

The first part of this speech is a tribute to Julian, his achievements, his vision and his humanity. The second part is about Brexit – and what Julian would be arguing for now.

I first met Julian campaigning ahead of the 1975 European referendum, that was held 45 years ago this very day, 5 June. It was at a mass rally of the “Yes to Europe” campaign, held on Trafalgar Square.

There were four speakers:

- Ted Heath for the Conservatives,
- Roy Jenkins, then still Labour
- Another you may have heard of recently...Jeremy Thorpe
- And a fourth speaker, whose speech outshone them all: Julian

Already, Julian was a bit of a legend for me. I was a student at Oxford, having arrived there just after Julian had left. But everyone was still talking about him!

He had done the “triple” of student politics, of being President of the famous Oxford Union debating society, Chair of the Labour Club and Chair of the Oxford Students for Europe group.

And this was in an era when all students seemed to be involved in student politics, and a lively scene it was too. I remember signs announcing

“Mass protest, all come to demonstration on Saturday, 11h00, subject to be announced”

But Julian still rose to the to what one of his contemporaries, Simon Walker (who I see here in this room, recently the Director General of the Institute of Directors) described as

“the pre-eminent student politician (and speaker) of his generation”.

So, meeting him left a deep impression, and not just because I was an impressionable young student – Julian had a stature and an elegance about him and tended to impress all those who met him! Again in the words of Simon Walker, Julian was:

“genuinely - often instantly – inspirational”.

He always commanded great respect, even from his political opponents.

Little did I know at that first meeting that our paths would cross many times in the decades ahead. Julian became President, at European level, of the *Jeunesse Européenne Fédéraliste*, as I was later. He was a parliament official, which I also was for a few years. He had a lifetime involvement in

Labour, as I did too. We both wrote books about the Parliament and other things. We both became visiting professors at Bruges.

As I got to know him, I found out that Julian grew up in Plymouth, where he went to school and would later stand for Labour in three General elections in 1974, 1979 and 1983. He was raised there in a loving family, with an elder sister, Jackie, who also sadly died far too young, a father who was active in the Labour party and in the European Movement and a mother who he regularly visited until her own death just a few years ago. He, like many of us in that era, was the first generation of his family to go to university.

Julian had several abilities, any one of which would be a major asset, but in combination made him the unique human being that he was.

He was a great public speaker – better, actually, than most of the MEPs he served – with mellifluous tones and a dry sense of humour that he would inflict on his opponents - and sometimes his friends. Had he been elected to the Commons, there is no doubt he would have dominated exchanges in the chamber. Already at school, he had been encouraged to develop this talent, then honed at the Oxford Union debating society - but let's face it, he was a natural!

He was a good administrator, able to identify the essence of a problem very quickly and to absorb the detail of unfamiliar subjects. A colleague once described to me how Julian, as Sec General, was due to appear before the budget control committee of the EP to be grilled about a particular problem in one of the DGs. Julian had not had time to read the weighty background dossier, and had to be briefed verbally while walking from his office to the meeting. Yet, once before the committee, he gave the impression that he had known about it all for 3 years, not 3 minutes!

Everyone wanted to speak to Julian. But there are only so many hours in a day. For many years, access to Julian meant getting past Morag Donaldson, nicknamed “Julian’s Dragon” by some, who fearlessly fended off all those people who she felt would be wasting Julian’s time. When it came to doing her annual staff evaluation, Julian had once put down that she might improve her telephone manners. Morag said, “*Fine, I’ll politely put every caller through to you!*” Julian very quickly rectified the evaluation!

But Julian was also a good manager of his own time. While he would often work very lengthy hours during the week, he would keep the weekends sacrosanct, rarely taking work home with him. “*Officials who work every weekend are bad time managers*” he would say.

Part of good time management is the ability to delegate. Julian was good at spotting the potential in people, entrusting tasks to them and giving them leeway to get on with it without him seeking to micro-manage. There are many here in this room who benefitted from that.

Conversely, he didn't suffer fools gladly. [*Note, I'm not saying that there are many in this room who fall into this category!*] But he was never disrespectful. Indeed, he never seemed to lose his temper with anyone – though those who knew him well claimed that you could tell when he was really angry, as the end of his nose would start twitching!

These combined abilities meant that Julian was able to apply himself to many different roles and tasks, invariably taking a leadership position. From presiding a historical debating society at Oxford, to leading an international youth movement, to being a Labour candidate, to being elected as President of the EP Staff Committee and leading a strike, to being the youngest ever head of division in the EP administration, to being Sec Gen of the largest political Group, *chef de cabinet* of the President of Parliament and finally Secretary General of the Parliament itself for ten years.

