

What is it that can rid this country of toxic Tory indi...

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Over the last few days I have listened to more radio phone-ins than is normal, largely because I have been waiting to take part as a guest on the programme.

Leaving aside any debate about the ethics of taxation, the most striking feature of these programmes has been the commentary provided by those who are living in fear of being unable to pay their bills as energy, food and other costs increase. As has also been apparent, without state assistance there is no obvious way in which the nightmare that many of the people telling their stories can be resolved.

One person who spoke eloquently, but with fear and anxiety dripping from every word that she said, related her story to Nicky Campbell on Radio 5 on Friday. No one, including Campbell, interrupted a word she said because it was so powerful. In her 50s, I guess from the story that she told, and after 30 years of work she was now disabled and unable to work any more. What she did was lay out the plain straightforward case that given the already small budget on which she has to live, and an absence of savings, she has no idea how it might be possible that she can now pay the bills that will be arriving for energy, food, council tax, water and other basic costs over the months to come. She was frightened, and very obviously reasonably so. She added that as someone who had always voted Conservative to date, she could never do so again. The way in which she felt she had been treated had made her change her mind.

I did not note this woman's name. I just listened, totally believing her story (as it is clear Nicky Campbell did) and her utter inability to comprehend the situation in which she now found herself, where the government was choosing to leave her to her fate.

Whatever the concept of the safety net provided by government it was clear that in her case it had ceased to exist.

Of course, she is not alone. Across the country there will be literally millions of households facing this fear, and it is utterly disabling. Once your focus is, firstly, upon the immediate decisions that have to be taken to get through the day with too few financial resource to do so, and secondly, worrying about when or if this might ever end, there is virtually no opportunity left for a person to think about anything else in

their life. Horizons are crushed. The opportunity to care is denied. What is left is a pervasive, all consuming dread.

Yesterday a friend in the States asked me if over the last few days I had been pursuing a one-person campaign to get rid of Sunak. I said I had not been doing so. I have nothing against him as a person. But I am opposed to the callous, profoundly self-centred, indifference towards those in poverty that typifies both people like him and his party, which seeks to promote the politics of indifference to suffering that these people espouse. That is why, I admit, I want him gone. That, and the fact that the politics in question are delivered using what looks horribly like fascist propaganda techniques, that is.

I keep wondering how it is that we bred a population so indifferent led by politicians so willing to exploit that lack of care for political purposes. And then I remember that most of these politicians went to public school, enjoy enormous wealth, and were taught at Oxford, whose politics, philosophy and economics course would appear to be the epicentre of indifference training in the UK, and after that I wonder what it is that can rid this country of this toxic combination.

For the sake of all who are going to suffer at their hands we have to.