

What we're missing is politicians who believe change ...

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I admit that one of the difficulties of blogging regularly is working out what is worth talking about, and what just keeps the flow going. I am interested in the former. If producing the second was the task that blogging became then I would rapidly give up.

This challenge presented itself to me this morning. Faced with limited time (there is a plan for the day) and a messy news agenda, out of which little actually stands out, the question as to what to write about, if anything, did come to mind.

Having framed the question in that way the answer then became apparent. The question to ask is what, if anything, do our politicians believe in?

In my youth this was, I think, easy to answer. The Tories served an old-school establishment and whilst not exactly business orientated, because wealth was always their greater interest, they were more inclined to favour trade as a route to the creation of 'new money' than were Labour. The result was an inherent mistrust of government.

Labour, on the other hand, favoured the working person and reduced inequality. They favoured unions as a result, thought highly of the state as an instrument of change, and were relaxed about trade pursued by nationalised industries as a consequence.

The Liberals back then really did not matter and nationalists were hardly on the scene. Relatively speaking, life was simple. We knew what the choices were. Importantly, the choice was real.

And so too is life simple now, except that for most people the opportunity to choose between opposing politicians has very largely been taken away from them.

The Tories dislike the state and all it stands for. They love wealth and use the state to increase the wellbeing of those already possessed of it. If a little (or even a lot) of none-too subtle corruption is required to assist that, so be it. That happened in the 90s. It has happened again more recently. As for anyone else, in reality the message is 'sod you'. Games will be played to secure votes, but that is about as far as things go.

Labour just wants power for its leadership. That is it. There is no philosophy, belief system or creed. The prevailing status quo without the overlay of Tory incompetence and corruption will do for them. If that power happens not to meet the needs of the electorate the attitude is, once again, 'sod them', because incompetence is the only other choice in Labour's opinion.

The LibDems want the EU back. As for the rest? Who knows?

The Greens want to save the planet but still have other issues to sort out.

And, quite reasonably nationalists want out of here without as yet being sure how, which creates the paradoxical demand to try to present a veneer of competence in a system stacked against them doing so.

It's all so deeply unedifying.

On Friday I was asked what was my theory of change that might explain how we might end this dire situation. I suggested a four stage process.

First, there has to be angst amongst sufficient people. A critical mass (but not the majority) has to think something is wrong.

Then there is analysis. That explains what is wrong, and how it can be put right.

The third stage is the promotion of solution focussed change. In other words, the demand is not just for something different, but for something specific that solves the problem. Analysis is not enough. Detailed plans are required that convince people that change is possible.

And then, finally, there is a need for champions who are willing to promote these solutions until change happens.

I think stage one exists in the UK.

I try to meet the need for analysis and the creation of solution focussed policy options. I am not alone with the former, but the solution focussed space is very thinly populated.

And then we do need champions. They are people who are willing to state their beliefs in an era when almost every politician has forgotten the significance of doing so and only wants power for its own (and their own) sake.

The missing element in the process of change is, then, people who believe that better is possible and who are willing to talk about solutions that achieve that goal.

Any volunteers?