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#Marmitegate and UKIP Leadership Take to the Headlines

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“Marmitegate” and the plummeting Pound: Brits feel Brexit consequences as PM May gets precise on how to leave the EU ++ Diane James steps down as UKIP leader after 18 days as replacement favourite Steven Woolfe is rushed to hospital. by Daniel Walker, Robin Dyck

“Marmitegate” and the plummeting Pound: Brits feel Brexit consequences as PM May gets precise on how to leave the EU

“Brexiters” and “remainers” argued passionately prior to the Brexit referendum about what would happen, should Britain leave the European Union. What a final Goodbye to the love-hate relationship with the EU would mean is yet unclear. However, Britons are beginning to feel the effects of the historic referendum’s decision on everyday lives: Following a price dispute between retailer Tesco and consumer goods company Unilever, Tesco ran short on stock on products of the multinational food giant. Unilever had claimed it had to increase prices by 10 percent due to the UK’s decision to leave the EU. Although a variety of produce was effected – such as ice cream and tea – it was the danger of the iconic British bread spread marmite missing from the shelves that took the quarrel to the headlines. Many took the dispute jokingly: posts with the hashtag “marmitegate” flooded social media and saw to it that the quarrel ended on a humorous note in Britain.

However, although the dispute has been settled, some feel that it may be a minor example of what could happen on a large scale should Britain finally leave the EU. Recently, the pound plummeted to the lowest value in three years. Many blame this low to new pressure on the pound following Prime Minister Theresa May (Conservative Party) announcing that the government would invoke the notorious Article 50 “no later than the end of March next year”. Furthermore, she spoke out in favour of a course some have termed ‘hard Brexit’ at the recent Conservative party conference. May said that the “sky has not fallen in, as some predicted it would” and that Britain still had a “strong economy”. Although the Prime Minister rejects the terms ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ Brexit for policy choices, many believe that what the Prime Minister has in mind will sever more bonds with Europe than former London Mayor and Brexit advocate Boris Johnson had promised – and maybe even mean leaving the European single market.

Although May said that the UK would “seek the best deal possible as we negotiate a new agreement with the European Union” she also rejected a hybrid model for Britain: “It is not going to be a ‘Norway model’. It’s not going to be a ‘Switzerland model’. It is going to be an agreement between an independent, sovereign United Kingdom and the EU.”

Diane James steps down as UKIP leader after 18 days as replacement favourite Steven Woolfe is rushed to hospital

Diane James, who succeeded Nigel Farage as the leader of the Eurosceptic right-wing populist UK Independence Party (UKIP) on 16th September, has quit the role after just 18 days. In a statement, James said she is stepping down due to “personal and professional reasons”. This has resulted in Farage declaring himself the interim leader until a new head is elected. However, Farage has stated that he has no intention of re-running himself.

There are several candidates who are considering running for the role of UKIP leader. Suzanne Evans, who was blocked from running in the last election due to a six-month suspension for “disloyalty” to the party, has stated that she is considering to throw her hat in the ring. Lisa Duffy and Phillip Broughton, all of whom ran in the previous election and lost to James, have also suggested they may participate again in this election.

Raheem Kassam, previously Farage’s adviser before a bout of infighting in 2015, has confirmed that he will be running in the election. He said he stands for “a strong, united UKIP” and that he wants UKIP to continue being “the driving force behind Brexit”. He added that he wants the party to “become the real opposition” and “put this feckless Labour Party to bed”. Bill Etheridge, who also ran in the last election, has also announced that he will be standing again.

Member of European Parliament Steven Woolfe, the party’s immigration spokesperson and also leadership favourite, has also announced that he will stand for election. He had planned to run in the previous election, but was disqualified from doing so after he handed in his papers after the deadline. However, just one day after his announcement, Woolfe was rushed to hospital in Strasbourg, France after an apparent altercation with a fellow party MEP.

The altercation was allegedly between Woolfe and Mike Hookem, the party's defence spokesman, in which, it is said, Woolfe struck his head before walking away showing no signs of injury at around 10am. He was able to vote in the parliament half an hour later, but left midway through the vote and collapsed at about 12.30pm. Hookem has denied hitting his fellow party member during the alleged fight, claiming he is "innocent" and that he "never threw a punch" or "assaulted" his colleague. It is said that the fight may have come about due to Woolfe admitting that he considered joining the Conservative Party in recent weeks due to being "enthused" by conservative Prime Minister Theresa May's leadership.

After being admitted into hospital, Woolfe had a precautionary scan which revealed there was no damage to the brain. Three days later, he was discharged from hospital, with a UKIP spokesperson saying he was now "focused on continuing his recovery". The alleged fight is being investigated by the party and the European Parliament.



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British bread spread "marmite" on a supermarket shelf