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OFFICIAL REPORT

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Jo Cox MP
Tributes

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Abbreviation	Party/Group
CB	Cross Bench
Con	Conservative
DUP	Democratic Unionist Party
GP	Green Party
Ind Lab	Independent Labour
Ind LD	Independent Liberal Democrat
Ind SD	Independent Social Democrat
Ind UU	Independent Ulster Unionist
Lab	Labour
LD	Liberal Democrat
LD Ind	Liberal Democrat Independent
Non-afl	Non-affiliated
PC	Plaid Cymru
UKIP	UK Independence Party
UUP	Ulster Unionist Party

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House of Lords

Monday 20 June 2016

2.30 pm

Prayers—read by the Lord Bishop of Portsmouth.

Jo Cox MP Tributes

2.36 pm

The Lord Privy Seal (Baroness Stowell of Beeston) (Con): My Lords, Jo Cox was clearly a remarkable woman. I never met her. Tragically, the first thing I knew about her was that she had been killed. We are shocked that a young woman in the prime of her life has been stabbed and shot dead in the streets of a town like Birstall on a Thursday lunchtime. We are sad that a husband has lost his wife and two young children will never see their mother again, and we are horrified because Jo was a Member of Parliament who was killed by a constituent while she was going about her work serving the people of Batley and Spen.

We have learned a lot about Jo over the past few days. None of us could fail to be impressed by her dedication and commitment both before and since entering Parliament. She was a woman who clearly cared about other people. She had travelled far, had wide horizons and she thought big. For me, what is most moving has been hearing what was clearly a woman with a passion for the world say in her maiden speech how proud she was to come from Yorkshire and to be representing the place where she had grown up and the people she had grown up among. The impression she gave this stranger, listening to her for the first time, was that Jo Cox was a woman who knew who she was, and I really like that.

We are not just paying tribute to Jo Cox today, we are standing in solidarity and shoulder to shoulder with the other House of Parliament. The House of Commons has lost one of its own in the most dreadful of circumstances. It is not the first time. Over the past 40 years, we have lost Airey Neave, Robert Bradford, Anthony Berry and Ian Gow at the hands of IRA terrorists. One of them, Robert Bradford, was holding a constituency surgery at the time of the attack and his caretaker was also killed. Thankfully, Stephen Timms survived a violent attack by a constituent, as did the noble Lord, Lord Jones, when he was the MP for Cheltenham, although tragically the noble Lord's assistant was killed in that attack. But Jo Cox is the first MP to be killed in the line of duty by a constituent.

Today, as Leader of this House and on behalf of all noble Lords, I would like to pay tribute to all Members of the other place, our elected colleagues who follow their vocation to improve things for the benefit of those they represent. Their route to Parliament is rarely easy and it can take them years. It is usual for them to have to accept failure many times before being selected to represent their party, hopefully in a winnable seat and often not before they have had to stand and lose in a hopeless one. Those who do make it work tirelessly for their constituents, not just here in Westminster, but every week in their constituencies. But as the

last election showed, dedicated or not, MPs can be unceremoniously rejected if the electorate is fed up with their party at large.

The British people deserve the best public servants to represent them in Parliament. Jo Cox was clearly a great public servant for her constituents. Thankfully, in that respect she was far from alone. Marking her death, tragic and unfair as it is, presents at least one opportunity for the sake of good democracy, and it is this: for those of us who know how hard MPs work, to raise awareness of their commitment to the people they represent.

On behalf of the whole House, I offer my sincere condolences to Jo's husband, children, parents and sister, and to all her family and friends. On behalf of the Conservative Party in this House, I offer all of our colleagues on the Labour Benches our deepest sympathies for the loss of their dear friend. Finally, on behalf of the House of Lords, I offer our condolences and respect to our colleagues in the other place.

2.41 pm

Baroness Smith of Basildon (Lab): My Lords, I thank the noble Baroness the Leader for her comments, because the murder of Jo Cox MP almost defies words. It is so devastating and so heartbreaking that any words are inadequate to express the scale and the depth of the loss—the loss to her husband Brendan and their children, to her parents, her sister, her family, but also to that wider family of friends, colleagues and constituents. It is a loss that has affected everybody who knew her, but also so many more who had not yet got to know her. It is not just the loss of who and what she was, but the loss of what would have been and what more she would have done. It is a loss that is so profound and overwhelming that we, individually and collectively as a nation, are the poorer for it.

