

“Corona Procurements”: Tory Corruption Is Eroding UK Democracy

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The UK's governing Tory party is dishonestly flouting the rules of free and fair competition for Coronavirus related procurements, by unfairly selecting commissions, awarding contracts to class allies instead of the best or cheapest service provider.

The party frequently uses cliches like “all in it together” or “get Brexit done” to fake solidarity with the working class. But the talk has been matched by relentless attacks on quality of life and civil rights.

Recently the government has faced criticism for its rampant nepotism and cronyism in awarding coronavirus related contracts to personal connections, and faces legal challenges over its misallocation of public funds.

Certainly some will not be able to look past beyond the paradox that a government that asks its citizens to bear austerity, privatisation, cuts is also granting huge sums of public money to its friends.

Jolyon Maugham QC, director of Good Law Project, said:

“What we know about the government’s procurement practices during this pandemic gives real cause for concern.

“Huge sums of public money have been awarded to companies with no discernible expertise. Sometimes the main qualification seems to be a political connection with key government figures.

“And I have seen evidence that government is sometimes paying more to buy the same product from those with political connections. We don’t know what else there is to discover because the government is deliberately keeping the public in the dark.

“We are left with no option but to push for transparency through the courts.”

Additionally, a researcher has invited citizens to look at “My Little Crony,” an interactive map that shows just how tightly related Tory MPs are with the firms they commission. This includes firms who had been in existence for mere weeks, with no portfolio, being handed vast sums of public money.

Dissenting MPs assessments have provided a forensic analysis of the corruption at the heart of Westminster. Green MP Caroline Lucas has fiercely attacked the government’s procurement process, additionally criticising their lack of transparency in hiding the details

for over 3bn in contracts from the public.

Giving lie to the myth that capitalism is a fairer system, the Tory party have perpetrated and perpetuated the same corrupt tactics in public administration as the Soviet state.

The credibility of the government has been shaped by two dominant issues: coronavirus and Brexit. In both spheres the legacy of institutional elitism weighs heavy.

As a breakaway from the tempering power of a strong opposition, the Tory party emerged victorious in the 2019 general election. Its strong commons majority has liberated it to pursue its free market fundamentalist agenda, with the obedience of Keir Starmer to government policy indicating that opposition is scarce.

Assaults on the independent judiciary were particularly prominent in the formation of Brexit, with the government arguing, against a constitutional system of checks and balances, that it should be able to determine the terms and conditions of Brexit unilaterally. Hard right rags collaborated, publishing venomous attacks on members of the judiciary who sought to make sure Brexit was legal. This overt repression was but a new manifestation of old fascist tactics.

The Tory party's attempts to act unilaterally with minimal opposition come as no surprise. They have often acted with contempt for the sovereignty of parliament and the people.

Tory government failure has been met with sympathetic and sycophantic media coverage. A pliant press is staffed with journalists who are content to forfeit fourth estate integrity to be mere stenographers of power.

Thus, public accountability is missing in this latest version of Tory rule. The government is not attempting to honour democracy, is even wilfully subverting it, despite the fact it won an election on a manifesto of restoring popular sovereignty. And they've inaugurated the power of unelected bureaucrats like Dominic Cummings over policy.

A pandemic should not be an excuse for profiteering. Britain's progressive wing must reclaim its place in power and defend the many rights under attack from this corrupt Tory government.

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