

Papers of Hugh Dalton:
Original Manuscript Diary

Volume 48:
1956
(Folder of Loose Manuscripts)

Reduction Ratio:

12 x

DIARY.

2/2/56.

When the House resumed after the Christmas recess, there seemed to be a much more relaxed & friendly atmosphere in the Parliamentary Party. The position of the leadership had been settled. The Tories had been in favour.

The Deputy Leadership vote was announced at a Party meeting this evening. Griffiths 141; Bevan 111; majority 30.

(I had been hoping for 50. To compare with the vote for the leadership: ~~Bevan~~ - Saitstead 157; Bevan 71; Morrison 40 - 15 fewer MP's voted last time, Bevan added 41, Griffiths fell short of Saitstead's vote by 16, and

of Saitstead + Morrison by 56.) The result was received very

smoothly. Griffiths made a perfect little speech of course. He had ~~spent~~ ^{spent} all his life in the movement. He would cooperate loyally with ~~any~~ ^{any} new leader, etc. Bevan was

very sitting on the platform with a most ugly, contorted, angry face, was asked by ~~the~~ ^{the} whether he would like

to be say anything, made a contemptuous, scornful gesture ~~and~~ ^{and} refused, ~~and~~ ^{and} remained seated. (There'll ~~be~~ ^{be} ~~no~~ ^{no} ~~more~~ ^{more} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~that~~ ^{that} ~~kind~~ ^{kind} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~it~~ ^{it} ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~future~~ ^{future}.)

Some angry time was ~~was~~ ^{was} when he spoke 2 days later at ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~meeting~~ ^{meeting}.) Luckily I stopped, or helped to stop, ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~meeting~~ ^{meeting} from ~~being~~ ^{being} ~~held~~ ^{held} ~~at~~ ^{at} ~~all~~ ^{all}. But for the

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2/2/56 contd

I feel a little like ~~the~~ ^a creature now nested and
 behold his handiwork after some hard labour & saw
 that it was good. Valencia's ~~presence~~ ^{due to} by Kettle's and
 Morrison's departure from Shadow Cabinet filled by
 Tom Fraser & Kenneth Tynan. Hope Fairbank
 Leake, Jim Pittillo, wonderful Royal, Deputy, & the
 other younger people on the Shadow Cabinet. I notice the
 average age is now 52 - younger than last Tory Cabinet.
 Tynan or P.K. M.P. I saw in various parts of the
 Moon Shin well. Edie & Morrison - the latter making
 his first appearance since before Xmas. I am the only one
 of these returns, I think, now am serene and happy.

The Owen mystique is still a danger. Will Strong, re
 met for Consett, and told me that he had voted for H.G. for
 leader; "he thought he would appeal to the largest and best
 range of electors, last 2nd vote - Brown as the Deputy." "He will
 be good" his words are in the working class. (That Jim's
 thought), are more deeper & firmer. A.P.'s have been
 shaken & loosened by the strong winds of social
 agitation, ~~flattening~~ ^{flattening} of middle class activities, and by a ~~disorder~~ ^{disorder}
 & ~~independent~~ ^{independent} ~~action~~ ^{action}

DIARY.

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End of February 1956.

Operation Avalanche (make this a Chapter heading is ver III) has gone down well. Jolly good! I was the smallest stone never deliberately struck it. Last the rest followed.

Our young people now must play the same as we, and get used to the light. I do all I can, in talk with on M.P.'s, to discourage jealousy, & ^{DEMIGRATION} despotic of any of the young team, or by any of them of others, (e.g. Brown of Roberts)

1/3/56

I am very happy at the outstanding success of G. Brown in Defence Debate. I've never heard him better. Grip & zip - self confidence, things Roped up.

2/3/56

I mean for its ~~most~~ with Great Popplewell & Dai Jones. I say how pleased I am. They say how sad it is about Shirewell & Morrison. Shirewell now won't speak to any of them. He

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2/3/56

Smilkeben Kofst
- spread of Valley about leaving
(control) in case of Phyllis
reduction in supervision

H.M. & E.S. have both had
very good public lives. How
fr. b. ought to be better than
of the latter days, & he

know speak, say E.P. to other
know speak to E.P. Since they had that now in the
FCA now, when E.S. was proposing to carry on for one
year with H.M. as leader, in succession to C.K.A.