Jo was clearly very special. She was exceptional. A physically tiny Yorkshire lass—she could not have been more than five-foot high—she was morally and intellectually strong. Driven by her values, she knew she had a role to play in creating a better country and a better world. For the all too short time she was in Parliament she brought those values, with all the skills, experience and knowledge from her past roles with Oxfam and NGOs, working with Glenys Kinnock, the noble Baroness, Lady Kinnock, and for Gordon and Sarah Brown, to her life as a Labour MP. We have heard her described as a force of nature, decent and determined. She made people feel good about themselves and what they could achieve. She was passionate, she was serious, and she was good fun. As one of her friends in the House of Commons said:

“She was the best of us, and she made the best of us”.

She saw that a role in politics should be a force for good—a force that could make lives better. That is what brought her, like so many others, into politics.

Our democracy will be seriously undermined and weakened if this outrage stops our brightest and our best from stepping forward into public life. When good people of passion and principle tell their family and their friends they want to be a councillor or a Member of Parliament, I want their families to be proud of them, not to fear for them. Yet the level of vitriol and violence contaminating our public and

[BARONESS SMITH OF BASILDON]

political life will deter some of the best people who we need the most. Almost every MP can report threats and abuse, sometimes violent. Although social media makes it easier, it is too easy just to blame the internet.

All of this has coincided with the deterioration of political debate. Of course we must argue our differences on policy with emotion and with conviction, but too many have gone beyond that. The tone of the debate and the language, particularly around immigration and asylum seekers, shames many. The drip-feed of denigration and abuse poisons the very air that we breathe, so those of us who can speak out, and those who report and write, need to think very carefully about past actions and words, and the way forward. In the words of Jo's husband Brendan, Jo would have wanted us to,

"all unite to fight against the hatred that killed her".

The hope for the future is that the good in society comes to the fore, as we have seen in the reaction from the public, both at home and abroad, at this terrible time, and as we saw in the amazing courage and bravery of Bernard Kenny, who risked his own life, and in the love and loyalty of her assistant, Fazila Aswat.

Over the weekend, my husband drew my attention to a 1968 drawing of Martin Luther King standing over a cross-legged Gandhi saying, "They think they've killed me". That was saying that—despite his death, because of how he had inspired others—his values, commitment and passion lived on and, through others, achieved, and still achieve, great things. Jo's legacy has to be that same inspiration—an inspiration to others to continue her work; an inspiration to us all to be better; an inspiration to those who have encouraged hatred and bitterness that they must stop. More than anything else, it must be an inspiration to others to fulfil her promise and her legacy. The following message was left in the Batley book of condolences, and I can think of no finer tribute. I imagine that it is from a young woman who had met Jo. She wrote:

"You told me I'd do great things. I'm going to prove you right and I'm going to carry on your legacy".

2.46 pm

Lord Wallace of Tankerness (LD): My Lords, at this time of terrible shock and profound loss, I wish on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Benches to extend our heartfelt sympathy to Jo Cox's constituents, her colleagues on the Labour Benches and above all to her husband, children, parents, sister and wider family. I am sure that, like many in your Lordships' House, I never had the privilege of meeting Jo Cox, but as I have listened to the outpouring of tributes we have heard since the tragic event of Thursday afternoon, I realise that part of my sense of loss is that I did not have the opportunity to know such an incredible person.

Jo Cox was a humanitarian and a deeply committed public servant. In her role as an aid worker, she spent time working with victims of rape in Darfur, dealing with child soldiers in Uganda and tribal elders in Afghanistan. She reached out across the world and touched the lives of many. Her knowledge and experience came together with her empathy and compassion and gave the voiceless a strong and powerful voice in

Parliament, where she showed vision and courage in standing up for refugees and for Syria. Jo Cox was a woman of courage and conviction. She fought passionately for the things she believed in. She fought for her constituents in Batley and Spen, she fought for those overseas who could not fight for themselves, and she fought to make this country a better place.

To be a Member of Parliament is both an honour and a privilege. It is a privilege to be elected by your constituents to represent their best interests in Parliament, but to serve your constituents and to help tackle the problems of those in your own community is a deep and lasting honour. Tragically, Jo Cox lost her life in the line of parliamentary duty, representing the people she was elected to serve. To be involved in politics is to be dedicated to public service, to be driven by a desire to make things better for our community and for our country and, indeed, for our world.

In the days since her death, Jo Cox has come to embody what is decent and good in our democracy. Too often, we see fear and division dominate political debate. Too often, we see fear and mistrust of others being used to manipulate the public mood. Jo rejected that approach. She worked to bring people together and was hopeful that we could build a country which is united. The words of her maiden speech in the House of Commons have been often quoted because of the truth contained in their simplicity:

"we are far more united and have far more in common with each other than things that divide us".—[*Official Report, Commons, 3/6/15; col. 675.*]

In response to her death, one of my own noble friends has written:

"Time to stop the anger and ask ourselves what sort of country do we want to be? What can we do to truly honour Jo Cox, who in her life, said no to the easy option of cynicism and took the much harder route of trying to make the world a better place. Jo Cox's murder is a wake up call to all of us. If we can show just an iota of the courage and love that Jo showed in her life, or just one ounce of the compassionate bravery that her husband has shown since her death, then we can and will create the better world that Jo Cox lived and worked for".

