



ENQUIRY

A publication of the AHI Undergraduate Fellows

Free thought and discourse

VOL. III No. 5 | CLINTON, N.Y. MONDAY SEPTEMBER 28, 2015

① *The Fall of Labour*

② *Clock Narrative Comes Under Question*

③ *Divestment Panel a Great Success*

The Fall of Labour

By **WILL SWETT**
STAFF WRITER

Anyone who reflects on the current state of American politics and feels the urge to sob and drink to senselessness can find some solace in the UK Labour Party's woes.

The 2015 UK General Election proved a cataclysmic failure for the Labour Party, beyond ensuring five years of a Conservative majority in all major areas of government. The shock of the summer's election prompted a major existential crisis on the far left as the party struggled to explain its failure and plan its future. Leading up to the party leadership elections, there was no question that the party needed a shakeup to move past its poor performance in the spring and rebuild for a resurgence in 2020.

The party became a victim of a radical populist movement that used the UK's party system to take Labour hostage

Following the general election, the establishment party members were calling on their party to accept the political right's victory as a sign that the party needs to move toward the center if it wants to regain political power. Prominent Labour members echoed Tony Blair's strategy when he led Labour to three consecutive victories in 1997, 2001, and 2005. But calls for repeating this strategy only angered the party's base, which regards Tony Blair as a failure and a traitor to the party's ideals.

Jeremy Corbyn seized on this feeling of distrust, tapping into the anti-establishment wave that's sweeping through almost every Western country. He went from being a throwaway candidate to becoming the most powerful member of the Labour Party.

Corbyn's election proves that the Labour Party is no longer a serious force in British politics. It would be unfair to throw blame at long-time Labour party members for electing this socialist teetotaler. The party became a victim of a

radical populist movement that used the UK's party system to take Labour hostage and install Corbyn at its head.

In the UK, party leadership is determined by a vote of its members, so all a UK citizen would have to do to participate in the vote is fill out an online form and pay the £3 registration fee. Thousands of angry and confused leftists joined Labour to have a say in the party's restructuring.

In the months following the general election the party grew by 40 percent from 194,000 to 270,000 full members with the fastest growth rate in 64 years. These numbers do not include another 150,000 people who registered to vote for Labour's next leader but did not want full membership. Almost all of these new supporters signed up exclusively to vote for Jeremy Corbyn.

The longtime Labour

continued on back page

Clock Narrative Comes Under Question

By **MIKE ADAMO**
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Some weird details emerged about the Ahmed clock phenomenon after people actually took the time to look into it.

First off, the kid didn't build a clock. He took an old alarm clock out of its casing, put it in a briefcase-shaped pencil case, and said he built it. On top of all the accolades that Google, Facebook, and the president are showering on Ahmed, I don't know if a Nobel Prize is in order quite yet.

Second, Ahmed's father is an Islamic activist who has pulled attention-grabbing stunts before. It didn't take long for Ahmed's family to set up a PR campaign that included press conferences, a new Twitter account, and many, many interviews with sympathetic media outlets.

School district and city officials in Irving, Texas seem happy to cooperate with Ahmed and his parents to get to the bottom of the incident, but getting to the bottom of the incident doesn't seem to be the family's priority. Instead, they cancelled their meetings with officials and

This Week's News in 140 Characters

EDITORIAL REPORT



Allahpundit @allahpundit · Sep 25
This is where Boehner announces he's jumping into the race

9 18



Rick Wilson @TheRickWilson · Sep 25
If you're wondering how many times HRC can lie, perjure, and dig herself deeper on this email story, the number is a bazillion, apparently.

40 48



el Sooper @SooperMexican · Sep 24
CNN pushing hard for Americans to change attitudes on immigration because of the Pope.
But not on abortion or homosexuality or sin or...

95 62



Political Math @politicalmath · Sep 22
I consider myself grudgingly pro-choice (due to painful necessity).

Seeing people gleeful about abortion makes me re-think that position.

9 12



Andrew Stiles @AndrewStilesUSA · Sep 23
Solid speech from Pope Francis, but a few glaring omissions, e.g., declined to weigh in on Common Core, infrastructure spending, Dodd-Frank

82 114

@ENQUIRY_AHI

CLOCK NARRATIVE COMES UNDER QUESTION cont.

got themselves a spokesperson from the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR), a lobbying group for Islamic public relations.

