

Funding the Future

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Richard Dawkins [wrote an article in The New Statesman](#) last week saying the UK needs a new political party. I have to say that I do not agree with Richard Dawkins on everything, but on this occasion I think he is moving in the right direction.

Dawkins thesis is that there should be a new European Party of which he said:

The “Euro-pean Party” would attract Labour voters and Labour MPs disillusioned with Jeremy Corbyn. The European Party would attract Europhile Tory MPs — and there are plenty of them. The European Party would attract a high proportion of the 48 per cent of us who voted Remain. The European Party would attract big donations. The European Party might not win the next election, but it would stand a better chance than Labour or the Lib Dems under their present name. And it would provide the proper opposition that we so sorely need.

As I said, this may be the right direction, but I think some refinement is needed. First, I am not sure it is really appropriate to give a new party a single issue name: this has always been a problem for the Greens. Politics is bigger and more long lasting than that.

Second, Europe is not enough to unite people. It's important, but any new party has to also address the failings of 2008, the end of neoliberalism being nigh and the need for a resulting new economic order based on an economics that reflects the reality of the state being something rather more than a household.

Third, a new party has to be built on a consensus that the state has worth, not least as the essential underpinning for the equally important (but not more so) private sector.

Fourth, sustainability has to be in such a party's DNA or the young are not going to relate to it.

Fifth, and last (for now) there's another key issue, which is that the party should be based on what I might call the mutuality principle. At its core this picks up a theme whose origin Dawkins may not approve of: in essence it's the command to love your neighbour as your self. This is pretty fundamental to any functioning society as far as I

can see, and so to any political party seeking a broad based appeal. I would hope the attraction is obvious. It says loving ourselves is fine, and as a matter of fact we know this is fundamental to wellbeing so it's got to be a good starting premise. The failure of neoliberalism is that it stops there. The mutuality principle takes this forward: there is a duty to love others as well. The result is a very different society from that which we have. I believe this is the basis for real progress without obsessing, as both existing main parties do, about ownership.

If these points could be taken into account and some practicalities (like limiting the amount anyone person could donate to exercise control) could be considered then I believe there is real mileage in a new party. I am in fact not sure what else at present breaks the log jam in English politics. Not that this means it might either happen, or succeed.