

Our democracy is not representative, relevant or realis...

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I spent quite a lot of time yesterday wondering what it would take to really transform the current UK political agenda. The antics of those few politicians who appear to be still at work in the UK coloured my thinking.

Andy Burnham played to the far-right agenda [by making a video](#) above the White Cliffs of Dover in which he suggested that he will control the UK borders. In the process, he did two things. Firstly, he proved that, like all his many recent predecessors, he will make claims on this issue which he must know he cannot deliver upon. Secondly, he acknowledged that Nigel Farage is his major political opponent when, at the same time, in the eyes of the reasonable voter and rational political analyst, it would seem that Farage's star appeal is fading rapidly.

As Farage [himself appeared to admit yesterday](#), he was in discussion with Richard Tice and Reform about a return to frontline politics at the time that he received the donation of £5 million from an offshore-based cryptocurrency financier that he did not then declare to the parliamentary authorities, seemingly in violation of the rules laid down for anyone winning an election, who is then required to declare funding political received in the 12 months prior to becoming an MP.

Richard Tice then confirmed that he was also subject to a parliamentary standards complaint, which is now under investigation.

Farage sought to distract attention from these issues by launching a new immigration policy on behalf of Reform, which he entitled Operation Fortress: Stopping the Invasion. The claim made in the proposals is that the Royal Navy can intercept all boats seeking to cross the Channel and forcibly return those in them to France, in the process requiring that British troops enter French territorial waters and then land uninvited on French soil, which are acts not permitted under international or maritime law, although Farage claims otherwise. I suspect he just does not care. Publicity and distraction are his only goals: facts would appear to be of little value.

Meanwhile, politicians were ignoring the real threat to the UK, which comes from

climate change, failing crops, failing water supplies, food shortages, serious threats to animal welfare, the risk of financial crisis flowing from these issues as I discuss in this morning's video, and any number of other issues which will really impact the wellbeing of the people of this country.

The fiasco of modern British politics is, therefore, continuing, with the far right seeking to turn it into a pantomime in which anything but relevant issues are discussed, with the deliberate intention of undermining the value of democracy itself. Just to reinforce this impression, [a spat also developed](#) between Farage and Rupert Lowe of the Restore Party, whose main aim is to make Farage look like a moderate.

And it should be noted [that the Tories selected](#) a candidate to stand for office in local council elections in Somerset who has previously described himself as a "nationalist, fascist, theorist and supporter of white rights" and who has also been the publisher of an online site that some think has promoted far-right views.

The difficulty is that despite all this, Reform got 21% of the first-preference votes in the Greater Manchester mayoral election, with the Tories on 7% and Restore on 9%, giving these far-right parties more than a third of the electoral base in total. We could take comfort from that and think that this means they are not a threat, but, as we all know, in an electoral system as flawed as that used in UK parliamentary elections, 35% or more of the vote is more than enough to win seats, especially as it is now clear that people are becoming quite used to the idea of tactical voting.

The madness of our politics is, then, very real. People are being conned into thinking that migration is a threat when, in the grand scheme of the issues we face, it is anything but that. And whilst a great many people will accuse all politicians of having their noses in the trough, they somehow seem to think that Nigel Farage, who in this context has the biggest nose of all, is exempt from criticism on this issue.

To return to my opening question, then, what is it that will really transform our politics so that it achieves the three goals of being representative of majority opinion, relevant in terms of the discussions it promotes, and realistic as to the promises it makes, when at present it appears to achieve none of these goals?

At present, I have no answer to those questions. Labour is refusing to discuss proportional representation. Politicians are persistently gaslighting us, which is the theme of this morning's infographic, and as for the promotion of realistic promises, what we get instead are discussions of fiscal rules, balanced budgets and the denial of possibilities when they actually exist.

If there is one thing that we have to accept if we are to ultimately make progress, it is that our democracy is, at present, in a very poor place and that, so far, very few of our politicians appear to have the resolve, let alone the ability, to achieve those three goals of making it representative, relevant and realistic. Given the scale of the issues we

actually face, that is deeply worrying.