

Who will trust Boris Johnson now?

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The report into whether Boris Johnson misled Parliament is still 90 minutes away as I write, but we know that it will be damning. It is expected to suggest that he did so on multiple occasions. He last abused privilege last week, when he leaked part of the findings of the report.

There is not a great deal of news in here. Any person with a scintilla of sense knew Johnson to be a liar. He is one of the few people about whom that term can be used publicly without the slightest fear of a successful libel action. Only those touched by what might, politely, be called the excesses of right-wing fervour seek to defend him now.

The recommendation of this Committee was, we expect, to be that Johnson be banned from the House of Commons for at least ten days, leading to a likely recall petition. That, of course, cannot happen now. Johnson has pre-empted the issue by resigning. He has, as ever, refused to accept the consequences of his actions.

There are such consequences, however. These exist, most especially, with regard to the Covid inquiry. If, as seems likely, Johnson was ultimately responsible for the deaths of tens of thousands of people who need not have died when they did, then he needs to give evidence to that judge-led inquiry. The simple question is, how will we, and they, know if he tells the truth then? And what will the sanction be if he does not?

Before then though, the option of another sanction on Johnson exists. He could be barred from the parliamentary estate in Westminster now. John Bercow was the most recent prominent person to be banned in that way. So a simple poll:

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