

# Grace Blakeley: the next round

Published: January 12, 2026, 9:36 pm

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Grace Blakeley has commented on the posts I made over the weekend ([here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)) on her Substack, [which is free to access](#). Doing so, she chose to do three things:

- \* Not tell me she had replied to my comments.
- \* Not share her comments here, as I invited her to do.
- \* Not answer any of the reasonable questions I asked in a spirit of curiosity.

I guess that's what I should have expected, given that she has declared me an enemy in her class struggle, but it was disappointing, nonetheless, most especially as I had tried from the outset to make clear I was seeking to discuss ideas, and nothing else. I will still try to do that, although I accept it is getting harder now it is clear that I am apparently her enemy and she will not make clear what might happen to me as a consequence when she wins her "class struggle".

That said, let me address what she has written on Substack.

In summary, in my opinion, the response:

- \* Is patronising (most especially to those in the working class who she clearly sees as cannon fodder in her class struggle, but who are not, in her opinion, worthy of being informed of, or educated about, what it is that they might be fighting whilst being denied the right to know about MMT, which could, as I explain in a video this morning, ensure all their needs are met).
- \* Is riddled with ad hominem attacks.
- \* Includes violent imagery, which compounds my concerns about my personal safety as a result of the threats I think implicit in what Grace has written.
- \* Fails to answer any of my quite genuine questions, including as to what my fate might be for being her chosen, supposedly capitalist, enemy in her class warfare if she were to win the "struggle".

- \* Is internally incoherent.

However, in a spirit of generosity (despite the venom aimed in my direction), let me note Grace (whose first name I will continue to use, since that is how I would greet her if we met again, even though she persistently refers to me as Murphy), saying this:

*Needless to say, I have never made any of these arguments [Murphy claims I support]. Those with a sophisticated understanding of MMT would find it easy to refute each any of these points - which is precisely why Richard chose them. As far as I'm concerned, MMT is an entirely internally-consistent theory - and one which largely describes the operation of fiscal and monetary policy correctly. My issue is that proponents of MMT have an utterly incoherent view of state power under capitalism.*

So, to let me summarise:

- \* Even though [her own first response](#) to the arguments I made on Friday ([here](#)), rather bizarrely, and I presume inadvertently, confirmed that all the arguments I had made were justified and were typical of those she and others use, she now says otherwise.
- \* She now claims a superior knowledge of MMT, presumably seeking to put me in my place. After all, what do I know?
- \* She confirms that MMT is right in all it says.
- \* But, she then says, those who promote MMT, despite it being correct, are necessarily seeking to maintain rentier capitalism and are, as a result, enemies of the working class, even if MMT is entirely correct.
- \* That is, apparently, because the state as it now is has been, in her opinion, irretrievably corrupted by capitalism, presumably requiring the overthrow of the state as we now have it through the class struggle she now promotes in workplaces, communities and on the streets, which I can only presume means that there is to be a direct confrontation with democracy in any form that we now recognise it, and it is this need that we do not understand - because I am genuinely confused as to what else it is that I do not comprehend.

Grace then summarises her argument by saying:

*Murphy is not a socialist. But you can still be a socialist and agree with many of the precepts of Modern Monetary Theory (I count myself among this group). A socialist, however, would realise that those precepts were secondary to the broader project of building power from below.*

*Socialists who sympathise with MMT have a strategic decision to make: do they spend decades trying to teach people how government spending really works, while much more powerful forces preach the common sense argument that the government is like a*

*household, and can only spend as much as it earns? Or do they spend their limited time and resources supporting people to win the battles that they are already fighting in their communities, in their workplaces, and on the streets - and advance a policy agenda that supports them in these struggles? Less 'learn MMT'; more 'freeze the rent', 'strengthen workers rights', and 'public ownership now'.*

*I actually believe this question has a much broader relevance for the left. At issue is what kind of project the socialist movement really is. Is it a technocratic, paternalistic project, aimed at electing a new managerial class capable of administering capitalist institutions more effectively? Or is it a democratic, popular movement, aimed at supporting people to take back control over their lives? In my mind, it always has been, and always will be the latter. Which means socialists need to spend less time teaching, and much more time listening.*

I would argue that what I do here, and what I propose, is the exact opposite of a technocratic, paternalistic project. My aim is always to:

- \* Say what the problems we face are
- \* Explain why they exist
- \* Identify what power structures maintain them
- \* Suggest what solutions can be offered to achieve better outcomes
- \* Detail what those better outcomes might be
- \* Persuade people that change is, in fact, in their best interests.

Quite simply, I aim to provide people with agency, power and the right to decide for themselves.

In contrast, Grace:

- \* Does not believe people want to learn, or have things explained to them, as this comment posted on her Substack suggests:

*Push back against austerity arguments? Absolutely - I've been doing so my whole career!*

*Force people to sit down and listen to an economics class about monetary financing? I don't think so - few would listen, and many of those who did wouldn't understand. It's just not a solid foundation for a mass political movement.*

- \* Is treating working-class people with contempt as a result.
- \* Is paternalistic, by definition, as a consequence of that attitude.

- \* Is denying them agency as a result.
- \* And is recruiting people as cannon fodder for her campaign of "class struggle" without explaining what the alternatives are, why anyone should support her choice, or what they can expect from it, which is contemptuous, in my opinion.

The last thing I can see Grace Blackley doing is recognising people's agency.

There is much else I could say, but I will do so from now on without reference to Grace, her declaration that I am an enemy of working people with the threats implicit in that, and her obvious contempt for working people, all of which I think are profoundly unsavoury and suggest to me:

- \* She is no believer in democracy
- \* She is no friend of the working class, and
- \* She, along with others who share her views, is a profound threat to the electoral credibility and prospects of the Green Party if it provides her or them with a platform for their "class struggle," with everything that implies.

It's time to move on. Answers are needed, and Grace Blakeley has none, so I had better work on them instead.