

## Can you imagine?

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Can you imagine Donald Trump staying in office for another three years, given the very obvious crises facing his presidency? I can't. Epstein is going to pull him down soon, even if his other policy failures don't, and they deserve to.

Similarly, can you imagine Keir Starmer remaining in office until 2029? Even Labour MPs, perhaps most especially, are struggling with that idea, so incompetent is he and his government.

Meanwhile, the French have reached the point where they presume that Macron will be appointing another government next week, because that appears to be his habit these days.

And, in Germany, Chancellor Friedrich Merz might have only been in office since May, but his days are very clearly numbered, so lacking in confidence in him are the Bundestag and just about everyone else.

Other examples are available, but these will do for now. My point is that just about wherever you look, politicians who are almost universally lacking in authority because of their incompetence or scandal-prone nature, or who are just so very obviously hopeless that people have seen right through them and are desperate for change, are holding office at a time of international crisis. These incompetent people are creating some of those crises, and others will require their attention, but whichever it is, they very obviously have no ability to deal with whatever it might be that is now heading our way, from war to financial crisis to environmental breakdown.

As a result, some are looking to the far right for answers, but Trump is already proving that they have none, and his base is now falling apart.

Recent evidence presented in the Guardian in the UK shows how disparate the support for Reform in this country is, and how unlikely it is that someone with Farage's limited ability can keep those factions aligned as he seeks power.

Le Pen is too familiar to too many in France now to ever be credible, whilst the AfD in

Germany has the problem that it is the party of what was the East, and the likelihood that, as such, it can rule what was the West is very low.

Therefore, those on the far right are not providing alternatives, as is also evidenced by their rejection in the Netherlands.

So, what happens now? That would appear to be the question of the moment.

This is the moment when political systems usually renew themselves. It is when the familiar falls apart under the weight of its own contradictions, and when those in power lose the consent they once enjoyed, that people begin to look for another story with which to make sense of their world.

What we are living through is not simply a crisis of individual leaders, although the personal failures are stark enough. It is a crisis of a whole political order that has run out of ideas, energy, and legitimacy. Neoliberalism, which for forty years promised competence, technocracy, and the management of decline, has now nothing left to offer beyond excuses and the enforcement of its own failures.

If there is hope, and I suggest that there is, it lies not in waiting for these exhausted governments to somehow reinvent themselves. They won't. It lies in recognising that people across the democratic world are crying out for something better: for governments that understand the crises we face, rather than manufacture them; for leaders who are willing to use the power of the state to solve problems, rather than claim that they are powerless; and for politics that treats people with respect rather than as a nuisance to be managed.

The far right cannot do that. Its only offer is resentment, at best. It has no solutions to climate breakdown, to economic insecurity, to failing public services, or to the collapse of social trust. It feeds off crises, but has no capacity to resolve them.

The alternative lies elsewhere.

It lies in the politics of care, and in the recognition that government is the only institution with both the capacity and the democratic authority to tackle the problems we confront.

It lies in the understanding that austerity was always a choice, and not a necessity, and a ruinous one at that.

It lies in acknowledging that every significant challenge we face, from public-service collapse to the climate emergency, is a collective problem that only collective action can solve.

What happens next, then, is up to us. These failing governments will not last for very much longer. They cannot, as is already very apparent. They are too divided, too

discredited, and too inept to do that. The vacuum they will leave can be filled with fear or hope. It can be filled by those who wish to turn the clock back, or by those prepared to imagine a better future.

A moment of political imagination is opening before us. The question is whether we seize it.

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You may say I'm a dreamer...

Lennon's dream is not my own: it lacks a foundation in reality, but dream we must.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YkgkThdzX-8?si=BO8FR3IE66voa6a1>

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