

If you want a saint don't look for a politician

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I am sure there are saintly people. I am not sure I have met one, but they must exist. You know the sort: people of pure conviction so driven to goodness that they have always acted selflessly in pursuit of a higher goal and never erred when doing so.

This, it seems, is what many expect the next leader of the Labour Party to be.

For the record, those people are going to be disappointed.

Saints of this sort are not just exceptional, they're also other worldly. They've got nothing wrong because they haven't done anything. Nor do they have any experience as a result.

And actually those aren't the sort of people who have, by and large, been declared saints over the years. Many actual saints have been quite clearly deeply flawed individuals who have learned from experience how to do the right thing. But left wingers don't now see that as a qualification for office, it seems. Only unflawed saints need apply for office in their opinion.

It's deeply depressing.

And candidly it plays straight into the hands of the right wing who have always accused anyone even vaguely on the left of hypocrisy if they have ever worked for the private sector, owned a share, put money into an ISA or anything else that is entirely acceptable in the real world.

I don't look for saints of the first sort that I describe in politics because I know I won't find one.

Can we undertake politic debate on the basis of that reality, please?

If we did it might even help attract better candidates into the arena, on all sides.