

Conservative Parties Should Never Get In

Taking the UK as an example, Conservative parties, like the Tories, should never get into government. They never have support from more than about 30% of the electorate. There's a clear majority of civilised, progressive, *non*-Tory citizens. There is probably a majority of *anti*-Tories in the electorate. Most people know how nasty they are. Much Labour campaigning and discussions amongst ordinary people is about how nasty they are.

But the Tories aren't the problem. The problem is us, the non-Tory and anti-Tory majority, and why we don't persuade each other to vote so that we get Labour or other forms of progressive governments serving most people, which the Tories don't and don't intend to. We let conservatives mis-lead many of us with claims like the ones covered here, about Labour's competence and public spending. Then there's voters own mis-guided behaviour, like wasting your vote on parties who have no chance of winning a seat, which splits the non-Tory vote and allows them in; like saying 'they're all the same' and not voting at all; like not voting for Labour for one or two reasons like 'not liking' the leader, which just lets something worse, i.e. the Tories, into government. These mis-guided voter actions, and how to tackle them, are covered in another brief paper, 'How To Talk Politics With each Other', available, as this paper is, as a free download from the website www.youpoliticsandwork.com

Why Labour Is Fit To Govern, and Competent To Manage The Economy

- **Managing The Business Class**
- **Public Spending Deficit and Debt - Labour's Record is Fine**
- **A Government's Aims Matter As Well As Competence**

Conservative politicians and business newspapers say the 2008 crash shows Labour is not competent. This paper is a rebuttal.

SUMMARY

'Managing the economy' means managing business people.

They are fiercely hostile to being managed.

The Tories key purpose is to allow business people not to be managed.

The 'New Labour' governments conceded to that freedom, calling it 'free markets'.

The 2008 crash showed that it doesn't work, because business people are too selfish and reckless to be allowed such freedom.

They were to blame for the crash, not Labour. Except for conceding to conservative policies.

Until the crash Labour's public spending deficits were less than the previous Tory government's.

Voters should not judge governments only on 'competence'.

Judge them also on what they are trying to be competent at.

The Tories aim to back business people. They are their party.

Labour aims to back everybody.

FULL TEXT

Labour must rebut the charge of not being fit to govern and manage the economy.

It influences many voters and is a key obstacle to Labour winning elections. But it's not only Labour's job to challenge it, it's up to voters themselves too.

Being Fit To Govern - Managing The Economy

The economy is the biggest issue in politics. Voters should be told it's not true that Labour is not competent at managing it.

But first, be clear with voters that :

- ‘the economy’ is largely business people, their daily business activities.
- we rely on them to organise most of the goods, services and jobs and growth we need.
- Relying on their private enterprise, carried out in their own interests, to result in public good and the good of the majority, is a problematic policy.
- Labour Government’s role in ‘managing the economy’ is mainly about persuading business people to act responsibly.
(The Tories free them from responsibility.)
- Managing is about what freedoms, incentives and rewards you have to allow or give them to persuade them to manage the economy as nearly as possible for the public good.

With this made clear to voters, where there are problems or crises, Labour can make sure the blame goes where it belongs.

It’s Not Just Managerialism

Conservatives and business newspapers have got many voters to see governing as mainly just managerial. That it’s just a skill, and that Labour hasn’t got it. Voters need be told that governing is not just managerial.

A government’s aims come a close second to competence.

The 2008 Crash - Labour needs to tell voters that :

The last Labour government didn’t fail to manage the economy.

*What they did was concede to the Tory, Conservative, business class policy of governments **not** managing the economy; of allowing business people to manage it.*

Led by the bankers, they caused the crash.

The argument for democratic political oversight and control of the economy, for state regulation of business people, for a strong role for the state in the economy, had been marginalised. The Labour leadership of the time conceded to this too readily, naively. *And they actually believed in it, in letting ‘markets’ - business people and bankers – run the economy rather than themselves.*

*But Labour **has** to go along with this, to a degree. Because many voters believe it too.*

Not enough show willing to back Labour to regulate business people and ‘free markets’. Labour need to be clear about this political issue, the biggest of them all.

People allowing the Conservatives, whose economic policies Labour had followed, to get back into government after the crash by painting Labour as incompetent, was absurd. Again, it was their policies, their people, business people, bankers, who were.

Conservatives claim free markets are the best way to run the economy for everybody. But it’s really because free markets mean low regulation of business people - the people they themselves are, the people they represent. It is proven not to be in the best interests of everybody by huge inequality in wealth, people being treated terribly at work, and by business people’s greed and recklessness causing crises. So, again, it was ridiculous that when they and those of them who are bankers took it into a crisis, *Labour got the blame*. And it needs correcting, as it causes large loss of votes.

