

The Tory's very obvious failings can only fuel the se...

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It is very hard to work out whether Rishi Sunak believes in anything, except power that is. Over his first few weeks in government the messaging has been deeply confusing.

The Schools Bill has been abandoned, as has much of the online safety bill.

Housing targets have been dropped.

Policy on onshore wind has been reversed.

A coal mine has, quite astonishingly been approved.

The Bank of England has been left in charge of economic policy. Hunt has only promised cuts, which is a move hard to describe as an initiative.

And on pay disputes, the government hides behind recommendations from pay review bodies that failed to take crippling increases in the cost of living, created and exacerbated by government policy into account.

Even when it comes to solutions that are known to be required, like solving the problem of rail franchising when that era has already in practice been brought to an end, there are no signs of progress.

Notably, no action is being taken against Michelle Mone.

This was not what the Tories needed. It is certainly not what the country needed. After the debacle of Truss and the corruption and lying of Johnson what was required was calm, clear-headed thinking that provided a new direction and confidence that there might be someone in charge with at least a little understanding of the issues that the country faces. We have not got that from Rishi Sunak. He has not, even remotely, risen to the challenges that we so obviously face.

Even in the House of Commons, where he faces Keir Starmer every week, he is failing when this was the one arena where Johnson did at least sometimes deliver. Yesterday

he was either so badly prepared, or so unable to think on his feet that he resorted to answering the questions he wished he had been asked even if that answer had not the remotest link to the question put to him.

No wonder then that Tory MPs are queuing up to leave the Commons, and almost all of them (Matt Hancock being the obvious exception) voluntarily. They can't stand this mess either. Not only do they know the Tories are bound to lose the next election, what they also know are three things.

The first is that the Tory rump that will be elected in 2024 (most likely) will be deeply divided, and unable to agree on almost anything because it will be riven by warring factions.

Second, those with any sense realise it will take a decade to be rid of the far-right Tufton Street element that is now making the Tories unelectable, and that is if they are lucky.

Third, this means that even if Labour make a total mess of their period in office (which cannot be ruled out, so bereft are they also of ideas) the chance of forming another effective Tory government in less than ten to fifteen years is very low.

I am not usually one to promote even moderate right wing parties. I am not changing my spots now. But this absence of anything like an effective government does trouble me.

Partly that is because I believe that the state has a duty to enhance well-being, and the government is failing to do so on many key issues right now.

It is also because this failure leaves those on the political right looking for alternatives, and those are never good.

But maybe worse, this failure also enables both the rightward shift of Labour and its own policy vacuum.

In essence the problem is that when in a two party system one party goes AWOL there is no incentive for decent politics of any sort. I think few would dispute that this is the point we have reached now. And when so much so obviously needs to be done to address the major issues in our society this is deeply troubling.

We are in urgent need of political renewal, based on strong ethics, empathy, sound economics and clear thinking. We are a long way from that. It's not just the Tories in trouble in that case. The whole system is, and by refusing to embrace PR Labour is enabling this. The sense of alienation from this total mess can only grow, and that's not good news.