

What is the future for the Tories?

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As Gaby Hinsliff notes in [The Observer](#) this morning:

Wherever Tories have huddled together this summer, from end-of-term drinks receptions to rain-sodden Cornish beaches, talk has turned to life after defeat. Few expect Rishi Sunak to turn things around now.

I would suggest that those few Tories who think Sunak has a chance should give up now.

Sunak is in California right now. I suspect that before he is 50 that is where he will be living. Parliament will just have been a blip in his career. Being PM will have been a stepping stone to yet more millions, the contact book being worth a fortune. But as for Rishi himself, what will there be for him?

No one is going to engage him for his ideas, his grasp of detail, charisma or leadership qualities. His media personality is leaden. When it comes to finance (the only thing he supposedly knows anything about) it is clear that he is out of his depth. The reality is (and this is going to come hard to him) that he has failed. He was always told he could do whatever he wanted. Maybe he could have done, except being prime minister. Or even a minister. He's really no good at being them, at all.

So, what should the Tories be imagining after defeat? That's not my job to say, but I do know what they should be avoiding. These include:

- 1) Denying climate change
- 2) Denying social realities
- 3) Pretending markets work without the support for an active state
- 4) Low taxes are good when people want public services
- 5) The Bank of England is possessed of the answers to all economic questions

6) There was a halcyon past that can be recreated

7) Rich boys from public schools are necessarily over-endowed with talent

To put it another way, stop trying to recreate the denial and policies of the 1930s in the face of a crisis. Read *Brideshead Revisited*. Realise that there is a past where some things necessarily belong. Move in. Try to be relevant.

Sunak has dismally failed at this. So have all his predecessors in office since 2010.

It will take the most extraordinary feat of imagination for the Tories to recover. Or they will move towards fascism.

In either case we need to be rid of first-past-the-post to manage the consequences.