Her family, her friends, her constituents, our country and, yes, the global community are so, so much poorer because of Jo Cox's death. But the world and the lives of countless people were made so, so much better by her life, so may the memory of Jo's remarkable life of compassion and commitment be a lasting inspiration to us all.

2.50 pm

Lord Patel (CB): My Lords, I speak on behalf of our Convenor, the noble and learned Lord, Lord Hope of Craighead, who is unavoidably absent today and regrets not being here. I also speak on behalf of my Cross-Bench colleagues. I associate myself and these Benches with the remarks already made by the noble Baronesses, Lady Stowell and Lady Smith, and the noble and learned Lord, Lord Wallace of Tankerness. We on these Benches join others in sending our condolences to the family and friends of Jo Cox, Member of Parliament. In particular, our thoughts are with her husband Brendan and their two children

Cuillin and Lejla, who have had their wife and mother taken away from them in such tragic, violent and cruel circumstances.

The remarkable and extensive tributes paid to Jo Cox from across the political spectrum and across the world following her death are a testament to her character, commitment and personality, and the respect that she was held in. While admired and respected by all who knew her, Jo Cox was not widely known nationally. But many today, including myself, sorely wish that that they had known and met her. One friend from the charity Avaaz—the word Avaaz means “shout or make noise” in Hindi—described her as an advocate for the voiceless and those in poverty. Seeing her pictured in a T-shirt with the logo of Parliament’s tug-of-war fundraising challenge between Lords and Commons for the Macmillan cancer charity defined her as a politician, a philanthropist and a sportsperson.

In an email forwarded to me, another friend of hers said that Jo brought out the best in everyone, even when she was being tough, and was quick to put people at ease with her bubbly personality—even when recruiting people to join her to climb her beloved Scottish mountains. Apparently, she enjoyed bagging Munros. Her love of Scottish mountains was reflected in the name of her son. The same friend also talked about humanity. She said that Jo could see the same humanity in the eyes of a Darfuri child, a Syrian refugee or a lonely octogenarian. She worked for many charities; one closer to my own interests is when she worked with Sarah Brown and the White Ribbon Alliance to reduce maternal deaths in developing countries. Her efforts made a difference.

As an MP, in a relatively short time Jo made a huge impact, as we have heard, speaking eloquently on subjects close to her heart and raising issues of concern to her constituents. Clearly, she was a popular and hard-working Member of Parliament. That she died a violent death while serving her constituents has shone a light on this important component of our democratic process and the risks that our MPs face in the course of their duties—even more so, our women MPs. We all owe much to those in public life, especially our MPs. It is they who keep our democracy alive, for which we should be grateful.

On this sombre occasion, from these Benches we pay tribute today to Jo Cox, Member of Parliament, whose life has been tragically cut short while she still had much more to give. The nation has clearly lost a rising star. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family and their great loss.

2.54 pm

The Lord Bishop of Leeds: My Lords, I speak on behalf of the Archbishops and Bishops and the Church of England. I do not want to repeat what has already been said but to associate ourselves with those remarks and offer deep sympathy to Brendan, the children and the wider family, and to the Members of the other place.

We live with our mortality and the fragility of civilisation. It is not very deep, and it can be easily

penetrated. When I heard of Jo’s death, in my office in Leeds, I was reminded of those words from “Julius Caesar”:

“Cowards die many times before their deaths. The valiant never taste of death but once”.

There are many cowards around who have died inside, and Jo was the antithesis of that: she was full of life. She was passionate, she was intelligent and she was always generous. Her constituents, among whom I have spent the last few days, are unequivocal about that.

Jo said in her maiden speech that she was “made in Yorkshire” and went on to talk about manufacturing in Yorkshire. However, her credibility was not only that she was local, and that therefore people knew where she had grown up—her family still live there—but that she had travelled the world and engaged with issues, many of which we discuss but of which we have very little first-hand knowledge. If I want to hear about refugees, I prefer to hear someone who knows what they are talking about because they have been there. Jo Cox was certainly that.

