

Is Labour LINO or the real thing? That is the question...

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Right wing FT columnist Janan Ganesh [this morning](#) summarises rather neatly, if inadvertently, just what the issue is in Labour at the moment by saying:

The question, therefore, is not whether Mr Miliband is tough enough to see off this bout of machine politics but whether he actually believes Unite's vision is wrong. It is a matter of ideology rather than character, and the signs are not encouraging.

The fight with Unite is not about seats, votes, or anything else. It is about whether it is to be a party serving the interests of ordinary people, or not, which is why I am concerned about this issue and all those with a concern for economic justice have to be.

As Mark Ferguson [puts it on Labour List](#):

Today Ed Miliband will make a speech that could define his leadership of the Labour Party, and determine one way or another whether the Labour Party will be organisationally and financially able to fight the next election.

And as he continues:

By switching from "opt out" to "opt in" for trade unionist affiliations, Ed Miliband is aiming to bring millions of working people into the Labour Party. But this comes with huge risks - if not enough people sign up, and the party is no longer affiliated to millions of ordinary working people, it could be the end of the party not just in financial terms but also as a party of Labour too.

Like it or not, Labour is the only party to have won general elections for the last two decades, but the question now is whether it might even exist because it does not appear to know what it is for.

It should be, [as I argued yesterday](#), the party with a bias to the poor, the party that ensures that all pay their fair share of tax to create a just society that embraces active government and fiscal policy (which, remember, embraces both revenue and spending) as a key component of any government's economic strategy. If it is not to be

that then the question is why it does exist. That, quite literally, existential crisis appears to have arrived.

But if Janen Ganesh's view prevails - and it does in some parts of Labour - then Labour will be what my friend and colleague Howard Reed calls LINO - Labour In Name Only - and that will leave a void that will have to be filled in UK politics by a party that is really concerned about people, equality, opportunity and hope for the majority.