D.J. Confesses that he was approached to support idea later
H.G. & H.B. should both stand aside to let H.M. have
an unopposed return of leader. He agreed, but had no
idea that anything would be published! (Now was it just
to H.G.)

E.S., they say, hates H.G.'s guts, since
he was his Under-Sec. I say it's very sad, & very
wrong, that these old men side to selfish, in manner
of the kicking of the block. & so unhappy. I'm very

happy. I want to see young people carrying on. This is an
essential movement. If I can do it, why couldn't they?

I know I can't make such a good speech now, as 10
years ago. Why don't they know it? And H.M.'s
speeches were catastrophic lately. Why don't the
Americans look after about 60 or 65, were all "over the

hill, broken. over the hill." And T. Williams, they say,
didn't like my letter at all. (He was afraid he'd lose his
job & salary for that's words, if he was to say it too old.)

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4/3/56

From Halifax's funeral oration on T. E. Lawrence,
quoted by A. C. Johnson Viscount Halifax, pt 389-90.

"When he lay in the uncharted land between life & death, I saw his life no longer in part, but whole before him..... Once more, it may be, he visited the Norman castles whose first, in boyhood, had excited his romantic sense, or walked again amid the ancient works of Palestine. On these came back to him ^{the} vision of the endless desert, rocking in the wreckage of the fierce heat of noontide, and once more he trod the dusty ways of Arabia, Azrah & the City of the Caliphs, and last of all, of his beloved Damascus, with her green gardens by the river, these fading in Rome before the places of his spiritual heritage, Henley, Bovington, HENLOW

Cranwell and the Air Force stations of India, - Peshawar, Miranshah, Karachi. And before the end came, I like to think that he saw again the spires of Oxford, unaccountably in their beauty, set in the misty blue of early May, until at last he reached no earthly city, but that city of his vision where he might see no longer as in a glass darkly, and know at length as he has Rome."

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27/10/56. (17)

We are at W.L. I draft the Preface to the Faithful Years, and tidy up other final details for this book. I've corrected and returned the galleys. I should soon get the ^{page} proofs. I lunch with Reynolds on Monday and hope to settle illustrations. Publication still planned for March. Miss Leroy, for my Agents, is pursuing possibilities of serialisation - Sunday Express, Evening Standard, Daily Mail ~~and the~~

pay best, she says. I've twice just missed Beaverbrook, who writes me most affectionate letters, - the first time, at the end of June, he was on his way to France, the second time, in September, he was just on board the Q-Elizabeth crossing the Atlantic. He won't be back till March. But I'm using his "interest" in my Agents' negotiations.

This first long Session of the Parliament elected in 1955 ends next week. H.G. is very firmly established as Leader, most firmly of all with the Parliamentary Party, but more & more firmly in the Party in the Country. He had it seems, a great success at the recent Annual Conference at Blackpool. A.B. is terribly full of

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27/10/56 (2)

himself after beating George Brown for Treasurer.
At first it was thought that he would challenge either
H.G. for Leader or J.G. for Deputy Leader at the end
of this session. But this now seems unlikely. J.G.
is thought by some to be aging quickly, and becoming
rather ridiculous & ineffective. ~~But~~ BUT I think this is
exaggerated. He is very legal & cooperative and he
could take two intellectuals, H.G. & J.G., as Leader & Deputy.

Alternatively, A.B. may demand the Shadow Foreign
Office, in place of Alf Roberts. H.G. will soon
talked some days ago, it is inclined to keep A.B. on
for at least another session. He may improve. The
trouble, I'm afraid, is that he isn't really clever
enough. H.G. is inclined to make as few changes
as possible in the Shadow Govt allocations.

There is no limit to A.B.'s ambition, nor even will he,
nor, therefore, ^{potential} his ~~it~~ fault & jealousy. His megalomania
is still almost unbelievable. The Chief Whip, Herbert
Brown, told H.G. that, ten months ago, when H.G. had
just beaten A.B. (& H.M.) for the Leadership, A.B. said
to him "there ought to be no election to the Deputy
Leadership. Gaitskell should appoint me as Deputy
Leader. I am the Leader of the Party in the Country."

