

Are the far-right promoting violence?

Published: January 13, 2026, 4:51 am

John Harris [said this in the Guardian](#) this morning:

A decade after Trump opened his first term with that apocalyptic speech about “[American carnage](#)”, British voices along a rightwing continuum have followed suit. [Robinson tells his followers](#) that “a massive civil war is going to happen in Britain”.

The shadow justice secretary, Robert Jenrick, says the UK is “[like a tinderbox](#)”. Reform UK’s Nigel Farage – who has 1.3 million TikTok followers, [more than all other MPs](#) combined – constantly talks about social collapse: when I went to Reform’s recent conference, it was not hard to find people who endorsed his claims that Britain is on the brink of “[major civil disorder](#)”.

As proved by the fact that the summer failed to explode into the riots that some politicians and media voices predicted, the real world shows this is so much hyperbolic rubbish, but Farage contests any such suggestion with a nod and a wink to his supporters. “I don’t think anybody in London even understands how close we are to civil disobedience on a vast scale in this country,” [he says](#), a claim that comes with an implied instruction: “Have a look at your phone. See?”

After a torrid few days, including the biggest far-right march in the UK ever (apparently), which [Diane Abbott has called openly racist](#) in every element, we have to understand the backdrop that the likes of Farage are seeking to create.

They are not suggesting that we might have a spontaneous breakdown in order. What they are doing is the promotion of civil disorder as the precursor to violent change in the UK.

Just think about Musk's messaging on Saturday, playing to and fuelling the far-right demand for change. He said this parliament must be dissolved and a new one elected. He, and all who heard him, know that is not going to happen, of course. But that was not his intention. He intended to set up a demand for the impossible to happen as a provocation for the violent overthrow of this government if it does not happen.

And the theme is violence.

The flag has been chosen.

The calls are being made - including one for the assassination of Keir Starmer that was filmed on Saturday - and the lines are being drawn.

And in all this, the only thing Starmer can say is that he will defend the flag, which is meaningless.

He not only has to defeat the despair which does exist in this country by abandoning fiscal rules, austerity, the pandering to markets and the failed politics of neoliberalism, [as I explained yesterday](#) - effectively reviving the spirit of William Beveridge's World War II report on reviving a country that had hit a pre-war low in opportunities - but he too also make clear he will defend:

- * All migrants, whenever they arrived
- * All people from ethnic minorities
- * People of all faiths, and none
- * People, whatever their sexual orientation
- * People with disabilities
- * Women
- * People, whatever their political beliefs

You cannot build a country free from fear without doing so.

Farage is building fear, as are those even further to the right.

Starmer has to do otherwise.

We need a new economy based on new economic thinking, for sure. Nothing less will do.

But we need something more than that. We must have a commitment to people so that they have the right to live as who they are. Nothing less will do.

Now will Starmer deliver, or will he, with Trump here this week, give in to the demands he will make that diversity, equality and inclusion in the UK be destroyed? That is the question.