

Labour's choices

There seem to be two main strands in leadership proposals for Labour. The first is to go back to the damaging topic of Brexit which has splintered them so badly in the last three years, and to present a stronger Remain view. The second is to let the Conservatives deliver Brexit and concentrate instead on the radical social and economic agenda. Neither of these offers an easy route back to popularity.

Many of us see the result of the referendum followed by two elections where pro Brexit parties have won as a clear indication of the country's view. We decided and we should get on with it. Trying to do at a later stage what the Lib Dems failed to do in the 2019 election seems foolish. Dressing it up as a second vote when they want to have a vote between two kinds of Remain will not convince the Brexit majority. It is also a short term policy. The next General election should take place long after we have left the EU.

Those who want to stress the domestic agenda and develop the work of Corbyn and McDonald are right to think forwards to a post Brexit world. They also need to ask themselves why was there so much hostility to their generous large offer of "free" services and nationalised businesses in 2019?

The voters in the North and Midlands they lost did not just switch because of Brexit, important though that was. They also felt Labour had forgotten the needs and views of the many aspirational families who are not well off but who look to government to offer a hand up not a hand out. Labour constantly spoke out for the tiny minority that sleep rough, or the minority that still cannot find a job rather than for the many who pay taxes to pay the state bills and who want more of their own money to spend. Labour also speak for the migrants still to arrive, which worries those facing housing shortages or low wages.

If Labour take away the conclusion that free hand outs and nationalisations are popular, so they need more of them, they may well lose again. Labour last won under Tony Blair, when he tacked a long way towards Conservatism at a time when the Conservatives had messed the economy up thanks to the European Exchange Rate Mechanism.