

[It's not just the newspapers that have been corrupted](#) [1]

Written by [Dr Eamonn Butler](#) [2] | Friday 8 July 2011



First it was 'cash for honours' and the scandalous way that MPs used their expenses. Then the activities of the banks, and the shortcomings of the regulators, that gave us the financial crisis. Now it is the inhuman behaviour of our newspapers, and the police apparently taking bungs for information. Can we trust any of our great public institutions?

No, we can't. Unfortunately we have a system of government that is no longer fit for purpose. As Peter Osborne explained in his book [The Triumph of the Political Class](#) [3], politicians and journalists have more interest in building themselves up with each other than they have in representing their constituents or getting at the truth. And as I pointed out in [The Rotten State of Britain](#) [4], they are not the only members of this elite political class: bankers, big business, officialdom and even the police have rushed to join ? losing sight of their customers and their public in the process.

The MPs in the majority party in Parliament owe their place their to the Prime Minister and party bosses. Around 100 MPs directly owe their jobs (and pensions, and chauffeur driven cars) to the patronage of Downing Street. Another 100 or so toady up to the whips because they would like one of those jobs. On the opposition side too, the focus is on career progression. Parliament simply does not represent the British people.

Instead, it represents special interests. There is no shortage of groups, from the environmentalists to industrialists, throwing energy and money into lobbying MPs and ministers for new laws, taxes, regulations and monopolies that will either enrich them or force the public to behave as they believe we should. Their noisy demands drown out the views of the public. And each new regulation means a new bureaucracy and a new ministerial responsibility, such that the institution of government grows and grows and grows. As it becomes larger, the opportunities for patronage become greater. As they do, so do the opportunities for corruption ? either straight back-pocket corruption or the more subtle corruption of mutual exchanges of favours between interest groups, officials and politicians.

There is no way such a system, dominated by and expanding to serve vested interests rather than the public, can give us honest politics, or journalism, or business, or officialdom. If you want to clean up the press, or politics, the first thing you must do is to reform our government system down to its foundations, limit what government can do, and make government represent the people rather than the political class.

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