

# We need radical electoral reform so that we might become...

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There are three facts that should be dominating political discourse at present.

The first is that both our leading political parties have collapsed into factionalism. The Tories are, despite already expelling significant numbers of their Remain MPs, still engaged in massive faction fighting, which looks unlikely to cease for some time to come. Labour has expelled hundreds of thousands of members, and some MPs, to remove from its ranks anyone who might be described as anything very much left of centre. Instead of being broad churches, both parties are now intent on being very narrowly focused, and express indifference to anyone of another opinion to whom they might have once appealed.

Second, neither party seems to think there is anything very odd about this. The idea that these parties should now be narrowly factional in their concern - and largely introspective to achieve that aim - seems to all those engaged in promoting those factions within both parties to be entirely appropriate. Their chosen modus operandi is to operate on the basis of the exclusion of oppositions, contrary ideas and even the desire for discussion. If there is one thing that both parties now share in common, it is their dedication to a singular view. The only difference between them is that Labour is, at present, proving itself better at imposing this seemingly totalitarian approach to party management.

Third, and this is what really matters, is the fact that this approach to politics might suit those who are engaged in it, but it is wholly unsuited to the needs of a United Kingdom where there have always been two major party politics and an electoral system suited to that fact but where, if large numbers of people are to be excluded from the two leading parties, those people are denied an electoral voice as a consequence.

You can have as many singularly focused parties as you like within a proportional representation (PR) system, and electors can choose between them.

You can also expel factions, knowing that they are likely to form new parties if you do so when PR is in operation and not deliberately deny voters choice.

But if you operate in a two-party system, the reform of which you refuse to contemplate, and still want to lead a party with a very narrow focus of interests, which very obviously refuses to consider any alternative ideas, and demand that it alone be one of the two options on the ballot paper that most electors must choose between, then what you are actually saying is that you no longer believe in choice, democracy, or the significance of the ballot box in determining political outcomes. Instead, you think that the ruthless pursuit of power within your party is the right way to determine national fortunes.

I appropriately describe Labour. I also appropriately describe what most in the Tories would love to see happen, except for the fact that they have not as yet worked out how to be rid of most of those that they do not agree with.

This is the sorry state of the politicians we are now presented with by the Tories and Labour. It is not democratic. It is not representative. It is not broad-minded. It is instead narrow, insular and suited only to those able to play the rules that apply to internal party management, which ability provides no indication at all of any ability to actually manage a country, council or anything else.

The solution is very obviously radical electoral reform so that we might become a proper democracy.

But that is the last thing either Labour or the Tories want.

We are in trouble.