

Theresa May: setting out to fail

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Theresa May is, I suggest, setting out to fail. She made that clear yesterday.

She made her shadow cabinet arrive at 'her' manifesto launch in a bus that talked about her and not their party.

She's chosen to ignore their collective opinion on immigration, which most think a key issue, when for once pragmatic opinion is on their side.

She's clearly chosen hard Brexit: I predict a breakdown in all talks within nine months. Failure is written on all the cards.

Despite which she's chosen to alienate business, which when she's already disappointing them on Brexit is a strange strategy.

She's alienating many in her party by hinting at tax rises, which will happen.

She's also alienating all those who think free movement has merit.

She's destabilising all those organisations, from farms to universities via the NHS and the building industry and banking that have relied on it.

She's told half her MPs that their core philosophy is wrong. She may be right about right wing libertarianism, but she's forgetting that those who believe in it have turned holding a grudge into an art form.

She's alienated the old on pensions and social care.

The inheriting class are up in arms.

Those who appreciated a free school lunch and think breakfast is no substitute aren't happy, although I accept that in educational terms the policy has merit.

And she's given remarkably little to anyone, whether it be the NHS, education,

investment, workers on rights, or anything else. Indeed, much of what she has said is just aspirational waffle. The discussion of R&D is an example.

And nor are there numbers: May does not want to hang herself.

She need not worry about that. She's already made enough enemies in a day to ensure three things.

The first is that others will end her political career for her. They'll be much faux acquiescence but the Daily Mail won't buy this agenda for long.

Second, with a large majority she will discover 'the bastards' will rise again, and with a vengeance. She's guaranteed her fiercest opponents will be on the Tory back benchers.

Third, there will be no lasting legacy of Mayism. The manifesto is a bid for long term control of the party and country. I suspect she'll be lucky to make the 2022 election as leader. Not only is there no Mayism, there is no chance of success for this weird and unworkable mix of ideas that ultimately represent little more than a pragmatic attempt to appeal.

I stress, appeal is the goal. As much as Blair needed affection, so it seems does May. One wonders if there was enough love in her childhood vicarage because there is in this manifesto an attempt to appeal to all, being more left on economics than expected, and more right on social policy but without any of the Blair / Mandelson ability to spin that to win grudging loyalty.

In fact there's only one real basis for her campaign when all is said and done, and that's her appeal to be the favourite offspring to whom the best chance must be given whatever the cost in terms of alienation for all the rest, who will bide their time and get their retribution in due course.

What a sorry state of affairs.

And it's a recipe for failure.