

# ***Marginal Gains***

A PolSoc publication

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**A hero  
for our  
times?**





# You have stolen my Dreams



By Antonia Elliott

Greta Thunberg, a 16 year old Swedish climate change activist made a powerful rally for action which sparked emotional responses at the United Nations Climate Action Summit held on 23 September. This damning speech addresses the UN's inadequate responses to the ever-changing battle against climate change: she states that they have 'stolen my dreams with their empty words', accusingly older generations with authority and political power of selfishly ignoring this environmentally necessary revolution, proposing 'solutions' only built on stopping and controlling what we use and create, failing to support the fundamental change necessary to ensure global survival.

However, Greta has 'built momentum' say leading scientists, with the UN leaders agreeing to urgently reduce emissions by at least 45% by 2030. Greta's age seems to make adults feel rather uncomfortable and threatened by her overwhelming passion and

***'We must sacrifice, and to sacrifice we need a voice to lead us, we need motivation and a hard kick from reality to show us, we can't live like this anymore'***

understanding of the topic itself. Sometimes, passion and drive is what the world, especially the political world, needs to create the momentum for the change that needs to be made. Greta inspires the young: I have talked to Hannah Armor, a lower sixth student, on her beliefs and the effect Greta has had on her. Hannah states 'she pushes the movement for change, bringing to light and showcasing that even young people can have an enormous effect in the world which really motivates you to do something worthy with your life, and gives hope for the future'.

Some may argue that Greta has no right to accuse the older generation of having

'stolen my dreams', however if nothing is done, if we let the world fall to pieces, these self-motivated leaders will have in fact not only stolen Greta's dreams, but stolen millions of lives, opportunity and happiness from future generations. The harsh reality of climate change is upon us. Indonesia is moving its capital city (Jakarta) as it is sinking, average wildlife populations have dropped by 60% in 40 years, there is more carbon dioxide in our air than ever before, 120,000 square kilometres of tropical forest was destroyed in 2018 alone. We must sacrifice, and to sacrifice we need a voice to lead us, we need motivation and a hard kick from reality to show us, we can't live like this anymore. We must fight climate change. So, if you criticise Greta's inspirational movement, ask yourself, what are you doing? How are you helping with your voice? How are you going to be heard?

***'How are you helping with your voice? How are you going to be heard?'***



# The world may be getting hotter... but having a meltdown isn't going to help

By George Bould

'You have stolen my dreams', Greta Thunberg said at the UN this week. 'We are in the beginning of a mass extinction and all you can talk about is money and fairytales of of eternal economic growth. How dare you?'

How dare our parents generation Greta? No, how dare you! How dare you sail to America on a carbon fibre yacht that you didn't build which cost \$15 million, that you didn't earn, and which has a back-up diesel engine that you didn't mention. How dare you be able to take pills for your headache, have clean water running from your tap and to buy any type of food 24/7. No 16 year old is responsible for any of that. Greta, you sleep sound at night, knowing that the generation you are laying into, are building and servicing and flying Sweden's fighter planes just to keep you safe.

You are right about how something

needs to be done, science has proven climate change and science can fix it. So get back to school and study science and stop being so spoilt.

Just because you told your parents to stop flying on planes and to eat salad for the rest of their lives and they agreed because you are their little princess doesn't give you the right to stand up in front of the world and start laying into the generation that has done nothing but provided you with luxuries.

Standing up and having a meltdown doesn't sort anything out does it? Because Mr Donald J Trump fell asleep during your speech! My point being that the awareness is already there, for example the Paris climate change agreement, the UK going completely green by 2050, a new 'Great Northumberland Forest' consisting of over a million trees.



People have already listened, the world is changing, shouting at world leaders won't do anything.

Editor's note: the article above is based on a column written by Jeremy Clarkson. Below is a response tweeted by Emily Clarkson, his daughter:



**Em Clarkson** ✓  
@EmilyClarkson

Wouldn't it be nice if all middle aged blokes could talk to and about Greta, the ballsy af teenager out there changing the world, like this ❤️🙄



**John Bishop** ✓ @JohnBishop100 · Sep 26

Replying to @GretaThunberg

You are an inspirational person. You have breathed life into the climate debate that was failing to get the attention it deserved. Whatever happens with the world it is a better place with you in it .

# The End of Solihull School?

By Emily Baker



At the Labour Party's annual conference in Brighton, Labour have pledged to abolish private schools if they win the next election.

Labour have stated that in their next manifesto they would include a 'commitment to integrate all private schools into the public sector'. This would be done through the scrapping of independent schools' charitable status and tax privileges. They have also said that they will set a quota for universities, ensuring that only 7% of students they admit went to private schools, which is the proportion in the general population. Jeremy Corbyn tweeted 'every child

***'There also seems to be an element of hypocrisy within the Labour Party as many outspoken party members such as Diane Abbot have chosen to send their children to private school.'***

deserves to get the best education, no matter their background'. However, while it falls in line with Labour's socialist values and attempts to address issues of class equality there seems to be many fundamental flaws in this policy.

Firstly, there will be a funding issue. Mr Barton, the general secretary of School and College leaders claims it will shift 'billions of pounds of extra costs' onto the state education sector.

Furthermore, it could be argued that the measures used to implement the policy, including scrapping tax privileges which will raise costs, will just exacerbate inequality. This is because only the richest and most elite families will be able to send their children to private schools, causing only the top independent schools to continue to run.

