

ANDREW MARR SHOW, DAVID LAMMY, MP

ANDREW MARR SHOW, 14<sup>th</sup> April, 2019

DAVID LAMMY, MP

Labour

AM: We're still in a phase where backbench MPs have vastly more influence than usual. One of the most prominent backbench voices and a man who's won two big awards for his Commons performance, is the Labour MP David Lammy. He's campaigned on Windrush and endlessly for another referendum. When I spoke to him earlier I asked him whether the Labour frontbench and the government could come together around a customs union version of Brexit.

DL: I'm not sure we are easily going to get a breakthrough because it's important to understand that a customs union is still a hard Brexit. Services are not covered and that's 80% of our economy. I suspect that there will be Conservatives deeply concerned that you're not able to then go off and do trade deals if you're within a customs union, and I'm a little bit worried actually about the fact that the EU in future trade deals will be determining the rules and we won't really have a say. But nevertheless there is a compromise there but the key point is because many people will feel that they didn't vote for that compromise it's clear that there has to be a confirmatory ratification in the form of a referendum at that point.

AM: Are you saying that if there is a deal between the Labour Party and the Tory party that if it doesn't have a referendum locked into it, you won't accept that?

DL: I won't accept that but I would have thought the majority of the Parliamentary Labour Party won't accept that. Having been to the meeting last week it's clear that there is a mood in the party to accept the deal that emerges as long as it's put to referendum. That is in a sense the compromise.

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AM: Now for a lot of people this is not very compromising. Let me put to you something that Emily Thornberry said very recently. She said the country, rightly, is absolutely divided. And real leadership is about bringing the country together. And in these circumstances with half the country having voted to leave the EU completely, that means a compromise where we stay close to EU institutions like the customs union but we leave and that is real leadership and that is the compromise the country needs.

DL: But look, let's be clear on this. If we're staying in a customs union you can't go off and strike free trade deals.

AM: True.

DL: I'm not sure many leavers voted for that. If we went with Norway, which has its attractions, again we would be a rule taker. I'm not sure many people voted for that. So clearly the best thing to do when a deal emerges is to ask the country whether they like the deal. And I might say Andrew, also, going forward – this is not going to end. We still don't know where the arrival point is. We don't know where we're heading in terms of our future trade deal. It's completely blind. So the rows will continue now for many, many years to come. The best way to actually bring the country together is through a democratic process. I'm not saying that the referendum won't be rough, it will be a bit rough.

AM: It will be very rough.

DL: But at the end of it we can act on what the country has said. You either act to implement the deal the following day, or you move forward and you remain in the European Union.

AM: Listening to the language at the moment can I put it to you it's going to be more than a little bit rough. On one side we've got the language of treachery and betrayal and traitors and all of that, but on your side of the argument the language has been quite tough too. I'm going to show you a clip about somebody you may recognise in full flow.

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DAVID LAMMY MP (recording)

Speaking on 23<sup>rd</sup> March

*I'm just looking over there at Winston Churchill. On the 30<sup>th</sup> of September 1938, he stood up in parliament and he said we would not appease Hitler. I'm looking across to Nelson Mandela who would not give in to apartheid. We say we will not give in to the ERG. We will not appease. We will not appease.*

AM: By implication you're comparing the ERG to the Nazi party or at least to the South African racists. Now whatever you think about the ERG that was an unacceptable comparison – wasn't it?

DL: Andrew, I would say that that wasn't strong enough.

AM: Really?

DL: In 1938, there were allies who hatched a plan for Hitler to annex part of Czechoslovakia and Churchill said no – and he stood alone.

AM: He did.

DL: We must not appease. We're in a situation now, and let me just be clear, I'm an ethnic minority. We have in the ERG, in Jacob Rees-Mogg, someone who is happy to put onto his webpages the horrible racist AFD party, a party that's Islamophobic and on the far right of the German citizenry. They're happy to use the phrase, 'Grand Wizard.' KKK is what it evokes to me when I think of that phrase and the deep South. I'm sorry, but very, very seriously of course we should not appease that. Of course we should not appease that.