As Irving Mayor Beth Van Duyne said, "At the exact same time they were supposed to be meeting with us, they were on their front lawn with a press conference."

Ahmed's father isn't the only family member who seems to be pulling the strings on their PR campaign. Mark Cuban says he spoke to Ahmed on the phone, and that when the conversation turned to the incident at school, Cuban could hear Ahmed's sister in the background coaching Ahmed on the answers he should be giving.

Third, the city has asked Ahmed's family to agree to release records shedding light on the police officers' conduct during the arrest. Mayor Van Duyne said the records could exonerate the officers of any misconduct. For some reason, Ahmed's family is refusing. Of course, by limiting the amount of information available, Ahmed's family preserves the opportunity to build its own narrative.

The media swallowed the narrative hook, line, and sinker.

continued on back page

Divestment Panel a Great Success

By **RYAN GLENN**
STAFF WRITER

Last Monday, Hamilton students and professors gathered in the chapel for a panel discussion on divestment.

Professor Peter Cannavo began the discussion by introducing the panelists and the question: Should colleges and universities divest from fossil fuel companies? The panel's four participants presented a range of arguments for and against divestment.

Should colleges and universities divest from fossil fuel companies?

Victoria Fernandez, an associate analyst for 350.org described several recent humanitarian crises attributed to climate change and reliance on fossil fuels. Since the fuel industry has serious financial and political power, she stressed that we must create a negative stigma around fossil fuel companies and usage. If we can influence public opinion, then public policy will follow,

continued on back page



members had their party seized from by a radical mob that discarded the old leadership and demanded ideological “purity of opposition.” As an ideologue, Corbyn sparked support from a previously politically disinclined crowd of younger people, who remain angry at the party’s failed stabs at moderation. This new-Labour group sees no benefit to compromise, and stamps its feet when reality kicks in and legislators make policies pragmatically instead of dogmatically.

Young, angry voters always made their presence felt when they are enraged enough, but never have they exerted such control over a political party. Jeremy Corbyn was elected the head of the Labour party because he was one of them, and now he is their representative in politics.

It is becoming increasingly unlikely that Labour will remain a serious political party with Corbyn at its head. In terms of policy, he would withdraw the UK from NATO, nationalize the railways and utilities, and eliminate Great Britain’s nuclear arsenal. Policies, however, rarely win elections. The real problem with Corbyn is that he is as unswervingly dogmatic as his supporters. It is hard to imagine that someone who called the death of Osama Bin Laden a “tragedy” drawing enough support to dethrone the Conservative government in 2020.

Openly anti-Israel, Corbyn has called members of Hamas and Hezbollah “friends” and is closely acquainted with avid anti-semites.

Corbyn is friends with Israeli citizen Raed Salah, leader of the northern branch of the Islamic movement in Israel and an enthusiastic proponent of the “Jews did 9/11” theory. When Salah faced deportation from Parliament, Corbyn spoke on his behalf, calling Salah “a very honored citizen. He represents his people very well.” Jeremy then graciously invited Salah to the House of Commons, saying how he “look[ed] forward to giving you tea on the terrace, because you deserve it.”

This is not to suggest that Corbyn is anti-semitic. In fact, he’s quite genuine in his opposition to bigotry, but there’s something to be said for the company one keeps when weighing the electability of a potential candidate. (See the Clintons’ friendship with terrorist and Hamilton College invitee Susan Rosenberg.)

Considering how Corbyn has approached his political career so far, it seems that the next five

years with him at the head of the shadow cabinet will be interesting, to say the least.

M. ADAMO *cont.*

Corporations saw the opportunity to cash in on the coverage, so Facebook, Google, and Twitter quickly offered Ahmed meetings and internships. President Obama, again showing his prejudice against police, assumed the Irving officers acted unjustly and then invited Ahmed and his “cool clock” to the White House.

This kind of rush to judgment is a tiresome aspect of the political landscape. We saw the same thing in the Ferguson incident, where protestors tried to portray Michael Brown as an innocent boy killed by a racist cop, when in reality he had just robbed a convenience store and was assaulting a police officer.

Many of those who “Stand with Ahmed” probably have the best intentions, though they reacted irresponsibly before the facts came out.

