



## They're the Wrong Trousers, Gromit!

Politics

Tony Broadbent Fri, 20 Sep 2019 19:41 GMT



# They're the wrong trousers, Gromit!

UK Politics | Tony Broadbent | Fri, 20 Sept 2019

Aye, 'appen the wrong brothers, an' all.

Call me a cockeyed optimist, but in my “Pollyannaish” alternative dream world, David Miliband was elected as head of the Labour Party, back in September 2010, and not his younger brother Ed. Both brothers highly acclaimed politicians and MPs; all but bred to the task from birth; it being widely understood among the chattering classes that in due and proper course the very highest political offices in the land would be theirs for the asking.

Everything brought to a head, between the two brothers, after the formation of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government, on 11 May, when Gordon Brown resigned as Prime Minister and Leader of the

Labour Party. Only, when it came to the 'leadership' run off contest, it was young Ed who won the gilded prize by a bare 1.3% of votes cast. Aided and supported as he was by a motely collection of Labour Party members, including many senior MPs; aye, and top, trouble at mill, unions, too. All of who no doubt believed the younger Miliband would be far the easier brother to handle.

Side Bar: 'Appen Ed's older brother David was far too accomplished and adept for most hard core Labourites, Gromit. And the one thing nobody wanted was to have to deal with another 'centrist', fast-of-lip, fleet-of-foot slippery-eel, like ex-Labour Prime Minister and "Gordon's Bane", Tony Blair.

And so it was but a few weeks later David Miliband announced that to avoid "constant comparison" with his brother Ed and because of the "perpetual, distracting and destructive attempts to find division where there is none, and splits where they don't exist, all to the detriment of the Labour Party's cause", he wouldn't stand for the Shadow Cabinet.

The net result: in short order, hugely-talented David Miliband; past Foreign Secretary; Environment Secretary; head of the Prime Minister's Policy Unit; MP for South Shields; resigned from Parliament and pulled up sticks and left for pastures green in New York: a sad loss to British politics.

Aye, and a bad day for the good people of Britain, too, Gromit, as how very wrong it all turned out to be. For even though former Labour leader, Neil Kinnock, in endorsing his campaign for leadership, said Ed had "the capacity to inspire and to 'lift' people" and could charm the clogs off a clog dancer (or words to that effect), it soon became evident to one and all that he couldn't. That he just didn't have the necessary "oomph." That he wasn't tough enough. So, after having fought the good fight for five tortuous years and repeatedly leading his party to failure against the Tory Party's slickly posh and polished David Cameron, dear 'growing older by the minute' Ed

finally threw in the towel, in 2015. Yet, conscientious bloke that he was and still is, he elected to stay on as the loyal MP for Doncaster North.

Don't get me wrong; I'm a big fan of our Ed's. He was Britain's first ever Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, a position he held under Gordon Brown from 2008-10. And whether in or out of office he's been a climate change champion ever since. And, from what I can fathom, was very instrumental in getting Greta Thunberg to speak to Parliament on 23 Apr 2019. So he gets huge thumbs up, from me, for that.

And what of David Miliband today? He's doing sterling work as Chief Executive of the International Rescue Committee, as well as acting as a much respected public policy analyst and commentator; appearing across the entire spectrum of American TV channels. Demonstrating, to one and all, once, again, his intelligence, charm, and considerable wit: yet another lost "king across the water."

David Miliband has ever been the right brother for me. Would that he would accept the call to return to save his old party from itself; save his country from itself. And would, that there were enough good men and women, strong and true, to make that call.

But then hope has ever been "a thing with feathers" and can soar to once unimaginable heights and become contagious if conditions are right.

If not, then 'hope' is badly dashed. As happened when yet another example of the 'wrong brother' syndrome recently reared its shaggy blonde head. Was it only last week or the week before or the one before that? So many things keep happening, in British politics, of late; all at one and the same time, all going off in different directions; it's hard to keep track of it. And, in the midst of the melee, there, they, suddenly, were, the two brothers, Jo Johnson, Conservative MP, and Boris Johnson, Prime Minister and leader of the Conservative Party, at extreme odds with one another.

