

Rishi will need some populism

To become a President or the leader of a majority party modern democrats need to assimilate enough populism to win. The elite establishment view is based around the iron discipline of accelerated progress to net zero, whilst including political correctness and the boom/bust lurches of their economic advice. The elite currently favour recession to tame the inflation their damaging over extended experiment in money printing brought us. This is not a winning ticket.

Populists of the so called right have been adopting some socialist policy features, favouring price controls on basics, subsidies and even windfall taxes. Their more unique and positive remedy of lower taxes is a good selling point, as is their opposition to government lecturing and regulating so many aspects of our lives. They see use of a car as part of our freedoms, and resent culture war thought controls.

Populists of the left want to tax the rich more. Their selling point is the offer of more free money to more people, as they work away at proposals to shorten working weeks, offer minimum incomes and promise ever more "free" public services on a universal basis. They are happy with taxing and regulating cars off the road and with making it more and more difficult to run a free enterprise business. They recruit plenty of thought police.

An incoming leader like Rishi Sunak has difficult judgements to make. He sits at the top of an establishment official and quango ridden government which will wish to expunge populist traits from his policy mix. If he lets them do this he will not rescue the opinion polls. If he insists on too much populism the elite will seek its revenge.