

Funding the Future

Article URL

Published: January 12, 2026, 7:52 pm

There was one moment during yesterday's speech by Keir Starmer that I have not mentioned in any of the posts I have published on it, so far.

I am not talking about his unfortunate error in referring to Israeli hostages in Gaza as sausages. That was a simple human mistake, and we all make them, and they should then be forgotten.

I am, instead, referring to his disgusting indifference to the protester who heckled him at one point during the speech. When Starmer talked about his supposed concern for children, the heckler in question made the entirely valid observation that he appeared to have no concern for the children of Gaza. For making this comment the person in question was, of course, evicted from the conference, but it was Starmer's reaction that I am interested in.

His off-the-cuff quip was that the person in question obviously had a pass for the Labour 2019 conference, which was the last one when Jeremy Corbyn was in charge.

He added that Labour is not a part of protest now.

Those in the conference hall cheered Starmer.

Those who understand the desperate need for a genuinely compassionate social democratic Ipolitical party in the UK that might represent the opinion of many millions of decent people in this country will have groaned in disgust.

Whatever faults Jeremy Corbyn might have had, nobody can say that he did not care for everyone who needed the support of the state, including children wherever they might be.

I can also say from my own personal experience of meeting him, which I have, that I never noted a hint of antisemitism in his behaviour, although I do think that so firm was his conviction that this was unacceptable that he was blind to that prejudice in others.

Corbyn would not, and does not, stand aside and watch the genocide of tens of thousands of innocent people by a neo-fascist Israeli government and say nothing.

Starmer still is.

And Starmer might also claim that Labour is no longer a party of protest, but what he fails to understand as a consequence is that it is not, in that case, the Labour Party at all. Without the campaigning zeal that drives both protest and change it is nothing but an agency tasked with maintaining the status quo. In his own description of the Party he now leads, Starmer provides a precise reason for what will be the ultimate and inevitable failure of his premiership.

No doubt, this heckler will have charges bought against him for a breach of the peace, just as the person who interrupted Rachel Reeves on Monday has been charged. That, though, makes a mockery of everything Starmer sought to communicate during his speech.

He said everyone should be heard in this country. He forgot to mention the small print in his terms and conditions for doing so, which state that as far as he is concerned that means that everyone will be heard so long as they agree with Starmer.

Starmer's was the action of someone with no faith in democracy and no faith in people's right to disagree. That might make him typical of the Single Transferable Party that governs this country, but it sets him apart from almost all Labour traditions. The organisation he leads is nothing that looks like a Labour Party.

We need one of those again.