

Badenoch

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We have a new leader of the opposition. Kemi Badenoch has been elected as leader of the Tory party with the lowest level of support ever recorded by someone holding that position. She could not even command an overall majority of that party's membership when winning this vote. 28% of its members did not even bother to vote at all. The idea that she has a mandate looks open to doubt.

However, Badenoch has never doubted anything about herself, and we can be quite sure that she will take this opportunity to do whatever she wishes.

That she will do just that was hinted at in her acceptance speech. She made it clear that she thought that the Conservative Party had failed of late. She also implied that it was time to question everything about its attitude towards government. The implications were obvious.

Firstly, I am quite sure that she meant that Rishi Sunak had moved too far to the left in political terms for her liking. Since that has very obviously been her view for some time, there is no great revelation in saying so.

More worryingly, what she is now implying is that she will, like Liz Truss, seek to fundamentally redefine what the Tory party is and move it much further to the right, in the process questioning what government should do. I think it is most likely as a result that she will seek to abandon her party's commitment to the government undertaking many of the activities that we have traditionally associated with it.

In other words,

we will now see Badenoch move the Tory party very much further to the right. She will be supported when doing so by a bunch of shadow ministers, almost all of whom will be very largely unknown. Each of them will learn some very simple lines, almost all of which will be wholly negative.

The response to almost anything that Labour does will be that the government should

not be undertaking the activity in question, and that they are wasting taxpayer money when doing so.

There will be not a hint of positivity about any of her proposals. Everything will be along the standard Tufton Street lines of government wasting money that taxpayers could spend better.

What I would stress is that this is the second time in little over two years that the Tories have elected a leader dedicated to delivering this message. The last was, of course, Liz Truss. It did not work well for her because she was exposed to the problem of being prime minister whilst also hating absolutely everything about the role that she had been elected to undertake. Badenoch has the good fortune to be the leader of the opposition, which means that she can say that she hates everything about what the government does with impunity because she can claim that it is her job to do so.

The difficulty for Labour will be in finding methods of countering the charge that they are continually wasting money when, in practice, they are not spending enough to deliver the essential services on which the foundations of prosperity in this country are built.

Worryingly, given that we know that Labour always seems to tack right these days, the likelihood is that her words will influence what it does. The outlook for public services is grim as a consequence.

The election of Kemi Badenoch is not without consequence. The millions who will suffer because of the denial of essential services to them will be testimony to her achievement and she will proudly proclaim her success in delivering this outcome.

This is a grim day for the Conservatives, for the perpetuation of the single transferable party that embraces both the Conservatives and Labour, and for the people of the UK. No one needs a Tory party leader of the sort Badenoch will be.