

The one thing the BBC is now really good at is shooting...

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The National [posted this article](#) from Lesley Riddoch today. I am inclined to call Lesley a friend, although we have only met very occasionally over the years. I appreciate what she had to say:

Thank God for Richard Murphy.

The [Prof's dogged determination yesterday](#) showed what can happen when an easy listening Radio Scotland programme ambles into a serious subject with a formidable contributor ready to stand his ground.

He was determined to point out that “fringe” causes like independence and [Gaza](#) are now mostly majority causes, yet casually placed way below the “mainstream” concerns of the great and good in broadcasting’s pecking order.

Richard spoke about the preponderance of [business](#) over trade union voices on the BBC, the insidious presence of right-wing Tufton Street think tank types on Question Time and Debate Night ... and the unfair way his own interview was being conducted.

For that he got it in the neck. And gave back as good as he got.

Yesterday’s Mornings phone-in was about bias, bad judgement at the BBC and a decline in trust amongst viewers and listeners. Savaging the sole pro-indy, left-wing voice substantiated the accusations rather well.

To be fair, Richard was asked on. I was too but didn’t pick up the message till halfway through the show. So, it’s true the left/indy position was sought out and “heard”.

But that’s not enough.

It’s one thing to have a sole voice representing the Yes “minority” (which as Richard pointed out, is a polling majority these days), it’s quite another to be interrupted throughout like an annoying, foot-stamping, attention-grabbing, irritating toddler.

From her tone, I'm not sure presenter Connie McLaughlin knew Richard's background beyond him being a National columnist (though strangely the paper's name was omitted from his description).

For the record, Professor Richard Murphy from Sheffield University co-founded the Tax Justice Network and directs Tax Research UK. He co-created the Green New Deal and the concept of country-by-country reporting, used in more than 90 countries to identify tax abuse by multinational corporations.

Not a guy to be shut down.

And anyway, from 25 years' experience of live broadcasting at the BBC and Channel 4, it's totally counter-productive to interrupt or shut down a speaker accusing you of bias. Flexing the extra muscle wielded by a broadcaster flips the audience instantly onto the interviewee's side.

I confess I did not expect any of this when I agreed to go on the BBC in Scotland yesterday morning. I had expected to take part in another phone-in programme, as I have done fairly regularly for the past two decades.

But why am I highlighting Lesley's comment? That is because, as Lesley made clear in the article, she was a broadcaster for more than 25 years, and is still involved in media production. She therefore speaks with the voice of experience, not least from within her time at the BBC. What is more, from that perspective, she thought that the way in which the BBC treated me during the course of yesterday's phone-in was wrong, and highly counter-productive, as I do.

If there is one thing that the BBC is now good at, it is shooting itself in the foot, and that is exactly what it did during the course of this programme yesterday.