

Of course we're in a mess: the collapse of political th...

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This morning has the feeling of being 'the week after'.

There is no reshuffle.

Or King's Speech.

Nor is there an autumn statement.

There is just the awful reality that we have to live with, which is that the bunch of incompetent individuals now in charge are still here until they are, inevitably, replaced by another shower possessed of excessive personal ambition and not the slightest idea about what they wish to achieve with the political power that they so desperately crave.

Let's ignore the details. Arguments on whether or not we will get a Rwanda Bill this week make almost no difference, not least because any such legislation is not going to make it through the Lords this side of any election. Instead, let's just muse on why we got to this dreadful point.

I can make the answer to that really quite complex or quite straightforward.

There are three reasons why we have such dreadful politicians. One is that the culture of neoliberalism is to focus solely on personal success, defined by material consumption, irrespective of context. After forty years of UK politics embracing that culture, we have inevitably got politicians who act solely in pursuit of their own self-interest. It is hard to explain the absence of any ideas, at least from the leadership of the two main parties, in any other way.

Then there is the fact that those two parties feel themselves utterly immune to challenge because of the first-past-the-post electoral system. Even now, we assume the Tories will be back. That is despite the fact that they are very clearly a zombie political party that deserves to be put out of its misery forever. Given that our political system actively rewards incompetence by perpetuating it, of course incompetence is what we get.

And third? There is the legacy of Thatcher. She said, 'There is no alternative', and that is now what politicians believe. It is neoliberalism or nothing as far as our politicians are concerned, with their sole task being to route as much of the state's revenue to the private sector as they can manage.

Of course, we're in a mess. All the rest is details, from Brexit onwards. These are the causes. The capture of politics by a single, totally false narrative has guaranteed our failure. We must now suffer it or change the way that we think. Those are the choices left open to us.