

Where now for the SNP?

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The SNP's new leader is Humza Yousaf. He beat Kate Forbes by the notorious margin of 52% to 48% on second preferences.

There is no doubt that Humza Yousaf had the advantage of being the establishment candidate in this election. When the SNP establishment has been all-powerful for the last decade, and maybe rather longer, that was an obstacle to anyone else that was always going to be hard to surmount.

The problem now is that he inherits all the problems the SNP had without the advantage of being able to offer an alternative.

The SNP has never managed to date to make the case that education, health and other public services in Scotland are bad because the devolution settlement is dire. That's because the SNP agreed to the devolution settlement.

Likewise, the SNP has never been able to discredit GERS - the dire Government Expenditure and Revenue Scotland statement, which was the whole reason why I got involved in Scottish politics in the first place - because they have always published it when they need not have done so. As a result, they have never been able to argue that another economy is possible.

And, in any case, they never tried to do that. The 2018 Growth Commission report, and all subsequent statements on independence, have been neoliberal to their core. They also placed bankers at the heart of their concern, always denying the absolute need for a Scottish currency from day one of independence if Scotland was not to sink under the yoke of being tied to sterling.

Do I expect any of that to change now?

I can live in hope that it might. But will it? I don't think so. The SNP has got very comfortable running a devolved parliament. I do not see any passion for that to change.

But, I may have misread Humza Yousaf. I have to keep an open mind. It's just that the signs are really not that good. He looks far too much like the continuity candidate to think otherwise at the moment.

But then, so too would Kate Forbes have also looked like that.

The shortage of talent in British political leadership is very obvious right now.