Funding the Future

How could a party headed by Starmer form a credible gov...

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I have the good fortune to rarely lose sleep. I don't underestimate the benefit. Just to remind me of how big that is I did lose sleep last night. I could not unwind from the anger I felt about comments Keir Starmer made yesterday.

Interviewed by the BBC in Scotland he seemingly set out to alienate as many people as possible. He definitely succeeded with me.

First, he appeared to rule out a referendum on Scottish independence, making clear that he is yet another colonising English politician as a result.

Then he ruled out ever going back to the EU or ever reintroducing freedom of movement for the people of this country again, alienating not only the majority in the UK as a whole who think Brexit a mistake but the majority in Scotland who see this as the reason for independence.

And then, within that context he had this to say:

Asked how many people he would be prepared to let into the country under a managed migration plan, he said: "We don't want open borders. Freedom of movement has gone and it's not coming back.

"*So that means fair rules, firm rules, a points-based system.*

"*What I would like to see is the numbers go down in some areas. I think we're recruiting too many people from overseas into, for example, the health service.*

"*But on the other hand, if we need high-skilled people in innovation in tech to set up factories etc, then I would encourage that.*"

This tweet has the video of this comment:

https://twitter.com/jrc1921/status/1589201343499341825?s=20&t=jCgDjjKVl5Ff44eO8KZHQg

I admit that I was furious on hearing this. Having lived with an NHS GP (albeit retired now because of ill health) for many years I know all the problems that the white racist population cause in the NHS, with people frequently telling both hospitals and GP surgeries that they do not want to be seen by foreign staff. You can imagine the devastation that this causes for the staff involved, and also for their colleagues who then have to see these people feeling laden with guilt for their colleagues who have been exposed to the humiliation of the refusal of the patient to see them.

Knowing that my reaction was this:

Richard Murphy @RichardJMurphy · 15h

The last thing we need is Keir Starmer encouraging the 'I want to see a white doctor' brigade. What was he thinking of with this utterly irresponsible comment? I am appalled

BBC NEWS

bbc.co.uk

Keir Starmer: Immigration not quick fix to NHS problems

The Labour leader says too many people from overseas are being recruited into the health service.

1,346   2,331   8,566

I was far from being alone in being appalled: the disgust was all over my Twitter timeline. This was a moderate version:

You Retweeted

Prof Tanja Bueltmann @TanjaBueltmann · 14h

The UK is 'recruiting too many people from overseas', says Starmer. I accept that there is a valid question in who staffs the NHS and UK training etc, to say this—and in these words—right now is really just fanning the flames, however inadvertently.

BBC NEWS

bbc.co.uk

Keir Starmer: Too many people from overseas recruited to NHS

The Labour leader wants to fix the health service staffing crisis by hiring more people from the UK.

130   81   849

I wish I could think this inadvertent: I will be candid and say I do not. I think it was entirely deliberate. The deliberate framing does not allow for anything other interpretation.

This poll was indicative of sentiment:

Some Labour supporters, including an MP, said I had misinterpreted the comments and that Starmer was simply saying we should a) train more staff and b) not denude other countries of their staff. If he had said that I would have entirely agreed. That is true, except it takes years to happen and we need staff in the meantime, not least because so many are leaving because of poor pay and conditions on which labour is offering them precisely no support at all. But that is not what Starmer said. He said the NHS has too many foreign staff, and that is a dog-whistle for the racists who will use that as an excuse to attack all non-white British staff, many of whom are as British as they are, of course.

I remain furious with Starmer this morning, on this issue, about Labour's refusal via Ed Miliband to support nurses yesterday, about the EU, about Scotland, and about its total failure to offer any credible economic thinking in the face of recession and even depression.

But most of all I cannot readily forgive the abuse of hundreds of thousands of NHS staff that Starmer encouraged with this comment yesterday. I am shocked, appalled and disgusted.

I have argued for a vote for Anything But Conservative at the next election but with Starmer in charge of Labour making comments like this I doubt I could vote for Labour now. I loathe those who seek to divide society in the way Starmer is clearly seeking to do. How can a party headed by him form a credible government?