



Media Erases Pro-Faith, Pro-Brexit, Anti-Migration Stances from Veteran Lawmaker Frank Field's Obituary

Description

WORLD : Frank Field, the Member of Parliament for Birkenhead for 40 years from 1979, has died, his family said on Wednesday. The long-time Labour politician had been diagnosed with cancer over ten years ago.

Unlike many left-wing politicians in the UK, Field was not shy about asserting that large-scale immigration hurts working-class communities and, from this basis, was a Eurosceptic and campaigned for Britain to leave the European Union. His strong Christian faith informed his campaigns against child poverty, as well as his support for restrictions on abortion.

Yet although Field was widely and well regarded as an “independent thinker” who reached political positions that could often leave him at loggerheads with his fellow Labour Party politicians, it would be hard to guess this from several legacy media reports on his death today.

An obituary in the Independent, formerly one of Britain's leading left-wing newspapers, neglects to mention Field's stance against the European Union, for instance, or his view that mass migration is detrimental to working-class people.

The Independent also did not make mention of Field's strong Christian faith, which informed many of his views and his strong campaigning zeal against poverty.

Britain's newspaper of record The Times also neglected these areas, which in many ways defines Fields' political life including his eventual fall-out with the Labour Party, leading to him being made a member of the House of Lords as an independent by the Conservatives.

The paper only touched on Field's faith briefly in the final sentence of the obituary concerning his decision to come to support euthanasia several years into his battle with cancer after previously opposing it.

In other reports, a superficial skim would leave casual readers none the wiser, with such details reserved for the end.

The BBC's obituary only stated Field's views on EU immigration and his Brexit campaign in the fourth quarter of its report, while also noting — also oddly absent from many other reports — his falling out with then-Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn over left-wing antisemitism, which Field strongly opposed as indecent.

The Guardian fared better, mentioning the fact Field had what it deems “socially conservative views” in the second paragraph, and noted his belief that if “mainstream parties” refused to talk about large-scale immigration to the UK, then “extreme parties” would instead.

Crucially, The Guardian reports on the repeated attempts to deselect Field from candidacy by hard-left Labour groups through his 40 years in Parliament, including by “The Trotskyite group Militant” in the 1980s.

In a way, Field's long-term opposition to the European project underlines the massive paradigm shift that occurred in British politics in his lifetime. When Britain first joined the Common Market — which would later become the European Union — in 1973, Euroscepticism was an overwhelmingly left-wing interest.

But as time went on, concern for the working class being a prime concern for left-wing politics seriously waned and was replaced with the interests of the globalist, managerial middle-class, which is overwhelmingly pro-Europe.

Field and a handful of other veteran leftists managed to stick to their guns on these issues over the years, honestly reckoning that unlimited mass migration from Europe depressed wages for British workers.

Others struggled; Jeremy Corbyn, a hard-left politician of a generation after Field managed to hold his Eurosceptic opinions until he managed to become leader of the Labour Party, at which point he dropped them for reasons of expedience.

Praising Mr Field in 2016, Brexit leader Nigel Farage said of a speech given by the Labour MP in Parliament: “...fantastic, that Frank Field, veteran Labour MP from Birkenhead, was talking there not as a Labour MP, not as somebody who is part of a political tribe, but somebody saying there is something more important than the colour of the rosette you wear at election time, it is the national interest.

“The country has voted for Brexit, and people should come together, whatever party they are from, and fight to make sure we get the best out of it. I have to say, Frank Field, ten out of ten. Goodness me, I wish there was more of that feeling and spirit in British politics”.

BY OLIVER JJ LANE

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