

Politicians of all other parties* need to rise to the c...

Published: January 13, 2026, 11:52 am

Boris Johnson is to be prime minister. And there are rumours that Iain Duncan-Smith and Priti Patel are to return to Cabinet. It is easy to think that nothing good can come from this.

At one level that is true. I suspect, very strongly that nothing good will come from this, directly.

And yet, there has always to be a turning point when people realise that all that was can be no more and that change is essential. Too often things have had to reach a dire state for that to happen. Whilst I would never have chosen the situation in which we find ourselves, maybe this government that will be without talent, vision or concern is what is required to precipitate that change.

That does, however, require more than hope. Change requires that all opposition parties have courage and go for what they want now.

Labour must offer a true vision of reform, and solve its internal divisions, whatever their cause.

Nationalists can no longer dither.

Greens must be unambiguous about what is required to save life on earth.

And in the face of populism Liberals must reiterate their values.

I make no pretence that I will like all that is said by any of them. But that's not the point. The point is that the time for dithering, for deliberate ambiguity and 'wait and see' is over. What is now required is positive proposals for change.

But I would also suggest a common constraint be recognised. Johnson will go for economic growth. He and his team will not accept that the environment imposes any limit on their actions. Everyone else must. This, above all else, is now the basic test for political credibility.

If that happens what Johnson might represent in the UK is the end of the neoliberal era and the ushering in of the new political consensus that will be built around the Green New Deal, whatever people call it.

There will, of course, be differences of emphasis between parties in this new consensus. But a consensus it will be, nonetheless. If Johnson's failure - for failure it will be - ushers this in then maybe this is a moment to live through.

I live in hope.

* I exclude the so-called Brexit Party as it is not as such a party, but a personal campaign vehicle for Farage