AM: Jacob Rees-Mogg has been absolutely clear that he does not endorse the AFD and the Grand Wizard stuff, we don't know where that came from. It's a dangerous thing surely to accuse him of being close to Nazi ideology.

DL: We do know that Boris Johnson is with Steve Bannon who is a white supremacist. We do know that there are links between Viktor Orban, Salvini and others. I'm not backing off on this. Never will I back off on this on behalf of my constituents and the

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BBC should not allow this extreme hard right fascism to flourish. And often the prettier side of it –

AM: These are elected Conservative MPs.

DL: I don't care how elected they were, so was the far right in Germany. They're often elected. Often giving a cover for the thugs on the ground and I'm afraid when people are experiencing rising hate and extremism in this country we must not concede ground, we must fight it and call it out for what it is.

AM: The problem is, this is what a second referendum is going to be like day after day, week after week. What kind of country are we going to be like at the end of this process?

DL: What kind of country are we going to be like, if these people are running it? What kind of country are we going to be like, when we head into a leadership race and some of them get their hands on the leaders of the country? Where will this stop, Andrew? It may be that you will be fine in that country but many of my constituents will not. And that's why I stand firm.

AM: You would say that Tory MPs like Boris Johnson and Jacob Rees-Mogg are equivalent to Nazis?

DL: Ask Boris Johnson why he's hanging out with Steve Bannon. Ask him that question, because he shouldn't be.

AM: You're sticking by that proposition. A lot of people watching this will be absolutely outraged by that.

DL: I don't care how outraged they are. I think that will be a minority if they've got any sense, because British soldiers in this country died fighting this thuggery and extremism and here we are in 2019 and people are bringing it into the mainstream for their own political advantage. Absolutely not. Absolutely not. We can't have it.

AM: Let me turn to something related to this that you've campaigned on a lot which is Windrush. We have finally got a

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settlement by the British government agreed of £200 million for the victims of Windrush. Now you've said that's not enough. What would be the figure that would be enough?

DL: It's not about the overall figure, it's about the system and what we found out last week is that the system is heavily capped when people make individual claims. So for example, if you've been deported you have a cap of £10,000. That's what the Home Secretary makes in a month. It's capped. The legal fees that you've had are £500. If you've been denied the prospect of going to university, capped at £500, despite the fact that you've probably got fees if you were pulled out of university well in excess. What we will see two years down the line, unless the government removes the caps is that people remain in deep hardship as a result of this scheme. And I'm telling you now the British West Indian, Caribbean community and their descendants will never ever forgive this government for both Windrush but then the derisory scheme that they've now come up with.

AM: Yet again, Sunday after Sunday after Sunday, there's a story on the front page of the papers about the Labour Party and anti-Semitism. Do you think it's possible, under this leadership, for the Labour Party to get away from this story before we have a general election?

DL: It's got to be. There has been a failure of leadership. It's a stain on Jeremy Corbyn's leadership of this party. I represent in my constituency the Stanford Hill orthodox Jewish community. Many people turning away from the party because of this. It's shameful the way that these complaints have been managed and frankly when a senior backbencher like Margaret Hodge is crying effectively in the Parliamentary Labour Party because of the horrific language that's been used against her and others, I stand in complete solidarity with them and I say quite clearly that this pernicious nastiness is found on the extreme left as it is found on the extreme right and we resist it and fight it equally.

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AM: And there are calls today for a completely independent system to deal with anti-Semitism inside the Labour Party. Would you like to see that set up?

DL: Well I think that very few of the Parliamentary Labour Party have confidence in the current system. We're now being investigated by the EHRC, understandably, and for all of those reasons we do need an independent system that has the confidence of party members and the Parliamentary Labour Party.

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