

The time for pandering to the libertarian right is over...

Published: January 13, 2026, 6:53 am

I have a habit of tackling right-wing libertarian extremists in the UK - who seem to have taken a dislike to me as a result. I can live with that.

And I make no apology for my attitude towards them. Their self-interested greed threatens the well being of vast numbers of people in this country, and most especially the young, the old, the sick, the disabled and those unable to work for any reason - including those that are no fault of their own. All of these people they would leave to the vagaries of the market - knowing full well they do not have the means to take part in the market and that they are as a result destined to abject poverty.

It's easy to assume that these people just populate the right wing blogosphere. But that, unfortunately, is not true. They also populate the Tory party. I hear Tory MPs like Mark Field promoting 15% flat taxes for the UK, based on Hong Kong with no VAT either.

And I hear the same sentiment echoed time and again by new entrants to parliament from the Tory right.

And I realise that these people are not there to promote society as we know it - but something very different indeed. They're seeking to overthrow that society we have enjoyed and replace it with a very explicit culture where the haves take all, and the rest are condemned to serve them without hope, chance of change or any effective means of sustaining anything other than what will be a quite basic living - and certainly much worse than that which many enjoy now. You can't remove the safety net from so many and deliver anything else.

I am glad that awareness of this is now growing - largely because the Tea Party and its associates have taken such a hold on the Republican party in the States and this same madness is becoming more explicit there as a result.

Paul Krugman has delivered listening attacks on Paul Ryan's budget proposals over the last few days - [all worth reading](#). As he makes clear - this is greed without economic

analysis.

Martin Wolf [has now joined in](#) - no doubt influenced by his weekend trip to the States. As he says in the FT:

What does the rise of libertarianism portend for the future of the US? This is not a question of interest to Americans alone. It matters almost as much to the rest of the world. A part of the answer came with the publication of a fiscal plan, entitled "[Path to Prosperity](#)", by Paul Ryan, Republican chairman of the house budget committee. The conclusion I draw is the opposite of its author's: a higher tax burden is coming. But that leads to another conclusion: much conflict lies ahead, with huge implications for politics, federal finance and the US ability to play its historic role.

In can't quote extensively, but note his conclusion:

The Ryan plan is a "reductio ad absurdum" — a disproof by taking a proposition to a logical conclusion. It would turn the government into a miserly provider of pensions and health insurance. These functions would absorb three-quarters of non-interest spending by 2050. Other functions, including even defence, would collapse. This is most unlikely to happen. Indeed, even if the government were astonishingly successful in curbing the growth of spending on health, the share of federal spending in GDP is almost certain to be above 20 per cent.

A long-term fiscal fight looms. The solution may even have to come out of a crisis. But Mr Ryan has given the president an opportunity, by defining what surely will not happen. Mr Obama must seize it.

Not just Mr Obama.

Mr Miliband and Mr Balls too - because this is not so far removed from right wing Tory thinking.

And even Orange Book Lib Dem thinking.

Yes, we're in for a fight. And the right have to lose. For the sake of the people of the UK, US and around the world this abusive philosophy based on greed and exploitation has to be shown for what it is - a blatant attempt to abuse.