

The collapse of Labour

Mr Corbyn must have been forced into a corner over a second referendum. He had wisely held out against it and sort of kept his party together and his poll ratings up. He then gave in just after 8 MPs left mainly over deselection, unpleasant treatment from their party and anti-Semitism. We read his advisers thought a second referendum would be the way to stop more dissenters. That is not necessarily the case, as MPs leaving seems to have more to do with the style of the party, the threat of deselection and a wider range of issues than the EU. It does mean, however, he will lose a lot of Leave voters who stuck with the party in 2017 in the belief that Labour now supported exit.

I have not met or heard from any Leave voters who think we need a second referendum. The campaign to hold one is of course a movement of Remain voters who cannot accept the verdict of the People's vote. The Remain MPs spend their time slanging off Leave voters by saying we were too stupid to vote properly or patronising us by saying we were misled or not given the true facts. Allying himself to this group drives a new wedge into his party, alienating Leave voters and putting many MPs in a difficult position having promised their Leave voters Labour backed leaving. Given the way they treat us Leave voters it is difficult to see why any of us would want to change sides and join them. A second referendum looks like a hopeless mission. Even this Parliament should vote it down. Were one to be held why wouldn't Leave win by a bigger margin, given all that Remain has said about us, and all the false forecasts they have come out with? The hardline Remain MPs are remorselessly negative, run down our country, think the UK can do nothing for itself, and take the EU's side in any negotiation. These are not becoming characteristics for those who wish to represent most UK voters.

Labour has not defined the question for its referendum, but have said it will include Remain, so it is a re run of what we have already voted on. The only question to be resolved is do they want a proper WTO exit as an option, or would they seek to deny Leave voters even that? The last thing Leave voters could accept is a referendum between staying in as a full member and staying in some limbo land with a pretend Brexit under the cosh of a Withdrawal Agreement and in due course an Association Agreement.

The immediate polling is dire for Labour as a result of all this. It looks as if they have plunged well below 30%, with a worse result if the so called Independent group becomes a party that contests elections. That group could poll into double figures, damaging Labour and the Lib Dems but not polling enough to hold the seats of those MPs who have decamped to it. Any party which ignores the wishes and views of 17.4 million voters will struggle for support.