

# Changing the cladding won't be enough: it's the whole r...

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The right wing of the Tory party got its attitude to regulation wrong.

It got its faith in markets wrong.

It got its attitude to those who need state support wrong.

It got its belief that the only job of government was to get out of peoples' lives wrong.

Some of us have said this for a long time. Others have only done so for a few days. It does not matter which is the case; Grenfell Tower is the shocking evidence that this is true.

But in that case it is important to ask what else the Tories (and others of neoliberal belief, because these errors were not made by Tories alone) got wrong.

They got their attitude to experts wrong. And so they got their attitude to doctors, teachers, fire officers, the police, judges, probation officers, housing officials, social workers, environmental experts, academics, health and safety officers and so many others wrong.

They got their attitude to tax wrong. Low taxes for the rich do not deliver prosperity, even for the rich.

They got their attitude to Europe wrong. The EU might be flawed but its cost sharing approach to the development of the regulation we need to make the modern world work is the right one.

They got their attitude to government spending wrong. Government spending creates income, and that's a benefit, not a curse.

They got their attitude to debt wrong. They tried to reduce government debt which is the foundation for the safe savings that underpin private wealth whilst encouraging private debt that grips peoples' lives.

They got their attitude to social security wrong in so many ways. Worst of all, they treated those making claim as if they were scroungers when people who have need deserve the right to a decent life when they are denied it by a market that does not value them for who they are.

They didn't value people for who they are.

They didn't value people for who they might be either. And so they burdened them with debt for their education.

They didn't realise that it isn't the savings of the elderly that provide them with their pensions. It is the willingness of the young to care for them that does that. But they treated the young with contempt because they chose to follow the wealth.

They assumed that the planet was an asset to exploit and not an ecosystem to sustain.

They treated any culture but their own with contempt.

They considered it impertinent for others to ask them questions. So they denied the right to free speech and assembly.

They denied those working the right to negotiate.

They considered London the epicentre of the known world, and that nowhere else mattered.

They considered that in the absence of real colonies Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland could have to act as substitutes, where relative poverty would ensure a continual supply of labour to south-east England.

They believed they had a right to govern and so sought to shrink parliament and ensure it remained as unrepresentative as possible.

They measured people by their worth, and ensured that most counted for nothing.

They thought nothing mattered but them. That, and their right to a free-ride on the back of others.

And that's what they got most wrong. Which is why we really do have to reject all they stood for.

It won't be enough to change the cladding after Grenfell Tower, although that may be necessary. It is the the whole rotten attitude of contempt that has hidden behind a veneer of respectability that has to change now.

Nothing less will do.