

Economic Responsibility with Social Justice

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Party conference coverage may give the impression that Punch and Judy have left the beach for the halls where delegates and representatives used to tell their leaders how to do better.

Nowadays the media handlers make the gatherings appear different, at least to outside watchers and listeners, if not to those in the hall. A theme is chosen; some taglines are repeated; then awkwardly, radio or television interviewers ask the difficult question again and again.

Most of us know that in government and in practice, each party aims for economic responsibility with social justice. The levelling up agenda has been intended to add to general prosperity by helping more regions to do better and for people left behind in other areas to have improved lives and opportunities to be happier, healthier and better off.

Do not be distracted by some issues. 'Six days' is the answer to this question: For how long during Labour's 13 years control of parliament from 1997 to 2010 was the highest rate of personal tax above 40 percent?

I am backing the bid by Worthing Borough Council for funds to help people in central parts of the town by improving and developing the mile between Worthing Station and the famous pier, now enlivened by the investment in the Perch restaurant at the southern end.

One of the youngest MPs to have been killed in action in WWII was Ronald Cartland. Before he was elected to Parliament in 1935, he had been in Germany with his novelist sister Barbara Cartland, seeing the Nazi treatment of Jews.

His first speech criticised the National Government: more should be done to help 'distressed areas' in extreme economic difficulties with their horrendous rates of unemployment. He gained his seat with the support of Neville Chamberlain; within a year he attacked him when Chancellor over lack of help for the poor and in August 1939 he attacked him as Prime Minister when it was proposed the House adjourn from August to October while Adolf Hitler was planning to invade another country.

Famously, sadly, Ronnie stood up to declare: 'We are in the situation that within a month we may be going to fight, and we may be going to die.' He was the first MP to die, defending the evacuation at Dunkirk. I am proud to have received a letter from a former constituent of his. She wrote that my speech to a group in Birmingham reminded her of his passion and his concerns.

One of Sir Keir Starmer's standing ovations from nearly all his audience came when he referred to dealing with anti-Semitism, an issue as important as fighting Islamophobia. His MP Rupa Huq was reported for saying something wrong about Kwasi Kwarteng. Her quick apology should be considered by the Chancellor and by those appointed to consider her case.

None of us can hang out a banner claiming we have got everything right. Once I gave the ministerial answer: 'I am sorry. I made a mistake.' after confusing the Union of Communication Workers with the Communication Workers' Union. Officials said I should have explained they had been at fault. I disagreed.

How can we restore growth within the next two years? Part of the answer was in the displays at Worthing's Leisure Centre last week where our local newspapers and business chambers gathered about 100 exhibitors for all the visitors. Mrs Henna Choudhury, the Mayor, cheerfully agreed to be photographed with Phil Duckett as he promoted the spirits of Worthing. She had a good welcome at each stand.

Every local business, including production, services or professional support, generates employment, provides training in association with our colleges, and contributes tax.

Let us work together for our shared economy and greater justice.