

The Critical Mass
Sunday Socialist

July 24th 2022

TIME FOR CHANGE

IN A WEEK when the Tories ‘best’ were narrowed down to services cutting Rishi Sunak or tax cutting Liz Truss it became more and more obvious that our political system is failing.

We don’t need a Forde Inquiry to tell us that the faction fighting and racism in the Tory Party is bad for our country and bad for democracy.. But, Labour as ever ripping itself apart just before an election, finally published an Inquiry into the leaks that exposed the rottenness at its core.

At the same time, and mostly unreported, a number of workers were rewarded with well above average pay rises after strikes. Which goes to show that striking does pay off in the end.

The government, if it can still be called a government, is continuing to push through its repressive legislation regime and without any signs of contrition dismisses the suggestions of its own Sage group on Covid telling us that we must just “live with it”. This at a time when infections are at an all-time high and, as if ignoring that wasn’t enough, the World Health Organisation report that monkey pox has now been reported in 75 countries.

At a point when we are crying out for radical solutions and radical change what we are faced with is more of the same. More pollution, more poverty, more destitution.

We will hear for the next 2 years a refrain of “if you don’t vote Labour you are enabling the Tories” from the very people who undermined the Jeremy Corbyn project and delivered this awful government.

Don’t believe it. We need change but not just a change of government. A change of system.



Photo by Roger Bradshaw on Unsplash

inside this issue

FORDE REPORT SPECIAL



FORDE: ANY COLOUR YOU LIKE SO LONG AS IT'S WHITEWASH

BACKGROUND

- The report, chaired by Martin Forde QC, was set up following the leaked memo entitled “the work of the Labour Party’s Governance and Legal Unit in relation to antisemitism, 2014-2019”.
- Leaked WhatsApp messages showed that full time officials of the party were working against the Corbyn leadership from day one.
- They showed a culture of bullying and intimidation.
- An inquiry was set up in 2020 which was delayed.

MAIN FINDINGS

- “evidence of factionalism, so deep rooted that the Party has found itself dysfunctional” p.5
- “a real antipathy towards LOTO by Labour HQ staff after Jeremy Corbyn won the party leadership” p.6
- “antisemitism... treated as a factional weapon” p.7
- “a disciplinary process not fit for purpose” p.7
- “There is nothing .. to support the conclusion that ..antisemitism in the Party was overstated.” p.21

PRESS REPORTING

- “Anti-semitism issue used as ‘factional weapon’ in Labour, report finds” was the headline in both The Guardian and on the BBC website
- “‘No way back for Corbyn’ as Labour finally publishes damning report into antisemitism.” Jewish Chronicle
- “Labour receives long-awaited report into antisemitism dossier leak”. The Independent

The press who had been the main weapon in the war against Jeremy Corbyn and who had amplified the messages being spread by the Labour establishment now see Forde as vindication of their position. The fact that Forde has failed to counter the false allegations about antisemitism and simply accepted the flawed EHRC report means that this report could not be anything other than yet another party whitewash.

LABOUR’S VIEW

“Keir Starmer is now in control and has made real progress in ridding the party of the destructive factionalism and unacceptable culture that did so much damage”

ANTISEMITISM CRISIS REVISITED

The Forde Report repeats the allegation that the EHRC report “thoroughly disproves any suggestion that antisemitism is not a problem in the Party, or that it is all a ‘smear’ or a ‘witch hunt’.

The EHRC Report was published in 2020 after pressure was applied by anti-Corbyn faction Jewish Labour Movement (JLM) and the Campaign Against Antisemitism (CAA). It is interesting to note that the EHRC report singularly failed to find the party “institutionally antisemitic”, although this did not prevent the CAA’s Chief Executive Gideon Falter from declaring “Under Jeremy Corbyn’s leadership, the Labour Party became institutionally antisemitic. It drove almost half of British Jews to consider leaving the Party.” Neither of these statements were empirically proven. But, they did not need to be. The British media, hostile to Corbyn in particular and the left in general, were quick to amplify these reports.

The EHRC report gives details of 220 cases of antisemitism but fails to say how many of those were proven. It cites evidence provided by the Jewish Labour Movement and conflates their view with those of Jewish Labour members.

It failed to establish any claim of antisemitism against Chris Williamson.

It provided no context for its conclusions nor any supporting statistics to back up its claim that Labour had a specific antisemitism problem any more than any other political party. Indeed, the only evidence available suggested that antisemitism amongst Labour members was less than amongst Tories. Yet, at no point has anybody accused the Conservative Party of institutional antisemitism.

CORBYN’S VIEW

The Forde Report casts an important light on events in the Labour Party in recent years. My election as leader in 2015 was a major shock in British politics. It wasn’t about me, but a popular demand for anti-austerity politics following the 2008 financial crisis and 35 years of market fundamentalism....

The appalling behaviour that Forde calls out, including the repulsive racism and sexism shown to Diane Abbott and others, should have no place in a progressive party. Toxic factionalism is far from over – nor are persistent problems of racism and sexism – and action must be taken, as Forde makes clear.

Most of all, the Party needs to decide what it is for and who decides that. Are we a democratic socialist party, run by members and affiliated unions, that aims for a fundamental transfer of wealth and power from the few to the many? Or are we something else?

OUR VIEW

A key finding of both the Forde and the EHRC report is that Corbyn’s office interfered in the disciplinary processes of the Party whilst he was Leader of the Opposition.

For the press, and it seems Forde, this is prima facie a case of wrongdoing by Corbyn. To be fair Forde notes it as part of the ‘factionalism’ that pervades the party.

Far from trying to protect his own supporters Corbyn and his office were desperate to speed up the disciplinary process in order to appease the media that, by this time, were in full smear mode.

This was a tactical error. Once the press knew that Corbyn was nervous about the allegations sticking it became a green light to intensify their attacks. Secondly, it left many life long members of the Party, and Corbyn supporters, vulnerable to arbitrary disciplinary attacks by the right-wing of the Party.

In the end, the establishment were determined that nobody with even a hint of socialism in their background was getting the keys to Number Ten. But that power fever which gripped Corbyn and his advisors meant that he was constantly being forced to concede ground. It also meant that the right were confident that they could force the left out of the party.

