

The Tory's oil licences are all about creating division...

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As [reported by the FT](#) and many other papers:

New legislation to mandate annual North Sea oil and gas licensing rounds will be at the heart of the King's Speech on Tuesday, as Rishi Sunak looks to exploit a key policy divide with Labour ahead of the next UK general election.

There are three claimed reasons for this policy.

The first is to, supposedly, use UK oil and gas as we transition to sustainability.

That, however, makes little sense when all the oil and gas produced will be traded in international markets, so at best, the aim of the exercise is to support the pound as we transition to sustainability, which is a lot more pragmatic and much less strategic, and considerably more uncertain as an outcome.

Third, the aim is to create a political wedge issue. Far from being green, the Tories are consciously rejecting green policy to differentiate themselves from Labour.

Doing so, as the FT points out, will make remarkably little difference to the overall position of the UK. They note:

However, the North Sea Transition Authority, the regulator, has acknowledged that any new licensing will do little to reduce Britain's dependence on imports or affect prices of oil or gas significantly, given that the basin's reserves are in decline and the commodities are traded on international markets.

I noted recently (and now cannot find the reference to confirm the fact) that over the last decade or so, just nine weeks of UK oil consumption had actually been found in the North Sea. I suspect little more will be on this occasion, so what matters here is not the policy so much as the politics

What are those politics, given the policy is very clearly inconsequential given little or no oil of relevance will be produced? They are, of course, the politics of power in that case.

The substance of this issue is almost irrelevant to the Tories. The fact that it will not change the outcome of any energy transition, or support the pound, does not matter. What matters is that the issue can be used to divide society.

There is, of course, a form of politics that is based solely on the creation of division. Its aim is to create barriers where there are none. It wants to demarcate people. The aim is tribal. That form of politics is, of course, fascism in its Italian form, where policy mattered little but power for the corporate state did.

The Tories used race and migration as their primary wedge issue for ages - with the slight problem for them being that they were unable to do anything about an issue they promoted into public consciousness.

Now they see green issues as taking on that role, and so they are piling in for all they are worth. In reality, they have no policy. They have no goals that impact real life. What they are doing is tokenism. But that really does not matter if division is created, because that is all that they feed on.

And what they know is that in a first-past-the-post system that can be enough, which is why anyone supporting that system is a facilitator of fascism.

So, of course, I oppose what the Tories are doing because it is not green. But I also oppose it for a much more important reason than that, given that much of what they are proposing will only have a very marginal impact on the transition that we need. I oppose it because the Tories are using green issues to divide and rule society for the advantage of a few - and that is a much more sinister issue.