Christians look through a resurrection-shaped lens called hope. Appalling though her death is, I want to pay tribute not only to her but to her constituents. Over the past weekend, they have had to engage with their own shock and grief and, in many cases, their anger. They have come together. Clergy have opened churches and mosques have been opened, and will continue to open, to create a common place where people can live with their emotions and responses and with their memories of Jo Cox, who was not only their MP but a daughter of their place.

We pray that Jo will rest in peace and that her family will find peace. I pray that Birstall will be remembered more for the manner of her living than for the manner of her dying. As we look to the future, from these Benches we say with confidence that death, violence and destruction cannot and will not have the final word. If we want to be the answer to our own prayers, as Psalm 23 makes clear, then we are the people who will be the rod and the staff that will enable her friends and her family to continue as life continues for them.

2.58 pm

Baroness Kinnock of Holyhead (Lab): My Lords, the tragic death of my great friend Jo Cox is devastating. I send all my love to Brendan, their beloved children and her proud, devoted parents, Gordon and Jean.

Jo Leadbeater came to work for me in the European Parliament nearly 20 years ago, as my diary secretary. Within weeks, it was obvious that she was a hugely intelligent, effervescent young woman who was going to do much more than minister to my logistical needs. She seized on my passion for international development, democracy and women’s rights, and very rapidly became an innovator of thought and action. Our close and deep friendship was made then, and it has enriched my life ever since.

I was overjoyed when she had her lovely children and thrilled by her continual and earned successes, including of course her election to her native Batley and Spen last year. She has, as I anticipated, been an

[BARONESS KINNOCK OF HOLYHEAD]

outstanding parliamentarian. When she left me for work with NGOs, her capacity for original thinking, practical deeds and team leadership showed that she was, as one of her colleagues said, a “pocket rocket”. For the internationalist cause of aid, development and justice, she worked throughout her life. She was a unique mixture of high intelligence, gaiety, bravery, energy and kindness, and she had an endless capacity for hard work. Her whole life was dedicated to her fellow human beings in her constituency, in Syria, in Africa and elsewhere where she could and did offer practical and useful compassion. She fought tirelessly on every front for justice and against prejudice and poverty.

Not only did Jo do nothing bad in her life but, much more importantly, she successfully strove always to do good. Happily, she was no saint. She was mischievous, merry and irreverent as well as focused, determined, resilient and brave. I feel cheated by the loss of this precious, valiant young woman. Our country and our world have been robbed of a unique talent, a glowing spirit of progress, enlightenment and emancipation. I cannot imagine what madness could have taken this truly wonderful young woman from us. It has punished goodness with badness and has left so many of us feeling emptiness. We must overcome that. Jo Cox would have said, “Don’t mourn. Work, organise and campaign for a better world”. I hope that we would, and will, heed her.

3.01 pm

Baroness Royall of Blaisdon (Lab): My Lords, Jo was beautiful inside and out. She was brave and bold. She was an extraordinary woman, as the world now knows, but she was also utterly normal, a working-class Yorkshire lass with a strong family. She was a mum who adored her children and put them first. She was a wife, a daughter, a sister and a friend. She understood the community that she served; it was her community. She had a fantastic capacity for connecting with people, no matter where they came from.

Jo was intrepid, feisty and fearless, whether climbing mountains—including when pregnant—working in countries torn apart by conflict or challenging authority. She was bright and intelligent, a tiny bundle of boundless energy whose enthusiasm for life was infectious. It is absolutely true that if you bumped into Jo during the day and had a quick hug, your day got better. Her life, so cruelly and tragically ended, was devoted to changing the world. Many of us say that we want to change the world but that is exactly what Jo did through her work for those fleeing war and hunger and with the poorest and dispossessed, and through her work as a Member of Parliament. She was a powerful advocate who gave a voice to the voiceless and fought passionately against injustice and for human rights. She was a great human being.

Jo loved this country but she was a real European and a citizen of the world, recognised by the World Economic Forum as a young global leader. The fact that on Wednesday, her 42nd birthday, events are being organised to celebrate her life in New York, Nairobi, Washington DC and Brussels, as well as in

Batley and Spennings and London, is testament to her global reach. She literally touched lives throughout the world.

In my book, Jo was the best sort of politician. She was Labour to the core and rooted in our values, but she understood that there are good people in most parties and that sometimes, in order to bring about real change, you have to reach out to those of a different political persuasion. She knew how to build bridges but also how to disagree in an agreeable way. Jo’s murder was a tragedy with a terrible and lasting impact on her family, but it was also an attack on our society and on democracy.

As an optimist, I hope and believe it will have a lasting effect on the way in which we do politics, and the way in which politicians are regarded by the public and the press. Public service should be celebrated. Politicians follow a noble profession at national and local level. Most do a great job, but too often they are undermined by the corrosion of cynicism and by a contempt that is dangerous and contagious. Someone wrote on the memorial to Jo in Parliament Square, “You can’t kill democracy”. We will not let that happen, but democracy is fragile. Our politicians are vulnerable and targets of hatred.

