

Now Labour is the incumbent Single Transferable Party o...

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For those who read the comments on this blog, and it would seem that a surprisingly large number do, then [references to an article by an author using the pen name Aurelien, entitled 'No Left Turn'](#) will be familiar of late.

Aurelien, I am assured, is a former foreign office civil servant in the UK, now working training staff at NATO. The use of a pen name is, in that situation, very clearly appropriate.

The article in question is available here, but if I might grossly précis it, the argument is one that is, fairly familiar on this blog of late.

Firstly, it is suggested that the mainstream political parties of most states, the UK included, are largely homogenous in terms of the opinions that they present, the backgrounds of those who serve in them, and the objectives that they seek to fulfil. There is, and I stress that these words are mine, a neoliberal consensus at play, whoever it might be that supposedly holds power.

Secondly, whilst this has not quite, as yet, rendered the democratic process meaningless, it is severely undermining it. It can be argued that neither the French left nor right got the results that they desired in their recent general election, having both been denied by the centre ground.

Elsewhere, and I offer this example which is not in the article, the leading right-of-centre parties in Ireland, after a century of supposedly intense opposition to each other, now serve in coalition together with the combined intention of denying Sinn Féin the opportunity of power in that country.

And, here in the UK, the freakiness of our electoral system has returned a massive Labour majority to Parliament on the basis of a share of the vote little different from that they enjoyed in 2019, which was a supposedly disastrous year for them. It just so happens, however, that in 2024, Labour could guarantee to deliver continuity, harmonious government in the way that in June 2019 it would not have done, so the cards played out in its favour.

What we are not getting as a result in any of these countries is anything approaching a left-of-centre government. As a consequence, in a very wide range of states, with apparently different situations, electorates feel deeply alienated from the political process because, as Aurelien puts it, they realise that “Workers and peasants, your elites don’t need you. Just shove off and don’t make any fuss about it.”

I hope that the above is a fair summary of the article, although I know that there will be those who can refine this summary in the comments, and probably with more nuance, and I would still seriously suggest that it is worth anyone’s time to read the original, which is well written. My summary simply provides opportunity for discussion, so let me offer some comments.

Firstly, I agree with the conclusion of this piece, which suggests that we have ended up with what might be best described as a ‘single transferable party’ (STP) within our political systems. In other words, far from us having electoral choice, the reality is a pretence of choice is being presented to us by a range of parties who claim to be in opposition to each other but who actually promote policy ideas and mechanisms for their delivery that are extraordinarily similar in style. The consequence is that we end up with an STP, meaning that whoever we vote for, all we actually change is the limited number of people responsible for delivering consistent neoliberal hegemonic policies that are designed to benefit those with wealth and big business and which have little or no impact on the well-being of the majority population.

Second, this fact is now being understood by the electorate. The rise in the number of parties represented in the UK parliament, which might arguably be counted as representing 15 or 16 separate groupings at present from at least 14 different parties, reflects the fact that some people have consciously noted this ploy perpetrated by the single transferable party and opted out of their game. However, since the system is incredibly biased against the interests of those doing so their representation in Parliament remains small.

This means that the rest of the population is effectively unrepresented as a consequence of the parties that they voted for taking on interest in them, whether as electors or, if they are so unwise as to have joined such a party, in their capacity as members of that organisation. In consequence, voter alienation is, inevitably, increasing because people are in growing numbers realising that a conspiracy is taking place against them.

It is my expectation that this understanding will grow rapidly as this Parliament progresses and disenchantment with Labour’s track record in office increases.

The question, as far as I am concerned in that case is, presuming that this fairly summarises this situation of which readers of this blog are increasingly aware, what happens next?

Do people hang on in quiet desperation, as Pink Floyd once suggested was the English way? I would happen to agree with them that this might be a peculiarly English response, but will it last?

Alternatively, will the people of Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland react, as they have the potential to do, and demand their independence from this hegemony to which many in those countries do not subscribe?

Might we also see an increasingly angry reaction to this attempt by those political forces funded by wealth and prevailing economic power to deny us the choice that those who seek to control us via the Single Transferable Party claim is what identifies us as human beings, which is our capacity to choose?

The possibility does, of course, exist that all these things might happen with decidedly unpredictable outcomes.

Of course, the current incumbent Single Transferable Party will seek to deny the possibility of any of these things happening. This is apparent from its attitude towards electoral reform.

It is also clear from their approach to independence movements.

And it is also apparent from their attitude towards the Greens, who have dared to challenge their hegemonic views.

Their attitude towards those inside their own parties who will not acquiesce to the control that they wish to exercise over them is especially vicious, which is why Labour suspended seven of its newly elected MPs so soon after this new parliament assembled.

The difficulty for the STP is that with the emergence of far-right alternatives, it is not clear that the STP now has the level of media support that it once assumed. If Reform continues to promote a far-right agenda, and the Tories break from the STP and join them on that fringe, which Robert Jenrick would do, it might just upset the STP as much as the far-right has upset Macron and his allies in France.

The consequences are threefold.

The first is that all of us who thought Labour would change nothing were right. That was the aim. It is now the STP.

Second, the far right is a threat, but the STP hopes to contain it, hoping it can suck the left in to support it.

Third, the STP is as determined as the far right to ensure that there is no real left-wing opposition in the UK.

So, what next?

As yet, I will be honest that this is not clear, but it does make me determined to make a space like this blog available to discuss this issue.