There also seems to be an element of hypocrisy within the Labour Party as many outspoken party members such as Diane Abbot have chosen to send their children to private school.

Additionally, the issues with the education system reach far greater than just independent schools. Grammar schools, private tuition and lack of social mobility also contribute to the devastating effects of inequality in the education system.

Therefore, while in principle this policy may be promoting class equality and social justice, it is simply unworkable in the country's current state. Instead we need to focus on addressing the root causes that challenge our education system.

By Cameron Kilpatrick

In order to 'challenge the elite privilege of private schools' Corbyn, alongside Angela Rayner, the shadow education secretary, plan to take private schools' property, land and other assets which will 'redistributed democratically and fairly across the country's educational institutions.'

Following the dissolution of the private schools, the party will also force universities to ensure that only 7% of students they admit went to private schools – the same proportion as in the general population - regardless of the fact that they were forced into state schools just like the rest of their cohort.

The difficulty with this is that it represents discrimination from Corbyn against those of a privileged background. There appears to be very little consideration of the culture shock that could occur as a result of a potentially sheltered private school student being forced into a far more open and diverse state school environment.

Problems such as bullying or the inability to settle in to the curriculum forced upon the new students are disregarded as the Labour opposition would see it fitting to continue the 7% intake rate of private school students into universities. This would not be an attempt to make up for the increased hours of an independent school, or the greater access to a wider

range of textbooks and utilities. Instead, it would be solely driven to punish the middle to upper class for their attempts to place their children in the best position possible for the future, which the likes of Jeremy Corbyn would like to see hindered.

For someone who is so dead set on bellowing ideals of equality, the most recent Labour pledges would suggest that Corbyn has his sights pointed directly at the Conservative voter base and is entirely willing to discriminate against the wealthy as a whole. As a result of this he will leave many of the hardworking and their children in the wake of his financially vampiric policies, should he ever reside in the walls of number 10.



# Why private schools should be abolished

By Zaki Hashmi

Currently in 2019 Britain we live in a parentocracy, where a child's education depends on the wealth and wishes of their parents rather than the abilities and efforts of the child. This is best represented through the massive disparity in the life chances between a privately educated student and a state school taught pupil.

***'despite only making up 7% of the student population those that attended fee paying schools dominate leading professions with 74% of judges who work in either high or appeal courts, 71% of high ranking military officers, 61% of top doctors'***

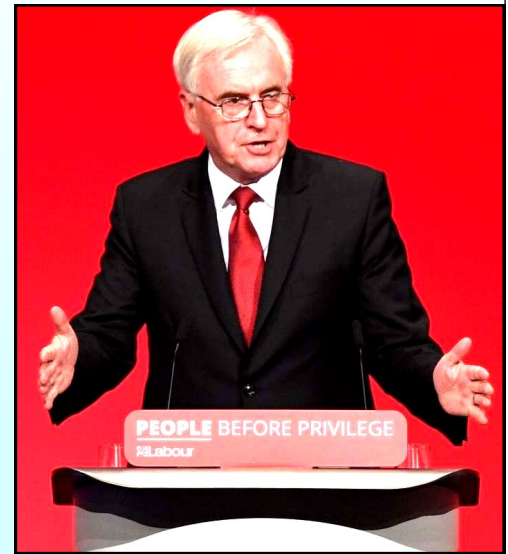
The facts are that despite only making up 7% of the student population those that attended fee paying schools dominate leading professions with 74% of judges who work in either high or appeal courts, 71% of high ranking military officers, 61% of top doctors, and 33 of the 55 Prime Ministers to have served went to just 3 schools (Eton, Westminster and Harrow). In a society which, largely speaking, does not accept inequality in regards to ethnicity, religion and gender it is truly astonishing that we accept this stark level of educational inequality where a child's level of education, which correlates strongly with their future life chances, is determined almost solely by the circumstances of their birth.

***'33 of the 55 Prime Ministers to have served went to just 3 schools (Eton, Westminster and Harrow)'***

***'In a society which, largely speaking, does not accept inequality in regards to ethnicity, religion and gender it is truly astonishing that we accept this stark level of educational inequality'***

Defenders of private schools may point to the fact that they provide a platform for social mobility by offering scholarships and bursaries to those who come from a disadvantaged background but excel in certain fields of school life, such as sport, however only 1.2% of those who attend private schools nationally receive either a full scholarship or full bursary, thereby limiting the ability for private schools to be used for social mobility as so few disadvantaged children are given the chance to attend a private school without paying fees (average annual private school fees are £16,000 which is more than half of average yearly income in the country which is £28,000).

Others may argue that private schools are necessary as they provide high



quality education while reducing the strain on state education as private school pupils would otherwise have to accommodate for 500,000 extra students further increasing class size and resulting in already insufficient resources being further stretched. However, the answer to this problem is not to allow inequality to continue but to simply increase funding for education, which would be a politically more feasible policy as more of the population would have an interest to see funding increase if every child went to a state school. If we as a society believe that solving inequality is a worthy and desirable goal then we must take steps in order to achieve it, even if it means making hard decisions, and therefore private schools should be abolished.