Jo’s life and her words were testament to the fact that there is more in our communities and in our country that unites us than divides us. The sight of the Prime Minister and Jeremy Corbyn laying wreaths at the memorial in Birstall gave a strong message of political unity. There are times for heated debate, but there are also times for us to stand together. Despite the fact that Jo worked in the most difficult and fragile parts of the world where the lives of human beings are degraded through poverty, hunger or conflict, she never ceased to love people and love life. She was generous in her friendship and had the widest circle of friends.

She was fun. I will remember Jo for many things, but my fondest memory is of an early evening last summer, sitting next to the River Wye round an open fire on which we cooked our dinner because summer at the cottage was the only way for the adventurous Cox family to cook. Her beautiful children were running around while Jo, her beloved Brendan and the other grown-ups put the fractured world to rights.

Westminster and the world will remember Jo in many ways. The tone of democracy, decency and tolerance were set by Brendan in the remarkable words that he crafted so soon after her vile murder. May that tone continue in our politics and our public life, and may Jo’s unquenchable spirit live on.

3.06 pm

Baroness Thornton (Lab): My 86 year-old Auntie Eileen was keen to assure me yesterday that she had voted for Jo Cox this week—what she meant was that she had voted remain, because Jo had advised her to do so. During the general election last year Jo Cox had talked to her and Eileen thought she was lovely. She voted for her and joined the rest of the world in her admiration for this Labour woman whom we all hope our politicians should be like.

I am rich in aunts, uncles and cousins who live in and around Batley and Spen, where I was born, where my parents were born and where my grandparents were born. My father was a Labour Party member in Birstall until he died last year—unfortunately before he could vote for Jo Cox. Like Jo Cox, I, too, am proud to have been made in Yorkshire.

I joined ordinary people to pay my respects to this amazing woman and her family in the Birstall town square yesterday. There was such a sense of deep sadness and loss, and in talking to people, they know the national and international significance of the political assassination of their local and much-loved MP. They are ordinary, decent Yorkshire folk who cannot believe that this has happened in their town. I was not sure whether I should speak today because, unlike others, I only knew and grew to admire Jo Cox in the last few years. But my family and friends said that a local Yorkshire voice should be heard in your Lordships' House today, and I was to say that this is not what the people of Batley and Spen Valley are like. I was to say how terribly shocked they are at the waste of a lovely, warm, vibrant, effective, honest and special politician who had belonged to them. They wonder, like my Auntie Marie—I have a lot of aunts—who said to me yesterday, “What have we done to create a world where this can happen?”.

3.08 pm

Lord Wood of Anfield (Lab): My Lords, Jo was committed to bringing the voices of those outside the corridors of power inside its walls. In that spirit, I wanted this House today to hear from a few of those who do not work in Parliament but who knew Jo as a friend, a mum and a colleague, and wanted to pay tribute today.

From her schoolfriends, Louise Woolard and Heidi Toulson-Bennett:

“We have always known that Jo was special, and we are not surprised at how many people now know this. We loved you like a sister. You will be greatly missed, you funny, bright and wonderful girl”.

From Katie Dilks, a university friend:

“Jo was human. She had fears and she spoke about her fears, but she ensured that love triumphed over fear. Jo radiated love”.

From Simon and Jenny Bond, family friends of Jo and Brendan:

“We remember Jo on her wedding day tucking up her wedding dress to play football with the kids, running around the woods near their house, taking the kids on a night hike to spot badgers, cooking us nettle soup—her fingers still tingling because she couldn't find the right gloves, dancing with us in the mud at a festival. She will leave a great hole in this world. Let it not be in vain”.

From her friend and office colleague Michelle Smyth:

“I'd go round the office tidying up after her, picking up bits of clothing, cycling gear, hair straighteners to put away. She was a stickler for making sure I blocked out time in the diary so she could be with the children. I'll miss my friend so very much, but will always be inspired by her”.

From family friends Tomos Livingstone and his family:

“The last time we saw her, when we said a light-hearted farewell, she said this of motherhood: ‘I love creating moments of magic for them, it's my favourite part of being a Mum’. And she

did every single day. But, maybe without realising it, she did the same for every single person she met. She saw solutions not barriers, she attacked problems like a bank of nettles and blitzed them into soup”.

