

Let's not escalate hate

Published: July 15, 2026, 6:46 am

The Guardian [has a headline this morning](#), which reads as follows:

Ann Widdecombe killing: police investigating possible leftwing motivation

Detectives examining whether hatred of Widdecombe's strong views or of Reform party were factors in killing described as a 'targeted attack'

I admit to being worried about this. I have no idea why Ann Widdecombe was killed. I am truly sorry that she was. I am very worried that, at this moment, so much speculation about her death is going to prejudice the chance of anyone having a fair trial if they are accused of the crime. But, added to that, is my concern that her death is being weaponised.

The reality is that we do not, at present, know why anyone chose to kill Ann Widdecombe. It is an act beyond the comprehension of most people, and rightly so. We respect human life, whoever possesses it, and in a democracy we should respect the right to disagree. I disagreed with almost everything that Ann Widdecombe stood for. But I absolutely stand for her right to hold her opinion.

It is not a left-wing view to think that she should have died for her opinion. Such a claim is wrong. It makes no sense at all. There is no overlap between holding left-wing views and wanting to murder politicians. I would add that I do not think that there is any link between right-wing politics as we have known it in this country and a desire to murder a politician.

The desire to murder is not political, is what I am saying. It is instead based on hate. That is something quite different, but saying so I entirely accept that hate has been politicised in the UK, and elsewhere, because that is what fascists do.

Fascism deliberately creates a culture of hate. It picks on someone, a group, a characteristic, or an identity that differentiates some in society from what is believed to be “normal” and uses that as the basis for grievance. This is its weapon. There is nothing positive about this. The whole basis of this politics is negativity. It is not solution-focused. Its aim is to secure power. The desire is to perpetuate elite control, which it pursues by exploiting the grievance it promotes. But the consequence, and we have seen it, is hate.

Those who have promoted hate cannot now be allowed to walk away from its consequences. Nor can they be allowed to exploit those consequences to further their own goal. That is the risk that we face by having the murder of Ann Widdecombe framed as a left-wing attack. It was not. If it was anything, it was an act of hate.

But, I reiterate, acts of hate are not about politics as such; they are about deliberately generated hostility, provocation, manipulation and abuse. That is why the promotion of hate as a political weapon should be condemned, unreservedly, whoever uses it. The approach has consequences. None of them is good. And the worst thing about it is that hate can feed on itself, with consequences that spiral out of control.

In this situation, the police and journalists might be wise to reserve judgement until a trial, at the very least. Even then, the trial should be on the facts, and not on politics, because a murder should never be considered a political act within the context in which we should use the term. It is always an act of violence. It is always to be condemned, and politics should be neither.