

The descent into chaos

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I am aware that some will think me inconsistent for singing the praises of Andrew Rawnsley in the Observer this morning. I have, after all, been quite critical of his writing on occasion. I offer no apology: I do not think the world is binary and Rawnsley has made a [highly pertinent observation](#) today when saying:

When [a] senior Tory confided his anxiety that public disorder could break out in the next 24 months, my first response was to think him hyperbolic. Then I considered it further. More and deeper spending cuts for as far as the eye can see. Accompanied by rising taxes. Plus another crunch on living standards. With the risk that an economic shock could turn an extremely challenging outlook into a really grisly one. I now think it not at all unreasonable to worry that there will be blood on the streets.

I have already made clear that I think an economic downturn is coming. The policies Corbyn borrowed from me in 2015 were designed for that eventuality: I said so at the time.

I have also made clear that I think May's premiership will end sooner and in more chaos than most now think possible.

And a persistent theme of this blog for some time has been the rise of neo-feudalism, which in many ways is the antithesis of populist politics but whose exponents think that populism may suit their purposes for the time being.

And Rawnsley is right that we face cuts, inflation, stagnating wages (partly as a result of foolish government policies like enforced pension enrolment designed to sustain stock market growth and an apprentice levy which is no such thing) and tax rises. Add massive diversion of government resources into a wasteful activity (Brexit) that cannot have a successful outcome, loss of key employees who are leaving the country in many critical areas in the economy, a growing NHS crisis in which the rising death toll will be unavoidable and repatriation of UK citizens from the EU where they will no longer be welcome whilst also not wanting to be here and a melting pot is the least we can expect.

What we also have to remember is that in the middle of all that there is no effective opposition in the UK. Labour wants to oppose. Many in it are sincere in their wish. But the party has lost its purpose right across the spectrum. Its right are indistinct and without a coherent or identifiable belief system anyone can adhere to. Its left proffer binary solutions for an era long past that rarely reflect the reality of the much more complex world we now live in. Despite that there are ideas out there. And parties too. But tribalism stops Labour joining with them to offer anything approaching a vision. This means Labour is now the impediment to democratic progress for any alternative to the bankruptcy of a Tory government given the crassness of our electoral system.

And so the descent into chaos begins.

There are ways out. But I fear if they must begin on the streets. That road usually leads to fascism. And let's not pretend that is not the great risk now. Because it is.

PS: still suffering from a lurgy: moderation may be slow