

Political and economic insanity on a scale we have not ...

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I would like to find the right words to describe Liz Truss' plan to level down civil service pay outside London, so reducing the income of all areas but the south-east of England, but frankly I can't.

Leaving aside for a moment the contempt that Truss clearly has for all those who work for the government she claims to want to lead, and leaving aside too the phenomenal organisational difficulty inherent in her proposals, you have to wonder why she is doing this.

The answer is easy to find. At present she faces a unified civil service on issues relating to pay and conditions. And she knows she is losing. So what she wants to do is create the classic fascist scenario where she faces groups off against each other. Her aim is to have the groups within the civil service fighting each other for the best pay deal whilst overall undermining them all. Fascism always depends on the creation of the enemy within. This is what she is trying to create here.

Will it work? I very much doubt it. Bizarrely, Thatcher picked on miners because ultimately she knew we could do without them. But no sane person thinks we can do without the civil service. Not that is, unless we are seeking to destroy the state.

Truss may well be seeking to destroy the state. But we have a civil service made up of people who, by and large, are competent and who can appraise reality all too well. Truss can try this one, but I think she would lose it.

However, the warning has been given. We are in for an exceptionally rough time if Truss gets the Tory leadership. Political and economic insanity on a scale we have not previously seen will be normal.