

Johnson is a man whose time has gone

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One of mildly annoying things about watching politics day in, day out, is that none of the rational reasons for people desiring change cut through, but the irrational ones do. It would seem people think any amount of economic distress is beyond the government's ability to address, whilst the abuse of rights is taken by people as a given. But then, to quote whoever once said it (and there is little evidence that MacMillan did), 'events' take over. Three events are taking over sentiment now. I suspect they will be pivotal.

First, there is partygate. People have at long last noted this. And when all was supposedly meant to be resolved, at least according to Johnson, the anger has become apparent. The lies, the contempt, the excuses and the whitewash by the Met and Sue Gray, have all become very obvious, and people are very angry. Rightly so, too. A friend of mine last saw her mother through the window of a care home. Downing Street partied. There is in that contrast an irreconcilable difference in view that is now clear to most.

The confusion and delays at airports highlight another issue. It is now a ritual for many to have an annual foreign holiday in the sun. As someone who has not left the UK to holiday for more than a decade I don't fully comprehend this, but accept it as a reality, for now. And what airport chaos is doing is to take the pleasure out of that, entirely. Whether it's having a second rate passport or the inability to recruit staff due to Brexit that is to blame is of little consequence. The reality of Brexit has now become clear to millions. The choice to create borders, which is what Brexit was about, has a significant cost. It just had to get very personal for it to be noticed. Now it has been. There will be millions pondering the wisdom of their choice as they wait in line only to have their flights cancelled this summer. Few will escape the conclusion that Brexit really is not working.

Then, perhaps more contentiously, there are the events of this weekend. The gratitude towards the Queen for a life of service is real amongst many. But, the prospect of King Charles III clearly worries many. And the brazen attempts to portray the royal line as functional and worthy of celebration appears crass and even deeply mistaken when

this, like almost all others, is a deeply divided and dysfunctional family. It is, however, worse than that. Even the BBC has let sentiment about an interfering, political king whose judgement cannot be relied upon creep into some of its broadcasting, albeit in odd moments. I suspect the realisation that this is what we are going to get is very real as Charles takes on the role of Regent, even if as ever his mother is denying him what he wants. No doubt that is because she realises how dangerous giving it to him might be. That leaves deep constitutional uncertainty in the air.

Why note all this? Because I think the doubts people are having are real, and pivotal. They are suffering economic malaise, neo-fascism and failed government, but it is the lived experience of 'events' that seems to change things, and those events are happening. I strongly suspect that this will be what Tory MPs are hearing this weekend, by the bucketload. And that will, I think, influence the number of them both willing to put letters in to call for Johnson's recall come the return of parliament tomorrow, and to vote against him in what looks to be an increasingly likely no confidence vote this week. Friday's booing will be resonating in their ears, and rightly so. Johnson is a man whose time has gone.

Will he survive? I do not know. Should he survive? Clearly not. Is his legacy sealed? I think so, and it is dire. Will he drag the Tories down with him? I strongly suspect so, whatever happens.

But I still wish the other parties were ready to provide an alternative vision. Events demand it. They will need it soon.