

Tonight there is Rejoicing and Merriment in Downing Street, but Tomorrow's Hangover will Surely Follow

News:

Last night, 12th of December, Boris Johnson won the UK elections with a landslide victory for his party that saw the biggest election defeat for the Labour Party since 1935. Labour's Jeremy Corbyn kept his seat in parliament, but with such a crushing defeat nationally, he announced that he would not be leading his party into the next general election. The Scottish National Party gained a landslide victory in Scotland, and with the third largest number of seats in parliament, they will have no power in the face of the overwhelming conservative majority, although they will have a loud and noisy voice with their call for Scottish independence and not being "dragged out of the European Union."

Comment:

Technically, Boris did not win the election - his party did. He only won his seat, but it was his message and his personality that resonated emphatically with the voters after three grueling years of Brexit mayhem dominating UK politics. What he promised them was simple. He promised less than any of the others, but told the people that somehow if you put your trust in me, I will take your problems away. The National Health Service would be invigorated, the economy restored and Britain would be great again. It did not matter that he failed to properly explain how.

He was called a coward for refusing to be interviewed by Andrew Neil, but here the real cowardice was that of the BBC who allowed Andrew Neil to accuse Jeremy Corbyn of anti-Semitism, while agreeing to surrender to Boris Johnson's wish to be given a softer interview by someone else. Boris was called dishonest and even a liar in the same vein as Trump, but today calling a politician a liar is strangely ineffective, as it is assumed that all of them lie to get elected. Perhaps that was even part of his appeal. If he had said how he would achieve his vague promises, then the electorate would have been forced to study data, listen to counter arguments and make a judgement.

What was stunningly effective was the simple slogan: "get Brexit done!" with heavy emphasis on the word 'done'. Repeated over and over again, his promise to take back control for Britain and do it his way, and at any cost, even if his claim was a gross over-simplification, was exactly what people wanted to hear. Brexit will not make the UK great or even very independent again, and whatever sovereignty will be reclaimed from the EU will very likely be handed straight over again to the US in exchange for a trade deal with Trump. The integrity of the UK will be shaken: constitutional crisis over Scotland and Northern Ireland is looming, and despite the Brexit slogan, it is not even certain that the new prime minister will actually take the UK out of the EU. His only definite commitment, which he has tied all his party's candidates to, is that his government will not ask for another EU extension.

"Get Brexit done" really means, do whatever you want, but 'please' (with my emphasis on please!) do it quickly and make sure that we hear as little as possible about this deeply troubling national dilemma in the days ahead. No one believes that Brexit will be easy, and Boris is not expected to get a very different deal to the one that May negotiated, but the main wish of the electorate was to have someone take full responsibility for the mess that a previous Conservative government had handed the people in the 2016 referendum, and Boris's overflowing enthusiasm for the task has met that need. The people, burned by the rare exercise of direct participatory democracy, and Boris, having cauterized his party and the nation, have pulled together the biggest landslide victory for his party in modern British history because he is the biggest and loudest fool to have stepped up to drink the poison chalice of Brexit. Tonight, there is rejoicing and merriment in Downing Street, but tomorrow's hangover will surely follow.

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