

Starmer's won the battle with Labour but there's no evi...

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As [Politico](#) notes this morning:

The consensus that this [shadow Cabinet reshuffle] is a ruthless march of the Labour centre/right (delete as appropriate) at the expense of the soft left is unanimous. One MP [tells the Times' Patrick Maguire](#): "Even Tony Blair didn't have this many Blairites in his cabinet."

That commentator may well be right.

There is, however, a problem. As Owen Jones has noted [in the Guardian](#), at least Blair had some big political characters in his Cabinet, and people with opinions. Starmer has almost none. Angela Rayner and Ed Miliband have to fill those roles, and they are clinging on, just about, to their positions and are unlikely to have any real clout. The apparatchiks have the day, but no one is ever going to suggest that Liz Kendall is going to create political excitement.

It could, of course, be argued that I am an old social democrat who was once to the right in the arena Labour occupied, who is just having another moan about the fact that Labour has now occupied the space the Tories have vacated since Cameron quit. And maybe those saying so are right. Except, that is, for one thing. And that is that right across the country there are very large numbers of us who think that way.

We want a proactive government that seems to meet real needs in society.

We want problems solved.

We don't want to watch Wes Streeting suggesting, as he implied on Sophy Ridge's programme last night, that Labour's fiscal rule is more important than providing schools, let alone safe ones, for children affected by RAACs.

We do expect a government to tax if that is required to meet the demand for public services.

And we mostly definitely expect that it will be the rich who will pay more because they are so grossly undertaxed now.

What is more, we do not believe that the market knows best because the evidence is overwhelming that on a great many issues it does not.

So, Starmer can build a party that is full of Blairites, but it is not clear that Blair ever really possessed the answers needed in the 1990s, and he most certainly has none for today. In other words, Starmer is building a shadow Cabinet that has no clue how to provide the active government that this country now requires if any of its problems are to be solved.

Starmer has won his battle with the left in Labour. But he's made a useless party of prospective government as a consequence. That will not be a price the country will think worth paying when it realises just how ineffective he intends to be in Downing Street because with this lot in his team, that is all he can be.