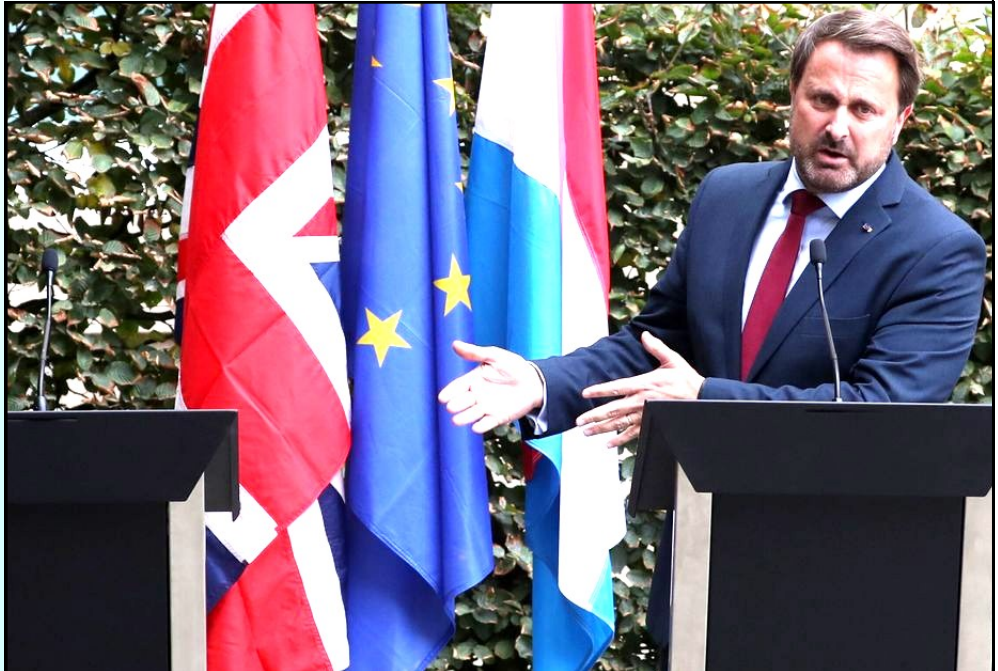


# Bo Jo No Show

By Freja Weber

These past weeks have been filled with drama, tea and turmoil, for example Boris Johnson deciding not to do a press conference with Xavier Bettel, Prime Minister of Luxembourg. One issue.. he didn't tell anyone that he wasn't coming. like a teenager who stands up their date. Luxembourg's confused Prime Minister was left alone to answer the media's questions while a cascade of boos from the anti-Brexit gathering could be heard. This crowd had been increasing in size and now was one hundred strong, but the sound of their boos and chanting made their number seem a lot greater.

Our country may be seen as a democratic country with its people capable of inspiring change. However, in Luxembourg their chants and cries only seemed to inspire fear and the urge for a new pair of strong and sturdy underwear for our Prime Minister, who recently has come under a lot of stress and criticism. But is this a sign of worse times to come? Is Bo Jo's no show evidence of a



no-deal future? Unfortunately, it could be. With only 10 days to come up with a deal before Boris Johnson has to ask for a delay, he has said that he would rather

be found dead in a ditch then ask for a delay, and it is very possible that we will leave with no deal. Chances are it's no deal or no deal.

## Boris vs Parliament: who will win?

By Tom Carter

Embattled PM Boris Johnson faces one of the most turbulent times in British politics. Johnson has made bold promises to the British public that he still intends to leave the EU on 31 October claiming that he would rather be 'dead in a ditch' before he agrees to comply with the 'surrender bill' that would seek an extension from the European Union on Britain's withdrawal. Johnson and his minority Tory government only have until 19 October to negotiate a new deal or to gain the support needed to pass a no deal.

Parliament has done its best to tie Johnson's hands by passing a law that required him to seek an extension if no deal was approved. Frantic last-minute diplomacy will be needed if Johnson will be able to pull together a new deal, meanwhile he is facing widespread criticism for his use of intense language through the course of debates, which many have linked to the language being used in violent threats which have

been received by anti-Brexit MP's. Boris is also facing controversial police conduct investigations into his declarations of interest and personal life while he was Mayor of London.

The Supreme Court has also dealt the PM a significant blow by declaring that his attempt to close down parliament early was unlawful, leading to parliament being recalled. Meanwhile Labour and

the other opposition parties continue to deny Johnson the general election he wishes to hold in order to gain a stronger mandate for his Brexit campaign. Whether Boris or Parliament will ultimately triumph is, as yet, unclear.



# Boris behaving badly

By Greg Cook

In the House of Commons, if unparliamentary language is used, the speaker will politely ask the MP to withdraw their language. However, if the MP in question refuses to withdraw, this may lead to MP in question to be disciplined; for example the speaker might name the member of parliament. This may sound reasonably old-fashioned however it would be seen as humiliating punishment.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of September, 2019, a rather public figure used such unparliamentary language during a heated PMQs: Boris Johnson. When referring to the Shadow Education Secretary, Angela Rayner's phrase 'sh\*t or bust', Johnson was met with immediate disapproval from the opposition and even a number of his own party were stricken with surprised expressions. Mr Johnson compared Labour's economic plans to Mrs Rayner's impolite phrase during a fiery

debate between himself and Jeremy Corbyn. Later on, the Prime Minister also called Mr Corbyn 'Caracas' for what he said was the Labour leader's support for the Russian, Iranian and Venezuelan governments. Shortly afterwards, away from the microphone, Mr Johnson was seen to heckle the leader of the opposition by shouting 'Call an election, you great big girl's blouse.' The Speaker of the House of Commons, John Bercow, quickly rebuked the PM for using an MP's name in contravention of parliamentary convention.