Our “JoJo,” who’s represented Orpington for nine years and served as a minister under three different Conservative Prime Ministers, resigned from his roles as Member of Parliament and cabinet minister, saying he’d been “torn between family loyalty and the national interest.” Adding, with no little degree of understatement, there was an “unresolvable tension” and that it was time for others to take on his roles as MP and Minister.

All this, coming to pass, after his brother, “BoJo,” faced a double defeat in Parliament when 21 members of the Prime Minister’s own party joined opposition lawmakers to pass a bill to prevent a “no-deal” Brexit on Oct. 31. After which they all but immediately turned down Prime Minister’s request for a new election. So what did our “BoJo” do? All the Conservatives Party “rebels” who voted against the government, including senior members, as well as former cabinet ministers, were all expelled from the party as a result: a decision that was a ‘Brexit’ bridge too far for our fearless “JoJo.”

Which brother right; which brother wrong? Is it moderate “JoJo” or extremist “BoJo” that gets your vote? Once, again: You pay your money and you tick the box of your choice.

The very idea of “moderation in all things” may now be seen as naught but a dying credo, but it can still be a reliable measure for how things should work in Parliament. Moderation allowing for dialogue; compromise between adversaries the promise of a meeting of minds. Or else: uncivil war. Heads roll to one side of the aisle or the other; no work gets done; stalemates last for years. Things fall apart. The country cannot hold.

Here comes that “thing with feathers” again. If only we’d been blessed with a moderate Conservative leader or a moderate Labour leader and an electorate to see the wisdom of both. No extremes. No extortionary measures. No forced exits. No ‘Brexit’. If only.

If only brother-in-arms, Michael Gove, had backed Boris Johnson in his bid to be Prime Minister, immediately post 'Brexit', post-David Cameron, we wouldn't have had three years of gathering nuts in May. We might even have already had a clean 'Brexit'. Or, be still my beating heart, a Second Referendum. Anything, at all, but the irredeemably awful parliamentary debacle everyone's been forced to endure these past few years, months, weeks, days.

If only Jeremy Corbyn, when young and impressionable, had turned to Tchaikovsky not Trotsky. Entirely too fanciful I know, but music to my ears all the same. For when it came to who should actually replace dear young Ed Miliband, Inkley Moor was all but deserted in minutes as a veritable army of would be Cloggies threw their flat caps 'n' nail studded clogs into the ring. And to everyone's surprise, with the aid of an even more motely collection of belabouring hard Leftists, the all but unelectable Jeremy Corbyn was elected Leader of the Labour Party.

Side Bar: "With heads uncovered swear we all. To bare it onward 'til we fall." Aye, lads; and no ready flinch or sneer, here; but you've got to be able to get yourselves elected first. Or you'll always end up doin' 'nowt.

So let me raise a flag here and wave it for Labour deputy leader, Tom Watson; long cast out into the farthest regions of political purgatory by his band of former brothers for being entirely too moderate in his views. His crimes against Party purity considered all the more egregious for having publically declared that: Labour should "unequivocally back Remain" in a fresh 'Brexit' referendum. And only then pursue power in a general election.

Tom Watson couldn't have been more clear about his position: "My experience on the doorstep tells me most of those who've deserted us over our 'Brexit' policy did so with deep regret and would greatly prefer to come

back. They just want us to take an unequivocal position that whatever happens we'll fight to remain, and to sound like we mean it."

And what did that elicit from the dis-united Labour Party; nothing but scorn and derision and an ad hominem attack by trade unionist, "Big Brother" Len McCluskey, General Secretary of Unite the Union. Yet another woeful case of "the wrong brother", even if only used as an honorific between once former comrades.

But that's differences between brothers for you; blood is ever thicker than water; the stain of any blood shed oft lingering for years afterwards; sometimes never to disappear. But wasn't that the first crime? When less able Cain slayed the more accomplished Abel?

Little wonder, I prefer my "Pollyannaish" alternative dream world to the one we've all been lumped with: 'Comic Boris' or 'Comrade Corbyn'?

Side Bar: "So, nah, then, 'ow do, Wallace?"

"What, with them politician fellas from either side? Nobbut middlin'. What think you, Gromit?"

**Disclaimer: Views expressed by writers in this section are their own and do not necessarily reflect the views of 7Dnews.**