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27/10/56. (3)

This year the National Executive must produce a Report on Ownership of Industry. It will be interesting to see what line, when forced down to detail, the Old Believers take.

Tony's Future of Socialism is selling well, & has had some good reviews. It may yet make trouble for him at a Selection Conference, but it is certainly building up his reputation in many different circles. He is very happy and cheerful - he dined with me last week - and is now pretty well off - Coop, Broadwater & writing.

I've made 3 speeches in the House in the session now ending; two officially in General Budget Debates, the first Memorably successful, winding up on Butler's autumn Budget of 1955, the second moderate in a debate on Macmillan's Spring Budget of 1956 (the night of the famous B & K Dinner demonstration); the third unofficial, from Silverman's seat below the gangway on the Middle East, Renouncing Egypt, pretty good.

I've made one speech in a Party Mtg, in reply to Shinkwell's objection, on the ground of my speaking on the Spring Budget. This was unparliamentary, and great fun, (the Commanders were, nearly all, delightfully behind me).

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28/10/56.

People who go on too long.
 Berra at FO was one. (See Strong Home and Abroad 2 Nov 53)
 & Atlee's account to me of how resentful Edsall was,
 when told he should give up on health grounds -
 K. Young was struggling on as Min of State, with Atlee
 as acting F/Sec, in addition to being PM. It was at
 a fairly Part. with an majority of 10. I was OK - the end of
 Cripps was another, but H.G. was doing his job well.

Very well.

(Part Early in vol III)

Flashback from 1945.

Strong is H & A (2 page) Stalin at Potsdam &
 Churchill "Atlee doesn't look to me like a
 man who is hungry for power."

(Good book in part 1, but not in part 2)

But compare Truman's Memorandum I (Year of Decision, p 317)

"A few more interchanges followed, and Churchill, referring to his departure the following day for the British elections, announced that he had finished."

'Don't a pity,' Stalin quipped. 'I hope to be back' Churchill replied. Stalin remarked that, judging from the expression on Mr Atlee's face, he did not think Mr Atlee was heading forward to taking over Churchill's authority."

DIARY.

2/11/56. (1)

A talk à deux with Alf Roberts in the Harcourt Room. He is a very nice man, an admirable colleague & v. loyal to H.G. He is very conscious that he has been a failure as Shadow Foreign Secretary, & that his poor press has got him down a bit. He has also, he says, had a lot of domestic trouble (brother committing suicide, etc) & this has got him down further.

He says he told H.G. 2 or 3 weeks ago that he knew he hadn't been a success, and was quite prepared, without any sense of grievance, to change to some other Shadow Dept. if H.G. wished.

We spoke of A.B. A.R. thought that he would never be loyal to H.G., a constant irritant he was not.

He recalled the famous story of Nye's speech "where is the Power?" often told by himself, & published in his "In Place of Fear". He wd play on H.G.'s nerves,

always overbid (C.G. on nationalisation programme).

H.G., A.R. said, had such a heavy job enough that he should hate peace and

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2/11/56 (2)

support in his inner circle. A.B. would never let him have this.

A.B. was pessimistic about the possibility of keeping A.B. out of 2nd place in the Party. If he came out top of the poll for Shadow Cab, he would win Shadow F.O. He was already No 2 in N.E. as Treasurer. I said I did not accept this nor need others.

3/11/56 (1)

(Sat). It all meets at noon for 3 hours, & adjourns in uproar. Loud booing & ^{gestures} ~~shouting~~ ^{shouting} at Eden, cries of "Resign", "Go" & "Get out!" Thus ends a tumultuous week. It began on Monday with Israeli crossing into Egypt (followed by swift & complete Israeli victory in Sinai, rout of Egyptian Army & capture of large quantities of arms recently supplied by Russians (Czechs). The myth of Egypt as a military power and a "leader" of Arab world is smashed for ever. At 10:15

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3/11/56 (2)

Israel ~~has~~ ^{now} ~~is~~ ^{will} now be more secure than at any time since 1948. And, ^{of} the other Arab states, none moved against Israel, in spite of all their Arab League & Alliances. If they do now, Israel will be able to deal with them promptly & easily, with Egypt not already. (No, I think, will either Suez or the Gulf of Akaba be blockaded against Israel any more.)

