

The Implosion of Liz Truss

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"The Tory Party is like a knight dying in his armour." -Peter Hitchens, Mail on Sunday, Oct 16, 2022

Liz Truss is proving to be the architect of her own spectacular demise. She laid the mines in a fit of drunken ecstasy and decided to skip across them with an almost childish arrogance that has stunned her own party members. Along the way, a few have gone off, doing her what can only be regarded as terminal political damage.

The effort to shift sole responsibility for the abysmal economic plan on tax cuts outlined in the "mini-Budget" to her Chancellor suggested a lack of awareness and authority. It further suggested a profound lack of competence, if only because the Chancellor had simply done what he was supposed to do.

While Truss supporters suggested replacing Kwasi Kwarteng, political reality yielded something quite different. They had been seen as a duo, immune to policy U-turns, keen to promote the "growth" agenda in the face of bizarrely named anti-growth sceptics. Now, everything was for turning. "This," [came the message](#) from Tory backbencher Craig Mackinlay to his colleagues, was "a double U-turn with the handbrake on. Never U-turn. Others will smell blood in the water knowing they can take bites out of your backside & dictate the agenda."

The arrival of **Jeremy Hunt** as Kwarteng's replacement was a clanging admission of failure. The veteran cabinet minister had been a leadership contender himself, not to mention a backer of Truss's main rival Rishi Sunak. Acting in the role of de facto CEO, a position alien to Westminster, Hunt was given the job of dismantling what was proving to be a calamitously assembled set of promises. Mistakes had to be admitted, though Truss was only reluctantly admitting that some had been made.

In his *Sunday Telegraph* column, Hunt [claimed](#) that getting debt falling and restoring market confidence would only take place with the making of "some very difficult decisions." He was pained to say that spending would not "rise by as much as we would have liked." Tax cuts would not be cut as quickly as had been hoped. Some - and here, he was sounding

positively heretical – would have to go up.

The PM, for her part, could not explain in her brief press conference on October 15 how removing her Chancellor would do more to pursue the agenda for more growth, let alone justify her continued stint in office. She had also ditched yet another platform of her economic agenda: reversing the Corporations Tax. Keeping the increase in place would, instead, yield £18 billion in revenue.

There is even a suggestion that reducing the basic rate of income tax next April will be pushed back by twelve months. According to the *Sunday Times*, “The 19 per cent rate will now take effect at the time previously proposed by Rishi Sunak, Liz Truss’s leadership rival.”

In *The Sun*, Truss [showed](#) how blinkered she had become, channelling the ghost of Margaret Thatcher and the tumultuous Britain of the 1980s. “We cannot allow Britain to be held back by a militant mob. That is why we will push on this week with new measures to stop the chaos caused by guerrilla protests and to curb the power of militant rail unions.” The “anti-growth coalition” led by Labour’s Keir Starmer would stifle free speech and shackle businesses “with ever greater mountains of red tape.”

Much of this was directed at the hope of calming the raging markets and the dousing rise in interest rates stemming from the Bank of England. “People across the United Kingdom rightly want stability and opportunity,” she said. The mini-Budget was intended to “shield families and businesses this winter and the next” but had gone “further and faster than the markets were expecting.” She tried to assure readers that she had listened and got it.

The delinquent management by Truss, equipped with policies a mocking Peter Hitchens [suggests](#) were bought on eBay, has even caused alarm across the Atlantic. US President Joe Biden was willing [to offer](#) his few cents worth to reporters at an ice-cream parlour in Oregon. “I wasn’t the only one that thought it was a mistake.” The notion of “cutting taxes on the super-wealthy at a time when ... I disagree with the policy, but it’s up to Britain to make that judgment, not me.”

Conservative MPs have been fuming and fulminating, much of it self-loathing given their role in making Truss PM in the first place. An MP who did support her [predicted](#) that “she’ll be gone next week.” One cabinet minister [declared](#) Truss “finished. We’re not going to sit back and let her take the country and the party over the cliff.”

There have been letters to Sir Graham Brady, chairman of the 1922 Committee, calling for a vote of no confidence, even if party rules disallow such a call for at least a year after the election of a new leader. According [to an unnamed](#) “Tory grandee”, if one can trust the *Mail on Sunday*, “it just needs Sir Graham to change that rule and then we submit the letters.” If not, Sir Graham could just as well be voted out and replaced by a more accommodating chair.

A fitting, if vulgar aside to the whole saga came from comedian and actress Miriam Margolyes on the standardly middle-brow BBC Radio 4. While slotted in to speak about the passing of fellow Harry Potter actor Robbie Coltrane, she could not resist, in coming on the radio slot after Hunt, [making mention](#) of a desire to say “Fuck you cunt!” on greeting him. Not perhaps the most mature observation, but not necessarily inaccurate. Through the course of his career, both man and name have somehow converged. And now, should the polls hold, his party faces electoral eradication.

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