

Fascists riot in Southport, England, seizing on tragic stabbing deaths of three children

Robert Stevens
31 July 2024

Hundreds of fascists seized on the tragic deaths of three children in Southport, England, laying siege to the town on Tuesday night in an anti-immigrant riot.

The riots followed horrific multiple stabbings on Monday morning at a children's Taylor Swift-themed dance workshop at a dance school on Hart Street. Two girls, aged 6 and 7, died at the scene, and 11 people, including nine children, were treated by the North West Ambulance Service. A third girl, aged 9, died in hospital on Tuesday from her injuries. Five children and two adults are in a critical condition.

The circumstances surrounding the attack, including the motive of the arrested suspect, remain unexplained. But far-right groups spread fake news alleging the attack was carried out by a young Muslim.

On Tuesday evening, shortly after local residents had gathered for a peaceful vigil at Lord Street for the three girls killed, far-right thugs gathered and attacked the Southport Mosque and Islamic Centre—located about a mile away. When riot police turned up, the fascists attacked them injuring more than 50. Front garden walls were dismantled by rioters to create missiles hurled at police, alongside wheelie bins, several of which were set on fire.

North West Ambulance Service said its staff treated 39 police officers, with 27 taken to hospital.

The fascist rioters surrounded the mosque, throwing bricks and other missiles at it, with half a dozen terrified worshippers still inside. A section of the mosque perimeter wall was destroyed. It was not set on fire, but the mob lit several fires nearby, and set a police van ablaze, while damaging other vehicles. Those inside the mosque had to await a police escort before they could leave the building.

The fascists also looted a corner shop run by immigrants after smashing its windows.

The attack in Southport was organised by members of the fascist English Defence League (EDL) and other far right elements. The EDL was co-founded by Tommy Robinson, previously a member of the British National Party. He led the EDL until his resignation in 2013.

Norman Wallis, chief executive of Southport Pleasureland, was an eyewitness to Tuesday's riots, telling *Sky News* the attack was clearly an organised far-right mobilisation: "It was like a war scene. People from out of town just causing absolute mayhem... The people of Southport are the ones here today cleaning the mess up. Those people from out of town—they came in in buses and cars and had change of clothes. They just started to riot and do this."

Within minutes of Monday's attack at the dance school, far-right activists spread lies across social media, blaming asylum-seekers and circulating a false name of the arrested suspect. This was despite police stating the only suspect was a 17-year-old male in police custody from the village of Banks in Lancashire, born in Cardiff, Wales.

The suspect remains in police custody, with police on Wednesday requesting an extension from the 48-hours available for police questioning to a maximum of 96-hours allowable for serious crimes.

Labour boosts far-right poison

At 11 p.m. Tuesday—after the fascists had already left the scene—Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer posted a statement on X declaring: "Those who have hijacked the vigil for the victims with violence and thuggery have insulted the community as it grieves... [and] will

feel the full force of the law.”

But the fascist riots were met with kid glove treatment—a far cry from the brutal violence meted out to immigrants at Manchester Airport by police officers just over a week ago. Although 54 police officers suffered injury in the riot, with dozens requiring medical treatment and hospitalisation, only four arrests had been made according to a police update on Wednesday afternoon.

There is no precedent in living memory for police failing to make mass arrests in response to such a violent siege. This was despite a 24-hour Section 60 order, giving officers enhanced stop and search powers. A Section 34 dispersal order was also issued, allowing police to clear the area and seize any item, including vehicles, used to commit anti-social behaviour.

Just hours before Tuesday’s riots, during which thugs chanted “We want our country back”, “no more boats,” “no surrender”, and “Stop the boats! Send them back!”, Reform UK leader Nigel Farage intervened to stir-up anti-immigrant hysteria, posting onto X, “Police say it was a non-terror incident ... I just wonder whether the truth is being withheld from us?”, while suggesting the suspect was being monitored by the security services. He concluded “something is going horribly wrong in our once beautiful country” The riot came just three days after Robinson held a rally of up to 30,000 far-right supporters in London.

Fascists like Farage and Robinson translate the nationalist and militarist filth of the main capitalist parties—the ruling Labour party and opposition Conservatives—into their own grunts and barks.

Chief responsibility for this week’s far-right mobilisations rests above all with the Labour Party. The Starmer Labour government’s authoritarian “country first, party second” manifesto, with its pledge to “secure the borders” through mass deportations of asylum seekers, is giving the far-right its head.

Within 48 hours of taking office, Labour had set up its Gestapo-like “Border Security Command” and “Returns and Enforcement Unit” to deport refugees. Home Secretary Yvette Cooper trumpeted a “summer blitz of illegal immigration raids” involving over 1,000 “Immigrant Enforcement” officials, boasting of her plans to the right-wing *Sun* newspaper.

And just one day before the Southport riot, Chancellor Rachel Reeves bragged that Labour will

repeal the Tories “Illegal Migration Act”, which she denounced as insufficiently tough, saving up to £800 million. She declared an end to asylum seekers being housed temporarily in hotel accommodation. Her statement was a pitch to the vile campaigns waged by fascists such as Robinson, who have portrayed asylum-seekers as living in the lap of luxury at the expense of “the British people”, blaming immigrants for the social nightmare caused by capitalism.



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact