

Contemporary democratic revolutions

There is a mood to sweep away the old centre left and centre right parties on the continent in a desperate bid to have something better. In the USA and the UK there is the wish to force change on the body politic by voting for Brexit and Donald Trump, within the traditional party structures. On both sides of the Atlantic and the Channel there is that same impatience with politics as it has been practised for the last twenty years, and anger at the way the governing corporate, civil service and Ministerial elites have behaved.

The anger is justified. The elites told us they knew best. They assured us they had the expertise. On the continent Tweedledum and Tweedledee parties alternated in government but little of substance changed. In the UK a puppet Parliament pretended to be in control whilst shovelling through thousands of pages of laws and many spending programmes that the EU required, with both parties claiming to support them without criticism or proper debate. In the UK we were made to live through the Exchange Rate Mechanism recession, the Banking Crash recession and the Euro crisis at one remove. The US was put through the Great Recession and the Iraq war. The Euro area had to endure the most economic pain with the ERM crash, the Banking Crash and the continuing Euro crisis.

People not very interested in politics, or pessimistic about their chances of changing anything for many years, have decided to take back control. In the USA Mr Trump first tossed aside all the serious professional well honed politicians of the Republican party to take their crown. He then went on to defeat the doyenne of political insiders, the darling of the elite, Hilary Clinton, who ran on a ticket of expertise and experience. The public said if it meant the expertise that had brought them the Great Recession and the Iraq war, they would rather try something new.

In the UK many groups of people with very varied political opinions united behind a campaign with the express slogan of Take Back Control. The more Remain paraded every great figure of the established governing and corporate bosses, the more the Leave case was supported. The experts who had led much of southern and western European economy into mass unemployment with their Euro currency were surprised when people did not believe their forecasts of gloom if the UK dared to vote Out. My belief Leave would win was strengthened at a big public meeting when many in the audience laughed and cried out their disbelief when the Project Fear forecasts were put before them.

If parties wish to run and support technocratic government it must at least be competent technocratic government. If they believe only they have the expertise to make the decisions and that the people just need bread and circuses, they must make sure everyone can afford the bread and get to the circus. The main reason the old establishment is being swept away is it failed to deliver.

Tomorrow I will look at the parlous light of the Conservative and Labour look alike parties on the continent.