The word 'sh\*t' has been used only fifty-one times in the House of Commons and Lords since January 1, 1800. Only thirteen of these misdemeanours have come in the past decade! During another debate, Labour MP Paula Sherriff expressed her concerns towards the Prime Minister's use of language in the House of Commons over important



topics such as death threats that have been aimed at MPs. Johnson quickly denied these accusations and further described them as 'humbug', leaving the Labour MP likely feeling even more enraged by his careless and derogatory demeanour.

# MPs victims of hate crime

By Katy Scott

Many people may not agree with the recent efforts of their local MPs, but are death threats and online abuse necessary? Many believe so, leading to UK MPs receiving a massive increase in the amount of hate and crimes targeted towards them. This is supported by the dramatic increase in the number of crimes shown by the Metropolitan Police, the Parliamentary Liaison and Investigation Team recording 111 reported crimes targeted at MPs from the year finishing August 2017 to 242 the following year. These reported crimes include harassment, malicious communications, theft and criminal damage and a disproportionate amount of these crimes were targeted towards women and people from ethnic minorities.

The hate MPs receive has been propelled into the public eye after the murder of the MP Jo Cox, who was stabbed to death in 2016, highlighting the severity of the situation. Metropolitan Police Commissions state that an

increase in this is abuse has been mostly caused by Brexit, with a relatively equal amount of hate for pro-Brexit and pro-Remain, and an increase in knowledge of current events by the general public. Levels of abuse fluctuate over time, with spikes during major events or decisions, for example the death of the IS bride Shamina Begum's baby. There is evidence that Conservative MPs attract more abuse than Labour MPs as well as the fact that sexual abuse is the most prevalent, as compared to homophobia or racism. A hard-hitting example is Dr Cameron, SNP MP, stating that as soon as she was elected in 2015, she received death threats and pictures of decapitated bodies. Dr Cameron was concerned for the safety of her children,

saying 'It makes you wonder whether you've put your family inadvertently at risk as a result of your choices'. The hate MPs receive is unnecessary and hinders rather than helps them govern our country; unlike constructive criticism and peaceful protests which might make a difference and alter a reform or legislation for the better.



Demonstration commemorating murdered MP Jo Cox



# How dangerous is Iran?

By Henry Davies

The recent attack that shut down half of Saudi Arabia's oil production is the latest example of the conflict that has been occurring between Iran and the West ever since the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran. In recent years there have been growing fears in the West not only about Iran's support for militias, but more troublingly that Iran was acquiring the capacity to build nuclear weapons. This led to harsh economic sanctions being imposed. In 2015 however, under President Obama, the US, UK, France, China, Russia and Germany made an historic agreement on Iran's nuclear programme in exchange for the lifting of the crippling economic sanctions.

***'the lack of a response further harms US foreign policy across the world as it signals that a country can engage in unprecedented aggression against a US ally and America will not respond'***

Although the deal was widely accepted as having solved the immediate crisis regarding Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons there were many who were opposed to the deal. The critics argued that it did nothing to address Iran's growing ballistic missile programme which could in the future carry nuclear warheads to the US mainland. It also did nothing to stop the corrosive Iranian interference in other countries' affairs, and finally, it only delayed the time the Iranians could build a bomb not completely rule it out.

President Trump was one of the critics of the deal and in May 2018 he abandoned it and reimposed sanctions on Iran. The effects of pulling out of the deal can be seen with the current state of affairs today. The recent escalation, many believe, is a result of Iran lashing out because the tight economic sanctions are once again suffocating its economy. President Trump had hoped to engage in fresh talks and come to a new agreement with Iran, but so far Iran is not prepared to enter such talks.



Many also believed that the Trump administration's aim in reinstating harsh sanctions was to see a regime change. There is no evidence, yet, that regime change is likely. In fact, the opposite appears to be happening as the Iranian leadership has used this crisis to consolidate its rule by removing the moderates in the regime who favour engagement with the West. This is especially dangerous as Iran has militias under its control in Iraq and Syria, Lebanon and Yemen. Iran's reach spreads across the region and the lack of a meaningful US response to the recent attack on Saudi Arabia may

encourage Iran to lash out further. The lack of a response further harms US foreign policy across the world as it signals that a country can engage in unprecedented aggression against a US ally and America will not respond. What will this do to countries in Asia who are now increasingly being asked to side with either China or the US in their economic battle? What remains now is the question of what is the US strategy in the region now, given regime change and/or agreeing a new deal look equally impossible? The thorn is certainly not going away and its effects look to increase.





# Hong Kong democracy protests

By Toby Bagshaw

Living in a country where people disappear in a similar manner to that of Stalin's regime is a challenge in itself, so proceeding to protest in said country is a bold move to say the least. For the last 100 days there have been on going protests, both violent and non-violent, within Hong Kong, surrounding opposition to the Extradition Bill. The Extradition Bill if enacted will allow local authorities to detain and extradite criminal fugitives who are wanted in territories with which Hong Kong does not currently have extradition agreements, including Taiwan and mainland China. People were concerned that the bill would subject Hong Kong residents and visitors to the mainland Chinese jurisdiction, undermining the autonomy of the region and its civil liberties.