But it is nauseating to find Tories now putting Israel's case with Egypt, when they ignored it before, when asked by many of us. So far, very good, & I think the health of the Israeli cause. Jews — ^{very} brave, dedicated and efficient.

But nothing else is good. On 11/10. French armed attack on Egypt, & declared intention to occupy the Canal Zone, "temporarily," is followed by even 2 countries being condemned by Security Council, — whereat we both used the veto for the first time — & by General Assembly

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3/11/56 (3)

By 64 to 5. (Over 2 selves, Israel & the Arabs).
And then we refused even the recommendation,
backed by the majority, for a Cease Fire. ~~the~~ Eden
& S. H. (a miserable kind - note if ever there
was one.) Both repeated today that our "justice
operation" must be completed, in order to keep
combatants (Israel & Egypt) apart, & to stop the
war" between them. But they are apart already
& the war has stopped, with overwhelming Israeli
victory.

Meanwhile the Canal is blocked by several
block ships.

There is great feeling against H. S.'s position, not
only in the H. C., but in wide circles outside. I was
away on Tues. and most of Thurs. in my
constituency, where Q. Mulder visited Bowes
Museum to celebrate take over by County
Council. All a great success. While I'm
away there are most v. angry scenes in the House;

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3/11/56(4)

once the sitting was suspended for the hour owing to
 grave disorder. Our vote of censure on Thurs
 was defeated by 69. Only Stanley Evans deliberately
 abstained on our side, 2 more, 1 from 2, on
 thurs. But there are rumours of a number
 of Ministers most unhappy & inclined to resign -

Muttling, Boyle & in Cal, MacLeod &

H. Amory.

Of private members on their
 side many are still very ill at ease. David
 Price, Desmond tells me, is practically decided
 to leave out with the op. He has been very
 recalled for a week. At first he thought of asking
 to be withdrawn, & perhaps of fighting a
 by-election as an independent. If he did, he'd be
 beaten in a fight, & we'd win Eastleigh.

Tonight, rather dramatically, he did
 the week at Westminster. Quite well. I'm afraid he
will win

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3/11/56(5)

(15)

H.G. has done splendidly (& this is the general view of the Party) all this week. He feels the moral & tactical range of U.K. -

the split in the Commonwealth, the crack in the Anglo-American Alliance, and the break in - and away from - the U.N.

When a pin can it be strong & respected! Will not even potential aggressors feel able to repudiate its decisions with impunity?

And today the Security Council is considering a complaint on behalf of Hungary against a "police operation" by Soviet Russia. They can cite an precedent!

The Party is organising a quick, wide-spread campaign of meetings. I have agreed to speak at Burton ~~on~~ ^{next} Tuesday (& Mansfield constituency) & Wandswoth on the following Sunday. Meetings will be live again.

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End 1956 (1)

It is a year now since H.G. became leader. He is, I think, well dug in with our own party. He has incurred a fierce hatred, so fierce as to surprise me, among the Tunis, arising out of his attitude on Suez. "Traitor (Sait'shell)" they call him. And the Tony build-up of Bevan, as a much more patriotic & national figure, has been most assiduously pursued. I can't find any evidence of a weakening of H.G.'s support within the Party, indeed Tony's hatred is likely to strengthen it - & Bevan may suffer if he's too ardently portrayed by his enemy as a national savior.

Anyhow, as Suez recedes, & new issues take the foreground, new criteria of persons & policies will come forward.

(In New Year, when we resumed, Herbert Partha said to me, leaving the House one day "Of course, your people can't go on with Sait'shell." I replied with attitudes as above.)
memorandum H.G. to man A.V. Shiller Foreign Secretary. This has, on the whole, been welcome, or at least copious & inevitable, in view of Alf Roberts'

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passive (17)

End 1956 (2)

failure to shine in this role. He has been the
perfect gentleman, putting himself entirely in
H.G.'s hands, & saying he won't resent it in any
way if H.G. wants to shift him. H.G. has given
him ^{important} ~~fast~~ assignments - I would like him to be
in this new role. ^{memorable} A.R. goes on
being ill. I hope he'll come back soon.