

Funding the Future

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The immediate news agenda as I write is dominated by the tale of two Tory resignations. One is that of [Toby Young](#) from the Office for Students. The other that of [Justine Greening](#) as Secretary of State for Education. If I am honest I am not a great fan of the politics of either and yet the odd coincidence of the timing of their departures highlights the scale of the malaise hitting the Conservative Party, and with it the politics of this country.

Toby Young has quit because he says the row over his appointment is a 'distraction' from the 'vital work of broadening access to higher education and defending academic freedom' that it is claimed that the Office for Students will undertake. All of that is untrue.

Young's appointment was not a distraction: it was a provocation.

And the OfS is not about broadening access to higher education or defending academic freedom: it is all about subjecting universities to the pressure of market forces by threatening to remove their licences to teach if they do not succumb. Young was the perfect 'gob' to distract attention from the real message. He served his purpose well. His whole life is about promoting the primacy of [abuse over reason](#) and of ideology over the politics of need.

Greening resigned because No. 10 did not like her and she would not accept the alternatives they had to offer to make her go. She had no time for grammar schools and the education apartheid that they embrace. And she had seen the disaster of supposed 'free schools' of the type Young so hopelessly promoted from close up and wanted no more of them.

It is widely reported that the [Tories were closing ranks](#) to support Young.

It is as [widely reported](#) that those same Tories were opposed to Greening because she had listened to the teaching unions and would not follow the party's line, which is, in effect, opposition to state run education.

Even if I would not want Greening as education secretary because I am no fan of her party it has to be accepted that she was bringing reason to her office. In the process it

became clear that she was willing to stand up to what she believed in. Expect a trenchant resignation speech.

In contrast, the favoured Young brought prejudice.

He might have gone but yesterday was one where the divisions in the Conservative Party were made clear. And they are ugly.