These protests began as peaceful ones; through March and April the demonstrations gained popularity and reached huge numbers in June. Hundreds of thousands of people marched against the bill on 9 June and on 12 June (the day the extradition bill was scheduled for its second reading) the protests took a sharp turn in violence. Riot police deployed tear gas and rubber bullets but the protestors successfully stalled the reading of the bill. Following this on 15 June Chief Executive Carrie Lam suspended the bill and a huge march took place the next day with estimates ranging from 2 million to 338,000 people attending.

On 1 July, the 22nd anniversary of the handover, hundreds of thousands of people participated in the annual July march. A portion of these demonstrators split from the march and broke into the Legislative Council Complex, vandalising central government symbols. Subsequently, the protests have continued throughout the summer, escalating into increasingly violent confrontations involving the police, activists on both sides, suspected triad gangs, rioters, and local residents in over 20 different neighbourhoods throughout the region. 21 July marked the Yuen Long attack where organised triad members assaulted protesters and bystanders, which heightened the tension. Subsequent police operations



and alleged misconduct prompted a general strike and a city-wide protest on 5 August. About 1.7 million people (organisers' estimate) also attended a rally condemning police brutality on 18 August.

Lam suspended the extradition bill on 15 June and declared the bill 'dead' on 9 July but fell short of a promise to withdraw it until 4 September. However, she refused to concede to any of the other four demands, namely an independent inquiry on police brutality, the release of arrested protesters, a complete retraction of the official characterisation of the protests as 'riots', and universal suffrage of the Legislative Council and the Chief Executive, and her resignation.

Authorities have arrested at least two high-profile activists as Hong Kong prepares to mark the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's

Republic of China on Tuesday. A large demonstration organised by the group Civil Human Rights Front, which has organised previous mass protests, has been banned by the police, but protesters have vowed to turn out on 1 October to show their anger and frustration at the erosion of rights under Chinese rule.

Scepticism of potential military action being taken in response to the protests is also on the rise with a growing military presence in Hong Kong with the People's Liberation Army garrisoned nearby and China's history of dealing with protests culminating in worries from everyone of lethal force being used.





# Does the UK need a written constitution?

By Jack Arrowsmith

In the midst of the political chaos of the last few weeks, Jacob Rees-Mogg is rumoured to have said in a Cabinet meeting that the Supreme Court's ruling regarding the suspension of Parliament is a 'constitutional coup'. The precedent the ruling sets is certainly an alarming one. It extends the power of the Court significantly, giving it the ability to make entirely subjective assessments of the motivations behind the use of the royal prerogative. In doing so, it will vastly limit the ability of current and future Prime Ministers to use prerogative power under the British Constitution.

But Mr Rees-Mogg fails to draw the correct conclusion. The flaw is with the British Constitution, which is controlled to a significant degree by precedent, meaning it can easily be undermined by the actions of unelected officials. He was similarly - and quite reasonably - outraged by the decision of Speaker John Bercow to allow a vote on Parliament taking control of the legislative timetable; another breach of precedent by an unelected and unaccountable individual.

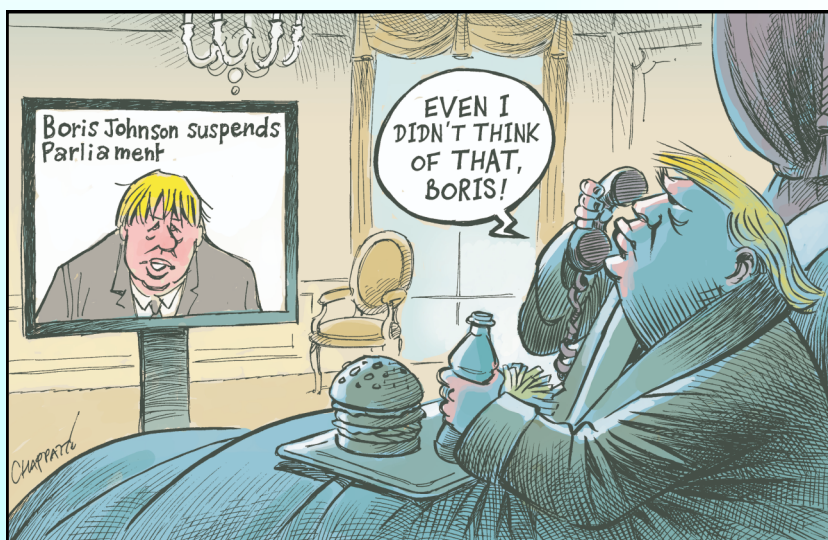
And yet, Mr Rees-Mogg and other defenders of the British tradition continue to believe it is justified to govern Britain through precedent. Even recent events, where precedent has been rewritten by unaccountable officials to undermine the Government, have not turned them away from this model.

Perhaps this is because the Government has also benefitted from this ability to rewrite the rules, increasing the length of time which the current Parliament was supposed to be prorogued beyond what is customary.

***'Jacob Rees-Mogg ... said in a Cabinet meeting that the Supreme Court's ruling regarding the suspension of Parliament is a 'constitutional coup''***

Proponents of the system of precedent may argue that it has acted as an effective check on Government power. The Government, for instance, will be unable to force through a no-deal Brexit, because of the decision by John Bercow to allow a vote on control of the legislative timetable. However, the

pressure Bercow has faced from Conservative benches to stand down indicates the flaw of this argument. Conservative MPs hope to replace Bercow with someone holding the Constitutional views of Jacob Rees-Mogg, such as the arch-Eurosceptic Maastricht rebel



Edward Leigh. An ally like Leigh for the Government could easily lead to a further rewriting of precedent, where Parliament is sidelined from the Brexit process, in favour of a Populist no-deal Brexit.

