

A SUMMARY OF SOME MAIN POINTS FROM THE ARTICLES

In his Sunday Express article explaining why he voted against the Dock Work Regulation Bill, Walden claimed that: "My political views have not changed since that day 26 years ago when I joined the /Labour/ Party." (A24) In a piece from 1967 justifying his abstention in a Defence vote, he identified a major source of these views, at least in their mature and developed form:

"I was a Gaitskellite. The young radicals who flocked to Gaitskell's standard did not come solely in response to a simple appeal for loyalty...there was the overpowering intellectual attraction of a left-wing critique of society which was both coherent and non-Marxist."

Walden indeed once stated that he intended one day to "write at length" about Gaitskell's struggles between 1959 and 1963. (A6)

Clearly for Walden, the intellectual rigour of Gaitskellism, its willingness to address itself to problems head on, and to confront a mature electorate - and the Labour Party - with realistic choices and options, was highly attractive. In a number of pieces from 1967 to the end of the Wilson Government, he sharply contrasted Wilson's tactical shufflings, horror of strategy, and continual panderings to Labour's ancestral intellectual befuddlement, with the clarity and honesty of the Gaitskellites.

Indeed this theme inspired some of his finest - and most entertaining - articles. (See especially nos. A2,5,7,8,9)

In a piece discussing Labour's move towards the 'In Place of Strife' legislation, Walden castigated the Party leadership for fatuous attempts to protect party members from the real world.

"Years of intellectual tripe and empty rhetoric have cocooned the Labour Movement against reality. Not one of the outstanding theoretical problems that Hugh Gaitskell raised has been pushed through to a final solution. Thus the theory of the Labour Movement is...wholly out of tune with the activities of the Labour Government...I have told my friends that Gaitskellism was the only possible conception that could make a Labour Government work and that the more they pressed for antiquated policies the more they would cut themselves off from the process of decision-making and indeed be parties to their own deception...I put again the question...'Does the Labour Movement have the breadth of mind to listen to and take part in an honest and open debate about present society.'" (A7)

/...Walden

Walden returned to the theme of Labour's lack of realism in a 'New Statesman' article:

"The Labour Party is billed at present as a party of Government, but it has little enthusiasm for the role. It came out of the tabernacles and often sounds as if it will never be happy until it gets back there. Easy moral judgement, the amendment to the amendment of the motion, the passing of the resolution, the writing of a manifesto - these, not the power of Government, are the core of the party's obsessions...Everything-must be lopped or stretched to fit its /the leadership's/ own procrustean bed of sentimentality, evasion, Micawberish optimism or traditionalist piety. It is often unwise to defend this Government by any means that might convince an intelligent man. By doing so you are only limiting its room for manoeuvre or tangling up one of its many little accomodations." (A9)

Walden also argued the need for selectivity in the Social Services- which would of course involve discarding another of Labour's though-stopping shibboleths - opposition to the 'Means Test'. (See A5,S2)

Walden also did on occasion pay tribute to Harold Wilson's success in leading Labour to office and keeping them there (A4, A10). He observed:

"Wilson is the master of British politics, because politics is now played according to rules which he himself invented around issues which he has selected as being the issues worthy of discussion.

"Having changed their leader to one allegedly closer to the Prime Minister in outlook and style, the Conservative Party are unable to stop talking about these things which Harold Wilson tells them are important." (A4)

Walden's strictures on Labour's lack of strategy continued, and even intensified, during the period after February 1974. (A21,22, 23,25,26) His distaste for the politics of evasion and rhetoric may explain why he voted for Foot rather than Callaghan in the Leadership election.

Walden expressed on several occasions his view that Britain was unlikely to secure a fast rate of growth. In a posthumous tribute to Anthony Crosland he drew pessimistic conclusions from this as regards the brand of Socialism in which he and Crosland believed:

"...the piling up around him /Crosland/ of evidence that his own vision of what Britain should be like had become unobtainable...

/..."Of

"Of course he was far too intelligent not to realise what was happening, but he refused to discuss it in any depth. He took refuge in flippancy, or pulled strongly on his cigar and glared balefully into the middle distance...

"...Britain does not get rapid economic growth and the British Labour Party will not accept that without it the rest of the policy is bound to malfunction." (A27)

Also included are:

1. A well-known piece on the post-1970 Conservative Party ('The Harsh Vulgarly of Modern Toryism' A12) - which is perhaps related to his opposition to tax-cut for high earners. (S2,S7)

2. An interview in which he acknowledges that his opposition to the Market in 1971 was wholly opportunistic - he simply wanted to keep his power dry for what he saw as more important conflicts within the Labour Party. (A17)

3. An adulatory account of Keynes' work.

4. A statement calling for slackers at BritishLeyland to be sacked. (A17)

5. A reply to the question "Should marijuana be legalised." - "I used to think so. But what I didn't realise is that pot-smoking is associated with a culture that holds anarchic views about society, that it is part of an ideology of life for which I have the most profound contempt." (A23)

6. A profile on Walden, drawing attention to curious features of personality and temperament. (A27)

Bruce Anderson/FF
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