

The Tories are a bunch of losers when it comes to the t...

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Boris Johnson has survived another weekend, even if the pressure on him continues to mount. During this one he claimed to have reorganised the top management of Number 10. I have to admit to being unimpressed. That, however, has nothing to do with the process involved, or the people appointed. It does, instead, come down to his motivation.

In days gone by, when I spent most of my time as a practising chartered accountant, there was one type of client I never wanted on my books. Those were the ones who said that their main goal in life was to make a lot of money. There was three fundamental reasons for this.

First of all, these were the people who were by far the most likely to fail in business because they had no idea what they were really doing. They had no interest in the product, the customer, or their staff. They just wanted cash flow, and it took very little time for anyone to work out that they had little to offer in exchange. What was apparent was that they ran bad businesses.

Second, these were the clients most likely to argue about the bill, and to take the longest to pay. The hassle that they created was not worth the effort of working with them.

But the third reason was the real explanation for why I didn't like working with these people. They simply weren't very nice, and I too might of been at work and I too might have eventually been wanting a profit from doing so, but there was always much more to the process than that. I did not leave my humanity at the door when I walked into the office, and nor did profit become the only thing that I was interested in. The quality of the human relationships developed during the course of work was pretty fundamental to the pleasure I got from being an accountant, and the people who prioritised profit over everything else usually had very little to offer in this regard. The firm of which I was senior partner was very willing to turn down work, whether at the enquiry stage or if it turned out that the client did not fit into our portfolio after a period of time. That was because we knew what we were about. We ran a better firm because of it.

There is a relevance to this experience when I look at what Boris Johnson is doing. It is abundantly clear that like the person who puts profit at the centre of their priority, Johnson is indifferent to other people. Whether it is power or profit that he really wants makes little difference: everything about his management of the government is all about him. Hence his comment this weekend that it will take a brigade of tanks to get him out of Downing Street.

Following on from this, it is very apparent that he is not running a good government, precisely because he does not believe in government. He wanted power to undermine the very thing he wanted to manage. This is the paradox that underpins the entire Tory philosophy. How can you run a good government when your entire purpose is to restrict what the government can do, meaning that you are always going to be alienated yourself from everyone who works for you, who has chosen to undertake the work that they do because they believe in the power of government to transform lives, which makes their own work worthwhile? I doubt this dilemma can ever be resolved: Tories will always govern badly because that is what they set out to do.

And then, there is, of course the obsession with money. By framing government as an agent of taxpayers, which it is not, and by then suggesting that everything government spends is taxpayers' money, which it is not, and by suggesting that government has no resources of its own, when it very clearly has, the Tories suggest that it is their task in government to limit the amount of spending that takes place to reduce the demand on those taxpayers whose interest they seek to serve, who come from the wealthiest parts of society. They are not, in that case, interested in what government can do. They are, instead, profit maximising for a limited part of society who are already the best off but either do not realise this or are so callous that they wish to improve their own lot irrespective of the consequence for others.

Nothing Johnson has done this weekend will change these characteristics that define his approach to government. As a consequence, his government is bound to continue to fail. It has no potential saving graces.

This, however, is not a trait now confined to Johnson. Given that the entire notion of one nation Toryism has entirely disappeared, at least from the Parliamentary party, whoever succeeds Johnson might be a better, or at least more focused, administrator than him, but they will still bring the same characteristics to the job that he does and so will, therefore, be as likely to fail.

The simple fact is that you cannot govern well if you think that your job is to undermine government, and that logic is at the very heart of modern Tory party belief. This is precisely why this party should not be trusted with governing again. They are a bunch of losers when it comes to the task of governing.