

Our government is not defending us

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As The [Guardian reports](#) this morning:

Prominent women including cultural figures, politicians and campaigners have signed a letter criticising rightwing attempts to link sexual violence in Britain to asylum seekers.

Signatories include the musicians Paloma Faith, [Charlotte Church](#) and Anoushka Shankar as well as Labour, Green and independent MPs including Kim Johnson, Ellie Chowns, Diane Abbott and Zarah Sultana.

“We reject the far right’s racist lies about ‘protecting’ women and girls. They are not defenders of women – they exploit violence against women to fuel hate and division,” the letter says.

The open letter, titled Women Against the Far Right, follows a surge in protests outside accommodation housing asylum seekers and far-right attempts to exploit a number of cases of alleged sexual crimes involving asylum seekers.

They are right to protest, of course. The claims made by right-wing protestors have no basis in fact. That is not to say people do not have a right to be angry about the failings of the neoliberal state, but to claim that because people are migrants, they are a disproportionate threat to women and girls is wrong; there is no evidence for that.

At the same time, [I note the FT reporting](#):

A leading organisation of genocide experts has passed a resolution declaring that Israel’s conduct during its almost two-year war in Gaza meets the legal definition of genocide.

The move by the International Association of Genocide Scholars adds to the growing number of legal experts warning that Israel has committed war crimes in its conflict against Hamas in the besieged Palestinian territory.

Unsurprisingly, I again share the view of these scholars. They, too, are right to protest.

What they have to say is very obviously correct. There is genocide going on in Gaza.

So, why link these two pieces? That is because we have now reached the point where we are dependent upon academics, public intellectuals, politicians on the fringe of the mainstream, and others to point out what our mainstream political parties will not say - because they are too frightened, intimidated, cowardly, and politically inept - to address the defining issue of this moment, which is the threat from fascism that has to be called out. That is the action they are refusing to undertake.

I admit, I can understand why the Tories are not calling out fascism. They embrace it. All that Kemi Badenoch is seeking to do is claim credit for the move to the far right that is going on inside our politics.

Labour has no such excuse. Firstly, it is the government, and so it is tasked with our defence—including the threat from extremism—which is what we are seeing on our streets, in our media, and in our political future. It is failing to do that. As a government, few failings can be ranked higher than this: it is consciously ignoring the greatest existential threat to the UK state since World War II, and is desperately hoping that we will not notice.

Secondly, the Labour Party, as I always understood it, should have had no hesitation or difficulty in opposing those ideas that fascists are now succeeding with. Instead, it is cowering behind the Union Jack and the cross of St George—as if these will provide some form of totemic resistance against the forces of evil that are so obviously threatening this country. Keir Starmer actually said in a BBC interview yesterday that he and his family have a cross of St George in their flat in Downing Street. As the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, what does he think he is doing?

Thirdly, if there was anyone capable of forming an argument in Labour, they very obviously either quit or were handed a P45 some time ago. We are now dependent on others picking up the political cause of fighting fascism in this country, as Labour is clearly incapable of doing so—all those with sufficient fire to resist having long departed the scene, culled by Starmer in his ruthless quest for power, which has, in so many ways, created the opportunity for Farage to flourish.

The moves by the two groups do, then, encourage me. They say there are still people of courage, intellectual credibility, and conviction who will fight for what is right, even if our government has given up doing so, having already agreed to concede the 2029 election. We will need everyone we can with those qualities if we are to preserve what is of value in this country, as the basis for what could be even better still. That is a promise fascism can never provide.