

The political system is rotten

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It would seem that people in the US have rumbled the truth. The [New York Times did a poll](#) in the first week of this year asking whether the political system in that country was broken. What they discovered was that 59 per cent thought it had been broken for decades. Only nine per cent thought it was not broken. Most of those in between thought it had been broken for a few years. About three per cent did not know.

They then sought to differentiate between the supporters of both main US parties. Republicans were a little more pessimistic than Democrats, but there was not a lot in it.

Overwhelmingly, people in the US thought that the system that is delivering them, Donald Trump, is not working.

I think they are right. The US system has been corrupted by corporate money, a two-party system that stifles any real competition of innovation, deliberate vote rigging and gerrymandering, a charade of democracy within parties, and the inability of the rotten system to recruit any real talent into politics, a few notable exceptions apart.

Perhaps we should take comfort in the UK. We are not alone in being possessed of an appalling, rigged and blatantly unfair electoral system. That is what neoliberalism delivers, just as it delivers the antithesis in the economy of the competition that is supposedly worshipped, creating monopolies and consumer abuse instead.

What is to be done about it? That is a much harder question to answer as those with power are not looking minded to relinquish it. But, we factor without three things.

First, there is the power of revolt. Maybe this will be unleashed in the USA. The system might have reached its nadir.

Second, there is the possibility that the system will collapse into such chaos - as is happening in European countries - that replacement might happen, although that direction of travel does not look to be in the direction of democracy right now, and rather more in the direction of fascist autocracy.

Third, there is the chance that the greed that drives those who are corrupting this system might in itself tear the parties that dominate it apart, forcing the need for replacements amongst whom choice will have to be made, requiring system change. This seems entirely plausible in the USA, where the MAGA and Musk divisions within the Republicans are becoming very clear, even before the inauguration has taken place. Far from the swamp being clear, Trump appears intent on increasing the level of the floodwaters. This is not going to go down well. And we can see the disquiet in the Tories here, and Labour is very, very far from being a happy camp.

The system is rotten. What we need is a catalyst for change, which is likely to be found in the system's rottenness.