



Burnham's no King of the North he's the Menace from Manchester for the left

## Description

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Burnham

In these quite frankly desperate times for British progressivism, with Keir Starmer's deeply unpopular government crumbling under the weight of its own timid orthodoxy, many on the left are (still) casting about for a saviour. Enter Andy Burnham the apparent King of the North, Greater Manchester Mayor, and newly energised contender for the Labour leadership.

Polls show Burnham is outpacing Starmer among Labour members, which really shouldn't be too difficult. Burnham's folksy charm and occasional rhetorical flourishes about public control of essential utilities play rather well in working-class heartlands.

So let's be absolutely clear from the word go. Andy Burnham is no saviour of the left. He is its latest disappointment, dressed in a tracksuit and a warm regional accent.

Worse, his brand of soft-left managerialism poses a direct danger to the Green Party's growing necessary challenge to the broken two-party system.

## Burnham: the Menace from Manchester

Burnham's recent announcements about how he would like to do things make the case against him with devastating clarity.

He has explicitly committed to Rachel Reeves's fiscal rules the very straitjacket of neoliberal prudence that has choked public investment, locked in austerity-by-stealth, and prioritised City bond yields over basic human need.

In interviews and statements this week, his team [ruled out](#) any changes to borrowing limits, even as they floated selective exemptions only for defence spending.

Burnham isn't speaking the language of transformative left politics. It is the language of [continuity](#) with a Labour government that has already failed to deliver the scale of change Britain's [crumbling](#) public realm demands.

Burnham's fealty to Reeves's fiscal rules signals he will offer little more than rebranded Starmerism with some warm words about the North and some devolution crumbs thrown in for good measure

Burnham's [positioning](#) on immigration compounds the betrayal. Labour's current policy has alienated principled left-wing voters without winning over the disaffected. Why on earth would anyone want more of the same?

Burnham has acknowledged a minority of the public's concerns about immigration's pressures on wages, housing, and services. But that acknowledgment isn't some type of radical analysis because it echoes the triangulating [strategy](#) that has dragged Labour rightward for as long as I can remember.

A genuine left alternative would frame these [problems](#) as failures of under-investment and deregulation, not symptoms of too many foreigners.

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## No more false dawns

This all matters because the left cannot afford another false dawn.

Burnham's [career](#) is a masterclass in ideological elasticity. New Labour [loyalist](#) under Blair and Brown, a cabinet minister during the financial crisis and [Mid Staffs](#) scandals, reluctant Corbyn-era shadow minister, and now self-styled popular leftist champion.

He backed Remain, yet courts Brexit-voting constituencies with selective silence. He [speaks](#) of nationalising energy and water while [chaining](#) himself to fiscal rules that make genuine public investment a mirage.

This is not principled evolution but [chameleon](#) politics, designed for electability over ideology. We have seen this film before. It ends with [broken pledges](#) watered-down promises, internal [purges](#) of anything to the left of Luke Akehurst, and disillusioned voters drifting to apathy or the populist right.

But this is where Andy Burnham becomes actively dangerous to the Greens. The [Green Party](#) under increasingly bold leadership, is emerging as the clearest voice for systemic change.

The [Greens](#) are [winning](#) council seats, forcing debates on [proportional representation](#) and [appealing](#) to younger, urban, and progressive voters alienated by Labour's unforgivable betrayals on [Gaza](#) [welfare](#) [austerity](#) and [net zero](#) delivery.

Burnham's [appeal](#) directly undercuts this. By wrapping mild social-democratic gestures in northern authenticity, he siphons off energy, [media attention](#) and potential defectors who might otherwise

bolster the Greens.

For voters tempted by the Greens's [clarity](#) on things such as the climate crisis, anti-austerity economics, and migrant rights, Burnham will insist that Labour can be reformed from within.

History shows this rarely works.

The end result is a weakened [Green](#) challenge, a Labour Party pulled only marginally left, and the continued dominance of centrist gatekeepers.

## Green danger

The danger to the Greens is electoral and ideological. In by-elections and locals, Burnham-aligned Labour campaigns can weaponise his apparent [popularity](#) to portray the Greens as tree-hugging impractical purists or single-issue spoilers.

This type of framing kills the [bolder](#) that is needed for the bolder vision that the Greens [represent](#)

Does anyone really think the North and the Midlands are craving reheated centrism? I would suggest they are desperate for material change — secure jobs, a functional NHS and local authorities that actually deliver.

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These polls [indicating](#) Burnham's strength against Reform UK simply reflect anti-incumbent sentiment and personal brand, not a deep endorsement of his fiscal conservatism.

Andy Burnham is not the left's saviour. He is its sedative. His rise risks anaesthetising the very discontent that should fuel a [bolder](#) progressive surge.

Our hopes cannot be outsourced to yet another Labour Messiah who has already [pledged](#) fealty to the rules that have already failed us. We need more than recycled disappointment.

At least the Greens — for all their organisational challenges and occasional missteps — [offer](#) some type of path toward genuine alternatives. Burnham's project, for all its polish, leads back into the same old cul-de-sac.

*Featured image via the Canary*

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1. News

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