

What does Starmer believe in?

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I am aware that not everyone shares my disenchantment with Labour, its absence of policy and its apparent lack of leadership. Nor do they like my suggestion that it stands for nothing more than continuity of the Tory tradition of neoliberal government, with reduced paranoia and conspiracy theory being the basis of the offer, as Wes Streeting pretty much put it yesterday.

However, for yesterday's Laura Kuennsberg programme the BBC commissioned a poll where people were asked to offer a one-word opinion of what they thought Starmer stood for, and got this:



There is no compelling evidence there that people think any more of him and his party than I do.

The nothing in the middle is staggering. It could be dismissed as chance if so many of the other significant comments were not similar, each scaled to indicate the number saying it. Some thoughts follow.

First, have we reached the end of politics based on ideas?

Second, alternatively, is there now one idea so pervasive that people do not recognise

it because politics is now solely about its delivery, and not challenging the system?

Third, does this matter in a first-past-the-post system where alternatives need not be stated to secure an electoral win when the party in office collapses under the weight of its own incompetence?

Fourth, what is politics in the UK about now in that case?

And fifth, how can the idea of ideas be reinjected into it?

I try to do that here. Others do, elsewhere. It is apparent that ideas do exist. But it seems that those with any drive for power reject the whole idea that they matter.

Or has Gove won the argument against expertise? And are we doomed to fail as a result, with politicians endlessly repeating their mistakes until the whole system collapses?