

Gordon Brown's answer to poverty in the UK is to appeal...

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Gordon Brown, the former Labour Prime Minister, [had an article in the Guardian newspaper yesterday](#) that plumbbed new depths for the Labour Party.

Brown acknowledged that the UK has a poverty crisis, with vast numbers of people having insufficient income to meet their needs. As he noted, one million children now live in what might properly be called destitution, because absolute poverty does not seem an adequate description.

Having wrung his hands over this, and inevitably seeking to blame the Tories, he claimed to have a plan to address the issue.

There were two parts to this plan. In the first, he suggested a tiny pruning of the amount of interest paid by the Bank of England to the UK's commercial banks each year on the deposits that they supposedly hold with our central bank. These sums actually represent the new money supply created by the Bank of England on behalf of the government during the 2008/09 financial crisis and 2020/21 Covid crisis, which the commercial banks did, as a result, do literally nothing to earn.

Approximately £40 billion will be paid in interest on these accounts this year. Brown suggested that between £1 billion and £3 billion of this sum might be redirected towards addressing extreme poverty in this country.

Having made this totally feeble gesture when the opportunity to do so much more with this wholly inappropriate enrichment of bankers was available to him, he then added his second suggestion. He did not, as any reasonable left-of-centre person might have expected, suggest that companies and people with higher levels of income might pay more tax to address the inequality that we now face as a country. Instead, he appealed to their charitable instincts and suggested that if only they donated a little more to food banks, the whole problem might be solved.

I have already suggested today that Labour's frank admission that it does not intend to do anything about the power of the private sector, or the inevitable fact that the private sector does not allocate rewards appropriately within society, is recognition on its part

of creeping fascism, about which it very obviously has no intention of doing anything.

Brown reinforces my opinion that Labour has altogether given up on challenging inequality, the power of the private sector, and the power of private, wealthy individuals within our society. Instead, it does now seem that it will tolerate any outcome that the market now dictates, however, undesirable that is for the people of the UK as a whole.

You could describe this as Labour giving up on its fundamental purpose, and you would be right to do so.

You could alternatively suggest that this is Labour tolerating the creep of fascism into our society, and again I think you would be right to do so, although I am sure that Labour itself would disagree. But, when it is doing nothing to stop that advance of fascism, what right have they got to do so?

As I have said before today, and will no doubt be saying many more times over the months and years to come, I have shown that none of this is necessary. The [Taxing Wealth Report](#) demonstrates that the money required to tackle the problem of poverty in the UK could be raised by simply reforming some of the existing taxes within this country. This would be easy, especially for a party in power possessed of a massive majority, which Labour is likely to have. Quite literally, nothing could stop them from reshaping the way in which rewards are shared within our society for the benefit of that society as a whole.

If Labour are not willing to do that with the power that they are likely to have then what are they for? Apart from enabling fascism, that is.