

## No wonder politics is in a mess

Published: January 13, 2026, 8:19 pm

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It is a day when the choice of new political leaders tops the news.

Kamala Harris appears to have sewn up the race to be the Democrat presidential nominee in only a little over 24 hours. Whether or not she is the right candidate is now an irrelevant discussion: she is the one the Democrats have got. The job required of her is clear. She has to beat Trump.

Here, there is another leadership campaign underway. By 2 November, the Conservatives will have a new leader. Rishi Sunak is staying on as leader until then. The role of whoever gets that job is utterly unclear. They will, undoubtedly, become the official Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, but will anyone be paying attention? Indeed, will anyone show much interest in a leadership contest between candidates who are so uninspiring that excitement is the last thing that any is likely to create, while some revulsion may be the best reaction that they can hope for?

Both of these situations matter. It is clear that the Democrats in the US did not prepare well enough for the possibility that Biden might not seek a second term, even though that eventuality was entirely predictable. As a result, they have a candidate by default, and not by choice.

In contrast, Conservative party members are going to have to choose a new leader for the fifth time since 2016, and it is still very apparent that there is no succession plan in place in that party.

In fact, the characteristic of both parties is the absence of a plan. The Democrats and Tories are both neoliberal to their core, but have ceased to understand what they mean by that, and as a result cannot see that neoliberalism has run out of road, as have they.

I very much hope that Harris beats Trump, but that's pure pragmatism on my part.

In contrast, I would be happy if there was never another Tory government in the UK. We have suffered enough of them already.

But, in both cases, what these parties make clear is that there is a vacuum in politics. The populist extremists have plans, albeit that they are for the destruction of democracy. The supposed mainstream parties, Labour in this country included, are simply adrift, quite unable to work out a reason for their existence.

Democratic politics should exist to improve the lot of the people of a jurisdiction. It does not exist to enrich politicians, their friends, or those who lobby them most successfully. At its core, it is all about meeting the need for a stable society in which all people can thrive, which term is vastly more comprehensive than any financial concept, let alone one related to either growth or profit. But neoliberal politicians, dedicated as they are to corporate interests and managerialism, have forgotten all that.

No wonder the Democrats have got a candidate who no one seems to really want, and the Tories are in a total mess. That's what happens when you don't know what you're doing and why you should be doing it.