

A new confidence in opposition to injustice.

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There is much discussion in the press, on blogs and on Twitter about what Saturday's TUC march and subsequent UK Uncut demonstrations, that lead to regrettable violence mean. Because I advise the TUC and other unions, because I took part in the march and because there is no doubt UK Uncut have been influenced by my work all these are issues of importance to me. That said, I'll deal with them in turn because the events are in a very real sense unrelated.

There was a TUC march.

There were UK Uncut events.

And there was trouble caused by some anarchists.

Three distinct events.

So, let's start with the most important and be unambiguous. Saturday was astonishingly successful. Minimum numbers present were estimated at 250,000. Maximum is suggested to be 500,000. I suspect both are right: 250,000 reached Hyde Park: 500,000 started the march and like me left before ever reaching Hyde Park.

I suspect almost all in the union movement and on the left must be delighted by this. I was delighted to walk with unions I work with - PCS and Unite. And to walk with such a wide variety of people. Fire officers. Prison officers. Midwives. Physiotherapists. A wide variety of carers. Senior HMRC staff. Other revenue staff. Council workers. Private sector workers of all sorts. And many, many more.

Yes, we were there because we are angry. And despite that the atmosphere was a celebration that we could join together to say there is an alternative - an alternative we and millions of others believe in. If you went on the march I suspect you saw not a hint of trouble anywhere. And you saw smiling police - police who know we were marching for them too, after all.

For the TUC and other unions this now opens a whole new agenda. The union movement can suddenly ask two questions.

The first is if cuts are agreed upon by the two major political parties what agenda should unions now be promoting?

The second question is what is the economic and social logic that underpins the view of those who marched, and what do they think the public sector should look like in the future?

These are critical issues I will be working on.

But the important point is that it is now entirely reasonable to think that these questions are not just theoretically interesting, they are about policy that has mass support and that might be delivered.

For that reason Saturday was really important. I think it will change the direction of political debate in this country. I don't claim that will be an overnight event. It may well take some time. But I think Saturday has delivered a confidence about opposition to injustice - and that's really important.