

How Much Worse Can It Get?

A leading strategist considers the next six months

Mark Thomas ran the strategy practice at PA Consulting Group. His book “99%” is one of the Financial Times Best Books of the Year. He sees three factors shaping the next six months:

- **We Are In The Eye Of A Perfect Storm**

“The UK is in the midst of an evolving disaster; the perfect storm of Covid, Brexit and rising market fundamentalism in Governmental policy. Despite growth in national GDP, the facts show that over the last ten years most working people in the UK have become steadily poorer. ‘Trickle down capitalism’ simply has not worked for them. The middle-classes are under pressure as never before. We will soon be left with a small hyper-wealthy elite, and everyone else living in near-poverty.”

- **Mass Impoverishment Is On The Way**

“The long and unnecessary period of austerity following the 2007 financial crisis led to underinvestment in public services and infrastructure. Mr. Sunak’s recent emergency largesse may now be used as an excuse for even further austerity. That will be a disaster.

From [300 years of Bank of England data](#), it is clear that our current levels of government debt are in fact far from unusual. In our two most successful economic periods, the Industrial Revolution and the Golden Age of Capitalism, levels of national indebtedness were much higher than the levels we have today. The IMF cautions that we must not reduce spending. I’m deeply worried that the government’s fundamentalist ideology may trump sound economic advice; in which case mass impoverishment will ensue.”

- **Widespread Unrest Will Follow**

“I’ve made a [special study](#) of countries and governments that have followed this path. It results in only one outcome: widespread civil unrest often followed by political chaos. This is no longer an inconceivable scenario for the UK. If we do not change direction, our society is headed for economic, environmental and social disaster.”

What Can Be Done?

“Unlike previous Conservative governments, today’s cabinet is dominated by [market fundamentalists](#): people who believe in ‘the magic of markets’ as the sole solution to every problem. For fundamentalists, all non-market spending is bad; all taxation is bad. There’s little point in trying to argue with market fundamentalists. Their beliefs are matters of faith even when logic or the evidence of their own eyes says they are wrong.

As Philip Hammond tweeted in 2019: *‘I’m afraid the Conservative Party has been taken over by unelected advisors, entryists, and usurpers who are trying to turn it from a broad church into an extreme right-wing faction. Sadly, it is not the party I joined.’*

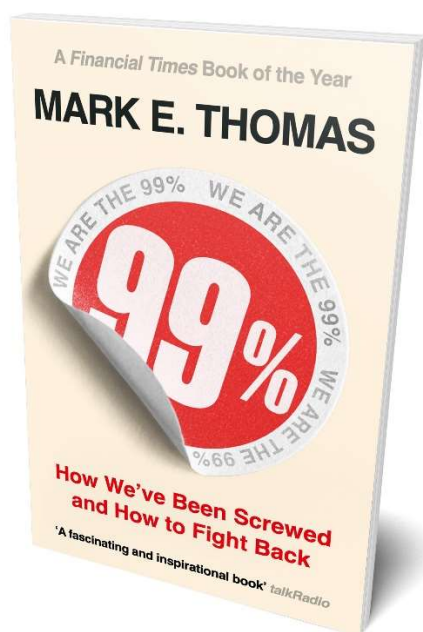
In the short-term, the most effective opposition to this market fundamentalist-dominated cabinet will be from principled one-nation Conservative MPs who seek to reclaim their party and their traditional values. It is not impossible. We need only 41 to be prepared to stand up to the government to do this.”

* * *

The new edition of **‘99%: How We’ve Been Screwed and How to Fight Back’** was published on 12th November.

Mark Thomas presents a daily videocast [THE NEXT SIX MONTHS](#) on YouTube.

To interview Mark Thomas please contact as below.



Contacts:

Mark Thomas, Author, 99%

Email: mark.e.thomas@99-percent.org Mobile: 07785 778 316

Heather Smith, 99% Organisation

Email: heather.smith@99-percent.org Mobile: 07710 294 845

Lauren Tavella, Head of Zeus

Email: laurentavella@headofzeus.com

Notes

1. Review copies

If you would like a copy of *99%: How We've Been Screwed and How to Fight Back*, please contact Heather Smith

2. Mark E Thomas

Mark is the author of [99%](#), one of the FT's Best Books of 2019. He has spent most of his career in business; for many years he ran the Strategy Practice at PA Consulting Group. During this time, he began to explore whether the tools and techniques of business strategy could be applied to understanding the health and stability of countries.

