

Funding the Future

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I have suggested for some time that the UK will leave the EU without a deal in October. The reasoning has been quite simple. First, it's what UK law, passed by the current parliament, requires. Second, I have not been able to see the parliamentary arithmetic changing sufficiently to change that in the time available, which is remarkably short.

Yesterday's [defeat of Labour's attempt to stop No Deal](#) rather proved my point. It was aided by eight Labour MPs voting for the government and between 13 and 17 Labour MPs abstaining (there are conflicting reports on the number who were paired, it seems). If those MPs had voted with their party No Deal might have been prevented. It may well not be now.

Weariness with this process has reduced the shock of MPs voting to cause significant harm to the UK. It is, rather bizarrely, something that we have come to expect. It has been normalised, just as a No Deal Brexit, which was never on the table in 2016, has apparently become what people thought they voted for in the referendum. Maybe this is how extremism really gets its way: the relentless presentation of what is not true as that which is desirable bends the mind of sufficient numbers to be believed. And then, when it is too late for remorse to have any consequence, the process is repeated to make the sacrifice made somehow appear justified.

There will, I fear, be much propaganda to come of this sort. I remain quite sure that the UK civil service, UK business, and those whose political judgement appears sound, are all right to think that No Deal Brexit is not just folly, but profoundly reckless. But some in Labour, and all the Tories, and a minority in the country seem to think otherwise. And they have the momentum with them. It increasingly feels like we will have to live through the hell that follows.

And I still cannot exonerate Labour from blame in all this. Of course I hold the Conservatives most responsible. And it looks as if any new leader will only make matters worse. But Labour's inability to create and hold a line is staggering. When Welsh and Scottish Labour are both pro a second vote and Remain now, but Labour as a whole still has no obvious policy, then the shambles of yesterday happens. And it goes unpunished too. Which still makes me think this is what Corbyn really wants.

So let me also say, yet again, that there is no such thing as a likely Lexit. Those who think the country will swing to the left and vote for resoundingly socialist policy post Brexit are as deluded as many Tory leadership candidates are on the chance of renegotiating the EU Withdrawal Agreement. It is not going to happen. So a vote to Leave is a vote for the hard Right.

And most worryingly, that's also a vote to ignore climate change, and all that it requires, in all likelihood, because I cannot see the right ever delivering on that. And that may well be the most depressing aspect of all this, from amongst a crowded field.

Yesterday was a bad day for this country. There may be many more to come.