

Could Chuka Umunna Save Britain?

by Hugh Fitzgerald



Chuka Umunna

Back in 2015, a new M.P. from Streatham was among those running to replace Ed Miliband as leader of the Labour Party in Great Britain. This was Chuka Umunna, who suddenly pulled out, explaining that he didn't want to put his wife through the ordeal of the campaign and his possible win. He worried, he said, about her loss of privacy. He was also 36 at the time, and may have felt unready; he knew he had plenty of time to prepare for a run.

As it happens, the Labour Party then elected, by a landslide, the far-left ideologue Jeremy Corbyn as its new leader. Corbyn has become most notorious for his obsessive hostility to

Israel and his indifference to antisemitism. He has declared Hamas and Hezbollah to be “friends,” has attended an Islamic service at a cemetery in Tunisia honoring, among others, those who helped plan the massacre of Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics, and has consistently attacked Israel for being “racist” in its very foundation – a charge he does not think constitutes antisemitism. Many in and out of his party have accused him of “grotesque” antisemitism, including the head of Labour Friends of Israel Joan Ryan, and such longtime members of the group as Margaret Hodge and Frank Field.

The most telling attack, however, may be that of Chuka Umunna, an M.P. for Streatham who has just left Labour, and [said last week](#): “After really soul-searching on this issue, can I in all conscience say that I want to make Jeremy Corbyn prime minister and the team around him – put them in charge of our national security? At the 2017 general election, let’s just be honest, nobody thought that was going to be a prospect. At a future general election, it could be a prospect and in all conscience I can’t do that.”

This is not Umunna’s first harsh words for Labour. In mid-September 2018, he publicly charged what was then his own party with “institutional racism,” and made clear that he was referring to “antisemitism,” the antisemitism exhibited by both Corbyn and others in the party whose unhinged hostility to Israel the Labour leader encouraged. To have a black man accuse Corbyn of turning his party into one of “institutional racism” must have been infuriating and puzzling. Corbyn clearly doesn’t think being against the Jewish state, and its supporters, is “racist.” Corbyn’s constant series of attacks on Israel, his sympathy for Hamas and Hezbollah, his palpable want of sympathy for Israelis, his refusal to even visit the country, even if only to go to Yad Vashem, his apparent indifference to the threats Israel faces, and the terrorist attacks it has endured, and the promotion by Corbyn and others of such attitudes, are what finally pushed Chuka Umunna to

break with Labour altogether.

But there are other influences at work here. Chuka Umunna's father Bennett was an Igbo tribal leader in Nigeria who had emigrated to the United Kingdom, established himself in business, and then returned to Nigeria to enter politics as an anti-corruption campaigner. He died in a car crash that some believe was not an accident. Bennett Umunna lived through the Biafra War (1967-1970), in which the Christians in the south tried to create the independent state of Biafra, where Christians could live free from Muslim aggression. The Biafra War was a pitiless Jihad – as the Biafran leader Col. Ojukwu called it in his Ahiara Declaration – in which two million Christians died of starvation. Though his father died when he was 14, Chuka Umunna surely heard from him, and from his mother, too, and other relatives, about the Biafra War and the Muslim oppression and mass murdering of Christian Igbos that prompted it. Chuka Umunna has as an adult viewed from afar the latest Jihad in Nigeria, that conducted by Boko Haram, whose members specialize in kidnapping Christian girls to be used as sex slaves, and by Muslim Fulani herdsman, who burn down Christian villages, destroy churches, and kidnap or kill Christian farmers. He cannot be fooled by the apologists for Islam; for them, he's The Man Who Knows Too Much. One can well imagine what is going through his mind when he reads what Pope Francis wrote in paragraph 253 of his *Evangelii gaudium*, that "authentic Islam and the proper reading of the Quran are opposed to every form of violence." Chuka Umunna must be one of a very few British political figures who has learned about violent Jihad from close family members who lived through such an ordeal.

That is one part of his family's history that surely has helped to shape his world view. For the confused likes of Jeremy Corbyn, Muslims are part of the underdeveloped Third World, and have been victims of colonialism, and so are deserving, naturally, of the guilty white West's total

support. Never mind that many Muslims are not part of the impoverished Third World, but among the very richest states per capita. Can we really call Saudi Arabia, the Emirates, Kuwait, and Qatar Third World countries? An accident of geology has made their people fabulously wealthy. Yet the corbys of this world are ready to see all Muslims as deprived. As for Muslims being victims of colonialism, in the Arabian Peninsula there was no colonialism in the strict sense, no moving in of large numbers of colonists from the metropolis. The "Trucial States" – later the Emirates – were not colonies, but protectorates. The Royal Navy helped to stamp out piracy on what was called the "Pirate Coast," as well as to suppress the trade in African slaves. There was also a British protectorate in Aden, helping to guard the sea lanes to India. As for colonialism in North Africa, the French were in both Morocco and Tunisia for less than 40 years, and the only place where large numbers of French colonists lived was in Algeria, which was a colony from 1830 to 1962. Elsewhere in the Middle East, the British (in Iraq and Palestine) and the French (in Syria and Lebanon) held mandates; these were of limited duration, and designed not to further any colonial project, but to prepare the locals for independence. Other Muslim states in the Middle East, Turkey and Persia, were never colonized by the Europeans. Nor was Afghanistan. In India, the Mughal rulers were suppressed by the British, who liberated the Hindus from the harshness of Muslim rule, replacing it with a much more humane form of administration.

In fact, the most successful colonialists, or imperialists, in human history have been the Muslims themselves. They conquered many lands and many peoples, forcibly convincing many of those peoples to adopt their faith. Those who converted would usually take on Arab names; some would even claim false Arab lineages: Pakistan is full of "Sayyids" who thus indicate a (false) descent from the Quraysh tribe of Muhammad himself. Thus did many of those conquered and colonized by Muslims come

to identify with their colonizers. No European colonialists managed that feat.

Jeremy Corbyn cannot see Muslims as conquerors; 1400 years of violent jihad and conquest have left no imprint on his brain. He has a most selective memory. He didn't at first remember having been at a cemetery in Tunisia in 2014 where "Palestinian" terrorists were buried, until a photograph emerged showing him at that cemetery. Then he didn't remember that while at that cemetery, he took part in an Islamic prayer honoring the dead, until another photograph appeared showing him, hands cupped and head bowed, taking part in such a prayer.

It would be fascinating to find out if Jeremy Corbyn remembers the Biafra War, remembers its more than two million Christian victims, remembers – did he ever know? – why the Christians in Nigeria felt the need to declare their independent state of Biafra in the first place. Perhaps Chuka Umunna could give him, and any other Labour MPs who are interested, a little history lesson about the Jihads in Nigeria, including the Fulani Jihad of 1804-1808 that established the Sokoto Caliphate, the Biafra War (1967-1970) that suppressed the Christian attempt to attain independence, and the latest Jihad in in northern and central Nigeria in the last few years, conducted by both Boko Haram and by Fulani herdsmen.

Jeremy Corbyn is yesterday's man, his mind full of standard leftist mush, with an admixture of his special house blend of antisemitism that he refuses to recognize. Cometh the hour, cometh the man: I'd place my bets for Britain, now, on Chuka Umunna.

First published in