

BBC propagandises in favour of pro-European Union, anti-Corbyn putsch

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The British Broadcasting Corporation's (BBC) posture of impartiality is increasingly threadbare, as was made evident by the documentary, *Brexit: Battle for Britain*.

Broadcast August 8 on BBC Two, it purported to tell the "inside story" of how former Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron's strategy for winning the June 23 referendum in favour of British membership of the European Union (EU) "backfired—and Vote Leave won."

Instead, the programme was extremely superficial, giving the impression that it had been hurriedly stitched together. No consideration was made as to the social, economic and political factors behind the Brexit vote, despite describing the outcome as a "political revolution" that would "reshape Britain's place in the world."

The documentary consisted largely of interviews with middle- or lower-ranking individuals around the respective Leave and Remain campaigns—including Craig Oliver (former Director of Communications for Cameron), Will Straw (Executive Director of the official pro-EU Stronger In), Nigel Farage (UK Independence Party—UKIP) and Labour's Peter Mandelson, the chief architect, along with former Prime Minister Tony Blair, of New Labour.

Presented by the BBC's Political Editor Laura Kuenssberg, the documentary articulated the grievances of a significant section of the bourgeoisie—the majority of which backed Remain—who are bitter at the result. Giving voice to their frustration at Cameron's decision to call for a referendum—largely to placate eurosceptics on his own backbenches and in UKIP, despite the "lack of public clamour"—was pro-EU Conservative MP Ken Clarke, who described it as the "most reckless and irresponsible decision."

The result "changed everything", Kuenssberg narrated, raising question marks over "our politics and our economy". But how this had happened, in what way it had changed things and why so few in the establishment were prepared for a Leave vote was not seriously examined.

Besides several references to Cameron having been betrayed by his long-time allies, Conservative MPs Michael Gove and Boris Johnson, who headed the Leave camp, only two other explanations were advanced.

The Remain camp was criticised for focussing on the "traditional" assumption that the British public would vote with their "wallets". Instead, the viewer was told, the dividing line was between immigration/identity on the one-hand and prosperity on the other. Leave told lying claims about mass immigration, and duped a significant section of the population, against their better interests, went the now familiar mantra.

It speaks volumes as to the self-satisfied social layer making such complaints that they consider opposition to the EU—the main instrument of the European bourgeoisie for enforcing austerity, privatisation and militarism—as conflicting with people's "wallets." But there is a direct connection between this class outlook and the main focus of the documentary, which was to propagandise in favour of the efforts to remove Jeremy Corbyn as Labour Party leader on the basis that he had "sabotaged" the Remain campaign.

Will Straw was interviewed, with no mention of the fact that he is the son of Labour's Jack Straw, who was Foreign Secretary at the time of the 2003 invasion of Iraq and an unindicted war criminal. Straw junior lost out as a Labour candidate in the 2015 General Election but, no matter, as he still had a slot as Executive Director of the cross-party, pro-Remain campaign, Stronger In.

Straw is the founder of Left Foot Forward (a "moderate" Labour blog, hostile to Corbyn). He is also an Associate Director for Strategic Development at the Institute for Public Policy Research—once dubbed "Tony Blair's favourite think tank"—and a Fellow at the Democratic Party-aligned, Washington think tank, the Center for American Progress.

After asserting that the "Remain camp wanted bold direction from one man—Corbyn", the programme cut to Straw condemning the Labour leader. Corbyn had sought to distance himself from the cross-party pro-EU group, led by Cameron. It was "really hard to work with Corbyn", Straw said, claiming that it took "six months to get a meeting with him" and that he "didn't want to work with us." Corbyn was "lukewarm" on Europe, Straw asserts, blaming the Labour leader for the Leave vote.

Mandelson was even more explicit. He complained, "It was very difficult to know what Jeremy Corbyn's motives were. Did he just sort of get out of bed the wrong side every day and not feel [in a] very sort of friendly, happy mood and want to help us?"

"Or was there something deeper—did he simply not want to find himself on the same side as the Prime Minister and the government? Or perhaps he just deep down actually doesn't think we should remain in the European Union? Who knows?"

The programme detailed the "unravelling" of support for the EU in "Labour's heartlands", especially in the north of England. In fact, 62 percent of Labour voters supported Remain. It was the overwhelming majority of Conservatives who defied their leader to support Leave. But this does not fit the political objectives behind the misnamed "documentary."

Leave was able to "hoover up" support from Labour because of Corbyn, it is asserted. The Labour leader was especially criticised for refusing to "engage" in the anti-immigrant propaganda that featured

on both sides of the official campaigns.

While “polite circles” had underplayed the issue of immigration for years, the referendum “changed” this, the programme declared. No mention was made of the fact that Farage and UKIP had been given prime billing for years to spew their anti-migrant propaganda, to such a degree that it is now official policy, with Gove and Johnson both arguing for greater migrant restrictions based on an Australian-style “points” system.