Why Labour *Has* To Allow Business People To Run The Economy, To a Degree

We could tackle poverty and low wages and get improved living standards and public services by taking from the rich. The inequality of wealth is disgusting.

But not enough voters back Labour to do it this way.

So Labour has to use *growth* to get improvements for all without taking from the rich. That means allowing and encouraging business people to be active. The Tories want growth mainly for their own greed. But also so they can allow the rest, whose votes they need, some improvements without taking much less themselves. Growth happens also because: Business people insist on the *right*, the entitlement, to constantly re-invest, to get a return on capital. And they all want a chance at getting rich, so they insist on competition amongst themselves. Competition has its points. But it *forces* constant re-investment, to keep up with each other. Constant re-investment brings ever-greater productivity and ever-greater number of products and services (that they then foist on people) *but also less need for staff, smaller workforces, redundancies*. So both Labour and Tories need growth not just for improved living standards but to provide jobs for the workers (voters) discarded because of the efficiencies gained by investment.

It's all madness, because we produce too much and it's causing climate disaster. But Labour need to tell voters that because business people are the economy, Labour has to strike a deal with them, and business people don't take to it very co-operatively. Conservatives and business people should be called out on patriotism. Before arguing for patriotism they have to operate in the interests of fellow-citizens, not just their own.

The Myth of Labour Spending Too Much.

Part of the charge is that the last Labour government, and Labour governments generally, spent too much and caused a large deficit in public finances. This wasn't true. Labour need to tell voters that. Here are the facts - (see Ref 1, at end) The *deficit* is government spending not covered by tax income. So Governments borrow it, just like the rest of us do. The money exists, in large part owned by the rich, and borrowed from them. The Labour government from 1997 to 2007 had an average deficit of 1.4%. *That's half the average under the 18 years of the previous Conservative governments*. In 2007, it was 2.6% - the same as the Conservative average. The *national debt* is the accumulated deficits not yet paid off. The government pays interest on it until it is paid off. Before the banker's crash, it was 36% of the value of the economy (GDP). Interest paid on it was 2% of GDP. That was less than the Conservatives ever managed between 1979 and 1997. It shot up in 2008 of course, as Labour saved the economy from the error of the Tory policy of leaving it to business people.

Aims Matter As Well As Competence

As said, governing and managing the economy is not simply managerial. But when people raise the issue of competence, Ok, we have to answer it.

But also to point to what any party's aims anyway. What do they try to do?

Tory competence may be worse for the great majority than incompetence!

We don't want them competent at exploiting and neglecting people.

Labour genuinely intends to do the best for the majority.

Some voters think Labour fails them in that.

But that's because they are obstructed by business people, who dominate the economy and dominate voters thinking. Labour needs more backing from voters if it is to challenge them. Voters need to be told this and to tell each other.

Not as scolding from on high, but as a discussion amongst the majority.

The Conservatives simply intend to govern and to manage the economy for the people they represent – rich people, business people, the business *class*. They like 'free markets' because they give business people the freedom to look after themselves at everyone else's expense. Yet they present this as being best for everybody.

They are forced to make a show of doing this because they are a minority and the majority have votes. But they simply don't aim to govern and manage the economy for the benefit of all. Look at what they actually do and it's obvious. They get away with it but it's quite an achievement. Again, we need to call them out on patriotism. They have to operate in the interests of fellow-citizens, not just their own. Anything less than treating fellow-citizens with respect and mutual concern is not patriotism. To repeat - in response to the charge that Labour is not competent to govern, *aims* have to be raised with voters as well as competence.

It's Not Only Labour's Job To Challenge The Myth Of Labour Not Being Fit To Govern.

Most voters view political parties like official providers of government, as if the parties themselves are a public service. They think the parties have a public duty to offer voters alternative governing packages. They see themselves as passive consumers, judging and choosing between alternative official providers of government.

But voters need to be told that parties are not that. That parties are just people from amongst voters themselves who take the trouble to be organised and active, trying to do what they think best for the people they aim to represent.

Voters who aren't active in politics themselves should not over-readily fault those who are. Whatever shortcomings Labour has, they are not as great as being unorganised and passive, as many voters are. Instead of expecting 'the politicians' to do it all for us, voters themselves need to take an active, self-respecting role in politics, in organised contact with each other politically. It's every voter's responsibility, to themselves and to each other.

And, for the non-business majority, to not get their political news and opinions from the business-owned media, who are against their interests. Then they, and not just Labour itself, can rebut Conservative arguments like the charge of Labour not being fit to govern.

- (1) Figures from The Guardian, 10 August 2015, Larry Elliot, 'Labour must stop apologising for what it got right'. His source – a House of Commons briefing paper by Matthew Keep.

v. 2, revised August 2018