental turning away from traditional parties.

“We don’t believe you” available on AMAZON

The price is paperback £6.99; kindle £4.99.

The links to the book to buy online:

Paperback version:

ISBN-10: 1095254952

ISBN-13: 978-1095254950

Kindle version:

ASIN: B07QYBK9SZ

On Amazon:

https://www.amazon.co.uk/Dont-Believe-You-Establishment-Differently/dp/1095254952/ref=sr_1_1?keywords=we+don%27t+believe+you&qid=1556687292&s=gateway&sr=8-1

On Bite-Sized Books website:

[We Don’t Believe You](#)

The book has chapters on military intervention, austerity economics, Brexit, the collapse of the Social Democrats and Christian Democrats as governing parties in most of the EU, the clash between social media and conventional media, the way some large businesses side with big government to the annoyance of their customers, political correctness, large scale migration and the difficulties caused by the Euro.

“We don’t believe you Why Populists reject the establishment” Bite-sized books Available through Amazon

Presentation of Post Office petition

I presented the Wokingham petition against Post Office closure to the Minister on Tuesday. She promised to share it with the Post Office management. She plans to meet them next week.

She listened carefully to the case I set out about the growth of Wokingham, the extent of demand for counter services already and the likely increases, and the worries that the WH Smith provision will not be sufficient or easy to access. I stressed that we had both lobbied about the decision in principle to move and about the nature of the replacement service proposed. I explained that opposition is widespread and people do not think the management has been listening to them over their concerns.

I will keep you posted when I hear of what happened in the Minister's meeting with senior management, and will post the Minister's response to my meeting when it is available.

My letter to the Attorney General about the delay Brexit Withdrawal Agreement

Given the government's difficulty in replying to this, I am re issuing it and encourage all to circulate it more widely. The conventional media refuse to ask these questions of the government and supporters of the Agreement.

Dear Geoffrey

Let me have another go at getting a reply from you concerning the way the Withdrawal Agreement stops us leaving the EU. Would you kindly confirm

1. If we sign this Treaty we will be locked into the EU and have to obey all its rules and pay all the bills it sends us for a period of at least 21 months, and probably for 45 months if we have not surrendered further to reach an exit agreement at the 21 month stage. This would mean remaining in the EU for at least 5 years from the decision to leave and probably for 7 years. The EU would be able to legislate and spend against UK interests during this period, whilst we would have no vote or voice in the matter.

2. In order to "leave" in your terms at the 5 to 7 year stage the UK will need to stay in the customs union and accept all single market rules and

laws, unless the EU relented over the alleged Irish border issue. 3 years on and the EU has given no ground on the made up border issue, so why would they over the next two years? Isn't the most likely outcome we would remain in the single market and customs union contrary to the government promise leaving meant leaving them in its referendum literature ?

3. After the 45 month period fully in the EU, the UK still would face financial obligations under the Withdrawal Treaty. The bills will be decided by the EU and we will have to pay them. Any attempt to query them would be adjudicated by the EU's own court! The longer we stay in the more the future bills are likely to be. The £39 bn figure is likely to be a considerable underestimate.

4 The Treaty creates a category of super citizen in the UK. EU nationals living in the UK when we "leave" the EU will have their access to benefits guaranteed in a way the rest of us do not for their entire lifetimes. So we will not be taking back control of our benefit system.

I am also concerned about a number of Articles in the draft Treaty that expressly extend EU powers and jurisdiction for a further 4 to 8 years beyond our departure date after the 21 to 45 month delay.

Article 3 asserts EU legal jurisdiction over Gibraltar and British overseas territories in general terms, where disputes about the extent of EU control would fall via the Agreement under the European Court of justice.

Article 5 reintroduces the powers of the European Court and enforces "sincere co-operation " on us as they do not want us impeding their plans for economic, monetary and political union.

Article 31 imposes social security co-ordination on us.

Article 39 gives special protection to EU citizens currently living in the UK from changes to social security for the whole of their lives, protection which the rest of us do not enjoy.

Article 51 applies parts of the VAT regime for an additional 5 years after the long transition envisaged in the Treaty

Articles 92-3 imposes the EU state aids regime on the UK for 4 years beyond transition

Article 95 imposes binding decisions by EU quangos and bodies for 4 years beyond transition

Article 99 requires us to pay for access to records to handle issues over indirect tax where the EU keeps powers for 4 years beyond transition

Article 127 applies the whole panoply of EU law throughout transition, including the right to legislate any way they wish against our interests and enforce it on us via the ECJ

Article 130 prevents us taking back control of our fish any time soon. Doubtless more of our fishing rights would be given away trying to get an exit deal.

Article 135 allows them to send extra bills up to the end of 2028

Article 140 imposes on us financial liabilities up to December 2020 and carry over into 2021

Articles 144 and 150 prevent us getting back accumulated reserves and profits from our European Investment Fund and EIB shareholdings

Article 143 imposes adverse conditions on us over pension and loan

liabilities of the Union

Article 155 requires us to make continuing payments to Turkey under an EU programme after we have left

Article 158 gives the European Court continuing power for 8 years after transition

Article 164 makes a Joint Committee an effective legislator and government over us

Article 168, the exclusivity clause , denies us access to normal international law remedies in the event of disputes. Presumably this closes off use of the Vienna Convention to renounce an onerous Treaty where there has been a material change of circumstances.

Article 174 requires any arbitration to be governed by ECJ judgements on the application of law in disputes

The Protocol on Northern Ireland will require us to stay in the Customs Union with regulatory and legal alignment with the single market, or split off a separate place called UK (NI) which will be governed differently to the rest of the UK on an island of Ireland basis.

There is much more I could object to. This is no Treaty to take back control, no Treaty for a newly independent nation. It does not quantify the financial liabilities, which are open ended and could be much larger than the low field £39bn Treasury estimate. We have little power to abate the bills and no power to abort the bills. It would probably result even in failure to take back control of our fishing grounds.

Mrs May needs to go back to the EU and explain why the UK people and Parliament have opposed this Treaty, and ask them to think again if they want an agreement before we leave. She needs to make it clear we now intend to leave without signing the Withdrawal Agreement prior to the European Parliamentary elections.

Yours

John Redwood

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