Considering this outcome highlights that the Constitution cannot rest on faith in certain individuals such as the Speaker, who have an inordinate amount of power to set the rules of the legislative process. The checks advocated by Jacob Rees-Mogg are fluid, unless they are entrenched in law and clearly defined. Whilst these precedents remain entirely open to interpretation, we cannot hope to have a coherent system of checks and balances on a Government which is clearly willing to sideline the scrutiny of Parliament in order to pursue Brexit.

Even if a US-style separation of powers is not the ultimate outcome, Britain should at least attempt to codify these precedents and define the roles of institutions with greater clarity. Doing so will reduce the sharp divide between the differing interpretations of Gina Miller and Jacob Rees-Mogg regarding the scope of Government power, thereby reducing the toxicity of our political discourse. It will also ensure effective accountability, as opposed to the status quo, where individuals and institutions have enormous power to dictate how our Politics function.





# No quotas for female MPs

By Guy Tomlinson

Judged by political representation, Rwanda is the most feminist country on Earth. More than 64 per cent of Rwandan parliamentarians are women – a higher proportion of any legislature, and a statistic trotted out to bolster Rwanda's status as a developing country. Rwanda achieves its equality by design: of the 10 countries with the highest levels of political female representation, 6 of them legislate gender quotas that set aside a certain number of seats for women, in Rwanda's case, 64% of their legislature has to consist of women.

This was imposed upon Rwanda after the genocide in 1994, leaving between 800,000 to a million people dead. The majority of these deaths were men, and others were incarcerated or fled the country. This led to Rwanda's population of 6 million people consisting of 70 per cent women. President Kagame, as a result of his broken country, and not being able to progress with male labour alone, introduced a gender quota as

part of the new 2003 constitution. This stated that 30 per cent of the Rwandan legislature must be women, this has now progressed to a 64 per cent quota.

***'Even though there are women in top positions, it's more of a smoke screen. There's no space for women who dare to challenge the status quo'***

Here in the UK, there has long been criticism of the Commons and the Lords not being diverse, or representative of the country, and that the majority of parliament consists of middle aged, white, middle class men. In the UK, our parliament is only 32 per cent women, whereas women make up 51 per cent of the population, suggesting that women in the UK are significantly under-represented. However, should a quota be introduced, like Rwanda, in order to

solve this problem?

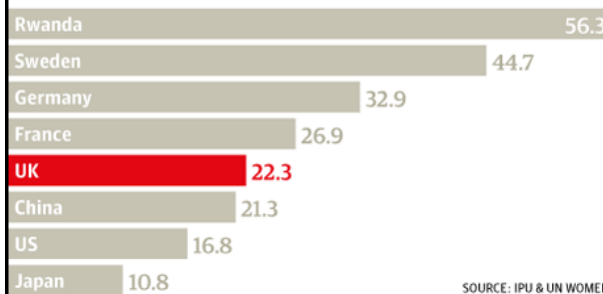
The main goal in the UK is to give women more political and social power, rather than just piling women into parliament. Diane Rwigara, Rwandan women's rights activist, and presidential contender in 2017, claimed that 'Even though there are women in top positions, it's more of a smoke screen. There's no space for women who dare to challenge the status quo. You have to be compliant, because no one is allowed to have an independent voice here in Rwanda.' During her campaign, Rwigara was arrested along with her mother, and disqualified from running.

Although I seriously doubt anything like this would ever happen in the UK, it is clear that gender quotas do not provide women with any further political power, and further increases the argument that MP's should be voted in on merit, no matter the ethnicity or gender.

Editor's note: below are some statistics which may have some bearing on the argument expressed above:

