

Protest is public service

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Last month Keir Starmer declared that Labour would “never again be a party of protest not public service”.

Yesterday nurses announced 48 hours of strikes because the government is willing to talk to them about any way to solve their pay dispute, the NHS staffing crisis and the appalling working conditions many NHS staff work under except increasing pay.

Nurses are striking because they are at the end of their tether.

They know that they cannot afford to live reasonably on what they are being paid.

What is more, they know that the chance of recruiting staff to work in the dangerous conditions in which they work is very low when inadequate pay is being offered.

And nurses know that what is at stake here is the future of the NHS. They know that the situation that they are in is unsustainable, which is why they are striking as a public service.

The last point is key: protest is public service. Protest is not the opposite of public service. Protest has always been the catalyst that has resulted in improved public service. It never came any other way.

Labour is now denying this, just as it is abandoning those who want to sort out the NHS and know what is needed to do that, who are the people who work in it.

Labour is wrong about protest. It is even wrong about protest when in government. Protest is exactly what creates transformative government that changes the status quo. But Labour very clearly has no desire to do that. Labour is now all about keeping things going, rotten as they are.

As a result we had Stephen Kinnock saying on Question Time last night that Labour would deliver 13,000 new police officers as a result of savings in government procurement. All progress is now apparently dependent on changing the photocopier

paper supplier.

I despair of people so small minded.

I doubt their motives for wishing to govern. What is the point of them if not self aggrandisement?

They have none of the answers this country needs.

And they might well be our next government.