Yet he never let the trappings of office go to his head. Not for him the jet setting flashy lifestyle that his income might have permitted. Yes, he did once buy a flashy red sports car that famously caught fire in the Parliament's parking, but free time was normally spent quietly, with Jean, at their retreats, rather than at trendy parties.

Not everyone knows that he was an aficionado of popular culture. He avidly followed *EastEnders* and even the ill-fated series *El Dorado*, set in an expat British community in Spain, as well as, less surprisingly, the *West Wing*. He could also tell you which song was *top of the pops* for almost any month in the 1960s, 70s and beyond. He even joined a Karaoke session while on a delegation visit to Japan.

In that respect, the one thing missing was an incomprehensible lack of interest in football. He just didn't get it! I often suggested that he talk to his doctor about this problem, but ... well, Julian didn't always follow my advice!

But with his wide range of knowledge, Julian was much sought after to be on pub quiz teams. Julian and I, along with Nigel Evans and James Pond, once entered as the European Parliament team for the BBC *Children in Need* quiz in Brussels. The problem was, our fields of expertise were not diverse enough, and to our

everlasting shame and horror, we lost out to the team from... the Economic and Social Committee!

But, more seriously, Julian had vision and devoted his career to it.

That vision was of a united Europe (*in the proper sense of that term, not the centralised superstate of Eurosceptic mythology*), creating a stable and peaceful continent, enabling our countries to deal jointly with those issues on which they are interdependent, and with a pluralist democratic parliament at the heart of it, a parliament that would show to the public that the choices we make at European level are in reality not so much between competing national interests, but between competing political visions and policy choices, -- something far more visible in debates in an open, pluralist, parliament than in the secretive meetings of ministers and civil servants in the Council. For Europe to engage with citizens, it should not be left only to diplomats, bureaucrats, and technocrats.

As Secretary General, he famously drove through a reform programme for the EP Secretariat called "*raising the game*".

Parliament had just received significant new legislative powers under the Amsterdam Treaty, and was facing an increase in its size with the accession of new Member

States. Reform, and a greater focus to its work, was necessary. But driving change through a large international secretariat inevitably meets some resistance, and obtaining political support for it was not an easy task. Yet Julian persevered and succeeded.

You can see this determination right back through the decades. And he often did things in a way that would be, not quite revolutionary, but, shall we say, bold -- and a little bit cheeky towards the establishment.

For example, when he ran the Youth for Europe campaign in 1975, he made it a distinct campaign from the somewhat staid senior Britain in Europe campaign, open to suggested poster from my Oxford branch "*Prince Philip is Greek, the Queen is German, aren't we all a little bit European?*" sadly ultimately censored by the senior campaign. But he did help establish a magazine aimed at young people called, no less, "*The Federalist*" and persuaded a young aspiring journalist called Andrew Neil to edit it (though I've noticed this tends to be omitted from Andrew's CV these days).

When he joined the secretariat of the old, unelected, European Parliament, as a very young member (perhaps the youngest) of the first British intake, joining what was then seen as a backwater in Luxembourg was not necessarily the first choice for an ambitious new official. Europe itself was then was in doldrums, a

period described at the time as one of “*Eurosclerosis*”. And as regards the Parliament, there was not yet an agreement that it would become directly elected and certainly no agreement to give it any new powers. But Julian could see the potential.

When the first direct elections came, Julian worked for the budget committee secretariat and was instrumental, with a rapporteur called Piet Dankert, who later became President of Parliament, in getting the first elected Parliament to use the one power it did then have, over the budget, and to reject the draft 1980 budget, something that had never been done before and which sent shock waves through the system: the elected Parliament had arrived on the scene as would not be shy to use whatever powers it had, even when every government was pleading with it not to do so.

Another example of his boldness came a couple of years later, when Julian chaired the staff committee of the European Parliament. He did not hesitate to call the entire Parliament staff out on strike during a Parliament session. Senior figures in the EP were aghast – it could have destroyed his career – but he still did it because he believed it was the right thing to do when faced with negative changes to the working conditions of staff that had been introduced suddenly and without proper consultation of those who would be affected.

When he was Secretary General of the Socialist Group, he and Group leader Jean Pierre Cot developed a strategy of Parliament deliberately holding up single market liberalising legislation until the Commission agreed to put forward balancing items of social legislation, so that the single market would not be a free-for-all, but would have rules to protect workers, consumers and the environment. This was denounced as holding up the objective of completing the single market by 1992, but Julian was determined that, while that needed to be done, it needed to be done right, and in a way that could command popular support.

This desire to make Europe more visible, more immediate for citizens and more democratic meant that Julian, even after his retirement, stepped in for one last campaign, organising the European campaign of Martin Schulz in the first Europe-wide campaign for the presidency of the Commission. He knew Martin Schulz was unlikely to win outright, but in making this a serious campaign, Julian was contributing to bringing to the European level something seen as normal at the national level: that parties should say in advance of the elections who they would support as head of the executive branch.

