

Trump, Carney, Starmer and Farage: a toxic political mi...

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Carney and Starmer are technocrats - stuck in the middle without ever realising there are clowns to the right of them, and no jokers, or anything else, to their left.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kn7xjmGI4Dc?si=NhxHFq2LWih1oZYE>

This is the audio version:

https://www.podbean.com/player-v2/?i=zjjjr-1896960-pb&from=pb6admin&share=1&download=1&rtl=0&fonts=Arial&skin=f6f6f6&font-color=&logo_link=episode_page&btn-skin=c73a3a

This is the transcript:

What ties together Donald Trump, Mark Carney, Keir Starmer and Nigel Farage? The answer is, of course, very obvious. Carney and Starmer are stuck in the middle with Trump and Farage, and this is not a matter of inconsequence.

It actually matters greatly, because what Mark Carney has proved in Canada is that Donald Trump is producing political outcomes outside the USA, which are the exact opposite of what he would wish for.

After all, what we know is that in January, the Conservative Party in Canada was riding high in the polls. The Liberals, who are now headed by Mark Carney, and who have just won the election, were at absolute lowest levels of popularity, and yet Carney won the

election.

Now, admittedly, he won the election by, in part, replacing Justin Trudeau, whose time as Prime Minister had reached the end of its natural course. And that party, his party, the Liberal Party, was desperate for a new leader and it's got it in a technocrat, because Mark Carney is no seasoned politician in the sense that he has never stood for political office before.

He has been Governor of the Bank of Canada.

He has been Governor of the Bank of England.

He does, therefore, know his way around the corridors of power in the world. There is not a question about that, and he clearly knows how to negotiate a deal. He is not, and I stress the point, a seasoned politician, and yet he won the Canadian general election.

Well, let's be clear about this. He sort of won the Canadian general election, because the Conservatives, although their leader lost office, did in fact have their highest poll rating for decades. What actually happened was that Canada moved towards its two leading political parties during the course of this election, and the Liberals came out on top, with the smallest parties being squeezed heavily as a consequence, with their support seemingly moving towards the Liberals.

So we have a number of things on display here.

One is the failure of the first-past-the-post electoral system, which is something that Carney and Starmer have in common. They are now both going to be in office despite not winning sufficient support to really prove that they have authority.

In Carney's case, that is in Parliament, where he might well have to work with a minority government. And in Starmer's case, it is with the population as a whole, where despite his landslide majority in Parliament, he actually won very little of the popular vote, and things have got very much worse for him since.

So the centre ground, which both Carney and Starmer would like to claim they represent, is actually really having a tough time.

If Canada was so sure, as Carney says it is, that it wants nothing to do with Trump, the Conservatives should not have polled as well as they did - in fact, in record numbers.

If Starmer was so popular, he would not be so worried about the election results to come in the UK over the next few days, both in Parliamentary by-elections and with regard to local council elections.

The point is that Farage is the equivalent of Trump in the UK, and Starmer is frightened of him.

So the centre ground is holding, but not very well.

The assault from Trump and the assault from the populist right in the UK are real. Both are winning support in countries where, frankly, it is quite illogical to have voted for parties who are aligned with these interests, and yet it's happening.

So, what do we really learn from Mark Carney?

First of all, technocrats are not actually really ultimately able to engage a population and Carney and Starmer share in common the fact that they came into politics from a technocrat background.

Starmer was, of course, a Director of Public Prosecutions in the UK - a technocrat.

Carney was a banker, a technocrat.

Both lack any obvious clear political convictions that have anything to do with the left at all, although they both lead what are called centre-left parties, although, in my opinion, that's a bit of a joke because I can't identify the left in either of them. And neither of them has got the experience, or charisma, or appeal, or most importantly of all, the political ideology that actually sells the fact that they have conviction to the people of the country that they're trying to get to vote for them.

So, the right-wing ideologues with buckets of charisma, because let's be totally honest about it, Trump and Farage have that in bucket loads - they are winning that race. The technocrats aren't.

It's the lack of ideology that is the real problem in Canada and the UK when we look at the fight between the centre ground, if that's what we wish to call Carney and Starmer, and the far-right, which is what Trump and Farage most obviously are, and this is, as ever, what worries me.

We can't have a politics that is based upon a lack of political conviction. And yet this is where neoliberalism has taken us.

Neoliberalism has destroyed alternative political thinking. It has claimed that it is the end of economic thinking because it has found the ultimate answer to the ultimate question, which is not 42, as the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy would have had it, but is instead that the market knows everything.

And, as a consequence, what politicians who are of a neoliberal persuasion have to say is that we might be running government, but actually the markets are better, and therefore don't trust us very much - trust them, and we will try to shrink the role of government to enhance the role of the market, even though the people who they are trying to convince of the merit of this know full well that this idea has over 45 years now led to economic disaster.

Because that's where we are. We are actually facing economic meltdown, whatever the markets say, whatever our politicians say, people are losing confidence in their future. And if that is not a measure of economic disaster, I do not know what is.

So Starmer and Carney literally might represent the last of the breed.

They are the last neoliberal politicians who might really be able to win power in their countries.

Unless they are replaced by people from the left who actually have a political conviction and who reject market-based solutions, then the right is going to have a free run, however bad it is, however terrible it's suggestions for the majority of people, because there will be no idea to oppose the right from the left and no charismatic person who is driven by conviction who can actually put forward a policy programme that people can believe in.

This is the crisis we're in.

Carney is a short-term solution to a short-term problem in Canada of how to manage Trump. And he might have an answer for the moment. But he hasn't got a long-term solution because this is a man who's never thought that way. If he had, he'd have been a politician a long time ago.

And Starmer is like him. He's a man who never thought about being a politician until he came to the end of a very successful civil service career. He lacks conviction.

Without that conviction, neither of these countries is going anywhere.

We are sitting in limbo.

The right is waiting to take power.

The left needs an answer.

The centre ground has failed.

This is modern politics. Welcome to it and welcome to the process of change because without it, we're in deep trouble.