

Reform wants to release a racist wrecking ball on the U...

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The former Tory, and now Reform far-right MP, Robert Jenrick, has set out in the [Daily Telegraph](#) his ideas on tax reform, for which programme he is now responsible on the Reform bench, such as it is.

His proposal is that the UK tax system should become explicitly racist by design. I suppose we should no longer be surprised by this, but I still am, and my shock that people would wish to use the UK state to prejudice people's well-being remains quite profound.

Jenrick's proposal is dressed up as a reform of National Insurance, but in substance it is a blatant tax on employing migrant labour.

The idea appears to be straightforward. Firms employing UK citizens would receive a National Insurance tax advantage by way of reduced bills. In contrast, firms employing migrant workers would pay more. The lower the migrant worker's pay, the greater the relative penalty. The result is intended to make migrant labour significantly more expensive than domestic labour, with the adjustment being very deliberately regressive so that those on the lowest pay suffer most.

The consequences are worth considering.

Firstly, this is a subsidy for employing British workers funded by a tax on employing migrants. Reform is trying to change employer behaviour through the tax system, making it more attractive to recruit UK citizens and less attractive to recruit people from overseas. This policy is blatantly racist

Secondly, the policy is deliberately aimed at sectors that rely heavily on lower-paid migrant labour. Hospitality, agriculture, food processing, social care and similar sectors would face the greatest increase in costs. The viability of a great many companies in this sector would be in doubt. If the NHS were subject to this charge, massive cuts in its services would be required if its budget were not increased to cover the cost.

By contrast, banks, universities, technology companies and multinational businesses

recruiting highly paid overseas staff would be relatively unaffected. This, then, is a policy that is not only racist but also elitist.

Thirdly, the policy assumes that unemployed UK citizens can readily replace migrant workers. That is a very large assumption. Many employers argue that vacancies already exist because suitably skilled or willing domestic labour is not available in the places and occupations where demand exists.

Believing that UK workers are suddenly going to become keen to take on the work with antisocial hours, or challenging roles, that many migrant workers now undertake in the UK economy as a consequence of this tax change, is an exercise in fantastic thinking, in the sense that it does not reflect reality, and that it is not going to happen.

Fourthly, Reform is explicitly seeking to force economic adjustment. The argument is that if employers cannot access migrant labour, they will invest in training, automation and productivity improvements instead. Whether this happens in practice is another matter. Some firms might invest, but others might simply shrink, relocate or close.

And if anyone can tell me what these adjustments might be in social care, I am keen to know. Does Jenrick know someone who has created a bottom-wiping machine?

Come to that, is the coffee shop experience now to become, make your own out of a machine? My suspicion is Jenrick has no clue what he is talking about.

Fifthly, the policy would almost certainly increase labour costs in some sectors. Since labour costs are a major component of prices, at least some of those costs would be passed on to consumers. Food, care services and hospitality are obvious candidates. This policy is profoundly inflationary, especially for those on the lowest pay.

Sixthly, the proposal is intended to reduce migration not only by limiting new arrivals but also by encouraging existing migrants to leave. Jenrick openly suggests that millions of migrants might be forced out of work by this proposal, and without an entitlement to benefits, would have no choice but to leave the UK. It is quite clear that this policy of hate and deliberate abuse is Jenrick's motivation for this plan. But it would imply a substantial reduction in the UK labour force, with consequences for economic activity, tax revenues, consumer demand and public services, many of which might simply no longer be deliverable, with the poorest in the remaining UK community being those most likely to suffer as a result, and they are the people most likely to vote for Reform at present.

Seventhly, there is a contradiction at the heart of the proposal. Reform argues that migration has not generated significant economic benefits. At the same time, it believes removing migrant labour will force productivity growth. If migrant labour is genuinely economically unimportant, the gains from replacing it are likely to be limited. If, however, migrant labour is economically significant, then removing it carries substantial

economic risks. Jenrick seems not to have noticed this.

The reality is that this proposal is about using tax as an instrument to effect social change, which I recognise as possible and, when used appropriately, desirable. But this is tax being used to deliver a racist migration policy. In the process, it is also an attempt to reshape the labour market using the tax system.

The consequences would be profound.

Farming would probably cease in the UK.

So would UK food production.

The hospitality industry would fail in very large part.

The social care sector would collapse.

The NHS would, if this charge were imposed on it, fail, forcing people to take private medical cover or go without.

The ramifications would be enormous.

And would there be funds in that case for businesses to invest, or even businesses left to employ those whom Jenrick wants to supply with jobs? I doubt it.

Jenrick wants to release a racist wrecking ball on the UK economy, and it will create mayhem, havoc, and massive distress. And the Telegraph welcomes the prospect of all that with glee.