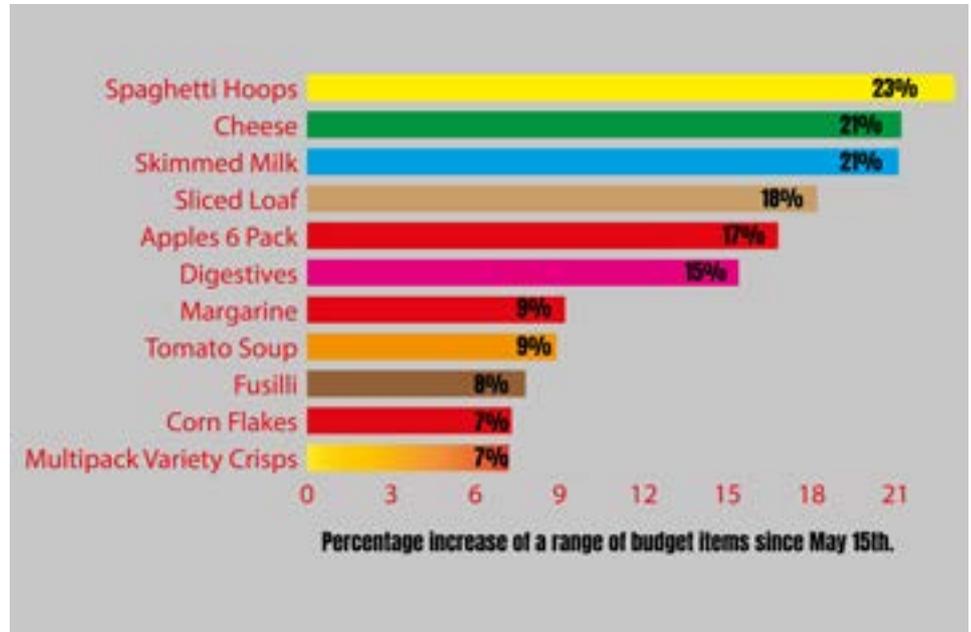
At one level this whole episode has been presented as if it was about Corbyn. But, the reality was and is that this was about whether there could ever be a left wing parliamentary opposition in the UK.

The answer to Corbyn’s question is that Labour is not, nor is it likely to become a democratic socialist party. And, it is certainly not a party that aims to do anything than maintain a capitalist system that is failing.

PRICES ARE RISING FASTER THAN INFLATION

PRICES are rising faster than inflation. This is not just our opinion, it is the evidence of ten weeks of monitoring 14 budget items.

Dairy products (including staples cheese and milk) have risen by 21% since May 15th. Bread is up a massive 19% and apples by 17%. Tea bags haven't risen at all, but if you fancy dunking a digestive then that will cost you 15% more than it did just two and a half months ago.



It's not just food. This week the Index of Private Housing Rental Prices compiled by the Office for National Statistics reported the highest monthly rise since they began keeping records in 2016. Rents have increased, on average, by over 13% since 2015.

Got a car? Then you will know that every trip to the pumps means spending more. That's not just an impression the RAC fuel monitor shows that a litre of unleaded was £1.01p in January 2016. By June 2022 it had risen to £1.85p. And, despite predictions that fuel will go down we would advise you not to hold your breath waiting.

What about cheap rail travel? Would you like to take advantage of a scheme where the government subsidises commuter travel by 100% to help with the cost of living crisis? Well, you will have to move to Spain, because nobody in the UK is suggesting following suit.

Our Basket	May 15th	Last week	This week
Cornflakes	0.55	0.59	0.59
Cheese	1.89	2.19	2.29
Bread	0.55	0.65	0.65
Milk	0.95	1.15	1.15
Pizza	0.99	0.99	0.99
Tomato soup	0.45	0.45	0.49
Tea bags	0.95	0.95	0.95
Margarine	1.09	1.19	1.19
Spaghetti hoops	0.13	0.16	0.16
Baked beans	0.22	0.22	0.22
Crisps	2.79	2.89	2.99
Digestives	0.39	0.45	0.45
Apples	0.99	1.39	1.39
Pasta	1.19	1.39	1.39
TOTAL	13.43	14.76	14.76

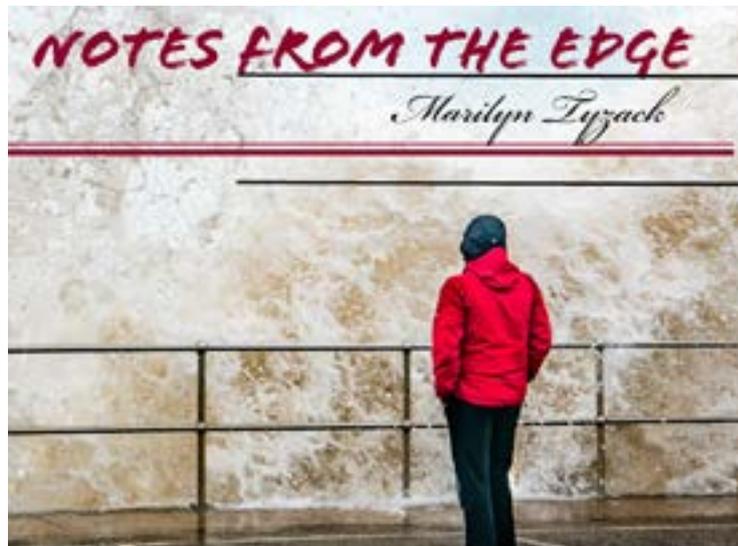
commuter travel by 100% to help with the cost of living crisis? Well, you will have to move to Spain, because nobody in the UK is suggesting following suit.

We all care about the pound in our pocket and how much it can buy. The fact is that week in, week out your pound is buying less and less.

Which means you either have to buy less, buy more cheaply or go without. Evidence suggests that the first two become implausible very quickly.

We know that more and more parents are going without food so that their children can eat. We know that food poverty and hunger is on the increase.

Surely now is the time to realise that the system is simply not working. It is time for a socialist solution. But, where is that to come from?



Riding the Waves of Culture Wars

We now have another barometer, besides the right wing press, to measure populism, and that is the Conservative election process. With two far right candidates left in the race, appealing to about 200,000 members, it makes for chilling reading and listening. They are addressing a group of people who are totally unrepresentative of British society.

This is supported by research from Queen Mary University of London conducted ahead of the 2019 leadership contest. It painted a grim picture of the demographics that make up the Tory members' list.

