

Why Tony Blair is Baffled by Bernie Sanders and Jeremy Corbyn

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Region: [Europe](#), [USA](#)

Global Research, February 24, 2016

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February 2016

The Guardian's interview with Tony Blair;[pictured left] [published today](#) inadvertently offers two major insights.

The first, smaller one is that, as this interview shows yet again, the Guardian and the liberal-left media in general remain in awe of the former British prime minister, despite his being an undoubted war criminal of the highest order as well as representing everything dysfunctional about the British political system. He is treated, as ever, with great deference and respect by the newspaper. No hardball questions for him here.

The deep and continuing affinity between Blair and the Guardian is also reflected in their mutual bafflement at the rise of Bernie Sanders and Jeremy Corbyn. I have noted the Guardian's intense antipathy towards Corbyn several times before (such as [here](#)) but in this ostensibly "neutral" news report, it is alluded to chiefly by this mischievous editorialising masquerading as a statement of fact:

Corbyn was initially viewed as fringe candidate for the Labour leadership but gained trade union backing and won in a landslide last year.

If anyone thinks Corbyn's success in the Labour leadership race came chiefly from trade union support, they weren't paying attention – or they are wilfully blind. It is difficult for the Guardian to understand Corbyn's success precisely because it adamantly refuses to concede that he has been riding a wave of popular support. They would rather suggest he has made some kind of dark, beer-and-sandwiches pact with the trade unions.

Blair at least admits his bafflement. He states it thusly:

One of the strangest things about politics at the moment ... is when you put the question of electability as a factor in your decision to nominate a leader, it's how small the numbers are that this is the decisive factor. That sounds curious to me.

Surely it should be a major factor because if this is not about you, but it's about the people you want to serve, then selecting someone who is electable is really important because otherwise you can't help people; you're powerless.

Let me explain it, Tony. It's not rocket science. The "question of electability" becomes marginal once you start to believe that the difference between a Republican and a

Democrat, between a George W Bush and a Barack Obama – or between a Conservative and a Labour leader, between a David Cameron and a Tony Blair – is so small as to make no difference to you. If you start to believe that these leaders are actually just the placemen of corporate interests, that they are all beholden to those who wield power rather than to their voters, then the “question of electability” becomes far less important than the question of independence and authenticity.

That is the wave Sanders, Corbyn and Trump are riding. They may fail this time, but there will be more like them coming along – good and bad alike.

And who do we have to thank for this state of affairs? The Tony Blairs and Bill and Hillary Clintons who showed that the so-called “strong, centrist progressive position” was all so much baloney. Oh, and, of course, their media lapdogs, who did so little to hold them to account.

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