

It has been the policy government throughout the neoliberal era to undermine all professions.

Professions necessarily reflect society. Admittedly, powerful parts of society, but society none the less. Neoliberalism loathes society. It loathes those who represent it. And it loathes collective expertise, because in the perverted logic of right wing libertarianism the necessary cooperation to build such expertise, and to defend it through the requirement that those who profess it must prove their competence is an attack on the right of the individual to do what they like, whether competent to do so or not and whether or not others would suffer from the absence of regulation.

I won't defend Labour's record in attacking professions: it was not good, but it was nothing like that of the Tories. Their hard core loathing for those professions that are at the forefront of public provision now knows no bounds. Doctors and nurses are being sacrificed to NHS privatisation. Those associated in any way with local authorities are having their ranks decimated, as are tax officials.

And now headteachers are fighting back. 99.6% of those at their conference today voted for strike action to defend their pension rights.

You can't say these people are militant.

You can't say they're natural trouble makers.

These people do one of the toughest jobs in the UK. And they don't get overpaid for it.

But the government still wants to destroy the relationship of trust with them. Deliberately. And provocatively. Even though they know that motivated headteachers are vital to the well being of children and therefore the education and economic prospects of this country.

So why do that? Because if trust is destroyed then the right believes that they get a perpetual hold in power when people retreat to greed and self interest motivated by fear as the protection mechanisms within society are destroyed. This, I suspect, is Osborne's plan.

But he should be warned: do that and extremism follows on.

But defeating professions has always been the pre-requisite of extremism of left or right.

Is that what the Tories want, because they're going the right way about it.

And it's time all democrats realise it, as Chris Huhne has, rather belatedly.

When headteachers vote to strike it's a metaphor for reasonable society saying they've had enough of the destructiveness of this government. Conflict will follow - and it's amazing that headteachers might lead it.