

Good thinking on tax is important

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I just [noticed this](#) in a feature on Owen Smith in the Guardian:

Now Smith says he is ready to return to the fray, in a modest way at least, cooperating with backbench colleagues to formulate some of the policies a future Labour government might need, particularly on tax reform.

“One of the glaring examples of weakness on the left is the fact that we have not really engaged in any meaningful debate about reform of taxation in this country,” he says. “The one big step that Labour took in the 1990s and 2000s was the introduction of tax credits but, other than that really, we left tax untouched and it’s the biggest tool in the state’s armoury. It’s the most important underpinning of everything you can do.”

Smith is careful not to be too openly critical of the current shadow frontbench. But it is clear his plans emerge partly from a concern that, while Corbyn and his colleagues style themselves as radicals, their detailed policies do not always match that rhetoric.

“We need to have specific, concrete ideas that people see are credible and up to the scale of the task we face today,” he says. “One of the things I can help do behind the scenes is think about those things and convene discussions about it.”

Has Owen a Smith been reading The Joy of Tax?

What I would welcome is serious discussion in Labour on what tax policy should be. It's long been absent and there is no doubt that he's right on the existing leadership's lack of radicalism on this issue. If what Owen Smith is doing intends to tackle that deficit I welcome it: good thinking on tax is important from wherever it comes.