Tory members mainly white, male, elderly and reactionary.

They found around 71 per cent of members are male, and have an average age of 57. Some 54 % live in London or the southeast and, according to the peer-reviewed research, they believe in the death penalty, are against gay marriage and think that schools should teach children to obey authority. Some 44 per cent also agreed that censorship can help uphold moral standards.

It has always been a defining element of political party leadership contests that for success, candidates must appeal to the membership's niche interests. With Conservatives this was generally about low tax and, of course, this has been a continuing focus.

However, there has also been a need to

deflect attention away from the cost-of-living catastrophe, homelessness and our failing public services. What better way to do this than by building on the so-called culture wars issues?

Research by Kings College and Ipsos-MORI, part of a series of studies updating their 2020 research, says that many people's views on cultural issues have become tied up with the side of the Brexit debate with which they identify, while people's party-political identities, although not as strong, show similar alignments. This provides the "conditions for more all-encompassing division", as compromise across these divides becomes harder when cultural perspectives become a core part of how we see ourselves.

It is not surprising, then that the candidates are intent on fighting over Brexit or issues like trans rights - rather than the cost of living or inflation. And that's entirely intentional.

Liz Truss and her backers have tried to portray her as the true Brexit candidate, even though she voted Remain. Rishi Sunak has offered to make a bonfire of regulations.

The problem for all of us is that this is not just political game playing. Promises today could result in legislation tomorrow.

Summer of Solidarity

As Mick Lynch said, "These people would not hesitate to jump on a bit of jingoism and nationalism and anti-migrant feeling and ride those waves. What Starmer and the front bench must do is ride a solidarity wave and have a #SummerofSolidarity.



WHILE almost everybody in the UK has been complaining of the extreme heat, it would behove everybody to remember that race and climate inequality mean that people of colour are far more likely to be at risk from heatwaves than white people

Research by Friends of the Earth and the University of Manchester have found that one in three people from minority ethnic groups live in areas most exposed to extreme heat as opposed to just one in 12 white people. Separate research from the BBC has supported these findings.

Almost six million people live in at-risk neighbourhoods, with Black people disproportionately represented. The top five local authorities with the most at-risk neighbourhoods are Birmingham, Newham, Tower Hamlets, Hackney and Nottingham, which are all amongst the UK's most ethnically diverse areas.

The head of science, policy and research at Friends of the Earth, Mike Childs, said:

“Our research... shows that the poorest people and people of colour are disproportionately impacted by

extreme weather in England. This is true across the UK and internationally. The communities on the frontlines of the climate crisis also have the lowest carbon footprints – they have contributed the least but are being hardest hit by rising global temperatures.”

Greenpeace added their voice to this issue with a guest post from climate activist and ornithologist, Dr Mya-Rose Craig, who stated “People of colour in Britain are more likely to live **close to a waste incinerator. Black people in London are more likely to breathe illegal levels of air pollution than white and Asian groups. And Black people living in England are nearly four times more likely than white people to have no access to outdoor space at home, whether it’s a garden or a balcony”.**

But a recent YouGov survey shows that these environmental inequalities are hard to see for the majority of the UK public, most of whom won't experience them first hand.

As Dr Craig writes: “The public isn't just missing the realities of the present. It's misunderstanding the inheritance of the past. We can't understand the environmental crisis, or address its root causes, without

understanding the racism that it has sprouted from, and how it still maintains it today.

“Most people don’t think of themselves as being racist, and try their best to treat everyone equally. But these individual good intentions are set against a world that, in a million large and small ways, has been built around valuing some human lives and experiences over others. Over the centuries, this logic has crept into our laws, our culture, the layout of our cities, and the deepest parts of our minds, steadily building up over time like silt in a river. This has affected every aspect of daily life, and the environment is no exception. This is what systemic racism is.”

She went on to write that it is crucial we understand the links between race and class.

People of colour are more likely to live in economically deprived, urban areas. The UK’s most

deprived areas suffer most from environmental harms, and people of colour in those areas are likely to suffer. Of course, economic deprivation is both a tool and a consequence of racism, so it’s impossible to separate class issues from race issues.

For many, many years, Indigenous Peoples, people of colour and their allies have been fighting environmental racism, and highlighting its injustices. It is time we all listened to these activists and joined them. This should be a call to all to come together in the fight against extinction – be it the extinction of people, animal and plant species or our very planet.

This article originally appeared online:

<https://creatingsocialism.org/race-and-climate-inequality-inexorably-linked>



*Image by
Andreas
Weith, via
Wikimedia
Commons*

A S EUROPE hits record temperatures over the next few days, Critical Mass writer [Luke Andreski](#) has tweeted a terrifying, though plausible, scenario.

In his Twitter thread which he titled: “CLIMATE CHANGE PLAUSIBLE WORST CASE SCENARIO” he says “2019, 2020 and 2021 were ominous – but they barely touched the surface. Expect more heatwaves, storms, floods, droughts. Watch as the Arctic and Antarctic continue to melt”.

For some, including the Daily Express, this seems to be a cause for celebration. “There is a “90 percent chance that we’re going to break the all-time UK temperature record” on Monday or Tuesday, a meteorologist has said” is how they reported the story.

Disaster looming

There is no disagreement that the ice caps are melting. Disagreements are over how important they are. Luke is in no doubt:

“Ice caps and glaciers lose cohesion. Water sources evaporate. Heatwaves, droughts and soil loss ratchet up. Climate famines hit Africa, South Asia, South and Central America. Water is now the primary cause of war. Desertification of Africa, central China, central United States, Mexico & Australia gains speed. Government in these continents/nations becomes erratic as populations panic. Climate migration destabilises borders. Hunger is now a global phenomenon.”

The [World Wildlife Fund](#) (WWF) estimates that by By 2025, two-thirds of the world’s population may face water shortages.

The [National Academies Website](#) which monitors scientific arguments as they appear in popular discourse is very clear that the cause of these extreme weather events is global warming caused by human activity. There is no credible scientific explanation that does not directly attribute these events to the emission of greenhouse gases.

