

Do you care? That's the political question for 2024

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Left versus right seems like deeply antiquated politics from another era to me. The fight between labour and capital makes no sense when we have to live in a mixed economy. Much more important now is the question “do you care?” because that’s the question that now decides how resources are allocated in our society. Which side are you on?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hwthLZfg23g&si=soCCXWOQyn5wst4r>

The audio version of this video is here:

https://www.podbean.com/player-v2/?i=bz48m-16f46a8-pb&from=pb6admin&share=1&download=1&rtl=0&fonts=Arial&skin=c73a3a&font-color=auto&logo_link=episode_page&btn-skin=ff6d00

The transcript is:

Are you on the left, or are you on the right? That has always been the great political question and I'm not sure that it is very relevant anymore.

I can't tell the difference between Labour and the Conservatives anymore. Yes, a little bit around the fringes, there are some Labour people who are clearly, in old-fashioned terms, to the left of some of the barking-mad members of the Tory party who are clearly on the far right now. But, overall? They both seem to be dedicated to the same fundamental economic policy these days, which is all about austerity.

So, is there any real difference between left and right in politics now? And is the dividing line in politics now anyway really about who controls the means of production, and therefore on which side of the fight between labour and capital you might find yourself on when there is enormous confusion between those roles these days?

Instead, there are much more important divides in politics these days. And that's what really concerns me. We're still talking about 19th and early 20th century arguments about capital versus labour, and left versus right, and wealth versus poverty, and all those things. But the reality is that because that rhetoric has remained stuck in the past era, arguing about situations that no longer exist, and because we don't have - and let's be honest about this, and I'm grateful for it - the deep poverty that we had in the 1930s, the rhetoric should move on. And if it did, we'd talk about much more important things.

For example, about care or not caring. To me this is the most important divide in politics we've now got.

Do you care that there are people who haven't got opportunity when some have?

Do you care about the people who are stuck in mouldy social housing, provided by the rented sector but paid for by local authorities, when there is the opportunity for them to have something so much better?

Do you care about those who are left unemployed because the Bank of England wants there to be a buffer of unemployed people because it can't get its inflation calculation right?

Do you care about the fact that some children are not provided with the opportunity that others enjoy?

Do you care about the fact that young people are burdened with debt if they go to university, and yet we want them to go to university because we want their skills in the future, but we will be denying them the chance to save for their own homes, let alone their pensions as a consequence?

'Do you care?' seems to me to be by far the most important question that we can ask in politics now.

And too often, I see politicians who seem not to care at all.

It's what fundamentally my politics is all about. I will always be on the side of the underdog. I have a bias to the poor. I have a bias towards the young because I can see that what my generation has done to the world that we live in that is not providing them with the opportunities that they need into the future, particularly when it comes to climate change.

I believe we should care. And that, to me, is where we should be going and how we should be talking about the dividing lines in politics in the future if we are to have a politics that makes sense for the 21st century. Because whether you care or not defines how you allocate the resources within society.

And if you don't care, the consequence is terrible for vast numbers of people.

And if you do, you can make the lot of humankind better.

Which side are you on? Do you care, or can't you be bothered to?

I think that's a question we should all be asking.