This research led him to the uncomfortable conclusion that many developed countries – including the US and the UK –are unwittingly pursuing economic policies which will result in the unwinding of 20th century civilisation before we reach the year 2050. Hearteningly, he also concluded that this fate is entirely avoidable.

Mark is also the author of *The Complete CEO*, and *The Zombie Economy*. Mark has a degree in Mathematics from Cambridge University. He lives in Herefordshire

<https://99-percent.org/about-mark-thomas/>

3. **The 99% Organisation**, is an inclusive, entirely voluntary, movement of people who want to end mass impoverishment using peaceful means. The 99% Organisation aims to make mass impoverishment a key issue for Government, and to drive serious policy change. We want to build a world in 2050, where rather than being poorer than their parents, people are better-off. www.99-percent.org

4. 99% Campaigns

Externalisation: working with Imperial College and others on a project to [re-engineer the profit motive into a force for good](#). This project has completed phase 1, and we are hoping to broaden it over the next few months.

Herefordshire 2030: looking at how one county could -- without waiting for major shifts in government policy -- take steps to become [fairer, more prosperous and greener](#). This project is now engaged in detailed analysis and stakeholder engagement.

Local Action: mobilising members to write to their MPs about important issues such as the [rule of law](#) in the UK.

Contact with senior politicians: 99% is working with like-minded MPs from all parties, and with some All-Party Parliamentary Groups to begin the process of amending policy.

5. **What is Mass Impoverishment**

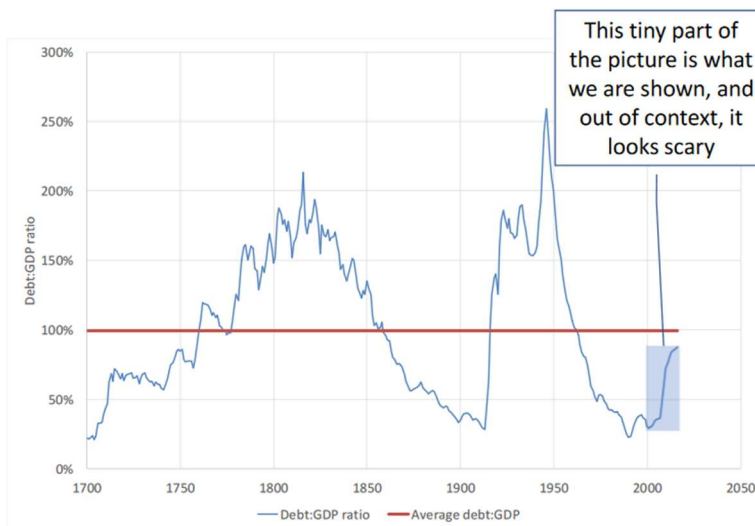
Mass Impoverishment is the process by which even as the economy continues to grow richer, many people find themselves getting poorer year after year.

For example:

- mass impoverishment means that we are looking at the first generation in living memory that expects to be poorer than its parents.
- Many countries suffer from mass impoverishment: the US since 2000 and the UK since 2010.

6. **300 years of debt:GDP stats from the Bank of England – see chart**

UK Government Debt is *not* at record levels



Source: Bank of England

| The Myth |
|---|
| <p><i>“To every mother, father, grandparent, uncle, aunt – I would ask this question. When you look at the children you love, do you want to land them with a legacy of huge debts?”</i></p> <p>David Cameron</p> |
| The Facts |
| <p>The UK’s Government debt is not ‘huge’; it is not ‘rather high’; it is not even ‘average’ – it is below the average of the last 300 years. But that debt was the justification for austerity.</p> |

7. **99% of taxpayers in the UK earn less than £160,000.**

This figure comes from <https://www.thisismoney.co.uk/money/comment/article-7357395/Who-1-Britain-one-them.html>