There is much more that could be told about Julian, his endeavours and his achievements.

But to sum up about his attributes, I would like to quote Rita Cardoso, who was his assistant very early on in his career:

“Julian was “real deal” throughout his life. He was genuinely interested in people and was comfortable in the company of all around him. I saw him fight in his 20s for EP employees’ rights and almost at the end of his life, in his 60s, I saw the same passion and anger in his final speech against the shambles and lies of the Referendum Campaign by the British media and politicians. He wore his passion and integrity with grace and charm.”

It is therefore not surprising that Julian was sought after for advice from visiting British MPs, ministers and shadow ministers, who all beat a path to his office when visiting Brussels. One of these was Tony Blair, and, as many here will know, Tony eventually asked him, not just once but I think twice, to head his office and become in effect his chief of staff. Many of us have wondered how things might have been different if Julian had accepted those offers. And we all tend to project our own favourite alternative histories on such an idea. But Julian did not take up these offers.

The reason is not, as many thought, that he preferred high office in the institutions to the rough and tumble of British politics. Nor that he just put Europe before

Britain. No, the reason was a simple but powerful one: love.

In his private life, Julian was happy and settled with his partner Jean – who none of us in the EP knew about at the time – but who remained his partner for 33 years. They finally married just 3 years ago in Luxembourg.

Julian put that love first. He did not want to put that precious relationship under the stress and strain that would inevitably follow a move to London to do that job and the intense and peculiar British media interest in the private lives of those in the public eye, especially at a time when openly gay couples were seen as targets by much of the British press.

And this is the ultimate proof that Julian was not all-consumed by politics. He had a hinterland. He had other interests. He was a human being, not a machine.

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So, what would Julian be advising us now about Brexit?

I will now offer a few thoughts on that.

They are not entirely guesswork. They are based in part on Julian's last speech, at the Committee of the Regions, where he denounced Brexit brilliantly hours before being admitted to hospital for emergency

treatment. They are also based on what I know of him, having discussed British and European politics with him for over four decades.

First, as a former Sec Gen of the European Parliament, he would underline the role of the EP and be proud of the fact that it has ensured that all the negotiating positions of the EU are in the public domain and have been discussed beforehand with the EP. This, in sharp contrast to the way the British government has behaved:

- Initially trying to avoid ANY parliamentary scrutiny
- Then trying to keep its own economic impact assessments secret, not least because they were so negative about any Brexit scenario
- Now, scheduling a mere one day of debate in the Commons next week to consider all the very important amendments proposed by the Lords: 48 mins per amendment

Second, he would be saying that Labour should be making the most of the Tory government's extraordinary Brexit shambles:

- That 2 years after referendum, they have no starting position on something as vital as customs arrangements.

- That there is also chaos and confusion about what the government actually wants in terms of several hundred other issues thrown up by Brexit where Britain itself has a choice to make.
- That there is still a “cake and eat it” attitude from the government as it seeks to re-join or remain in bits of the EU, such as the research programmes, ERASMUS, Galileo and various technical agencies, while not wishing to accept all the rules or obligations that go with them.
- That the negotiations so far have consisted of the government retreating from positions they initially went out of their way to say they would never accept, from
 - the obligation to meet Britain’s budgetary liabilities
 - to the need for a transition period,
 - to accepting that EU citizens who moved here in good faith have rights that should be preserved,
 - to belatedly (and only partially) recognising that if you have legal disputes about rules you have agreed to, referring them to a Court is not inappropriate.

He would be particularly scathing about how on earth you can turn the Irish border into a customs border, as the government intends, without having any customs controls!

Third, he might not get into the detail of which form of soft Brexit is the least damaging. Of course, he would want to preserve as close as possible a relationship if we indeed Brexit, keep inside the R&D research programmes, remain in security cooperation, remain in the technical agencies and so on. On the idea of joining the EEA, he might point out that, while that is a lesser evil in many ways, it does not cover agriculture and is outside the customs union.

Rather, he would no doubt draw attention to the Central Dilemma of Brexit:

- Either you leave everything: EU, single market, customs union, technical agencies, research, etc. - but take a huge economic hit

OR

- You stay close to the EU, in the customs union, aligned to the single market, participate in research, technical agencies, etc. - but have to follow the rules without, as a non-member, having a say on those rules.

And he would point out that neither option is good for Britain.

He would therefore argue above all that, until there is a signed and ratified deal, Brexit itself is not settled issue.

He might take a particular perverse pleasure in agreeing with David Davis when he said that if a democracy cannot change its mind it ceases to be a democracy.

And he would say that there are good arguments for Britain to re-consider Brexit.

