

## Starmer makes me despair

Published: January 13, 2026, 6:07 am

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Keir Starmer was interviewed by the ever-affable Justin Webb on the *Tory Today* programme on BBC Radio 4 this morning. Paul Waugh, chief political correspondent of the *Independent*, summarised one exchange as follows:



Paul Waugh  
@paulwaugh

...

Interesting answer from [@Keir\\_Starmer](#) to [@JustinOnWeb](#):

“The question you put to me, ‘wouldn’t it be sensible to raise taxes even higher?’ I think the high-tax, low-growth model doesn’t work, I think it’s busted.”

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Starmer was actually asked about taxes on wealth. He rejected the idea.

What is Starmer saying as a result? There are at least three obvious things.

The first is that inequality does not matter, when it very clearly does.

The second is that he does not think that redistributing from those who only save their excess income to those who might spend it into use in the economy can have an impact on the level of economic activity in the economy as a whole. This reveals a staggering level of incomprehension of the impact of multiplier effects.

Third, what he is saying is that he really does not believe in the ability of government to meet need. If he thinks high tax delivers low growth then he is clearly saying low tax, which is associated with small government, does deliver growth. In other words, he is clearly suggesting that the private sector is to be preferred as a delivery mechanism to the state.

I could dig deeper into this, but I am not sure I need to do so. This is neoliberal thinking of the most basic, dogmatic, mantra-driven and unchallenging type. The message could not be clearer. He thinks that everything that Labour once stood for will not be embraced by him, his team or any government he leads. We will instead get austerity,

shrinking services, growing inequality and kow-towing to the markets, bankers, and the supposed entrepreneurs in big business whose sole objective is to gouge out their companies for their own private gain.

I despair.

I can say with a very clear conscience that I will not be voting Labour this week.