ANDREW MARR SHOW
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AM: Can I start by asking you about all these stories that we’ve been reading in the papers about plans to deselect Labour MPs, if the party membership has moved a bit to the left and if some of your colleagues still go back to the Blair years and the Brown years for their loyalties, should they not be removed and MPs more in tune with the Labour Party put in their place?
CL: Now look, I think the story about Momentum we saw – and there are lots of red under the beds scare stories that are coming out now, and we’ve got four more myths. Last year the Sony production company produced a hatchet job on Jeremy Corbyn a week or two before the election announcement, and I think you know, we’re seeing the same thing again. I think we’ve had a very robust debate in the party this year. De-selection hasn’t come up as I understand as an issue, if it does, as far as I’m concerned that’s a democratic choice for our members. We already have churn in our party through MPs that comes up, we’re going to have churn in the boundary committee, there are going to be MPs that have to go up against one another. But the whole process of de-selection, I think as Caroline pointed out, you call it de-selection, well the other word for it is actually democratic election of your representatives in parliament. And I think there’s a legitimate argument for that.

AM: I was going to ask you about that, because if the party is sort of – centre of balance, if you like, in the country has moved a bit to the left under Jeremy Corbyn, then something has to change if he’s re-elected. The MPs can’t carry on being in opposition to him and sulking or whatever all the way through the parliament can they?
CL: I think Jeremy Corbyn hasn’t created a shift to the left, I think we’re seeing a change in politics. I mean, the top of your
programme was about a shift in politics across the west, across Europe, across this country. And I think in terms of that there have been changes. Do I think Jeremy Corbyn – do I think the Labour Party, the PLP inside Westminster, do I think they're a homogenous group? No I don't. I know that there are people – a new Tribune group has just been set up. I think that’s fantastic news that the Tribune group is back. Because if you think where politics were in our party just last year, it was a small technocratic, managerialist kind of approach to politics which people quite frankly were tired of. We now have open Labour, we now have progress, Momentum, the Tribune group. I actually think it’s really healthy that we have these groups who are debating, coming out with ideas. So you know, I don’t think it’s about – the PLP isn’t homogenous, there are people in the PLP who will support Jeremy Corbyn, who will come back and work with him, and there will be a small group, I’m sure, who’ll refuse to do that.

AM: Do you think that non-homogenous group of parliamentarians should elect the Shadow Cabinet?
CL: I think what’s come out so far is that we want to see a complete reform and democratisation of our party, and I think there’s a role for the PLP to play in that. I’m part of the PLP and I’d like to be a part of that. And I think the idea that’s come out that the PLP potentially could elect a certain percentage of the Shadow Cabinet, the leader, another percentage, and the membership another percentage, is a genuine idea and something that should be discussed and reviewed. And I think it’ll be coming up at the NEC next week. Tom Watson himself has said it’s an idea that he’s open to and he’ll think about and look at carefully. So I think it’s about the ideas that are coming out, about democratising our party, about allowing members, allowing people to have a real say in how their representatives represent them and the policies that we have as a party, and I think that’s good. Good for democracy, good for our party.
AN: What about the idea advertised at the front of the Observer that as the party changes direction a bit, so ordinary party members should have a more direct say on policy than they do at the moment?
CL: I think that’s a good idea. And I think, do you know what, one of the things – you probably know one of the things I’m really interested in is this idea of proportional representation, and one of the reasons I think proportional representation is a good idea is that it allows more people to feel they have a say in their political system and the decisions that are being made. And I think that should apply to political parties as well. I think people want to be empowered. The days of when someone at the top of the party told you, ‘this is what the policy is, this is what we’re going to do,’ we’ve seen how that ends up. It doesn’t work that well. And I think ultimately it’s about finding a balance between not having chaos, clearly, but having some form of organisation where the members feel that they have a democratic say in the policies that are being implemented by your own party.

AM: Now, some people in the Labour Party, including people on the left of the Labour Party, think that what’s happened has pushed Labour simply too far to the left to win an election. Neil Kinnock, Lord Kinnock, a man of the left, says on Panorama tomorrow that if Corbyn wins he will not see another Labour government, he fears, in his lifetime.
CL: Well, Lord Kinnock is someone who is respected by many people in our party, many people in this country, he’s entitled to his view. I’d like to see the crystal ball that he’s using, and I’m happy to look into it. Unfortunately he can’t make that prediction any more than anyone else can. And I think the thing is – people are saying that Jeremy Corbyn has shifted the party to the left, actually I don’t think his policies would be a surprise to Edward Heath or Wilson. I mean, look what he’s talking about, he’s talking about a public NHS, he’s talking about having non-selection in our schools, not having grammar schools, a national education
service. He’s talking about democratising the internet. This is not a shift to the left, these are good politics, good policies, and I don’t see that as a shift to the left, I see that as reacting and responding to a changing world where people, too many people in this country feel they have been left behind. And it’s about tackling that and challenging that.

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