

Happy new decade. May we survive it.

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I would like to be subtle about this, but that would be wrong. The 2010s were a dire decade.

It wasn't just Tory rule that made them so. But they massively assisted the process.

Austerity was wholly unnecessary. Brexit resulted. That was the consequence of too many people suffering.

Under Miliband Labour wimped along in obsequious acquiescence with the austerity narrative. Corbyn resulted.

And yes, I know it can be said I helped him get to power, but I never joined Labour despite that.

And I don't regret not doing so.

Just as I don't regret saying he should go in 2016.

But Owen Smith was not an alternative.

And Labour descended into tribalism, identity politics and irrelevance to most as it completely forget its purpose.

It was not alone in doing so. Capitalism literally ran out of time, ideas and (as QE evidenced) money. But around the globe parties on the left failed to offer alternatives.

Most instead obsessed about identity issues of little consequence to most people and about which nothing could be achieved without power. At the same time they becoming increasingly fixated on concepts of socialism based on material constructs of well-being and notions of class that have long been dead and now appear patronising.

The consequence is apparent: Labour vacated the arena of political plausibility.

The Tories were driven right by English nationalists whose populist agendas have filled the void where hope should have been.

And so we end the decade with political power being given to those most likely to abuse it.

And in response Rebecca Long-Bailey wants to give us more of the same from Labour.

Very politely, I say no to that. I have had enough of Labour's failure.

I have had enough of what has appropriately been described as its student politics.

I am bored by the politics of those that came back in from exile where Militant and the SWP belonged.

And in saying so I stress that nothing has changed my view that we need a radical alternative to what I believe will be a Tory disaster, however Brexit pans out.

But I know that the detail I am interested in, whether it be in tax, monetary policy, the control of central banking, or fiscal policy as managed through modern monetary theory, accounting reform or whatever else, are not issues of any concern to most people. And nor are most other interests of people on the left, including the fate of Palestine, of much interest to many in this country. All that these things, important (even vital) as they are, provide are bear traps. That is, they're gifts to the media anxious to prevent the left winning, ever.

Why when the left knows the media hates it why does it continually gift it ammunition? I wish I knew the answer.

Just as I wish I knew the answer as to why the left will not build coalitions.

And coalition building is all the left can do now. The absurd nonsense heard so often from some on the left of late that if only there was Lexit then Corbyn would be swept to power and a new socialist era would emerge was delusional, at best. Only a tiny number in the UK ever shared that hope, however fervently that few did.

Instead the reality is that the ground level left, from some in the LibDems (and yes, some are on the left as I see it), to the Greens and some (maybe most) in PC and the SNP, as well as what, I am sure, is a majority of Labour members, want cooperation wherever possible to achieve common dreams.

What common dreams? I name some.

A Green New Deal, with its implicit promise of better housing, better transport, local secure jobs with union rights and training for the long term as well as an end to energy poverty, and survival.

Electoral reform to deliver real representative democracy, including House of Lords reform, an end to arbitrary executive power and real devolvement of responsibility to localities and even countries, but with appropriate balances provided to make sure that this does not increase regional inequality, as it could so easily do.

Proper regulation of large companies to prevent monopoly abuse, exploitation of workforces, the end to zero hours and the proper holding to account of companies in particular so that they pay their fair share.

Better public services, including health, social care, education, and access to legal protection for all so that society and the justice it should provide on both criminal and civil issues is seen as something available to all again.

Safe pensions, built around secure savings arrangements which will guarantee security in old age.

And the reinforcement of the view that community really matters, in all its connotations, including those that the left has refused to listen to on issues such as defence.

That is more than enough of a platform for a government on the left. And I believe it would be possible to get 95% of those who are on the left to support a coalition of interests to achieve such a goal, even when it would be apparent as a result that no one would end up getting precisely what they wanted.

Where will the objections come from? I'd suggest Labour, most likely. And from its factions, including some of the cults around some of the unions, in particular.

We have a new decade coming. The left has a choice to make. It can recall that it exists for the majority of people.

Or it can remain as a petty political force intended to satisfy those who have brought it to its current state, where it has abandoned all relationship with and responsibility towards those it set out to represent, but who it ignored for so long, and from both its left and right wings.

The Left could refine its purpose.

It could define itself around issues.

It could build narratives that make sense, such as the GND.

And it could consign factionalism to history.

Or it can just play politics still and consign us all to far-right rule.

That is the key choice that I think will shape the 2020s.

I'd love to think that the left could rise to the challenge and build consensual politics for the benefit of people.

I live in hope. But there's scant evidence to support it right now.

Happy new year.

Happy new decade.

May we survive it.