From her friend and Member of this House, currently on leave of absence, Shriti Vadera—my noble friend Lady Vadera:

“When so much has been written and said about her death, I hope people will remember Jo for her life. More than anyone I knew, Jo truly lived her values, not just espoused them. When I lose my way and my voice, as I often do, I hope the memory of Jo's friendship and unwavering commitment to fight for a better world will strengthen me with some of her courage and optimism”.

Of the many messages from her houseboat neighbours at Hermitage Community Moorings, here is just one from her neighbour, Coco Zatorksi, aged seven:

“She is very special for her kindness and care, and will be remembered by everyone who knew her. Also people who heard about her. Her body is kindness and care”.

Lastly, another university friend, Jane Brady, said:

“Most of all Jo was a mum who deeply loved her children and wanted the world to be a better place for all children. The last time we spoke, she was very tired, the kids had been poorly and she wondered if she really was making a difference. I just want to say to her, ‘Look at the world now, Jo. The world is so much better for having had you in it’”.

3.10 pm

Lord Smith of Finsbury (Non-Aff): My Lords, it is almost impossible to express how devastated I am by what happened to Jo. Jo was a truly remarkable person: remarkable for the wonderful food that she and Brendan could produce in the tiny, cramped galley of their narrowboat; remarkable for their love of wild country on the borders of Wales or among their beloved Scottish mountains; and remarkable above all for the astonishing amount that she achieved in only a year as a Member of Parliament.

Jo will also be remembered as a remarkable, bright, energetic and highly respected student at Pembroke College, Cambridge, the college of which I am now the master. She was and is much loved by her fellow students and especially by those who taught her. Our students and fellows in recent weeks collected funds to support Syrian refugees. We will now make our collective donation in Jo's name. In due course, we hope to establish a studentship in her memory for a refugee or for someone from a background like Jo's who might otherwise find it difficult to come to Cambridge.

Jo stood for the politics of hope and love. She has been cruelly taken from us by fear and hate. There has been too much fear and hate in recent weeks, has there not? We must dedicate ourselves to continuing her work.

3.13 pm

Baroness King of Bow (Lab): I knew Jo because we both worked for the Kinnocks, for the Browns and for the Labour Women's Network—which Jo chaired—and we both had a habit of ending up in refugee camps. In the run-up to Jo's election as an MP, she told me that my diary of being an MP had nearly put her off. “The thing is,” she said, “my constituency could never cause me as much grief as yours”. This is the only thing Jo was wrong about.

[BARONESS KING OF BOW]

Jo has suffered more than any one of us in Parliament. Jo has given more than any one of us in Parliament. Therefore, Jo now represents more than any one of us in Parliament. She represents civilisation in much the same way as her murderer represents barbarism. Glenys—my noble friend Lady Kinnock—told us that Jo was no saint but let me tell you why she was an angel. She is one of a tiny percentage of the world's population, a truly infinitesimally small percentage, who genuinely care about other people's children as much as they care for their own and then act on that.

Apart from being an angel, Jo was also a proper policy person. She would want us to be talking about the policies as much as the personality. Because she was an angel, she would most likely be the first to point out that we must not just rage against her murderer. We must seek to understand what leads an isolated, mentally ill man to kill. What is it that whipped him up into a frenzy? Who is it who whipped him up into a frenzy, because it was not Jo? Or did all of us whip him into a frenzy? Was it Britain's public discourse that whipped him into a frenzy? Then our cultural discourse must change and that must be Jo's legacy—a kinder, more tolerant Britain.

In that kinder Britain, one of the first questions must be: just how many isolated and mentally ill people are there among us? Which policy failures have contributed to their plight? Why are those isolated mentally ill people not our priority, rather than our afterthought? Why are we not heeding the police when they say that the single biggest factor shared by extremists who carry out terror attacks, whether Islamic extremists or white British nationalists, is untreated mental health issues? Jo would ask why our mental health services are Cinderella services—in fact, she asked that in Parliament. Another question that she always asked was why poorer communities in general and refugees in particular are always the ones to pay the highest price.

A few weeks ago, speaking in favour of the amendment in the name of my noble friend Lord Dubs on refugee children, Jo said:

“Syrian families are being forced to make an impossible decision: stay and face starvation, rape, persecution and death, or make a perilous journey to find sanctuary ... Who can blame desperate parents for wanting to escape the horror ... Children are being killed on their way to school ... I know I would risk life and limb to get my two precious babies out of that hellhole”.

