

Filling the voids in the post-Elizabethan era

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I posted [this thread on Twitter](#) this morning:

It's indisputable that the Queen's death marked the end of an era. It also creates two empty spaces. The royal family must try to fill one. The Tory party has created the other, much more worrying, void. A thread.....

I have no idea what the royal family will do next. It is not my great concern. I will let others fret about that, sure in the knowledge that they will, and that there will ample nastiness to come. That is the way of the tabloid media, as we all know.

My great wish over the weekend was that neoliberalism might have departed with the Elizabethan era. That is not going to happen. We have Liz Truss instead, a prime minister of two weeks.

Politics has, supposedly, been suspended for most of that period, but that's not how it feels. It's likely Truss has already committed to £100 billion plus a year to support energy bills over the next two years.

And it seems very likely Truss will also commit to £30 billion of tax cuts, very largely for the best off, this week in a combination of reductions to national insurance and corporation tax.

On top of that, the Treasury is now very obviously laying trails for the creation of twelve 'low tax zones' that considerably upgrade the 'freeport' policy of Johnson and Sunak, with seeming near tax haven status going to the designated areas.

At the heart of this is dogma. That is astonishing. That's because we only have to go back to Cameron to find a Conservative PM, or in other words, a man without dogma willing to peddle any old story to perpetuate his party in power, but never believing in anything.

That's what a true Conservative is: a pragmatic defender of the status quo and the power relationships implicit in it. Via Brexit, the ERG, the decline of UKIP and the rise of Britannia Unchained, plus the drive towards kleptocracy, everything has changed in the Tories.

The far-right has taken a strong hold on part of the party. The Brexit wing is deeply xenophobic. Little placates it. Its aim was to divide, in the basis of exit or remain, but with the division going much deeper than that, and remains when Brexit has so obviously failed.

Johnson gave the kleptocrats a go. The residue of that group remains, with more maybe headed for the Lords. The aim was to divide, once more. There were those within the ruling elite, who gained enormously from Johnson, and those without. Mistrust is his legacy.

The old Conservatives have largely been expelled. Rory Stewart appears to be best chums of Alastair Campbell. The neoliberal compromise that has governed for forty years is out in the wilderness. The division between traditional Conservatives and their party is massive.

And now we have a form of hardcore Manchester School nineteenth-century capitalism that believes that so-called free markets, absent of government regulation, are the route to prosperity. This is where the tax-cutting and freeport mantra comes from.

This time the division is between rich and poor, with a profound bias to the rich, and those areas to be favoured as tax havens and those that will not. As ever in the modern Tory party the aim is division. All that changes is where the dividing lines are drawn.

Despite the massive changes in direction over just six years it is said that all these varying, deeply divisive, types of supposed Conservatism are capable of reconciliation within a single political party, creating the coalition that enables it to govern.

Bluntly, I doubt that. The only thing that ever enabled the Tories to rule was an absence of dogma. Without a belief system the party could always let its membership and the country project onto it whatever they wished that it might think, and that was the basis of its support.

But since 2015 the Tories have begun to think things. First, the xenophobes won. Then the kleptocrats. And now it's the hardcore free marketeers. No wonder we have been changing prime minister so often. But, more seriously, these groups really do not agree with each other.

There is little that the Brexiteers can really gain from Truss. She might taunt the EU over Northern Ireland. She may say something about migration. But the hard-core Brexiteers are unlikely to get much of a kick out of a low tax zone in Great Yarmouth.

They don't do economics.

And whilst the tax cuts that are going to be announced and the tax breaks that freeports might provide should appeal to the kleptocrat class, they are available to all, in principle, unlike the PPE contracts that favoured only a few. So they're unlikely to buy into this agenda.

And, candidly, most traditional Tory supporters must be having nightmares about the policies Truss is proposing. That partly because they will rightly think she will be trashing the public finances. It's as if she was trying to lay waste to them.

And they will know the freeport policy is unsustainable because it will create administrative nightmares for tax, employment law, and administration, all of which most in business (the tax abusers apart) will hate, and wish to end as soon as possible.

As for the energy support package, it is already too late to likely save a great many small businesses. If this is what Tory dogma brings many who were previously willing to believe in Tory competence will now abandon a party seemingly intent on destruction.

The party itself may not even tolerate this for long, most especially in the Lords, but quite possibly on the back benches of the Commons as well, to which Truss has sent so many potential enemies with the experience to counterattack.

In summary, the Brexiteers hijacked the Tories and have created mayhem at enormous cost. The kleptocrats have destroyed faith in the integrity of government and now the Truss faction of hardcore free market dogmatists are in charge. They will try to wreck us too.

But what they will leave is a void in politics. The coalition that is the Tories cannot survive these continual reinventions for much longer when each has left a core of bruised remnant of members angry that their own coup attempt has failed.

The greatest challenge facing the royal family is trying to remain the glue that holds an incoherent and illogical Union of nations together.

For the Tories the greatest challenge will be trying to hold the Conservative Party together when it has its fourth leader in a row intent on destruction of value as their primary modus operandi.

The failure of the Union is quite possible, and is now widely talked about, as if the countries of the UK are already trying to come to terms with the inevitable.

Sometime soon the imminent collapse of Tories will become apparent. But when it does occur it is not clear who, how, or what fills that void. And that is deeply dangerous because how English politics works without the Tories is unknown.

But as serious, if Labour continues as it is then the majority who now believe in rejoining the EU are left without a major party in a two-party system that they can support. Nor, in England, the Green's apart, is there a left-of-centre party. Labour has abandoned that role.

So when the Tories collapse, as they likely will, the void is even bigger. That means are in a dangerous era with the most dangerous PM of my lifetime in charge.

Of course, we could see a democratic revival. We might get a Labour government intent on genuine political reform to prevent fascism. We may see new parties emerging with the same intent. There is no sign of either, as yet.

Alternatively, the rump of the Tories may pick up the fascist reigns. That is entirely possible. Voids get filled, often undesirably.

The post-Elizabethan era is going to need a lot of luck. Politically its pathways, at least in England, but much less in the other nations of what for now is a Union, look very dangerous.

It will take co-ordinated action by all real democrats to save England. One has to hope Labour might do its duty. If not, we need to worry, greatly.