

Funding the Future

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I made clear my position with regard to those from the left seeking to support those who harassed and intimidated Keir Starmer earlier this week. I did so as part of my general policy of not tolerating extremism on this blog from wherever it comes. I was not making a case for Starmer. I was making a case against intimidation, lying and deliberate distortion within politics. I would have done that whoever the victim might have been.

In this context it is, however, worth noting that fascism is a real threat, and its methods are as commonplace on the far left as in the right. There is the denial of the truth; the spreading of lies; the binary world views; the creating of enemies to be hated as 'the other'; the denial of the importance, let alone the reality of the democratic process and the intense focus upon the control of material resources by an elite for the supposed, unevidenced, benefit of others as if nothing else is of consequence in life. All these are characteristics of the extremes of left and right, and I have no time for either.

I have received some vitriolic mail from those on the left who hate Starmer as a result, using language akin to that of the standard output from the right wing troll factories. In addition comments like this one were offered on the blog. It has not been published under the contributors name, but it is typical of the sentiment offered, if less abusive than some:

Richard, you have finally convinced myself and many others that you are a midget. I did wonder why you had blocked me for criticising Starmer last year until a friend asked why I had never replied to you. I explained you had blocked me and were in fact the only person ever to have done so on an internet forum or comment section ever.

"Ah right..." he replied: "...So Murphy is after the Starmer gig..."

You do of course deserve each other but it will never happen because Starmer is a genuine tool of the establishment and you are beyond the pale for even saying as much as you do, so in effect you are merely fucking your support off for no gain whatsoever, because "the gig" will never be yours.

You are a clever guy but you have made a seriously stupid miscalculation: get back to

the punters because the Starmers of the world will never give you or your ideas houseroom.

The naïveté of comments of this sort are staggering. First, it is apparent that the author (who had previously commented on this blog quite a number of times) thinks that I might have subscribed to their world view. I never have, but they can see nothing else.

Second, they think I was apparently defending Starmer's views by defending his right to proffer them. I was not. I was defending the right for anyone to engage in politics without fear of intimidation or abuse from those peddling falsehoods and lies, which Johnson has promoted about Starmer.

Third, they resort to ad hominem abuse, thinking that will assist their cause. No wonder they side with those who hurled abuse at Starmer.

Fourth, they presume my thinking can only be defined within their framing. That is quite extraordinarily naive, and shows that although this person had read this blog over an extended period he clearly never once comprehended what I was saying.

Fifth, within the frame that he creates he presumes that if I am not for him in supporting the abuse of Starmer then I must instead be for Starmer. The extraordinary limitation in imagination that presumes there is such a simple polarity is, I have to say, amusing because it is (and I can't think of another way of saying this) so stupid. I, for one, can deal with multi-dimensional thinking, and so can many others.

Sixth, the idea that I want a job with Starmer is as laughable as the idea that I wanted one with Corbyn - the offer of which I was more than happy to decline. That anyone thinks I am seeking any such job is deeply deluded. I have always made clear I am not seeking party political or public appointments. And to imagine Labour might want me is decidedly hard to imagine given that I am clearly not a supporter of its current economic policy (which is pretty close to that of Corbyn in overall tone, which was also pretty unacceptable to me) and my position on Scottish independence and other issues clearly puts me at odds with the current Labour Party.

Seventh, the idea that the support for this blog is drawn from those who would have sided with those attacking Starmer is laughable.

Eighth, the suggestion that I actually write this blog to win support rather than to promote ideas is also so wide of the mark that it represents a staggering misunderstanding of what I do. And for the record, there has been no apparent decline in readership this week, whilst my Twitter following appears to increase by the day.

So, in that case will I be going back to 'the punters' that this person thinks I serve? No, I will not be. If these punters support intimidation of Starmer they are not a part of any politics I could support. But that does not mean I support Starmer.

So, let me be clear about some things then in case anyone else is suffering from the type of misunderstanding this commentator clearly had.

First, I do not promote any party. I used to say I would only not work for racist ones. Now I add those that I think to be neo or proto-fascist, which is where the Tories are. But let's be clear that when in 2012 I was asked by the Tories to sit on a Treasury committee I did. My opinion of the party has changed since then. I would not do so now because the party has adopted extremist positions.

Second, I have little time now for the notion of left and right based around the artificial constructs of supposed capitalism or socialism. Both are simply mythologies promoted by those whose politics bear little relationship to reality. There are no markets of the type that the supposed supporters of capitalism and their friends in academia describe. The same is true of the society that the supposed supporters of socialism describe. So what is the point or orientating thinking around these falsehoods?

Third, I reject both capitalism and socialism in any case because both are based on materialism and that is now proven to be an unsustainable world view.

Fourth, I believe in a mixed economy because that is what we have, need, and will continue to enjoy. Those pretending otherwise deny the only thing that we know works. But that does not mean I believe in unlimited growth, profit maximisation or any of the other nonsense that proponents of capitalism (most of whom, unlike me, have never run a real business) say goes with having a private sector. As a matter of fact, for example, no business knows how to maximise profit and anyway accounting and economic profit are not the same thing, but few seem to understand that.

Fifth, this mixed economy needs two things. A strong, profoundly representative democracy that is, to the greatest degree possible, beyond corruption is the first such thing. We clearly have not got that. It also requires well regulated, transparent and accountable businesses that accept the obligations that limited liability impose upon them, and which operate within the parameters of enforced law. We do not have that either. I argue for both.

Sixth, we need compassion, morality, empathy and a focus upon mutual respect that the duality of modern politics does not foster. Care for others has to be the basis for our politics or it is worthless. Indeed, what is its point unless that is its focus? Can anyone seriously believe that promotion of the interests of the already selfish is politics when, surely, it is simple corruption?

Seventh, we need a new understanding of economics as the world actually is. Modern monetary theory is an example of that. The approaches I suggest to tax and accounting are also designed for the world I actually see, rather than the fictions I note too many in politics and academia promoting

Eighth, many of these ideas are multi-dimensional. I support privately owned business and strong government, simultaneously. That's because I think they (and we) need each other. I also support the right to private property, and the right of the state to redistribute the ownership of that property. I think we have to tackle climate change. I do not think that means pleasure disappears. And so on. That does not imply conflicted thinking. It recognises that such reconciliations are what any reasonably balanced life involves.

So what do I really wish for from politics? I cannot be alone in wanting politics that moves way beyond the fantasies of the extremes of left and right, and frankly beyond the daft narratives played out closer to the centre ground of politics where milder forms of these caricatures of ideas long out of date ideas still exist and corrupt our current first past the post political narratives.

What I want is a politics rooted in reality. That is, one that addresses the issues that we face, not the convenient and too often simplistic myths that too many engaged in politics wish to create.

I want to tackle corruption, fraud, abuse, poverty, inequality of opportunity, climate change, poor housing, inadequate access to housing, under-resourced health and social care, a pension system that exists to serve the City and not pensioners, tax evasion and avoidance, and so much more. But I do not want dogmatic solutions to these issues. I want appreciation that they are real. I want open mindedness on solutions to them and other issues. I want a politics that can see the other side of the argument and makes choices on the basis of what is best for those who need most.

I want fact, not myth.

I want debate not insult.

I want a politics in other words that recognises the sheer, messy and also essentially important diversity of the world where to gain acceptance credibility rather than tribalism is the basis for success.

This is a politics for the real world.

It is a politics defined by care.

It is a politics of diversity.

And of negotiation, not imposition.

This is a politics for today.

It's a very long way from what we have got.

And it's nothing like the positions the far left and right adopt.