We’ve got 100 years

In his thread Luke gives a timeline which provides a plausible scenario for the future if, and of course it is an if, the governments of the world continue to put the interests of big business before those of people and the planet. By 2052 heat will be a major killer. By 2062 superstorms multiply and governments incite wars to distract from their own omissions. By 2072 worldwide hunger and heat deaths exceed three billion. By 2082 temperatures become so extreme that life on Earth becomes impossible for most species including humans. By 2112 life on earth is all but extinguished. As Luke says: “It’s rational to be afraid”.

Critical Mass is committed to the kind of wholesale changes that are necessary if this terrifying, and scientifically based, scenario is not to become reality. It is only through the self activity of ordinary people that the planet and our species can survive. Governments around the world have turned their back on every climate agreement they have ever signed. As Greta Thunberg so aptly summed it up, “It’s all just blah, blah, blah”.

The situation has reached emergency status, but too many people are still determined to hang on to the life they have become accustomed to, believing that if they turn off a few light bulbs they are doing their bit. It’s not enough. We have to confront the reality that the climate emergency is real and that those we rely on to lead us have no answers at all.

This article originally appeared [online](#).

Tories lose in court. Now is the time to turn the heat up.

AS TEMPERATURES soar it is time to turn the heat on the Tories. On Monday Friends of the Earth along with ClientEarth and Good Law Project won their case in the High Court against the UK Government over its flawed climate policy – the Net Zero Strategy. In a landmark ruling, the judge found that the Government acted unlawfully on two grounds.

Flawed Strategy

The strategy promises to meet the UK's obligations under the Climate Change Act, but it doesn't say how they are going to do it.

And it was wrongfully approved in the first place by the Secretary of State, who signed off on the strategy despite not having this essential information on implementation.

The Government already knew that the strategy would not reduce greenhouse gas emissions enough to meet the UK's legally binding climate targets. But it hid this crucial information from both the public and parliament.

Now the Net Zero Strategy has been found unlawful, the Government has to revise its plans to include essential details explaining how it will meet the UK's targets. The court ordered that the Government must publish a new strategy by 31 March 2023 at the latest which stands up to the scrutiny of independent climate experts.

London Burning

On Tuesday we saw how important it is for the Government to have a climate change strategy that works. We are used to seeing bush and forest fires raging in Europe because of the climate crisis. But grass fires in London? The capital's parks and green spaces are tinder dry and, as temperatures topped 40 degrees, fires quickly spread.

More than 40 properties were destroyed, and 16

fire-fighters injured, as London Fire Brigade had its busiest day since the end of the Second World War. It responded to over 2,600 emergency calls. On a normal day the service receives between 350 and 500 calls.

Tories Need Turning

But Tuesday may have seen the start of a new normal. All praise to Friends of the Earth and their allies for using the courts to hold the Government to account, but the Tory Government is packed with climate change deniers. The leadership campaign has seen candidates call for a pause on green policies and an expansion of fossil fuel to stave off recession.

Rishi Sunak has failed to address climate change in any of his budgets preferring instead to halve air travel duty, whilst the woman many believe will be the next PM, Liz Truss, has called for a moratorium on net zero strategy to enable businesses to thrive.

The climate emergency is now accepted by all reputable scientific opinion. Yet the political class continue to support businesses which are prepared to sacrifice life on earth in their short-term desire for profits. We need to build the broadest possible alliance and take the lead from Extinction Rebellion if we are to have a planet on which to build the socialist future which really is the only hope for humanity.

This article originally appeared [online](#)

Image courtesy of <https://www.needpix.com/photo/1312114/>





Tory hopefuls lie about tax cuts

*stevepb, CC BY-SA 4.0
<<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>>*

TORY leadership contenders are promising tax cuts with leading contenders Rishi Sunak and Liz Truss publicly falling out over the issue. When Sunak said he wanted to cut taxes, but not yet, he was called a socialist 'tax and spend' Chancellor by leadership rival Liz Truss. Sunak responded that Truss was the real socialist for wanting to cut taxes and increase borrowing. It got so heated that they refused to share a platform and Sky News cancelled their debate.

Interestingly, unlike when an actual socialist, John McDonnell, produced his fully costed plans in 2017 and 2019, the press have not challenged the claims that these uncosted tax cuts will promote economic growth. Of course, the key difference is that, if introduced, they will benefit the rich and not the poor.

Tax cuts do not impact on economic growth

None of our media pundits have mentioned that there is considerable research showing that tax cuts for the rich do not have any

significant effect on economic growth and unemployment and actually lead to higher income inequality.

Those are the central claims of an LSE study, led by David Hope and Julian Limberg published in 2020 based on 18 OECD countries. It draws on economic data from the past half century – a period during which taxes on the richest have fallen. A committee of MPs looking into taxes collected from the super-rich noted that, between 2010 and 2015 as income tax receipts from high net worth individuals fell by 20%, income tax from all taxpayers increased by 9%.

Hope and Limberg were clear that the detailed study sent a very clear message to governments that taxing the rich to fund the financial costs of the pandemic would not harm their economies. They pointed out that the pandemic has actually sharpened wealth divisions, with billionaires seeing their wealth increase by 27.5% , and the world's poorest suffering most.

The arguments for tax cuts are simply not supported by the evidence. In the UK it is the poor who are being expected to pay for the impact of Covid and the continued economic mismanagement by this Government. If the wild promises of most of the leadership

hopefuls are anything to go by, it will be the working class who will be the real losers – again!

Services will suffer

The impact won't just be felt in the pockets of the working poor through the increased use of food banks and homelessness. Current tax revenues are still not sufficient to address the climate emergency, reform and fund the NHS, sort out policing, manage delays in the judicial system, get education back on track, overhaul public transport, and repair the roads. The leadership hopefuls are gambling that their base, mostly quite well off, prefer tax cuts to

public services. That may work with the Tory faithful but the public are starting to see through them.

John Kenneth Galbraith, the economist popular in the 1960s and 1970s summed up this selfishness as “**Private Affluence, Public Squalor**”. Never have truer words been spoken.

<https://creatingsocialism.org/tax-cuts-the-unchallenged-lie/>



Confidence

In the UK most people welcomed Johnson's resignation and then he won a confidence vote in parliament! In Italy city mayors, business leaders and unions urged Prime Minister Mario Draghi not to resign after he lost a confidence vote in parliament. His government then fell apart when a second confidence vote was boycotted by Draghi's coalition partners, and he resigned. Italy is the third largest economy in the EU, but it has accumulated massive debts. This has added to the Euro's decline. It is now worth less than the US dollar for the first time in 20 years.