He would not, however, rely only on the arguments that many people made in the immediate aftermath of the referendum two years ago, that this was an advisory referendum, won by a narrow majority on the basis of a pack of lies, and with a questionable franchise.

Even though these arguments are now reinforced by what seems to be emerging about the Leave campaign breaking the rules on spending and misusing data with the assistance of Cambridge Analytica.

Rather, he would focus on the fact that the emerging Brexit deal bears no resemblance to the promises made by the Leave campaign:

- We were told that Brexit would be easy, it isn't
- We were told that it would save money, all going to the NHS, it is in fact a costly, economically damaging exercise that will hit public finances

- We were told that we'd get shiny new trade deals from day one – it's now clear that we will struggle even to keep the status quo in deals with countries across the world.

He would argue that it is Leave voters who have the right to say:

“this is not what I was told, it's not what we were promised, and it's damn well not what I voted for”

And as to the Labour party's position, he might say that the question is no longer how Labour should have responded to the referendum two years ago, but how it should respond to the emerging costly Tory Brexit deal.

He would no doubt analyse the scenarios for stopping Brexit and their chances for success.

He would note the campaign for a People's Vote on the final deal, and would probably support it. After all, why should people who had the right to vote on the broad idea of Brexit not have the chance to confirm or reconsider once the actual deal is known?

He would, however, look with particular interest at the parliamentary situation.

He would welcome the six tests laid down by Jeremy Corbyn, Keir Starmer and the Labour front bench and the assurance that Labour will oppose any deal which does not meet them.

He would underline that Labour should equally oppose a “*Blind Brexit*”, where all the difficult issues are postponed to be negotiated only after Brexit, during the transition phase, without any guarantees on how they will be resolved. Parliament would be invited to buy a “pig in a poke”, to confirm Brexit without knowing how the key issues would be resolved. Unless the Declaration on the Future Framework appended to the Withdrawal Agreement gives detailed commitments.

Now, if Labour votes against the deal, and, as one can suppose, the SNP, the LibDems, Plaid Cymru and the Green do likewise, it would still need at least a dozen to 20 Conservatives to do so too for it to be rejected.

Is that likely? The continued state of civil war about Europe in the Conservative Party means that nothing is impossible. Julian, who worked closely with a number of Conservatives over his career, would hope that enough Tories put country before career, patriotism before party, Britain before Brexit.

But, if the deal is rejected, what happens next?

One of the Lords amendments to be voted on next week in the Commons is precisely on that point: to specify that Parliament, not the government, should decide what happens next if the Withdrawal Agreement is rejected.

So, what are the options?

It cannot mean a No-deal Brexit. None of those I mentioned as likely to vote against the deal are supporters of leaving without a deal. That cannot be construed as the will of Parliament. And it would be a cliff-edge scenario, with legal limbo on everything from citizens rights, to aircraft landing rights, to trade, to everything.

It can therefore mean only one of two things:

Re-negotiate or re-consider.

That is, re-negotiate for a different Brexit deal, or re-consider Brexit entirely.

The chances of securing a different Brexit deal might at that stage not be easy. It would depend on the willingness of the EU-27 to re-open talks and would probably need an extension of the time-limit, which requires unanimity. There would no doubt be some flexibility, but the chances of a radically different deal are uncertain. And the fundamental choice for Britain,

between damaging distance or rules-compliant closeness, will still be there.

The other option is to reconsider Brexit entirely.

Legally, Parliament can stop it by requiring the government to withdraw the Article 50 notification of intention to leave.

Politically, Julian would, I'm sure, argue that it cannot be done without another referendum. Otherwise, for years ahead, the Eurosceptic narrative would be "*The people voted to leave and the politicians prevented it*". It has to go back to the people through a referendum (or a maybe a general election with a clear choice).

Would another referendum give a different result?

Public opinion has not done what was expected. One would have expected opinion to rally behind the result of the 2016 referendum, just as most politicians, including the government and the Prime Minister, have done. "*We've had our debate, we voted, get on with it*". But polling shows that opinion has in fact edged the other way.

And it could well shift further. Every time Brexit is in the news these days, it's bad news: confusion, costs, problems we never knew about, problems we were

never told about, revelations about the Leave campaign, government splits.

Brexiters will no doubt seek, as ever, to blame Brussels, but they may not find that to be so easy as in the past.

Julian would be the first to say that you cannot just rely on this drift of opinion. Issues and concerns that led to the Brexit vote need to be confronted head-on. We need to show how the widespread fears about immigration can be addressed without tearing up the principle of Freedom of Movement, what measures can be taken to help left-behind communities, how remaining in the EU is in fact the best way to take back control, how our trade deals with the rest of the world will not be better if we leave, and much else.

He would above all say that nothing happens by just waiting for it to happen and that everyone of us in this room must get active, get out there, argue, debate and campaign.

Starting now.