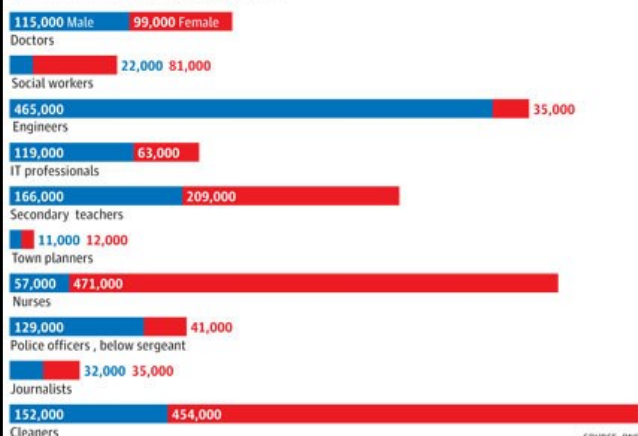
## Women in parliament

Percentage of women in parliament (lower or single house), selected countries



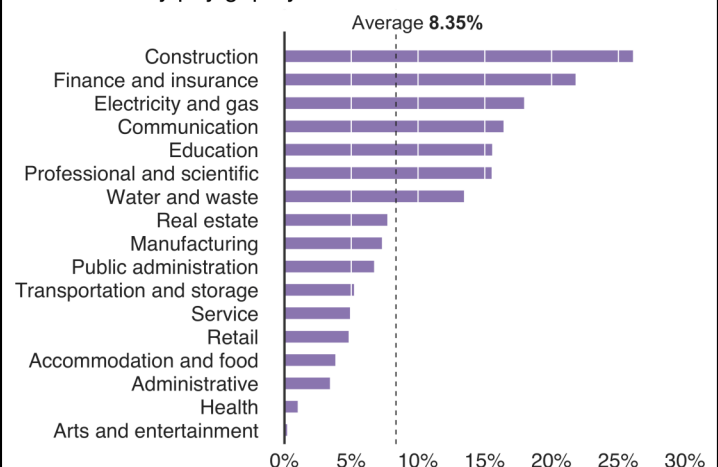
## The gender gap

Numbers of UK employees, Q2, 2008



## Every sector pays men more on average

Median hourly pay gap by sector\*



\*Note: Only includes sectors where at least 10 companies have reported so far

Companies that have reported to gov.uk by 3.45pm Tuesday 19 February 2019



# Emmerson Mnangagwa: the new Robert Mugabe?

By Lauren Webb

In November 2017 in a military coup supported by a popular uprising the long-standing President Mugabe of Zimbabwe was toppled by his long-standing deputy Emmerson Mnangagwa. In scenes of jubilation reminiscent of the celebrations at Independence in 1980, the country was engulfed in optimism supported by domestic and international goodwill. After two years there is a sense of déjà-vu: scenes of repressions by security forces and a crackdown on journalists are comparable to the prior actions of Mugabe. Has anything actually changed?

The former leader, Mugabe, became notorious over his 37-year reign for corruption and greed. Industry collapsed, the 'breadbasket of Africa' had millions starving, the education system was left in tatters and, in 2008, 100 trillion Zimbabwean dollars wouldn't even buy you a mars bar. At the same time rumours circulated about army officials throwing diamonds around in bars and Mugabe purchased a £4million villa for himself and wife 'Gucci' Grace in Hong Kong. It is unsurprising, therefore, Zimbabweans allowed themselves to be hopeful for a future without the tyrant that had ruled nearly four decades.

This hope was largely shattered on 20 February this year when the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe announced electronic savings and locally printed bond notes were no longer exchangeable 1 to 1 with the US dollar, despite this having been promised when their reintroduction was announced on October 31 2016. The introduction of the bond note was an attempt to fix chronic cash shortages in the country, but suddenly the savings people thought they had in US dollars were worth a tenth of the value.

The erratic 'rate of the day' was used in shops that accepted a variety of foreign currencies, bond notes and online money such as ECOCASH. On 23 June the rate of bond to \$US was 12 to 1.

On 24 June the 'Zimbabwe dollar' became the only legal tender.

Possession of US dollars was not



illegal, but trade in them was. People were encouraged to exchange their foreign currency at banks, which were offering a rate of 6 to 1. Taxes, tariffs and park fees could only be paid in \$US.

'The crocodile' Mnangagwa claimed this would fix Zimbabwe's chronic shortage of cash. However, the aims of this reform are clear: the Zimbabwean government is collecting all foreign currency. It is widely believed that this is in order to pay the army, who were demanding wages in \$US, after the government itself ran out of foreign currency.

Whilst the motives behind this snap decision are still subject to speculation, they certainly allow us to draw parallels between the reign of Mugabe and Mnangagwa. In 1980, under Mugabe, the Zimbabwean dollar was introduced at a rate of 1 to 1 with the \$US dollar and proceeded to devalue. This move, too, was used for the benefit of the army as Mugabe printed more and more Zimbabwean dollars to finance his intervention in the DRC and to compensate war veterans, essentially breaking the economy in the process. Both men were reliant on the co-operation of the army, both for putting them in power and keeping them there.

Is Mnangagwa not following in the footsteps of his predecessor by sacrificing the economy to pay for the loyalty of the army?

Indeed, Zimbabwe today faces the same problems as it did in the 2000s: inflation (300% in August), food shortages (1/3 of the population in need of food aid), fuel and electricity shortages, and illness (Harare is expected to run out of clean water within a week, stoking concerns for a cholera outbreak).

Underlining this is a fundamental lack of democracy and political transparency. The July 2018 election that legitimised the crocodile's rule is almost certainly as undemocratic as those under Mugabe, despite the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission claiming 'absolutely no skulduggery' was involved. Following this election, the military killed at least 6 civilians, echoing the electoral violence under Mugabe a decade before. Protests aimed against Mnangagwa in mid-August were characterised by blue-helmeted riot police beating protesters, a signature of the Robert Mugabe era.

New face, same story.



# End of the line for Netanyahu?

By Guy Sandler

'Mundane' is not a word used often when describing Israel, or the politics that take place within it. Since 1948 the tiny country has been an ever-changing field of unpredictability, war and development. Israel's longest serving Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, who is fighting for re-election as this article is written, epitomizes the characteristics of Israel. Born only a year after the country he 'serves', Netanyahu's education and career achievements are impressive, studying at both Harvard and MIT, with a list of ministerial positions so long that to call it varied would be an understatement.

Netanyahu first rose to attention through his service in the army in Special Operations during the 1967 Six Day War, achieving the rank of Captain. However his first national recognition was serving as UN ambassador from 1984-88, going on to become the youngest Prime Minister in 1996, before being ousted in 99. He later achieved multiple cabinet positions - Foreign Minister and Minister of Finance - before becoming Prime Minister again in 2009, a role he has held for more than a decade, as well as serving as minister of Defence at the same time.