Public Sector Pay

Years of wage freezes and increases that fail to match inflation mean that higher than expected awards to public sector workers are still not enough, so health and education unions will be balloting members over strike action. Meanwhile NHS employers are saying the government is not funding even these inadequate awards. The Treasury has only allocated enough money to fund a three percent rise, creating a £1.8 billion hole in NHS finances. Meanwhile in the privatised Royal Mail 115,000 workers have voted to strike over pay.

Private Sector Performance

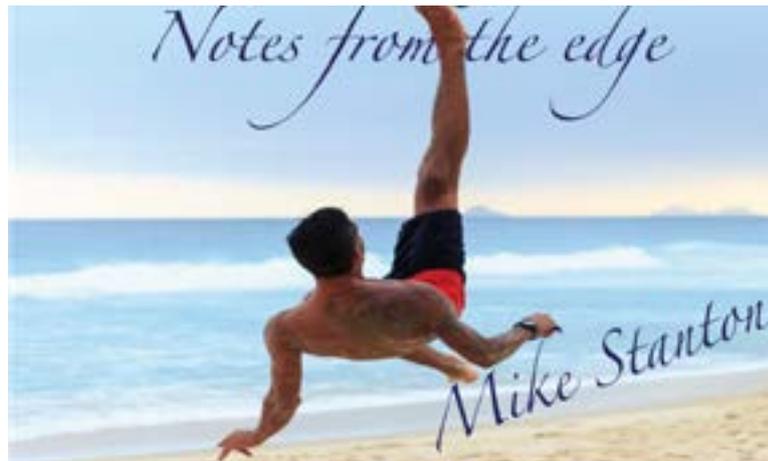
Truss and Sunak sing the praises of privatisation,

Compiled by Mike Stanton

even while we can all see that privatised energy, transport and water companies are failing. A report on Britain's nine water and sewerage companies this week describes their performance on pollution as “shocking” and says that “we would like to see prison sentences for chief executive and board members whose companies are responsible for the most serious incidents”. The report says that companies are deliberately discharging sewage into the environment because they can get away with it. “Over the years the public has seen water company executives and investors rewarded handsomely while the environment pays the price,” it says. “The water companies are behaving like this for a simple reason: because they can.” Who issued the report? The government's own Environment Agency!

Cost of Living Crisis?

The so called ‘Great Wine Robbery’ in Spain reminds us that the rich are doing very nicely out of it all. A couple have been arrested for stealing 45 bottles of wine from the luxury Astrio Hotel, which charges £339 a night for a room. The 45 bottles were worth £1.4 million in total! One bottle, an 1806 Chateau d'Yquem, was priced at £298,225 in the hotel's Michelin starred restaurant, even though it ‘only’ cost £10,225 at auction. But those greedy workers asking for a living wage are supposed to be the ones driving up inflation.



INDEPENDENCE DAY

A year after 'Independence Day' Covid is now more common than the common cold. Unlike the common cold, Covid is a lethal disease. Last week, out of 334,000 new cases, 12,038 people were hospitalised and 908 people died.

The government never had a strategy for Covid. It prepared for a flu pandemic and its preparations were totally inadequate as the debacle over PPE demonstrated. Track and trace was ditched early on because repeated cuts to local health authorities had crippled capacity for disease control.

The only plan was herd immunity: protect the vulnerable and let Covid rip through the healthy. Except they did not protect the vulnerable, as the carnage in our care homes showed. And high mortality rates meant that 500,000 would have to die to give the plan a remote chance of working. So herd immunity was dropped and subsequently denied.

Without a plan, lockdowns became the last resort but were never properly thought out. The government dithered and locked down too late, then panicked and unlocked too early so we got the worst of both worlds, economic pain followed by a new wave of infections.

Luckily for the government, and for us, scientists risked all on developing a vaccine and it worked. So herd immunity was back, only this time it was vaccine induced immunity. The main drawback was that wealthy nations like the UK cornered the market in vaccines while the virus raged in poorer countries. And this vast pool of infection allowed the virus to mutate and render the vaccines less effective.

The government carried on regardless, ending free testing, abolishing all restrictions, and failing to use

the leeway that vaccines gave us to build resilience in public health and prepare for the next pandemic. They ditched their mantra of 'following the science' and they ditched science when they closed down SAGE.

It is summer and hundreds of thousands are infected, more than ten thousand are hospitalised and hundreds die every week. These figures will double in the autumn and who knows what winter will bring? Thankfully Independent Sage has continued. This week they published guidelines in the British Medical Journal for the gathering storm, which were largely ignored by the media, even though they offer our best hope of mitigating the coming disaster.

1. Clear and consistent messaging concerning covid risk and risk mitigation, reinforced by public statements by those in positions of authority;
2. Increased efforts to promote vaccine uptake, among all age groups, and with particular emphasis on groups among whom uptake has been low, in particular ethnic minority communities. This should be coupled with a clear long term plan to address waning immunity and immune escape by new variants;
3. Installing and/or upgrading ventilation/air filtration in all public buildings, with schools an urgent priority over the summer holidays;
4. Provision of free lateral flow tests to enable everyone to follow existing public health guidelines;
5. Financial and other support for all workers to self-isolate if infected;
6. Systematic promotion of the use of FFP2/FFP3 masks in indoor public spaces and public transport when infection rates are high;
7. Increased support for the equitable global provision of vaccines and anti-virals.

They forgot this one.

Drive this government out of office and then we have a chance of enforcing 1-7!



I Told You So

Welcome to my weekly column about finding, and having, a very real, practical faith that we need every day, just to get up in the morning.

Eternal Squatter



It's strange, the way things turn out. Like Cassandra, it seems that sometimes I happen to say a thing, and it happens to come true down the line. It's just that nobody I tell believes me, until it's staring them in the face.

There is a man, not far away, living in a house in London. He has no legal right to stay there, but he is playing a game whose sole purpose is to keep people distracted long enough that nobody will notice that he has no actual intention of leaving.

Barnacle

This week just gone, during a heated session

the night before Johnson's "final" PMQs, the Opposition called the rabid pusbag former PM a "vengeful squatter." On hearing those words, I remembered that I'd described Johnson with that epithet only a few days before.

