

We face a Labour meltdown after the election

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I seriously wonder how long Labour has got before it has no choice but to wake up and smell the coffee.

It would be incredibly easy for Starmer, Reeves and Streeting to be sitting very smugly at present thinking that the election is sewn up and that their future in government is assured. On the basis of that they could and should be planning a whole string of King's Speeches in which they might deliver their grand vision for the UK.

My problem with this suggestion should be obvious. Whilst the first observation is clearly true in the sense that the probability that they will win the election is very high

, the second assumes that they have a plan for when they are in office, and nothing does at present suggest to me that anything of that sort exists.

It is, of course, possible that the Labour leadership team has created a ship so tight that nothing has leaked from it and they are playing a deliberate game of not disclosing their plans. It would be foolish to ignore this possibility. They do, rightly, know that much of the media is still not on their side.

However, I do not think that the team is anything like that watertight, let alone clever. Instead, like dazed rabbits that can hardly believe their luck on realising that they might suffer their fourth loss in a row, they are still so obsessed with winning the election that almost no one, I suspect, within the party has given much (if any) thought to what might happen next.

If there is a plan for government (and by now they should have one), I would be surprised. After all, we know that they might have only agreed on a manifesto very recently.

Likewise, if almost anyone within the shadow team beyond those very close to Starmer, has any real clue as to what might be expected of them on the day that they walk into

their new department, I will be astonished. Nor do I expect anything much to change between now and then.

I do, in fact, have good reason for thinking that. The only minister who appears very close to Starmer who might have responsibility for a major spending department is Wes Streeting, and what he has to say about the NHS is deeply depressing. His instruction is that we must accept the status quo, increase the scale of private sector involvement in the supply of health services, anticipate real-term cuts in funding, and face down the inevitable employment disputes that will arise as a consequence. Given that he is in a better position than anyone else to negotiate a sensible settlement with Starmer and Reeves, then heaven help everybody else. It looks like that for all new ministers their primary focus will be on who it is that they can sack from day one onwards.

Accepting that I could be entirely wrong, the question to then ask is what will the public's reaction to this be?

It is, of course, possible that in the short term they really will not care. Given how utterly disastrous the Tories have now proved themselves to be, anything might seem like a relief in comparison.

But, this is very unlikely to last for very long. The UK public are extremely fickle when it comes to their support for politicians, and I already suspect that Labour's internal polling will be showing them that much of their support is decidedly soft.

As many commentators here suggest, it is likely that many of those who would traditionally support Labour feel decidedly uncomfortable about doing so now. Instead, much of their support probably now comes from those who would normally have voted Conservative, but who appreciate just how extreme and incompetent those who lead that party now are. That does not suggest that those people have really changed their political persuasion or that they think that Labour really is taking the place of the Tory party that they once supported. They are simply voting in despair, just as those who traditionally supported Labour despair about who to vote for.

This combination could prove quite disastrous for Labour. If it becomes apparent within months of being in office that they really do not have a plan for government, let alone a plan for how to fund the improvement in government services that people in this country are desperate for, the number of people who will have a sense of regret about voting for them will be significant.

Labour could, of course, be planning for this and expect to play a long game, hoping that over the following years, events will turn in their favour, giving them the opportunity for re-election. I do, however, think that to do so would be naive. There are two reasons for doing so.

The first is that as anyone with any sense knows, the Tories and other far-right political

parties will be working in close strategic alliance, supported by the well-funded Tufton Street think tanks, from the moment that the election is lost. They will be promoting an agenda of hate from then on, knowing that there will always be a certain part of the population that will support this, which part will be boosted in size if Labour appears incompetent once in office.

The other reason for doubting that Labour will necessarily survive the appearance of incompetence that they might create within months of being in office is the deeply embedded belief that appears implicit in Rachael Reeves' thinking at present. Everything that she does and says implies that she is of the opinion that the structure of the society in which we live is stable and without need to change. In fact, most of the few proposals that she has made are about reinforcing those structures. This is naive in the extreme. The reality is that our society is unprepared for the problems that it is now facing, and someone with Reeves' attitude is wholly unsuited to partake in the process of adaptation that is now necessary.

Every one of our major public services is failing. It is apparent that a little tinkering at the edges will not solve the problems inherent within them.

As is also now very obviously true that climate change is going to have a dramatic impact much sooner than most people ever expected. After the wettest, but warmest, history in the UK in 200 years we will face a food crisis this summer. A new dependency upon imports will put pressure on exchange rates, and prices, but there is no hint within her thinking of how we will address that issue.

Worse, she has already abandoned her commitment to a Green New Deal.

On top of that, her very obvious lack of willingness to believe in the power of government to effect change, because she is already outsourcing decision-making to as many establishment-populated quangos as she possibly can, makes clear that she does not even think the government should be seeking to tackle the changes that are so obviously required. Presumably, she believes that the market will address them.

My guess is that Starmer shares her views. He shows no apparent capacity for independent thinking.

It is only a question of when all this will become apparent after Labour gets into office. My suspicion is that it will only take months for this to happen. At that point, when possessed of a big majority, Labour will have three choices.

They could try to weather out the storm, which would be disastrous for us all. Action is required.

Alternatively, they could realise that they have no choice but change, and look for what other plans are on the table that they might adopt. This is when I hope that the thinking

in the Taxing Wealth Report might be of benefit.

Otherwise, they might resort to the ruse that they are already using with regard to social care, and say that nothing can be changed on issues of this scale without cross-party support, on the basis of which they will try to blame everyone else for their failings even though it would be naive on their part to believe that anyone will think that claim to be credible.

In summary, Labour is likely to offer us turmoil whatever the outcome of the general election precisely because they appear to have no plans in place for what they might do if, as is overwhelmingly likely, they win it. That's not encouraging. Worse than that, rarely might there have ever been a greater opportunity lost, because that looks to be the prospect right now.