

Three risks, one cauldron and Johnson's future i...

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I recorded for Alex Salmond's television programme earlier this week. The broadcast is out tonight. In it Peter Osborne and I discuss the current state of the political economy in the UK and the countries that make it up. One question Alex asked was what the threats to the Johnson government are now.

I suggested that I saw three major threats, all of which would be internalised by his party.

The first was angry students, and even angrier parents as the scale of Covid 19 lockdowns, and the real risk of widespread outbreaks in halls of residence, grows. Students are not naturally compliant. Patents required to pay a lot for what looks like a second rate deal are getting angry.

Then there is Brexit and the real risk that this will give rise to food shortages in January, which is a month when we are at maximum imported food exposure, with much of it coming via Calais and Dover, where chaos is widely expected. People will not forgive a political party that deliberately create food shortages, or that creates deliberate food price inflation, which is inevitable from January onwards. The anger of parents who have difficulty feeding their children will be hard to contain.

Third, there is a coming unemployment crisis. I find it very hard to believe that many of the 3 million also people still on furlough will have jobs by Christmas, most especially when so many very vulnerable sectors are now operating under restrictive measures again, with threats to business viability now being very high indeed. People who are out of work, and with no apparent prospect of securing it, and who are at threat of losing their homes as a consequence, have nothing more to lose. Governments need to be very worried about creating millions of such people.

My suggestion to Alex Salmond was that putting these three risks together into one melting pot to which the government was now applying more than gentle heat was going to be calamitous for the Johnson administration. Peter Osborne suggested that he could not see it surviving: his suggestion was that a national government under Keir

Starmer is likely next year.

The agreement was that we are in for a very rough ride. I think that the programme should be worth watching.