

Funding the Future

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In odd moments I confess I do wonder why I write this blog. This weekend has been one of those occasions.

After a pretty exhausting week [I wrote a blog on Friday about Corbyn and Europe](#). I am far from alone in pointing out he does not have a coherent policy on the EU. He's not alone of course; nor have the Tories. There is a difference though. Corbyn wants to be prime minister. It seems no one in the Tories really does any more. As a result I think it's beholden on him to have a realistic plan.

I knew when I wrote it I probably shouldn't say it. The sense of foreboding was real. I sensed that what I thought a completely logical comment, that was also utterly consistent with my [previous apology](#) to Corbyn that made it quite clear I thought he had a long way to go on policy, would be received badly by Labour tribalists, who had been a subject of criticism in that apology. And it was.

The usual nonsense was rolled out. Apparently I am plotting coups. I am anti-working class. I know nothing about politics. It is arrogant of me to write. I shouldn't be a professor. I shouldn't be demanding Labour sing to my tune. And on, and on. And to be candid, it's really boring, for three reasons which seem worth reiterating.

First, I do not do party politics. To put this in plain terms, if you came here thinking this is a pro-Labour blog, you're seriously mistaken. It is instead commentary on the political economy as I see it, which is from a left of centre perspective.. There are good reasons for this approach. I'm too honest for party politics: I would find it extraordinarily difficult to say a party was right if I thought it wrong, but that is what party allegiance requires. That is why I am not in any party, criticise all on occasion and also offer praise across the board when I think a party gets things right. As a political economist who is not seeking to be a politician but works from a base of fairly clearly thought out principles that should be pretty obvious to all by now I think that's a completely reasonable thing to do. But some clearly don't think so, which brings me to my second point.

This is that I never asked Corbyn to adopt my ideas: he did so without ever seeking my consent. It was flattering but it neither makes me beholden to him or on any way responsible for what he does now. Or vice versa, of course. We're not in any form of

relationship and never have been, although those criticising me now might want to think what doing so says about Jeremy Corbyn: he did, after all, run for leader of Labour on an economic platform quite largely of my creation. But that does not mean he 'made' me as some Labour tribalists seem to think. The ideas existed before he used them, as did the principles on which they're based. There were 1.6 million reads on this blog in 2014 and 2 million in 2015 and 2016. This year there will almost certainly be somewhat more since there have been 1.4 million reads in the first half year. Corbyn didn't create much of a blip in the progression in that case. And I also made only a minor blip in his progression. The nonsense thrown at me by some of his supporters is then unfair to both him and me, and I'm sure he'd agree, wholly unjustified.

Third, as a matter of fact I am, when writing a blog of the duration this one has enjoyed, allowed to change my mind, offer differing perspectives on occasion as part of the exploration of ideas, and even be wrong sometimes without having to do more than acknowledge it. Writing a blog does not make me someone else's property. Nor does it make me beholden to any reader. I'm just a person at a keyboard, nothing more or less. If some ideas resonate I'm happy with that. But I have actually never asked anyone to approve a word I have said here. And I never will. So take or leave what you will, or ignore it all. I really don't mind. But it does not give you the right to say I cannot say what I think, because that right is mine alone and I will use it as I will. You can disagree if you like, and I respect your right to do so. I even provide a space for you to do so if it's done reasonably respectfully: I can't be fairer than that.

But in the process don't tell me I'm not allowed my own thoughts.

And don't tell me I am demanding others agree with me when I am most definitely not.

All I'm actually doing on this blog is working out what I think. Nothing more, or less.

And please be aware that if you don't think I have the right to do that what you're then doing is something much more sinister, because what you're actually asking for in that case is a curtailment of my right to free speech, and I am really hoping that's not on your agenda because if it is I am really worried.