

American democracy, dying after the Party

Published: January 13, 2026, 7:48 am

The USA is about to commit one of the biggest, if not the biggest, frauds in history. It is giving notice of its intention to default on its creditors, not because it can't pay, but because it won't pay.

Or rather, a group of far-right wing, Christian fundamentalist politicians, rightly called '[dangerous charlatans](#)' by the Guardian this morning are seeking to force it to default on its debt even though it could pay.

Worse though, even if they agree to pay the debts, they'll do so at a price that will devastate their country. Whilst they will grant the richest in their community lower taxes they will deny to the poorest many of the services, and indeed the incomes, on which they are utterly dependent.

These people, for the so-called 'Tea Party', claiming to be driven by God, are going to willingly unleash economic mayhem on their country and gross poverty on many people already desperately poor whilst they will, without doubt, drive millions out of work, hundreds of thousands of businesses into ruin and the world economy into deep recession, all they claim because of their love of the markets they seem so intent on destroying.

There is no rational reason for this act of wanton vandalism: it is motivated by dogma and nothing else. But that is a dogma of greed, that says 'what is mine is mine'. And it's a dogma of wealth - that says a few shall inherit the earth. It's also a dogma of hate - that treats those without great wealth as contemptible. It's based on a dogma that applauds ignorance - the ignorance that says that the way to reduce debt is to cut the very income that is your only source of repayment of that debt. Of course, it's also a dogma of complete irresponsibility - because millions, if not billions of people will suffer and many will die as a result of the wanton acts of this group.

And in the process they will seek to destroy democracy itself, and the so-called American dream. Nye Bevan wrote in his classic book 'In Place of Fear':

The issue therefore in a capitalist democracy resolves itself into this: either poverty will

use democracy to win the struggle against property, or property, in fear of poverty, will destroy democracy. Of course, the issue never appears in such simple terms. Different flags will be waived in the battle in different countries and at different times. And it may not be catastrophic unemployment. There may be a slow attrition as there was in Britain before the war, but poverty, great wealth and democracy are ultimately incompatible elements in any society.

He was right. Yet what we have in the USA is a group promoting massive increases in wealth for those already wealthy, massive unemployment for those already poor, an indifference to the rule of law by refusing to accept obligation for debts already incurred and the outcome will, undoubtedly, be a threat to democracy itself.

That's what makes it so worrying that Barack Obama is not standing up to this mob (for a mob they are).

And if he fails to do so, then we all need worry. For not only is recession highly likely, it's democracy that's also under threat, and not just in the USA, but in all places where this logic prevails - as it undoubtedly does now in the right wing of the UK's Conservative Party.

These are dangerous times.