Johnson is a squatter, now. The most disgraceful man to even call himself as low as a Tory has now resorted to trespass to cling to his position.

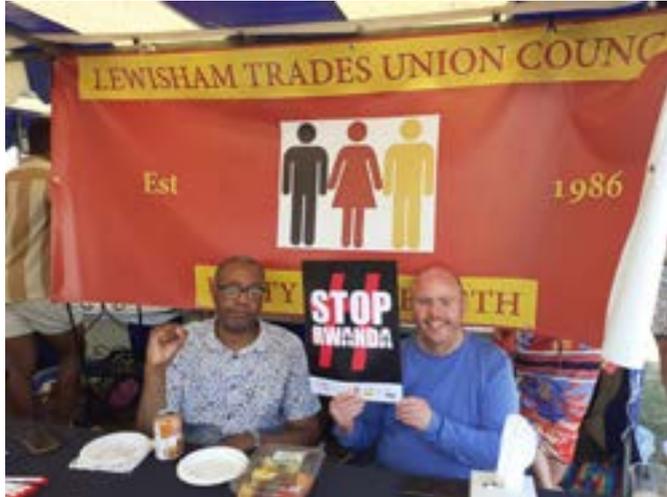
He's quit as PM, so he has no more mandate to stay in Number 10. The building should be vacated, pending the new PM.

I hate to ask what his plans are. Does he want to lurk inside Number 10, trying to tell the new PM what to do, as Dominic Cummings once tried to do with him? Is that his plan – to stay there, directing the country through a puppet PM, forestalling election after election because Hecate and Lucifer forbid he ever be forced to leave?

How long does this nightmare have to go on before people realise that the only recourse left is to physically eject him from the premises and change the locks? Because he really is that far gone.

And like Cassandra, I hate being right, over and over. What are you waiting for?

Have a good week, everybody* *except Johnson, the Tories, and the media. They can have a nightmare week.



Trade unionists at the Annual Tolpuddle Festival show their support for the campaign
Image courtesy of Stand Up To Racism

Time to stop Rwandan deportations

FOLLOWING a day of action last Saturday, Stand Up To Racism, Care4Calais, the TUC and a number of unions and campaigning organisations took to Twitter to promote the campaign which aims to overturn the decision by Home Secretary Priti Patel.

The Fire Brigades Union tweeted: “The government’s Rwanda plan is barbaric, inhumane, and must be stopped in its tracks.” Whilst Freedom From Torture sent a [video](#) to Tory leadership contestants. The day of action was accompanied by a workplace day of action in opposition to the Government’s plans to deport asylum seekers to Rwanda in contravention of international law.

The court hearing to assess the legality of the case has now been postponed. The case will be heard at the Royal Courts in London on September 5th.. When it does, the StopRwanda campaign will be there with a major rally planned for 1 pm that day.

Mark Serwotka, PCS union general secretary, said *“It’s time for the government to show humanity to the people who come to our shores for refuge, and to start to engage seriously with sorting out the asylum system so refugees are treated fairly and according to the law.”*

Better still it’s time the UK stopped involving itself in foreign wars which create huge numbers of refugees we then turn our backs on. The fact is that the Government is not as out of touch with the British electorate as many of us would like to believe. Immigration generally, and refugee rights specifically, remain vote winners for the Tories. And they know it, which is why none of the leadership candidates will do anything but support the current plan.

Weyman Bennett, co-convenor of Stand Up To Racism, makes the point that the legislation currently going through Parliament will make it even harder for refugees to find a safe place in the UK.

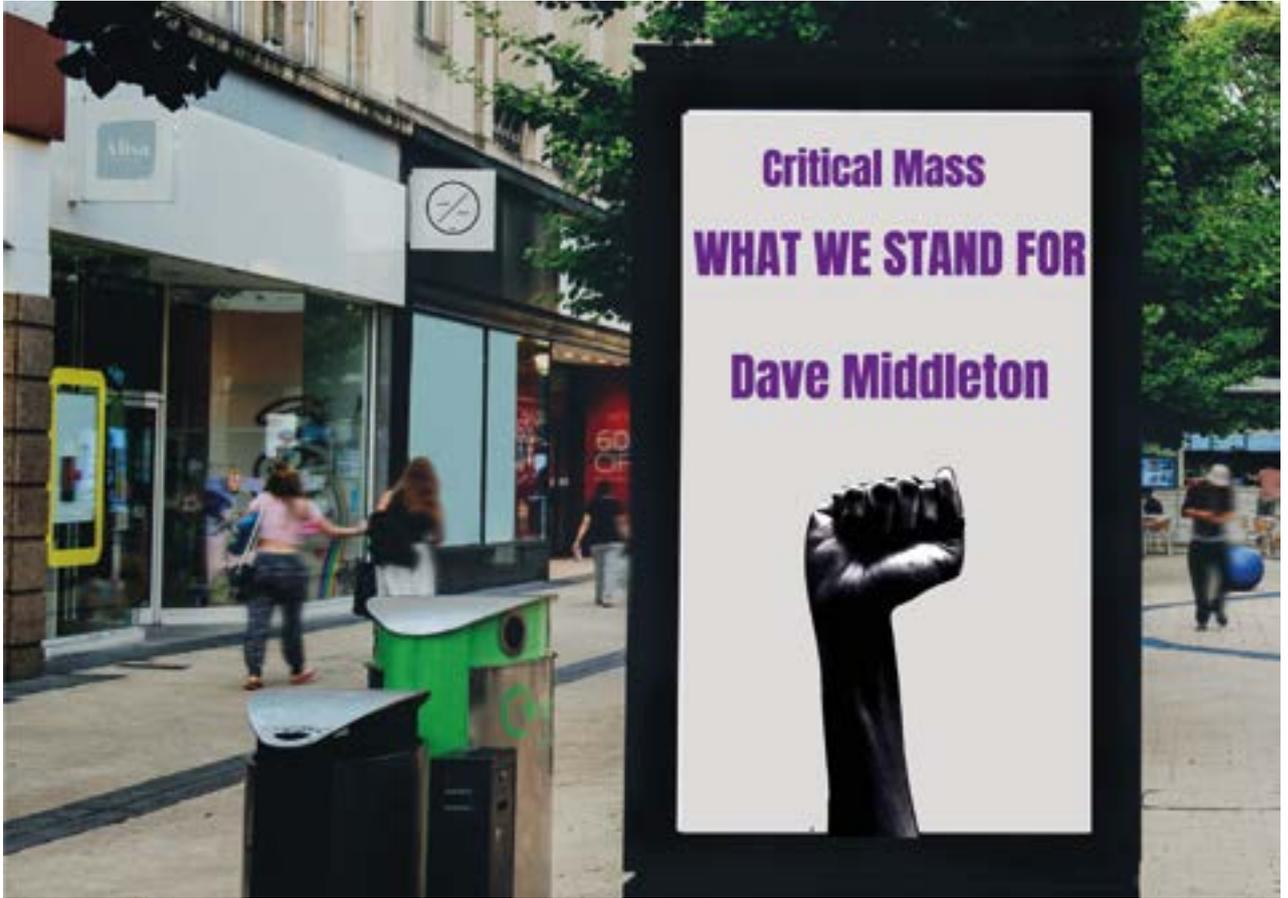
“The act’s assertion of a two-tier system that defines anyone arriving via ‘illegal’ routes, which is the vast majority, as undeserving refugees and removes their right to asylum, represents a step change and full scale assault. As many charities and organisations have pointed out, it is in breach of international human rights law.”

