

## Osborne - tax benefits for the rich, no benefits at all...

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The sickness in our society could not be better illustrated by two contrasting headlines.  
[From the Mail:](#)

*George Osborne confirms intent to end 50p tax because it is 'uncompetitive'*

[From the FT:](#)

*Ministers plan removal of rioters' benefits*

There is no evidence that the 50p tax rate is uncompetitive: companies are coming to the UK, no one seems to be leaving - as I've pointed out, often.

More than that - without sufficient tax data as yet to decide what the yield from the tax is any decision is clearly premature. Which means that there is no economic basis whatsoever for abolishing this important tax rate.

But there is enormous symbolism to it: it says the rich matter, a lot. Especially to this government. Even though the evidence is that it is many of the rich - and the businesses that have made them rich - that are the cause of a considerable part of our economic malaise. Banking, the promotion of excess consumption, the privatisation of social services: all these things are breaking down essential trust in society and making a tiny number very rich indeed - and Osborne wants to reward them for the harm they do.

I have no problem with those who have committed criminal acts being punished. But the other headline makes clear that those who looted - who believed what they are told that they are what they consume, even when they're being denied any chance to take part in that currently (and wrongly) accepted definition of society - have no worth. In fact, what dignity they had as human beings is now to be denied to them. They are condemned.

I have to say that a government that can create such headlines on the same day is corrupt at its very core. But they cannot see that, I'm sure.

I'd presumed that humanity had advanced beyond this pre-Dickensian view of right and wrong as rich = right = good and poor = wrong = bad. I'd thought that One Nation Tories' legacy was strong enough to ensure we'd never have a party offering such views again.

But I was wrong.

And yes, I am depressed by them. Quite physically so. And I'm frightened of its consequences. Because all hard right agendas require the creation of 'an other' group to hate. The Tories seem intent on creating such a grouping - and have begun the process of separating them from society. The risk inherent in this is terrifyingly high. And what's really scary is I think they know that, and are doing it anyway.