

# Labour's in a mess over 'working people', and rig...

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Labour keeps talking about working people and says everyone knows what they mean when they use the term. Except, most people don't, and the term makes no political sense in the way that they use it. It's another fine mess they've got themselves into, and it's all their own fault.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7p6ILmPX28Y&si=XElYXHL3ZJH-IXJX>

This is the audio file:

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And this is the transcript:

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Who are working people? This, it seems, is the big political question in the run up to this week's budget, and it does matter.

For years I was annoyed with the Tories when they talked about "hard working families", because they were trying to divide society between those who they called the strivers and those who they described as the shirkers.

The divide was completely absurd, largely because in the shirkers were, of course, all those who lived off investment income plus pensioners, because they were a certain

age, and children, and so on.

And now Labour is repeating the mistake. It talks about the fact that it is on the side of working people, and it isn't going to impose more tax on them. But who are working people? Labour clearly does not know.

And that, to me, is ridiculous because, let's be honest, the Labour Party has its origins, as its name implies, in the working class. The divide that it needed to talk about in the runup to the budget had nothing to do with working people though, because there are hordes of working people in this country who have incomes that should be taxed more. They are, quite simply, the wealthy.

The wealthy don't not work these days. This idea, implicit in what Labour has said, that somehow or other, we are still a society where the wealthy sit around in their great country piles and sit and watch the rest of the world working to keep them in the style to which they're accustomed, is wrong.

Very wealthy people work in the City of London above all else and they do undoubtedly knock in the hours. So, to pretend that there is a divide between working people and non-working people, which somehow delineates wealth, is absurd. Because that's not true.

Around 20 per cent of people who work for a living in the UK will also be earning a reasonable amount of investment income because the UK's wealth is split amongst those top 20 per cent of the UK population.

Admittedly, it's heavily concentrated amongst the top one or two per cent, but the rest will have some and maybe sufficient for them to notice the difference to their well-being as a result. So, to pretend that working people do not have investment income, which seems to be implicit in what Labour has said, is obviously wrong.

And to pretend that this divide is a real one around people who do work and don't work and who, therefore, need to be taxed more and who don't is clearly wrong.

But there's much more to it than that. The other really big problem with this claim that Labour is on the side of working people is that so many people can't work.

They can't work because they're children. They're at school.

They can't work because they're elderly. They're pensioners.

They can't work because they're students.

They can't work because they are sick or have a disability that prevents them from doing so.

They can't work because there is no work in the area where they live for them to do, and they don't have the necessary qualifications for whatever jobs might be available.

To therefore pretend that there is a split between working and non-working people is not just stupid, and I use that term advisedly, it's also dangerous, because it creates an artificial divide, and that artificial divide is also in itself quite ridiculous for a party like Labour to adopt.

And that's because what they're trying to do, of course, is create an "us" and a "them", when actually members of all our families will be on both sides of that divide. And they're trying to create a divide which does not make sense in the case of many working families because - and I take myself as an example here - for 40 years I have employed people. I've been self-employed since I was 26. I still have an employee. He's sitting the other side of the camera at the moment that I am recording this. Does that make me a non-working person in Labour's definition? They aren't able to answer that question. Which is crazy - beyond imagination - but worse still, what they're trying to do is basically define people as economic units.

And this is what really offends me about this. Because we know that's how they think about us, because that's how they talk about people when they come to healthcare.

They don't talk about wanting to make people better because they are better as a result and, therefore, can enjoy life more. No, they talk about wanting to make people better because they want to get them back to work.

All that we apparently matter for is our ability to work as far as Labour is concerned. If we can be put to work, we're useful and if we can't - well blow us.

Now, that is just ethically, morally, and however you wish to look at it wrong. People are of value in their own right. When a political party doesn't recognise that fact it has lost its own basis for credibility.

Yes, Labour might have come out of the working class, and it might have come out of the whole tradition of Methodism and what goes with that, and it might have come out of the trade union movement, and it might have come out of a class war defined in the 19th century as between workers and capital. But in the 21st century, the world is more complicated than that. There needs to be more nuance than that. And to pretend that this economic divide is what splits society in a way that means Labour is either interested or not interested in people as a consequence of whether they work or not without actually even being able to define who is working is just absolutely bonkers.

I'm trying to find a more polite word that I can use, given the constraints of YouTube, and I can't think of a better one. This is crazy, bonkers, mad, stupid, whichever way you wish to look at it. Labour has got this wrong. And no wonder they are, therefore, being slaughtered by the media on it.

They were arrogant enough to use this term without even thinking what it meant, or to imagine that somebody would challenge them on it. They thought that they could use it with impunity, because who on earth would challenge Labour on what a working person was? But there are too many ambiguities in the term in itself, and it divides people in ways that are so unreasonable, that Labour has made a trap for itself.

This is yet another giant crater into which Labour has fallen. The only black holes, in fact, in this economy are those that Labour has dug, into which it now seems to be descending. This is the foretaste of the budget to come. This is what Labour is. It is a disaster.

I'm really lacking confidence for this week.