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Momentous times for the US political system

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Sir, Courtney Weaver's informative historical backcloth to a possible third party presidential run by former New York mayor, Michael Bloomberg, might have considered two additional scenarios ("Bloomberg weighs lessons of Roosevelt's third-party failure", January 27). Should Joe Biden or John Kerry enter the race, as has been bruited, in order to stave off a successful capture by Bernie Sanders of the Democratic nomination, it is possible that Mr Sanders would reprise the legacy of Eugene V Debs and run independently on a Socialist ticket. In other words, he could revive the fortunes of the Socialist party in America.

This is not a fanciful idea, considering that Mr Sanders is now running as an avowed Socialist and was elected to his Senate seat as an independent. His tie to the Democrat party is purely formal and essentially a matter of convenience. What is more, he has built a following that constitutes a virtual movement that could easily follow him out of the Democrat party, if he is forced to make that choice.

Second, we find Rand Paul having been denied a place on the main stage of the last Republican debate and taking umbrage by declining to participate altogether. To him, his demotion to the undercard debate platform seems to have been political, not based on the merits of the quality of his campaign. If he should feel unjustly marginalised yet again, or if he finds a Trump or Cruz candidacy unpalatable, he could run for president as candidate of the Libertarian party, which has a history of third party candidacies. The recent appearance on the Iowa hustings of his father, Ron Paul, candidate for the 2012 Republican nomination and former standard bearer of the Libertarian party, as campaign surrogate, hints at such a possibility.

The American political system may be on the verge of a historic fracturing much more than anyone has yet imagined.

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