

Fearlessly Taking Tough Decisions



THE ESTABLISHMENT has been in disarray since 2016. David Cameron's decision to have a simple majority referendum on membership of the European Union was based on the assumption that "Remain" would win. This was a catastrophic miscalculation, a miscalculation that plunged the country into chaos. The civil service, government ministers, and politicians in general were at a loss. Most decided that the only course open to them was to undermine the referendum result by remaining in the European Union in some shape or form.

These attempts to undermine the result of the referendum ranged from the Tory Party to Jeremy Corbin's Labour Party, and even to some major trade unions. Suggestions for compromise on the issue extended from proposals for a softer form of Brexit to those calling for a

second referendum aimed at reversing the majority decision of 2016.

This confusion was apparently brought to a close with the victory of Boris Johnson in July 2019. Both, the shilly shallying of Teresa May's government and the threat from Jeremy Corbyn were at an end. Six months later, on the 31st of January 2020 Boris had "Got Brexit Done". Well, had he? We were not at all sure. Confusion reigned, particularly over Northern Ireland's land border with the Irish Republic, which is an international frontier between Britain and the European Union. This rumbled on until Boris's *penchant* for throwing drinks parties in Downing Street resulted in his removal from office, his replacement by Liz Truss in September 2022, and her sudden replacement by Rishi Sunak little more than a month later. This was followed by Sunak's resounding defeat two months ago - five Prime Ministers in less than eight years.

These years of tumbling prime ministers, topsy turvy policies, ill-divined objectives, unreliable characters in Downing Street and the Cabinet Office, incoherence in a Parliament at odds with half the electorate and the Supreme Court, rattled 'The Establishment' almost to destruction. The web of relationships between ministers, senior civil servants, the judiciary, the bankers, employers' associations, and the security services, was fractured almost beyond repair. The normal cues and indications of what was expected by the different branches of the state proved difficult to divine; the left hand was never entirely sure what the right hand wanted or was going to do.

A reset was definitely overdue.

Surprisingly, this reset has come in the form of the Labour Party's leader, Sir Kier Starmer, Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath, and Fellow of St Edmunds Hall, Oxford. A scholarship boy, Kier Starmer, the son of a toolmaker who entered the elite via Reigate Grammar School (all fees paid), has clambered up the greasy pole of politics from youthful Trotskyism into the British establishment as Queen's (King's) Counsel, Director of Public Prosecutions, and now, Prime Minister. It must be understood that these honours and positions pre-date his involvement in Jeremy Corbyn's front bench. Jeremy

Corbyn's demise, following labour's defeat in 2019, enabled Keir to slither into the leadership of the Labour Party, and consolidate this move with the astonishing expulsion of his socialist predecessor from the party.

It is certainly noteworthy that Starmer succeeded in doing this to Corbyn without the left of the Parliamentary Labour Party taking any action to stop attacks upon socialist MPs. Corbyn's attitude to the Jews or Islamism was not really at issue, he was clearly removed because he is a socialist of the Bennite sort, pledged to shift "the balance of wealth and power in favour of the majority of working people and their families" rather than preserving the privileges of the country's shareholders and company directors.

Starmer is engaged in completing the process, initiated by Tony Blair, of squeezing the social democrats out of the Labour Party in favour of a frankly establishment party committed to the conservative 'centre' ground. This is, no doubt, why he refers to the Democratic Party across the Pond as Labour's "sister party". Starmer's objective is to ensure that the Labour Party is seen to oppose the conservatism of the Tories, while remaining unencumbered by social democracy. His objective is to restore the fortunes of both the Labour Party and the British Establishment by guaranteeing austerity and preserving the cherished objectives of balancing the budget and keeping the country, and its clapped-out constitution more or less unchanged so that the stability of the key institutions of the state, and the functional relationships between them, are brought back to the coherence and good order they lost after 2016.

Consequently, his watchwords are 'partnership' and 'common cause'. The partnership and common cause concern the identity of interest between capital and labour, between the workers and employers – between the public and private sectors of the economy. This repeats Tony Blair's mantra: "no more workers and bosses, we are all on the same side".

The tough choices that Keir Starmer and Rachel Reeves are fearlessly making in the struggle to impose austerity in the interests of balancing the current account are presented as unavoidable; the only course open to

them. Balancing the current account and keeping borrowing to a minimum means continuing to close libraries and swimming pools. It means cutting the cold weather payments to millions of pensioners. We will learn what more we are going to lose in the budget pencilled in for the beginning of next month.

These cuts and the reasons for them are presented by the establishment as neutral – or as Margaret Thatcher used to say, TINA: “There is no alternative”. In reality they are simply the political choice most congenial to those in power. We could borrow much more for infrastructure spending, for capital investment, by allowing the national debt to balloon with the solid understanding that the resulting growth of the economy would result in a fall in the relative size of the national debt within two or three years. However, as Liz Truss discovered this sort of move is not going to be tolerated by the banks, international investors, the insurance companies, asset managers, the Treasury, and the *Establishment* in general.

This is why Starmer, whilst attacking the idea of austerity, is bravely taking the tough decisions implementing exactly what he says he is committed *not to do* – maintaining austerity. This slithering hypocrisy and the extraordinary shift from being a spokesman for Corbyn to being a man of the establishment has led some to insinuate sinister goings-on around Starmer – maybe a deep-state plot, or something similar. In truth such speculations are unnecessary. Sir Keir Starmer KCB, former Director of Public Prosecutions, offered Corbyn a bit of responsible cover in an otherwise outlandish shadow cabinet. However, personal ambition had simply led Comrade Keir into alliance with the left, and then in short order, to ruthless attacks upon his former pals the moment Corbyn was revealed as a busted flush. He was then able to “get the job done” on behalf of the movers and shakers in the British state. These people, the authorities, are now breathing a collective sigh of relief, delighted that at last, after years of disorder they have their man in Downing Street.