

Funding the Future

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There are moments when it is not clear what Jeremy Corbyn is offering with his leadership of Labour. This is, of course, most obviously true with regard to Brexit where his line might best be summarised as being 'I'll pick up the mess an inevitable Tory hard Brexit delivers and then make things better'. Politically that ambiguity may well be astute. But then Oliver Letwin appears on the Today Programme on Radio 4 and says Corbyn is planning Venezuelan style socialism and you realise that the Left in the UK still has to manage the outright lies that the Right promote.

In fairness, Nick Robinson responded by saying that as far as he could see Corbyn's plan were about as far left as the SDP, that had spun out of Labour to the right in 1981, had once proposed. I am sure he will have upset some Corbyn enthusiasts in the process but it shows how far political debate in the UK has moved to the right that, firstly, many in the SDP at that time would probably have no difficulty at all with what Corbyn is saying, and secondly, Letwin could respond by saying how much of a threat to the country this was.

What is abundantly clear is that Corbyn is nowhere near making a Venezuelan style offering. There is no revolution in the air, nor of anything like the types of reforms tried in Venezuela, which was and is a very different country to the UK, rendering any such comparison almost utterly meaningless.

State [ownership of natural monopolies](#), as Corbyn is proposing, is not tooth and claw socialism, although Letwin said it was.

And state backed investment to deliver full employment and funds for investment when it has been known since Keynes first pointed it out that markets are more than capable of settling into what an economist might call equilibrium at a point where there is significant under-employment and an excess of savings that serve no constructive purpose but which do drag on the economy makes complete sense to everyone but a Letwin.

But the claim that Corbyn is planning to deliver communism - made in an interview I took part in on LBC last week, where Nick Ferrari was another person obliged to point out that the commentator was talking nonsense - is the obviously planned line of

attack.

It's depressing, but the simple fact is that now is the time to make the case for the modern mixed economy where state and private sectors work in harmony for the benefit of everyone. It may look like a good old compromise. And it is, with the added twist that policies like People's QE add to it. But so what? It's this that has best prospect of working. What we have to do is find the best narrative to support it. A certain degree of familiarity with Venezuela to ensure that the likes of Letwin can be kicked into touch looks to be a necessary start.