

If Labour will not stop Farage, then it - and the count...

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Andrew Rawnsley has this line in his column in The Observer this morning:

"Reform is not great for Labour, but it is an existential threat to the Tories," remarks one Labour strategist, noting that [last week's YouGov poll](#) reported that one in five of Tory voters in 2024 said they would now back Reform.

This made me groan out loud when I read it. That's because substitute the word Brexit for Reform in that sentence, and that was what I was told by a senior Labour strategist in March 2016. Brexit, they said, was a 'blue on blue' issue that could only go well for Labour, I was assured. They were wrong. It has not gone well for Labour, or anyone else, come to that. The same will be true for Reform.

As Rawnsley added later in the piece:

If Labour is to beat back Reform, the job won't be done simply by coming up with some sharper attack lines. Mr Farage is thriving now, just as he did in the years running up to the Brexit referendum, because he is tapping into high levels of voter discontent about the quality of their lives in a country with a stagnant economy and dilapidated public services. Immigration is one of the factors, but so is the cost of living and the condition of the health service. Sorting that is critical to seeing him off. It is not enough to say that Reform has bad ideas. Labour must demonstrate that it can deliver good results.

That is correct. It is hard to argue with any of it.

But, as I have noted in this morning's video, Labour is basing its whole economic policy on what are quite literally fantastic ideas - in the sense that they are works of fantasy that are very unlikely to yield results.

The required delivery, which is bums on seats in front of doctors, pounds in the pockets of people in need rather than those who would exploit them, and secure housing for those who live in fear of having to perpetually move on, are nowhere near Labour's headline agenda. We have to presume they are not on the agenda at all in that case, driven off by the obsession with book balancing, which is destroying Labour as surely as

it destroyed the Tories.

Labour could deliver, but it has to abandon Reeves and all she says she stands for to do so.

Labour could deliver, but to do so, it would have to deliver from the left, and Morgan McSweeney apparently hates that, in which case, so does Starmer.

Labour could get out of the mess it is in by becoming a Labour Party, but those who knew how to deliver on that idea have all been expelled from it.

So, the door is open for Farage and something very much worse. Labour could prevent that. The Tories can't. But Labour has no desire to take the necessary steps to deliver what this country wants and needs - any more than Farage would if he were to get into office.

If Labour will not stop Farage then it - and the country - are consigned to history for the rest of my life. Of course, I am angry with Labour about that, and I have every reason to be so. Choosing to fail in the face of a far-right threat is not what politicians of any party should do. Those pretending to be on the left who facilitate the far-right are hard to forgive. And that is where Labour is heading. It really is last chance saloon time for it.