A version of this article originally appeared [online](#).

The Socialist Sunday is a collective effort but some people deserve a special mention for their work in bringing it to you.

Not in any order of merit thanks to the following:

- Mike Stanton
- Marilyn Tyzack
- Susie Granic
- Jo Buchanan
- Ann Marcial
- Luke Andreski



EVERY week I share the Sunday Socialist with a variety of left groups on Facebook. Over the last couple of weeks a user on They Don't Work For You has left comments. Danny Lambert asked what sort of Socialism the Sunday Socialist believes in? When I replied, "Read it", he came back with, "I've looked through the Sunday Socialist and found no clear definition of the socialism they promote."

I want to thank Danny for raising this issue because it prompted a few thoughts which I'm going to share. I don't want to put words in his mouth but I see three possible areas underlining his question.

Three questions

One, he is looking for us, as a professed socialist publication, to outline exactly how the socialism we purport to promote is better than capitalism.

Two, he is looking for a page that states our position on various issues over which the left often falls into disagreement.

Three, he wants to know whether we are supporters of a particular Marxist, or other, creed. Are we, perhaps, members of the Communist Party or Socialist Workers Party? Or worse, the Labour Party?

I am going to concentrate on number one, but will just briefly mention that Critical Mass, the Sunday Socialist and the creatingsocialism website

are not affiliated to any party or sect. We are an independent publication. That said, people who write for us have been members of various groups, which include the following: Greens, Socialist Workers Party, Labour Party, Workers Party, Socialist Party, Trade Union and Socialist Coalition, Northern Independence Party, Respect, Breakthrough Party, Counterfire. There are no factions within our group and we encourage participation from a wide range of views. That can be both a strength and a weakness.

As for what we stand for, our red lines, as it were, are in no particular order: we oppose the Labour Party in its present form, we support trade union struggles, we support an evidence-based scientific approach to the pandemic, we oppose war and remain sceptical about NATO as a "defensive" alliance, we support the Palestinians, we support the right of refugees to go to a country of their own choosing, we support Black Lives Matter (and oppose racism), we support Extinction

Rebellion and, as with the pandemic, support a science-based approach to the climate emergency, we support women's rights, we support the rights of disabled people to live the fullest lives possible, we support trans rights.

What about socialism?

So far, so liberal. But we call ourselves socialists and Danny wanted to know what we mean by socialism. Because we are not a political party we do not have a manifesto as such and, like many who claim to be socialist, we can offer no blueprint as to what the future socialist society should look like.

Broadly speaking, we believe that socialism cannot be achieved through the ballot box. Having said that, there is still some belief amongst our writers that who you vote for makes a difference. I no longer share that belief and I don't mind saying why, in an attempt to clarify why I think it is impossible to say exactly what form a future socialist society will take.

Let's start by stating the obvious. We live in a globalised capitalist system. It is an intricate and complex system of interconnected parts. It has changed in form considerably in the 300 or so years of its existence.

But two features remain. First, capitalism is primarily a productive system driven by the profit motive. And, secondly, whilst capitalism has delivered enormous wealth for a few, it has also created misery and poverty for many. The mistake, in my view, is to regard that dichotomy as sufficient explanation for the system. The fact is that between those two extremes are the vast majority who, neither wealthy nor impoverished, do alright. They aspire (see Howard Thorp's article in Issue 16) to be part of the wealthy, and they fear falling into the ranks of the impoverished. This creates a measure of stability in an otherwise unstable system.

Capitalism endures

There is a third and enduring feature of capitalism, however, that undermines its ability to sustain itself. Broadly speaking, it is competition. This means that capitalists (it doesn't matter whether they are individuals or pension funds) are constantly trying to make more profit at the expense of their rivals. They do this by investing in better machinery or by working their labourers harder. If successful, it means rival firms go bust. It also means that more and more workers become impoverished.

Even this (and I'm carefully avoiding the concept of surplus value) is not the real endemic feature of capitalism. It is this. Capitalists tend not to produce much. What they do is invest their capital to make more capital. And, like any investor, they look for the

best rate of return. Historically speaking the rate of return has what Marx called 'a tendency to decline'. You don't have to agree with Marx to see that, empirically, capitalism is a system of boom and bust. It is a cyclical process. Even bourgeois economists agree this to be the case. But what they don't necessarily agree on is that the booms are getting shorter and the busts longer. And what they certainly don't agree with is that this process is hard wired into the very system.

What has all this to do with parliamentary democracy? Or socialism, come to that?

Many people who regard themselves as socialists believe that by capturing parliamentary power through the ballot box they can use the state to create socialism. I see two problems with this approach. The main one is that parliamentary democracy has evolved alongside the capitalist state not to challenge it, but to support it. Unless the successful socialist party were to take control immediately of the entire economy, capitalist enterprise would undermine them from day one.

But imagine for a second that the Revolutionary Socialist Party had won the election and nationalised all essential industries. Let's say they managed this in the UK or maybe France (more likely to be honest), what would happen next? Most likely the capitalist economies would conspire to destroy their economy and bring capitalism back as the saviour having first created food shortages and economic chaos. And, in a nutshell, that is our second challenge. How do we defeat a global empire without an international movement?