This led into a segment on how the crisis in Remain had cleared the decks for a “strong and direct Labour message” on the issue of immigration, but Corbyn failed to come through. The documentary segued into a TV interview in which Corbyn admits that he is not a “huge fan of the EU” and that he would rate it at around seven on a scale of one to ten. Mandelson complained that the Remain camp was greatly “damaged by Corbyn’s stance.” “Not only was he most of the time absent from the battle, but he was holding back the efforts of Alan Johnson [official Labour Remain leader] and the Labour In campaign. I mean they felt undermined, at times they felt actually their efforts were being sabotaged by Jeremy Corbyn and the people around him.”

This is not opinion or news, but raw propaganda. Virtually all the leading lights in this programme have form. Kuenssberg is the daughter of Scottish businessman, Professor Nick Kuenssberg, OBE, and his wife Sally Kuenssberg, CBE. Nick Kuenssberg is a major donor to the Labour Party and Laura’s siblings are reportedly “employed with the British Diplomatic Service.”

In January, as Corbyn was forced into a cabinet reshuffle following the refusal of several of his ministers to support his opposition to intervention into Syria, Kuenssberg organised for Labour’s shadow foreign minister, Stephen Doughty, to resign live on air. Timed to coincide with Prime Minister’s Question Time, it was conceived as a deliberate attempt to undermine Corbyn.

So blatant is Kuenssberg’s hostility to Corbyn that the campaign group 38 Degrees organised a petition for her to be sacked from the BBC. It gathered more than 35,000 signatures before 38 Degrees withdrew it, citing complaints that it had led to misogynist and sexist abuse. According to Craig Murray, former British ambassador to Uzbekistan, who signed the petition, he had read “through every single one of the comments on the 38 Degrees site, when 26,000 people had signed the petition.” Only one he read was sexist, and one other was “totally unrepresentative.”

Querying why the petition had been taken down, Murray found out that the allegations of sexism had first been made by the *Guardian*—propagandist in chief against Corbyn. Despite asking a 38 Degrees spokesperson to confirm how many of the comments were sexist and abusive, and if he had even seen the offending comments, Murray received no reply.

One of Kuenssberg’s producers on the Brexit documentary is Adam Grimley. He was involved in the BBC *Panorama* documentary, *Jeremy Corbyn: Labour’s Earthquake*, during the run-up to last September’s Labour leadership election, which Corbyn’s campaign described as a “hatchet job.”

An official complaint from Corbyn’s team said that the BBC had lied about *Panorama*’s purpose, claiming the programme would deal with all four leadership contenders but instead concentrated only on Corbyn. It listed a number of factual inaccuracies on the programme, including the allegation that Corbyn had attended a conference in Cairo that advocated attacks on British and American troops. According to the *Independent* newspaper, Corbyn’s team sent a copy

of his diary entry for that day proving that he was in Islington, his London constituency.

That documentary, aired almost one year ago, raised the first allegations from leading Blairites that a “Corbyn victory could reignite the divisions of Labour’s past and bring back the ‘thuggery and intimidation’ of the militant left.”

To add to the stench of a politically motivated witch-hunt involving the supposedly “liberal” BBC and *Guardian*, consider this:

On June 26, three days after the shock Leave vote, Kuenssberg published an article on the BBC politics site, under the headline “Corbyn office ‘sabotaged’ EU Remain campaign.” Referring to efforts by “some of the most senior figures in the Labour Party” responding to the Leave vote by trying to push out Corbyn, she suggested that as many as half of the shadow cabinet would resign “by the end of the day.”

This was because a “document passed to the BBC” suggested that Corbyn’s office were guilty of “deliberate sabotage” of the Remain campaign.

Some 60 shadow cabinet members were to resign over the next days in a bid to force Corbyn out of office.

Kuenssberg explicitly cited Seamus Milne, Corbyn’s director of strategy and communications, complaining that Milne had refused to involve Corbyn in anti-migrant discussions.

Others have made criticisms of Milne in a manner reminiscent of the US military-intelligence apparatus’ offensive against Republican presidential candidate, Donald Trump. Numerous comments and blogs from Corbyn’s opponents condemn Milne as a “Putin” apologist, largely due to his previous support for Britain’s Stalinist Communist Party and his complaints at US/British aggression against Russia.

According to this account, Milne deliberately sabotaged a more effective intervention by the Labour Party because he is working in cohorts with President Vladimir Putin, who backed a Brexit as part of weakening the US/British “special relationship”. In May, the anti-EU, right-wing *Mail on Sunday* cited “Labour sources” as alleging that Milne had “censored a Labour document on the EU referendum to remove all references to Russian aggression.”

Just days later, *EUObserver* ran a comment by Sovereign Strategy consultant Benjamin Fox arguing, “The Labour Remain campaign was under-resourced and repeatedly marginalised by Corbyn’s team, led by press secretary Seamus Milne, a former journalist noted for his sympathy towards Russian president Vladimir Putin. As a result, Labour’s campaign was tepid to the point of non-existence.”



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