

Can Rayner survive?

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I am already immensely bored by the Angela Rayner stamp duty story.

For the record, I doubt she will survive this episode in office. Her story does not stack with me: I am aware of just how deeply inclined solicitors are to ensure that their clients pay maximum stamp duty if there is any doubt as to the liability owing; I have seen a transaction where that was the case in the last month. I am also aware of just how disinclined lawyers are to advise on this issue, always outsourcing it to others if they can. That happened in the instance in question, and the conveyancing lawyers would not budge from their position without third-party advice to persuade them to do so. As a result, Rayner's position feels vulnerable, but events might prove the error was made elsewhere, and she might survive.

However, that is not my reason for writing this post. My question is quite different to that which others are asking. It is, so what? So what, in other words, if Rayner does go? What difference will it make?

She appears to have done nothing to make Labour deliver.

Her supposed left-of-centre influence appears to have been non-existent on Starmer.

Her achievements on housing, so far, appear to be minimal; there's not even a whiff of a decent policy in the air.

She is most definitely not the heir apparent to Starmer, even if she has a sense of cool command at the Despatch Box.

And she has remained loyally as Deputy Leader in a government that has stood by, watched and supported genocide whilst cracking down on freedom of speech and protest for anyone left-of-centre in the UK, whilst all the time responding to right-wing racist thuggery by trying to grant every concession they can to their toxic demands.

She is, then, a failed minister. Whatever credentials she brought to the job have vanished in office.

In that case, whether she goes or not, because of whether she paid the right amount of stamp duty or not, is inconsequential. She, like the government of which she is a part, has failed the country, and as deputy leader she has real responsibility for that.

Please, then, don't ask me to be overly worried if she has to go to the backbenches. Once the moment is over - and it will be soon, either way - no one will notice any more.

It is the big issues that matter - and this whole episode is a sideshow engineered by the right-wing to ensure we do not notice what is really happening in this country. That is the big issue. The right is all too happy to have that big issue ignored because what is happening in the UK is toxic, which appeals to them.

Rayner made an error of judgment, whatever turns out to be the case in this matter, but that is not the big issue. That we're on the pathway to fascism, and she has so far done nothing to stop it, is much more important than whether or not she paid stamp duty, and no one is talking about that.