

Funding the Future

Starmer has changed his mind on almost everything. Now ...

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Keir Starmer [said in his speech](#) on his vision for Labour yesterday:

We're going to have priorities coming into government, clear priorities. They are going to be the missions, and I'm afraid voting reform is not one of the priorities.

This is absurd. Even [Andrew Neil in the Mail](#) yesterday could see the advantages to him of signing up for electoral reform:



ANDREW NEIL: Britain could well be heading for seismic electoral reform that'll keep the left in power FOR EVER... And Starmer may sign up to it without voters even getting a say

So why isn't Starmer following Neil's advice by adopting electoral reform and staying in power forever, as well he and his successors as Labour leader might?

The first reason is that Starmer still wants to hang on to the idea that he can rule, as Blair did, with an absolute majority. Current polls suggest he might, just, do that once.

The likelihood of him doing so twice is very low indeed. In that case the strategy makes no sense.

The second is that, like most Labour leaders, he wants to make clear to the public his contempt for his members and the unions that support him. PR has been overwhelmingly endorsed as Labour Party policy by its conference, so Starmer has rejected the idea to prove to voters, who apparently require evidence that he can be this contemptuous, that he will ignore their wishes.

Third, there is the possibility that Starmer and his coterie, so long removed from reality by the experience of living in the Westminster bubble, don't actually believe in democracy. They might acknowledge, deep down, that the public want something other than two party politics, but they have become wedded to the game it represents. Like so many professionals, their greatest fear is that change might expose that they know little about anything but the rules of the current but outdated game, meaning that they would have to make way for others with new skills and expertise if PR was to come about. Hence, they remain dedicated to first past the post.

I think none of these represent remotely good reasons for Starmer's expressed opinion. But each, and even all of them, might be true. As a result Starmer is trying to show intransigence on this issue when on almost every other known issue he has the apparent ability to change his mind.

This won't work well for him. The people of this country want their opinions heard, and respected. They know that options other than Labour are available to them. He is totally foolish not to accede to their wishes when even Andrew Neil can see that this would keep the Tories out of office, maybe for ever, which is an overwhelming desire of a majority right across the UK.

For once, I hope Starmer does change his mind.