

Tony Blair tribute band politics

Published: June 29, 2026, 6:12 am

As the [FT notes](#) this morning:

Andy Burnham, who is poised to become the next UK prime minister, is considering giving David Miliband a senior position.

A former foreign secretary, David has been absent from Westminster since 2013 when he left to head the International Rescue Committee in New York.

They added:

David is an old friend of both Burnham and James Purnell, the next Downing Street chief of staff, having all first been elected as MPs in 2001.

They did, of course, add that David Miliband was the Miliband brother who lost in the Miliband v Miliband race to be leader of the Labour Party in 2010, but fratricide is not my concern this morning; the revival of Blairism is. In that context, the revival of the power relationship between Burnham, Purnell and David Milliband is what matters.

All prodigies of Blair and Mandelson, they share a lot in common politically.

And Miliband is almost inevitably, yet another Oxford PPE graduate (as is Purnell), sharing the same right-wing perception of neoliberal market supremacy as do almost all those of that ilk.

What would David Miliband's return, almost certainly as a cabinet minister sitting in the House of Lords, represent in that case? It would represent the creation of a Tony Blair tribute act government.

Blairism, along with the Thatcherite thinking that it so obviously embraced, should have died with the 2008 Global Financial Crisis, to which it contributed much. It did not. The world in general, and this country in particular, has paid an enormous price for the perpetuation of this Friedman/Hayek-inspired form of political thinking that is anything but left-wing. It looks as if that cost is to continue. We will all pay the price, and we can

ill afford it.