But for others, this is going to be a cultural litmus test by which they can root out “Islamophobes.” Anyone who asks if the school administrators and police officers in fact reacted appropriately will be branded as Islamophobic, because this is a political opportunity that can’t be passed up.

R. GLENN *cont.*

lowering and eventually stopping the use of fossil fuels. It is the responsibility and obligation of institutions of higher education, she argued, to lead this process.

Katelyn Kriesel, a financial advisor for Koenig & Selzer Asset Management Group, followed up Fernandez by discussing the practical aspects of divestment. She advocated what she called “socially responsible investing,” where individuals and corporations invest in companies that share their values. To be socially responsible, one must invest in sustainable programs.

For Hamilton, our endowment portfolio should then reflect what we, as a community, value. To do so, we must qualitatively observe a company’s business practices and social responsibilities in addition to the quantitative financial investment. Citing her experience as a financial advisor, Kriesel said socially responsible investing was financially viable, typically matching or exceeding previous (non-responsible) returns in the long run.

Rachelle Peterson, a research associate for the National Association of Scholars, challenged divestment by addressing three of its assumptions: that investing in fossil fuels is immoral, that it will stop or reverse climate change, and that it is an effective political and financial statement against the fuel industry. If we polarize divestment by making it a moral decision, she argued, we will dismiss any reasonable discussion.

The fuel industry presents a difficult case because of the degree to which other sectors of the economy rely on energy. Everyone benefits in various ways from technologies that rely on fossil fuel energy. Forcing institutions to take the brunt of the responsibility for personal and societal use of fuels makes little sense.

Rafael Castilla, director of Investment Risk Management at the University of Michigan, agreed with most of Peterson’s points, stressing that fuel is not only the industry but the infrastructure on which society has been built. He described how stigmatization can be a useful concept, as there are certainly immoral individuals in the fuel industry.

He questioned, however, whether stigmatization of the industry and polarization of the debate are effective steps in addressing energy and climate change, since they lead to emotional responses rather than reasonable and productive discussion. To reinforce their claims, Castilla and Peterson showed the investments in the energy and fossil fuel markets tended to generate the best returns.

Hamilton students helped

the discussion by introducing insightful questions after the panelists presented their arguments.

In my view, divestment is mostly a symbolic act, and it risks politicizing academic institutions. While divestment may take the moral and idealistic high ground in the face of climate change and energy crises, it does not address the economic realities of the energy market and investment.

When Hamilton students and faculty introduced a petition to divest last year, our Board of Trustees was “disinclined to take that course” because it posed a financial risk to our endowment. Secondly, they recognized the seeming hypocrisy of divesting while the college continues fossil fuel use.

Bowdoin College recently attracted attention for enormous endowment gains generated from investment. They, like Hamilton, have student groups promoting divestment from a variety of causes, including fossil fuels and Israel. All of their demands for divestment have so far been rejected.

If a superior alternative energy source becomes more competitive against fossil fuels, then divestment will work itself out. Until then, we should not put Hamilton’s endowment at risk by divesting.

Special thanks to Professor Cannavò for organizing an impressive panel. Thanks also to the event’s co-sponsors: Hamilton Divests, HEAG, the AHI Undergraduate Fellows, the Hamilton Democrats, the Hamilton Republicans, the Environmental Studies Program, the Government Department, and the Office of the Dean of Faculty.

<p>vol. III</p> <h1>ENQUIRY</h1> <p>Mike Adamo <i>Editor in Chief</i></p> <p>Michael Levy <i>Layout and Design</i></p>							
<p>STAFF WRITERS</p> <table> <tr> <td>Alex Klosner</td> <td>Amy Elinski</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Will Swett</td> <td>Phil Parkes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ryan Glenn</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		Alex Klosner	Amy Elinski	Will Swett	Phil Parkes	Ryan Glenn	
Alex Klosner	Amy Elinski						
Will Swett	Phil Parkes						
Ryan Glenn							
<p><i>The opinions expressed in these articles are the views of their authors and do not represent the views of Enquiry or the Alexander Hamilton Institute.</i></p>							
<p>Enquiry accepts articles of 500 to 800 words at madamo@hamilton.edu. Please be aware that we do not accept anonymous submissions.</p>							