

Hope not hate: A battle for the middle ground: My response to the UK riots

By Wayne Visser

Image from Reuters

Usually, I like to use this blog to share positive, creative and inspiring words, be they prose or poetry. But I feel that there are also times when we need to add our voice of solidarity and stand up for what we believe in. When injustice or discrimination rears its head, we must be prepared to name it and shame it. This is my small attempt.

The UK, like so many countries today, is having to confront its ugly racist shadow-self. Many are left feeling angry, frightened or confused - with good reason. Many feel powerless, hopeless, or despairing for the future. At times like this, we all need to speak up. So, here is what I think:

1. We must call this out for what it is: criminal thuggery, fuelled by far-right, divisive politics, rooted in racism and misguided nationalism, stoked by ultra-conservative media and weaponised by social media platforms like X and figures like Tommy Robinson and Elon Musk*.
2. We need to stand with all those affected: disrupted communities, targeted small businesses, individuals from minority groups, be they ethnic or religious. These rioters are a tiny disaffected, opportunistic minority. They don't represent the vast majority of decent people in the UK and beyond.
3. We need to recommit to the politics of the centre; to counter extremist views on the far right or the far left. We need to listen to those who feel left out or left behind by socio-economic changes, and try to address their fears. And we must keep social justice issues front and centre in our sustainability work.

* Postscript on Elon Musk. For many years, I saw Musk as an inspiring leader; even a sustainability pioneer (indeed, I am an early adopter of Tesla). But his true colours as a right-wing, conspiracy-loving, division-sowing, billionaire-bully have been exposed. We must look elsewhere for regenerative leadership.

Fear not, next post will revert to happier subjects.

Source:

First published on Purpose Inspired, August 7, 2024. Available at:
<https://purposeinspired.substack.com/p/hope-not-hate-a-battle-for-the-middle>