Published on *Adam Smith Institute* (http://www.adamsmith.org)

TNG with James Delingpole [1]

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The Spectator and Telegraph columnist James Delingpole gave a solid defence of classical liberalism at the ASI's The Next Generation event on Tuesday 4th May. He explained why it was so difficult to be a classical liberal - its firm roots in empiricism and the realities of human nature do not often arouse great enthusiasm. Its policies and positions must constantly be explained and justified, relying on the audience's commitment to reason and logic. A big ask.

To be on the left on the other hand is simple. Not only have they won the culture wars as Gramsci had hoped and advocated, but to take on an air of moral superiority is both thoughtless and effortless - it is the easiest thing in the world to be committed to reducing global warming, poverty and inequality. Actually acting on those commitments is something entirely different, and could be done to the detriment of all in a spurt of destructive moralising zeal.

Despite the numerous advantages of the left, classical liberalism is fundamentally 'sound' due to its basis in reality rather than wishful thinking. It will prevail so long as we keep on justifying our positions sensibly and with the use of reason. Delingpole's speech ended in a call to arms - it was for us to continue a fight with the odds stacked against us - whilst being a classical liberal may be difficult, we gain all the more from the tools of empiricism and realism at our disposal. In short: classical liberals are always right, and should remember it.

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