

# Will Labour tackle the injustice at the root of the far...

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Many will have watched pictures from Rotherham and elsewhere as racists rioted in pursuit of the neofascist goal of threatening the right of people to live in peace.

No supposed grievance can justify such abuse. No excuse can be offered for it. There is no human rights defence for what these people have done: behaviour of this sort can never qualify as protest. No one should, therefore, describe it as such, but the media is still doing so, too often. If evidence that we have a problem with the media in this country is required this is it.

What else needs to be said?

First, those breaking the law know there is no court or prison capacity to bring them to account. The Tories are to be thanked for that.

Second, Labour is only talking tough. It is refusing to call out the fact that all this behaviour is motivated by Islamophobic racism. I have a horrible nagging fear that they would not be so reticent if it was Jews and synagogues that were being attacked. The sense of hypocrisy, or the possibility that that Labour (like the Tories) has a deep-seated Islamophobia problem feels very real.

Third, talking tough is a distraction when the reality is that there are deep seated problems in communities across the UK. I find the trolls accusing me of being unaware of that fact deeply annoying when I have been drawing attention to these issues for years. I will do so again now. Decades of austerity, but most especially since 2010, have heightened tension, disquiet and alienation. I understand all that. What worries me is that there is no apparent sign that Labour do. If they really think that 'talking tough' will solve these tensions they are deeply mistaken.

Fourth, whilst tiny minorities are involved in these activities, those fuelling their anger are powerful. Years of anti-immigrant lies by the Mail and Express helped create the sentiments that have fuelled what has happened. Similarly, far-right politicians in the Tories and Reform have done the same thing. They need to be held accountable.

But, fifth, beyond these there must be ultra-far-right-groups who must be behind this. What are their goals? I think it safe to assume it is the destruction of the state as we know it. But when this appears to be an open objective of leading politicians in the US the likelihood that there are those of like mind here has to be high. The stakes are very high.

So what to conclude?

My suggestion is that until our politics changes these tensions will exist. Until our politicians acknowledge that neoliberalism has failed the conditions for these disturbances will continue.

There is gross inequality in the UK and until that is tackled the underlying stresses in our society will continue. My worry is that unless that fact is acknowledged and tackled nothing will change.

That change is possible. It can be financed. We could have a fairer, more quotable, richer society. But will Labour even try to deliver that? I wish I knew.