

Why is some criminal damage with red paint acceptable w...

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This red cross appeared on a mini-roundabout near my home yesterday.



It wasn't the only such symbol to arrive. I noticed that other mini-roundabouts had been similarly adorned.

I also noticed that at least one had been partially obliterated by someone using grey paint. I cannot, in that case, be the only person who does not welcome what these symbols represent.

More than that, though, serious questions arise about what is going on here.

Firstly, this is criminal damage, which imposes a cost on communities. Why isn't this point being made in all reports on this issue? And why do those reports not all call for the prosecution of those involved? It has, after all, been proven to the satisfaction of the government that daubing red paint is now a terrorist offence carrying a penalty of 14 years in prison.

Secondly, at a time when writing words on a piece of cardboard is also apparently a terrorist offence, even though no actual harm is done to anyone, there appears to be a

campaign of mass propaganda in our social media to promote the idea that painting roundabouts and flying flags on lamp posts is, somehow, a valid way to express political comment when it is very clear that these are acts intended to intimidate.

In the immediate vicinity in which I live, there are quite a number of people who are not of British origin, either themselves or because their parents and grandparents were migrants to this country. If any of them feel relaxed about what is happening, I would be completely astonished. The actions of those painting these logos are meant to intimidate all of us in this situation, and as a matter of fact, I am sure that they do. As a consequence, painting these symbols is not just an act of criminal vandalism: it is also an act of harassment and intimidation at the very least, with, in my opinion, an implicit threat of violence contained within it.

Third, if it were otherwise, why is it that some of those taking part in these activities have, as the BBC have reported, worn balaclavas, or refused to talk to the media about their actions?

Finally, and fourth, why is it that there are so few arrests at the protests taking place outside hotels housing migrants, where such symbols are also used? We have draconian laws on protest in place now. They have been used to prosecute environmental campaigners for simply walking down the street, intimidating no one, and doing nothing more than mildly disturbing traffic for brief periods. In contrast, protesters outside hotels where migrants are being housed are not being arrested. This is despite the fact that, according to the law on criminal protest that now exists, their actions appear to be illegal. What is more, they also seem to have the deliberate intention of causing nuisance to a particular community, with an act of aggression implicit within it. This would also appear to be illegal.

Despite this, it seems that actions are not being taken to prevent such protests. The contrast in policing is quite extraordinary and has to be noted. It is as if we now have laws on protest that only apply to those seeking a more sustainable, peaceful, and harmonious way of life, while those seeking to disrupt it are beyond the law. How and why is that?

This issue is unlikely to go away, I suspect. If so, our politicians need to get their heads around it pretty quickly because, unless they want us all to live in societies where division is normalised, action is required very quickly.

Taking further action

If you want to write a letter to your MP on the issues raised in this blog post, there is a ChatGPT prompt to assist you in doing so, with full instructions, [here](#).

**One word of warning, though: please ensure you have the correct MP.
ChatGPT can get it wrong.**

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