

What can't Labour stop the 'weird stuff'?

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The award for best question of the morning must go to John Harris in the [Guardian](#), who asks:

Why, if you want British society to be radically changed, the climate emergency tackled via a Green New Deal and the basic notions of democracy and empowerment rolled out into the economy as well as the political system, does that agenda have to be coupled [within the Labour Party] with fringe ideas that only speak to a tiny minority of people, and have played a key role in Labour's current mess? Put another way, why does 21st-century socialism have to be bundled up with all this weird stuff?

What's the weird stuff? He suggests:

Thanks to an accident of history, these people's politics came to sit alongside and often blur into a cliquey, closed-off strand whose roots go back into the mists of the British left's past. Alongside a belief in top-down power structures, among its key features are hostility towards the EU, and an affinity with the old Soviet Union that is now manifested in sympathy with Vladimir Putin. These things go with the grain of a supposed anti-imperialism that doesn't only criticise US foreign policy and Israel's treatment of the Palestinians, but sees those things as unsurpassable evils. All too often, its adherents seem to apply entirely different moral standards to events depending on who is held to be responsible (witness responses to foreign intervention by Russia and the US), and keep the company of very rum people indeed: the tendency of some anti-imperialists to associate with or endorse antisemites is part of the reason why Labour's current problems started in the first place.

If only Labour could endorse the sense without the weird stuff.

Is that really so hard?

Or too much to ask for?