

The reality is everything must change

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Kenan Malik wrote this in [The Observer](#) yesterday:

The question we need to ask is not, “How should we create a centrist bulwark against populism?”, but “How can we give progressive shape to people’s disaffection?” Otherwise the left will either remain standing on the sidelines, allowing the radical right to take centre stage, or be driven, as has already happened, to promote illiberal notions of immigration, culture and belonging. Whatever the fate of the gilets jaunes, this wider issue — who will give shape to disaffection? — has still to be addressed.

I thought that a neat synopsis of where we are. Amidst all the noise of Trump, Brexit, trade war and so much more, there is a need for some pretty serious debate. I would remind you that this was also true in WW2. The welfare state was the result. We’re not at war, thankfully, but the crisis is real, nonetheless. And the absence of a great deal of thinking is profoundly worrying.

I would suggest there are three things we know.

The first is that climate change is real. The result is that nothing can stay the same.

The second is that neoliberalism has reduced most people to living in states of profound insecurity. Ignore that poverty is supposedly being beaten. This is almost for nought if the result is disabling fear for future well-being. This cannot persist because people will not tolerate it. We are seeing that, very widely.

Third, our economic and social orders do, then, have to change, and profoundly. This is not an option. It is an absolute necessity. And what we know is private capital has ceased to be available for active investment it is now almost solely directed to rent seeking. In that case it is only state created funding that can create this process of change.

To put this another way, what may be the biggest programme of change ever known in human history is required in very short order. We need new energy systems; transformation of our housing stock; new transport infrastructure; radically different

approaches to food that might even require rationing if we cannot create change any other way; different ways of working and new ways of using leisure time. As I suggested, everything must change.

But this must be done in a way that increases certainty. Jobs must be created on the ground, everywhere. And I mean, in every constituency. There must be new homes on brown field and some greenfield sites - but the transport and other infrastructure must be provided in that case and that does not simply mean more roads. The social safety net must be recreated. That means a job guarantee. It also means a universal basic income. And business must be transformed. Since that process will be incredibly expensive this requires capital and if that means state investment and co-ownership, so be it. At the same time some things might need to be foregone. Like nuclear submarines and aircraft carriers. We have no resource to waste on the legacies of our imperialist past.

How to do all this? Only state created funding can create the finance needed for this change. What we need is not just a Green New Deal but Green Quantitative Easing too to fund it. If this was wartime funding would be found for the crisis we face. It always has been. Well, this may be worse than war. This is life itself we are fighting for, on all fronts. The time for prevarication is over. The time for pussy-footing with new taxes to extract a little more from the rich is yesterday's news. There is no time for that. This is the time to create money for change. And, if need be, to restrict money creation for other reasons.

The time for pussy-footing is over. We know what we need to do. We know the scale of the issue. We know the reasons for acting, which combine into the single desire to save the planet to secure everyone's future, and we know we can pay for it.

This is not left or right as we know it.

And this not centre either.

This is the new politics. Born of necessity.

Which says we must spend to change, forever.

In time of war innovation is released and effort is maximised. That is what we need now.

This is addressing the wider issue.

And any party not addressing it is part of the problem and not the solution.