It is hard to think about Jo's two precious babies today, even if they have an extraordinary family and a father, Brendan, who radiates love and is surely the most dignified man in Britain. Jo concluded:

“Any Member who has seen the desperation and fear on the faces of children trapped in ... camps across Europe must surely feel compelled to act. I urge them ... to be brave and bold”.—[*Official Report, Commons, 25/4/16; cols. 1234-35.*]

That is what Jo said and that is how I conclude this tribute to her. I urge everyone who contributes to Britain's public discourse to be brave and bold—bold enough to be kind and brave enough to be tolerant. I ask parliamentarians to transcribe Jo's kindness into legislation, because that is how we drain the hate that killed her. Tragedy brings focus. Jo represents us now in a way that others do not. Jo's words mean even

more now and, unless we heed the tone of her words, her life could have been lost in vain. Not just for the sake of Jo but for the sake of British democracy, that can never be.

3.17 pm

Baroness Nye (Lab): My Lords, Jo Cox was proud to be a member of the Labour Party and that Labour family is proud of her. There are some people in families, as well as in political parties, whom you try to dodge, but Jo was someone who improved your day. She was a passionate believer in the power of good and many dark corners of the world have lost a passionate human rights defender. So many people have lost a woman who was a joy and an inspiration to work with—people who worked with her for nearly two decades here in Parliament, in our own Parliamentary Labour Party offices, in party headquarters and in party offices up and down the country. Even before she became an MP, her many friends in former leaders' offices—in Tony Blair's and Ed Miliband's—as well as my friends and former colleagues in Gordon Brown's office, valued her insight and compassion, not least in the work that she did with Sarah Brown on women's health. They are all part of this tribute to Jo, who loved life, her country, her world and, most of all, her family. I met Brendan when he was a Labour student. Over this awful time, he has shown himself to be so brave and so strong. We mourn their loss, but he and her family should know that all of us are absolutely and resolutely united and determined to counter the hate that killed Jo and to prove that hope beats hate.

3.19 pm

Baroness Jenkin of Kennington (Con): My Lords, I did not know Jo very well, and of course I had every expectation and hope that I would get to know her better and would work more closely with her in the months and years ahead.

She came to see me some three years ago, as chair of Labour Women's Network, to talk about an idea that she had had for a women's think tank. We discussed what it might look like and, of course, we roamed on to other issues such as international development, women in Parliament and other passions. I assumed that, given her charm and energy, the think tank would go ahead. But it was not to be because, a few months later, she was selected and then elected, and the think tank was put on the back burner. It may be something that we should ponder again.

She came to see me about a year ago with a friend. The friend was a Conservative who wanted to be a woman Member of Parliament. Not all Members are so generous as to share their friends with other parties. Indeed, Jo was a living embodiment of how, as she said, we have far more in common with each other than things that divide us.

Initially, I was concerned that this terrible, tragic death would put women off coming forward, but in fact I wonder whether that is the case. I hope that perhaps her passion, inspiration and compassion will encourage women who have what it takes, including resilience, to come forward. There could be no better tribute to her than if they do.

3.21 pm

Baroness Pinnock (LD): My Lords, Jo Cox was my MP. She was savagely attacked and murdered on a street just yards from the marketplace where we were due to meet that very afternoon to campaign together on an issue about which we both cared passionately: Europe. It was not to be.

Jo had strongly held, principled views. She was willing to work with all those who would help to make a difference. Following her murder, there has been an outpouring of love for Jo. The floral tributes placed in the marketplace grow daily. Yesterday, more than 100 came in just one hour. The messages speak of real help given, concerns listened to and anxieties lightened.

People in her constituency of Batley and Spenningsheath knew who she was. Jo, in her too-brief time as our MP, visited countless schools, community groups and businesses. Everywhere she went, she gave support and encouragement. “Be ambitious: yes, you can” was her mantra. “Keep positive. Be hopeful”.

The evening she died, the local church in Birstall held a vigil. The church was packed; it was literally standing room only. Those who came included people of all faiths and none: Christians, Muslims and Sikhs mourning together.

The following day, I had reason to walk into Birstall. In Yorkshire, when you meet someone in the street, you say hello. That day, the mood was heavy and sombre. Nobody wanted to speak, so there were no words. But there was an understanding that what had happened to Jo was a tragedy beyond words: an awful, barbaric attack which left a huge, overwhelming sense of the loss of a special person whose life had been so brutally cut short. And, yes, a sense of anger that our democracy had been violently besmirched.

I was speaking to some young people yesterday. Jo had been to their school several times. At first they said that no one was interested in politics because it was pointless, but not any more. Jo had enthused many, especially girls, to see what can be achieved through political campaigning.

We in Batley and Spenningsheath have lost a remarkable MP. The country has lost a spirited advocate for the poor and dispossessed wherever they live. Her family has lost the person they love. We are all the poorer for her passing.

