

ANDREW MARR SHOW, 9<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2019, BARRY GARDINER, MP

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BARRY GARDINER, MP

Shadow International Trade Secretary

AM: Barry Gardiner, a great relief I'm sure for the party at Peterborough, but nonetheless, you get a new MP who immediately she's selected other Labour MPs, your colleagues, are calling to be suspended because she liked what was an anti-Semitic tweet.

BG: Andrew, I found myself scrolling through tweets yesterday and by mistake I liked a tweet of one of my colleagues, which I immediately unliked actually. But look, the point that you're making I take it on board. She had apologised. She said that this was a careless error. She looked at the video of the children supporting people who'd suffered in New Zealand and she didn't bother to read that, what went with it.

AM: It was pretty clear. 'Zionists slave masters agenda.'

BG: If she'd read it I'm sure it would have been, but she said she didn't. The point is this. Lisa Forbes will be dealt with in the same way as anybody else in our party. If there's a complaint made against them, and you're telling me that there is, then it will be handled in exactly the same way as a complaint against anybody else. I'm not part of that process but we have a robust process and it will take place.

AM: All across Britain there are people who use social media and don't find themselves liking anti-Semitic tweets, and yet the Labour Party doesn't seem to be able to get those people into candidacies and you choose the ones who do. There is a problem here, is there not?

BG: Well look, let me simply say this. She has apologised. I think that she has said that she's committed to fighting against anti-Semitism, to working with the Jewish community to ensure that

they are confident that she is not anti-Semitic. And that is something that she must now deliver on. But on a day when, you know you are, you're going to be interviewing Michael Gove who's asking to be forgiven for class A drugs use, I think if he can be forgiven for that, then Lisa Forbes can be forgiven for liking a tweet that she didn't bother to read. So in that perspective let's move on.

Am: Lesson. Read tweets before you like them.

BG: And before you ask me, no I have never taken any illegal drugs. I haven't snorted or smoked or popped the pills or injected anything, so I guess I'm not even eligible to stand for leadership of the Conservative Party.

AM: Let's talk about Brexit, which is the other issue that comes out of this by election. Given where we are now, given how long we've got and looking at what Conservative leadership candidates are saying do you back an extension to our membership of the EU beyond the 31<sup>st</sup> of October to get a deal?

BG: Look, I think we do have to now move on. It's clear that the –

AM: - so move on beyond an extension?

BG: No, let me explain. We have tried our best. It was the government's job to try and secure the referendum result and to get a deal and to make sure that we left the EU. They failed to do that through their own incompetence and the intransigence of the red lines that they laid down. We have then tried to work conscientiously in the cause of democracy, we will remain and reform was our original position, but because of the referendum result we have tried diligently to work with the government to get a compromised deal that would be acceptable, that would leave the European Union but would be acceptable to the broad majority within parliament and would get through. Again, the government's obstinacy and red lines precluded us from doing that.

AM: So where does that leave you now?

BG: Exactly. So now we are now in the position where our party conference set out very clearly that if we could not get a deal that was acceptable, if we were facing a disastrous no deal situation, then we would do everything we could to stop that, and that means a second public vote, either through a General Election or through a second referendum. That's our party conference position and the events of the past months where Theresa May has gone beyond the original deadline, failed because of her own intransigence to negotiate an acceptable deal with us, we're now in that position.

AM: So to be absolutely clear the official Labour Party position now is for a second referendum?

BG: It's exactly the same as it was at the party conference, which is that if we could not get that then of course we would oppose no deal. And we would look either for a public vote for indeed for a General Election to do that.

AM: I'm interested you can't just say yes when I say is the policy now for a second referendum, because almost everybody at the top of your party thinks that now. Tom Watson thinks it, the Deputy Leader, Shadow Chancellor, John McDonnell thinks. The leaders in Scotland Wales think it, you know. Transport Secretary thinks it, the Brexit Secretary think it, almost everybody seems to agree that a second referendum – at the top of the Labour Party is now necessary, with one notable exception. And you know who I mean, Jeremy Corbyn on Friday: "we are not at the stage yet where parliament's actually voted on another referendum. I think it would be much better if there was actually a General Election." Now we know he wants a General Election, we know you want a General Election but the ball is not in your court.

BG: Well actually you've got it entirely the wrong way round. Because you know very well that the whole mechanism of parliament means that we have, as the opposition, no power to deliver a second referendum.

AM: Or an election.

BG: Sorry, that's where you're wrong. Because of course what we do have is we have one power that could actually force the government and that is to call for a Motion of No Confidence in the government.

AM: But you only win it if you have Tory votes.

BG: Yes, indeed. And we might be able to – certain Tories have said that they would actually in the circumstance of a no deal support a Motion of No Confidence in the government. The point is this, that in order to get a second referendum the government would have to introduce legislation and the government have made it clear that they don't want to do that. We could force their hand for a General Election because we can introduce that, we have the power to introduce that Motion of No Confidence. So I'm very happy to go for a second referendum and I've told you if the government is going to do that I would be delighted –

AM: But you just don't think it's going to happen. Can I just come back to where we started on this which is –

BG: So that's exactly the point and that is exactly why Jeremy said that he thinks that the way forward would be a General Election.

AM: All right, you've explained that very clearly. Let me come back to where we started however, which is as things stand we are heading to leave the EU on the 31<sup>st</sup> of October quite possibly without a deal. What I want to know is what is the Labour Party's policy about an extension beyond the 31<sup>st</sup> of October if it's a no deal otherwise?

BG: If we cannot secure a public vote either in a General Election or in a second referendum then of course we would not want to crash out on no deal and we would want to extend. But that's not the point. What we want to avoid is a no deal.

AM: But an extension is entirely possible from your point of view?

BG: It's one way of avoiding it, yeah.

AM: Can I ask you about another issue. At what point, a little more specifically, do you think this country should be carbon neutral?

BG: Well the Committee on Climate Change has made it very clear that it should be carbon – zero carbon, that's not just carbon neutral, that is zero carbon and this includes international aviation emissions and shipping emissions and it must be that by 2050. That's what the report that they've just produced sets that very, very clearly.

AM: The Chancellor has said in a leaked letter that would cost a trillion pounds to achieve and clearly that is money that wouldn't be going into schools and hospitals and so forth 'cause you can't spend the same money twice. That's a huge choice for the country. Which way does the Labour Party fall? Going for that target, yet or no?

BG: Yes.

AM: Yes okay right. We're out of time now I'm afraid but a yes will do us very well.

BG: Well it's important to explain that the Chancellor's figures are wrong and also that the Committee on Climate Change has said that this new target can be achieved within the same cost envelope as the previous one. The Chancellor was wanting to take the benefits of that and secure them for himself. He can't.

AM; Barry Gardiner, thank you very much indeed for joining us today.

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