

Parliamentary Democracy is not Working for Britain

News:

A BBC headline today, 13th of September, carried the title: “Bercow warns Johnson against disobeying Brexit law.” The law in question was “passed before the suspension of Parliament, forces the PM to seek a delay until 31 January 2020, unless a deal or no-deal exit is approved by MPs by 19 October,” and the prime minister earlier said he would prefer to be “dead in a ditch” than ask for a delay.

Comment:

The United Kingdom has been dragged into constitutional chaos with its parliament prorogued by the prime minister in a failed attempt to prevent MPs from voting to thwart his promise to withdraw from the EU on the 31st of October even without an exit deal. Parliament did pass a law that gained approval in both houses to make it illegal for the PM in the event of no-deal to leave the EU without requesting a three-month extension. Parliament is now suspended, in what MP’s mostly consider to be an attack upon parliamentary democracy where elected members should decide on behalf of the people what is best. Those in support of the prime minister argue that the people have already spoken by voting by a majority, albeit a narrow majority, to leave the European Union. Those who wanted to remain accuse the ‘vote leave’ campaign of misleading the people about the consequences of leaving, and so the arguments go on and on.

Johnson has been accused of being a tyrant, and an enemy of democracy, or at least parliamentary democracy, but then again parliamentary democracy has failed –so why not? How could any parliament of competing interests come to agreement about a serious issue that requires an outside party, the European Union – itself composed of 27 members including the UK, to agree to what is offered? It is an incredible task.

The Romans had a solution in their version of democracy. The Roman senators would appoint a ‘tyrant’ during times of crisis who would rule by his own will for a designated time with the promise to hand back power to the senators when the situation calms. Some saw Johnson as that needed tyrant, but the system did not even allow him to have a free hand, so we have him asking parliament to accept fresh elections and the opposition party refusing. What a game UK politics has become!

The knife edge balancing, upon which the whole future of the country teeters now will eventually see, perhaps in October, or perhaps in January, or perhaps in a year’s time or who knows when, a final puff of air or a twist of fate that will take the decision out of the hands of those who are unable to take any real decision. Islam has given us the caliphate system where a Revelation is the basis of a comprehensive system of life and a single man is appointed by the people to implement this system. Like all systems run by humans it will face questions of legal interpretation; and accountability will be essential. Islam provides a framework for judgement and accountability that requires political awareness amongst the people, while democracy pays lip service to, and is very noisy about, that, and yet in practice it has relegated its affairs to entertainment style campaigns and the concept of balancing interests through a multi-party system of representation that is not able to address complex problems.

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