3.25 pm

Lord Ashdown of Norton-sub-Hamdon (LD): My Lords, Jo Cox erupted—there is no other way to describe it—into the inbox of my email account about six months ago. The voice was demanding not to be ignored and, as I soon discovered, not to be resisted either. She demanded that I work with her to help identify the cause of the starving in the besieged cities of Syria. I met with her, and how on earth could I conceivably resist? I was very privileged to work with her for some months to try to bring the issue to public attention. I have to say that she did the work rather than me and she could write extremely well. Due to her energy and commitment, I think we began to move the public debate.

The last email I had from her arrived on 28 May, three weeks ago. In typical Jo fashion she wrote saying, “Paddy, sorry to disturb your bank holiday weekend. I hope you are getting something of a break. Please will you sign the attached statement?”. So, of course I did and I wrote back to her saying, “You are wonderful, Jo. Thanks. Yes, that is fine. I am so involved in the referendum that I have little time for anything else. Fortunately, we and the starving in Syria have you”. But we do not any longer, and that cause is hugely diminished. In characteristic Jo style she wrote back to me saying, “Thank you, Paddy. Keep up the good work. Jo. X”. What else would you expect from her?

The last time I met her, we talked a little about the starving in Syrian cities and about how we could make politics more sensible and deliver on her passion expressed in her maiden speech to celebrate diversity. I quoted a poem which I have by heart from Rabindranath Tagore. She insisted that I send it to her because she was deeply moved by it. I have to confess that I forgot, so I shall quote it now. It sums up the value of a life, as others have said, cut tragically too short but nevertheless lived extraordinarily well. The poem goes like this:

We are all the more one, because we are many,
for we have left an ample space for love in the gap where we
were sundered.
Our unlikeness shines with the radiance of a common creation,
like mountain peaks in the morning sun.

Those were the values for which Jo lived her life and they are the values for which perhaps she may have died. If we are able to do our best to live to those values, our politics will be better, our nation more successful and our civilisation, I believe, far more secure.

3.28 pm

Lord Kinnock (Lab): My Lords, I express my gratitude and that of my colleagues for the tributes that have come from all sides of the House to Jo Cox, and say also to those who have not voiced their sympathy this afternoon that we do understand that it is none the less deeply and sincerely felt.

For 20 years I knew and cherished Jo Cox as a friend and as a young woman of great personal and political vivaciousness. In life she was brilliant in all respects and her death was appalling in its ugly brutality and dreadful injustice. As I reeled from horrified shock at hearing what had happened to Jo, I confess that I felt misery mixed with hatred: hatred for whoever had terrified and killed her; hatred for the times and the conditions which had made someone feel that they were justified in being brutally extreme. Then I realised that my outrage was useless. Not for the first time I recognised that hate cannot be beaten with hatred. Jo Cox would have said, “Do not hate in my name”. She might even have quoted Gandhi: “An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind”. Then she would have offered a brave, rational response to the malicious incoherence of an environment in which a minority of people think they can write, speak and do violence to anyone if they have the excuse of enthusiasm, offence, partisanship, or even a warped form of patriotism.

Jo’s response would not have lacked passion. She was pragmatic in order to get things done, but never cold nor clinical. This spirited woman would have

[LORD KINNOCK]

centred on realism and been driven by rationality. She would have pursued the cause of the rage and then put bold ideas into action to counter it. We know that, because that is what she always did when confronted by inhumanity, bigotry, injustice or simply by the needs of her constituents. Now we who are part of the reasonable majority must employ truth against divisive fiction and distortion; reality against prejudice; hard-headed common sense against delusion. We have to combat hatred in its lethal public forms, in the bilious preaching of demagogues, in the sly dog-whistles of populists, and when it oozes as a cowardly, anonymous social media secretion.

Impressionable, maladjusted individuals may claim that their responsibility is diminished; politicians and newspapers with voices that shape views may not. We have to fight hatred that is incited and nourished by those whose purposes are served by fostering fear—fear

of change, fear of insecurity and fear of foreigners. That is our duty, not simply to ourselves but to our democracy and the British people's sense of decency. We cannot allow venom to displace mutual respect. We cannot permit intolerance to intimidate tolerance. We cannot accept that a convention of hating can ever be allowed to prevail over the greatest, strongest, most civilised British quality of life and let live.

History teaches in too many lessons that if temperate rationality concedes ground, the space is invaded by intemperate irrationality, always with horrific results. That is why we and all who recoil from the politics of hate must never make that concession. We must never stop confronting those who seek political profit from encouraging the neuroses of threat and resentment. Young Jo Cox did not concede. That is why her short life was so productive, so radiant. It deserves to be forgotten because it was unforgettable.

House adjourned at 3.34 pm.

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