Self-styled revolutionary socialists have understood this challenge for years. Marx was a founder of the First International, after all. (see Mike Stanton's article in *The Socialist Sunday*) But I think socialists, like many people, are too keen to believe that they can decisively influence events.

So we form a revolutionary party and we assume that the party is central to the revolutionary movement. Don't get me wrong, parties, particularly supposedly revolutionary ones, can play an important role in any burgeoning revolutionary movement. My point is that socialism will not occur through wishful thinking, carefully worked out blueprints, parliament or socialist agitation. Which is not to say that none of these things cannot play a role. But it flies in the face of history to think that systems change in any of these ways. At best we can encourage people to think about the issues and to see the possibility of a change to something better.

From despair to where?

To some, possibly including Danny, this will seem like a cop-out. Nothing I've said here suggests that socialism, which so many of us desire, is imminent. Or that any of

our combined activities will be responsible for bringing it into existence. Far less have I said what it will actually look like.

If you accept what I said earlier, that capitalism is prone to frequent and deeper crises, then one of those crises will herald its demise. This much we know from history. Systems change at a point when the old ruling class can no longer claim legitimacy to rule. And, this a massive and, a class exists to replace it. Marx very clearly identified the proletariat as that class. But as we all know the proletariat as a class has shrunk as the productive power of capital has increased. Machines now do the jobs once done by living, breathing proletarians. Which isn't to say the proletarian class no longer exists. In fact, they potentially have more rather than less power.

Our socialism

Our socialism doesn't need to rely on a dogmatic application of Marx or any other theorist. What it must be based on is activity this side of the revolution to win more and more people to the socialist side of the argument. It is unlikely that we will see the revolution coming in advance, but when, and if, that situation arises (and the precursor to it could be mass strikes,

or catastrophic economic collapse, or an environmental disaster) we need socialists in the midst of it arguing for a substantial and long-lasting shift in our society. A society no longer operated on the principle of 'to a few according to their greed' but rather that of 'to each according to their need'.

Quite how to make that work in practice we'll have to see but I, for one, would be disappointed if we simply replaced rule by a capitalist elite with rule by a party elite. If socialism is to mean anything it has to be based in the widest application of democracy possible with a genuine desire to ensure that citizens throughout the world can have a say in the decisions that affect them and their families and communities. But those decisions will have to be made to ensure that this planet, on which we all depend, will be there for future generations to enjoy peaceably.

This article appeared in [Issue 17](#) of Critical Mass Magazine



CRITICAL MASS MAGAZINE

Issue 17 available now

[Just click on this link](#)

Dave Middleton on

“What we stand for”

Mike Stanton on

“Religion and Revolution”

Howard Thorp on

“Western Culture”

Luke Andreski on

“Power”

Andree Ryan on

“Roots”

Tanweer Dar on

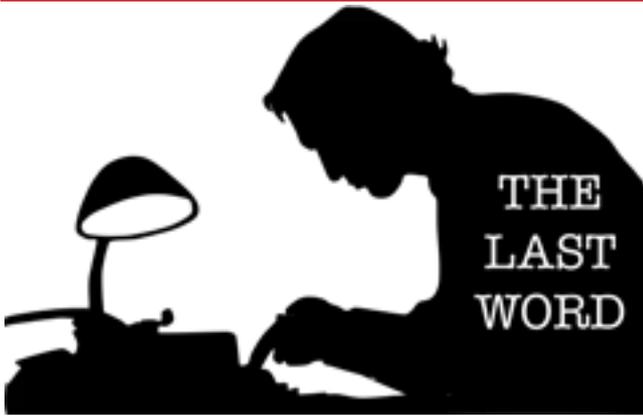
“Boris Johnson’s downfall”

Hazel Roy on

“Fred Roy’s Longer Days”

Plus short stories from

Mel Cakey and **Harvey John**



“When I use a word,” Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, “it means just what I choose it to mean — neither more nor less.”

“The question is,” said Alice, “whether you can make words mean so many different things.”

Clearly, Alice had never read the responses to the Forde Report, though Humpty Dumpty might well have written them.

The Forde Report, so long in the making, so weak in its findings. When all sides to a dispute look at the findings of an inquiry and decide that they are vindicated then it is a sure sign that report has steered very clearly along the middle of the road.

But, as a socialist, and no longer a member of the Labour Party, what am I to make of this report. I suppose the first thing that strikes me is that if Labour Party members had thought that this report might force the right to atone for their behaviour they are likely to have been disappointed.

Of course, the report throws a few fillips our way. The WhatsApp messages were, it concludes, genuine and representative. The appalling racism displayed by full-time officials toward Diane Abbott has been exposed and castigated in writing.

But, will disciplinary action toward any of the perpetrators follow? It is highly unlikely. Some of those involved have now moved on. But, even those who remain are unlikely to be brought to book. Why? Because those attitudes toward Diane

Abbott are commonplace amongst the Labour hierarchy and amongst MPs, who do not see a black woman when they look at her, but simply a political rival.

My lasting thought on the report and probably my last word on it, is that it shows more clearly than any amount of statistical analysis could that Labour cannot be a socialist party. It is not a party that cares for the values most socialists hold dear. Even when somebody with the values we all support had the helm, he never had the party.

Indeed, the report shows clearly that the party was working against the election of Jeremy Corbyn from day one. The implication of this is clear. People on Labour’s payroll preferred to elect Boris Johnson, a serial liar, a misogynist and a confirmed racist than Jeremy Corbyn. They were supported by a number of prominent MPs and Labour Peers who now hold senior positions within the party.

As we get closer to a General Election we will be bombarded with messages on Twitter, Facebook and elsewhere telling us that we must bury our factional differences and get behind Keir Starmer. A failure to do so, we will be told, is tantamount to supporting the Tories.

Yet, we will also be asked to forget that when we had a chance to elect a Labour Government, that would have been popular with younger people and ethnic minorities, those same people now telling us to put our factionalism to one side were unable to do the same.

For every Tory assault on truth, on human rights, on basic human decency we must keep reminding ourselves that this was the choice of the Labour establishment.

We must remind ourselves that faced with the choice of socialism or barbarism Labour’s right-wing chose barbarism. And, we owe them absolutely nothing. Especially our vote.

Dave Middleton