

Cake in politics

The most infamous cake quote came on the eve of the French revolution from their Queen. "Let them eat cake" as a solution to the poverty of those who could not afford bread became a phrase to sum up just how out of touch governments and elites can become from the reality of the lives of many of those they govern. Marie may never have said it but it is all most people know of her.

More recently Boris Johnson's famous statement that he was in favour of having cake and of eating it was a welcome dose of common sense and optimism against those who favour austerity and bad choices. There is no point in having cake unless you are going to eat it. Leaving it to go mouldy is a bad plan all round. Selling it to someone else may be a good idea for a producer but for the rest of us the whole point of cake is to eat it. The aim of economic policy should be to allow all those who want it to earn enough to afford cake, and for there to be a good supply with plenty of choice for the cake eaters.

The latest intrusion of cake into our politics has come over whether a birthday cake appeared at a work gathering in Downing Street. If it did did it turn a meeting into a party? Was any cake eaten? Suddenly the pressure was on to show this was a time when cake if had was not eaten so no rules were broken.

Meanwhile Keir Starmer's keen wish to see all rules applied and all statements to be truthful does not seem to impose these important standards on himself. Drinking a beer with colleagues himself apparently does not constitute a party nor an offence against lockdown rules. Accusing the PM of something he never said about the BBC is apparently not worthy of a review by the Privileges Committee.