**'Netanyahu [is] a leader who is preoccupied with defending Israel, but who is less responsive to the beliefs of a new generation of Israelis and of foreign politicians.'**

Netanyahu himself is a curious figure, a man whose policies seem often contrasting, and whose choices of allies even more divisive. His belief in Conservatism however, is most evident, introducing Thatcherite policies as Finance Minister that revolve around creating freer markets which many economists credit as the reason behind Israel's significant and consistent economic growth at the moment. As well as this, he announced that he would annex the West Bank, a key chip in negotiating a two-state solution, demonstrating his belief in a more



aggressive Israel and a more secure Israel. And this represents the flaw with Netanyahu, a leader who is preoccupied with defending Israel, but who is less responsive to the beliefs of a new generation of Israelis and of foreign politicians. His stances on a more aggressive Israel, while seemingly winning him over more allies from the right-wing, do little but alienate the more centrist youth, potential voters who believe in a more peaceful future.

Furthermore, while this more right-wing approach may be favourable among Israel's closest ally, America's current president, the next American president could favour a more two-state solution which could damage the relationship between the two, putting Israel in a vulnerable situation politically. Whether or not Netanyahu is able to continue his run as Prime Minister, the question remains, are his policies still compatible with Israeli and Global society in the 2020s?





# Will UK relations with Latin America improve after Brexit?

By Lily Waters

Since 2016, Brexit has dominated media headlines with many commentators suggesting that the social and economic consequences will be disastrous for the UK. At the same time, Brexit provides an opportunity for Britain to engage in new and different relationships, globally. This includes the potential to develop new trade relationships with countries outside of the EU, including those in Latin America.

During my recent work experience, with the international team at HMRC, I learnt that many civil servants working for the Department of Trade and Industry and the Department of International Development, are actively developing and strengthening relationships with countries outside of the European Union. They suggested that one positive benefit of Brexit, could be a new more globally focused UK, with new international links and relationships. One of the main arguments articulated by the Leave campaign, was that exiting the EU would provide the UK with the opportunity to secure free trade agreements with economies outside Europe, such as those in Latin America. However, as recent months have demonstrated, the UK's ability to do this remains dependent on the nature of the final Brexit deal. At the moment, nothing is definite until the final withdrawal agreement is decided on.

In preparation for this, the UK is therefore developing a broader strategy of global engagement, where it will strive to build on existing links with other

countries, and develop the concept of a post-Brexit 'global Britain'. The UK's Foreign Office has already announced the creation of 250 new diplomatic posts in order to achieve this new 'global Britain' strategy. The British government has therefore made increasing efforts to improve its relations with Latin America, one of the most urbanised regions in the world with a population of over 650 million people. It is likely to be a region of increasing importance in the coming decades, so it will therefore be vital that the Foreign Office revitalises their relations with this region to promote trade and diplomacy.

There is already a strong appetite throughout Latin America for improved relations. For example, the Mexican Ambassador to the UK, Julian Ventura, explained how the effect of Brexit could offer new opportunities in Latin America that might not have been possible if Britain remained in the European Union. The Mexican Finance Minister stated that 'there is a strong desire for a free trade agreement'.

When Boris Johnson was Foreign Secretary, he visited South America to emphasise how Britain was committed to improving future engagement. He stated that the UK will primarily focus on the countries part of the Pacific Alliance (Mexico, Colombia, Peru and Chile) as they equate to being the 8<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world. These interventions have been relatively

unusual, in that UK government ministers have tended to fixate on countries such as China to develop trade. To a certain extent, this is because there have been some concerns about trade with Latin America. Many



Joanna Crellin, UK Trade Commissioner for Latin America

Latin American countries suffer from a negative perception, because of issues with drugs, corruption, and organised crime. British security agencies have raised concerns about developing relationships with Latin America, as they are worried about sharing intelligence with countries renowned for corruption, where security forces are often infiltrated by organised crime gangs. This means that these new relationships needed to be handed carefully. For the UK government, this means co-ordinated activity across the UK Foreign Office security agencies, the Department for Trade and Industry and the Department for International Development.

Post-Brexit, there is an opportunity for the UK to develop new, stronger relationships with other countries around the world. This could enable it to be more outward in focus, and to develop relations with new partners, including those in Latin America. In order to achieve this, the government must reassess and develop its foreign policy, alongside its international trade strategy and any related policies on international development. This will support new trade relations and will contribute to the new 'global Britain' which the country needs to be after leaving the EU.

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# How George Soros has become demonised by the Far Right

By Max Penney

George Soros is a Jewish Hungarian multi-billionaire who has given away over \$32 billion to charities to help fund education and healthcare schemes. However he has fast become the centre of hard right conspiracy theories. The Hungarian émigré, who survived the Holocaust and fled the Communists, is thought to have made in total about \$44bn through financial speculation. And he's used his fortune to fund thousands of education, health, human rights and democracy projects. Conspiracy theories about Soros have been circulating for a couple of decades now, however Trump's election victory has taken the speculation over Soros to an unprecedented level.

The horrific attacks in Charlottesville in August of 2017 were reportedly orchestrated by Soros, according to far right activists. They have claimed Brennan Gilmore, the man who filmed the video of a black person being run over by a white neo-Nazi has been paid \$320,000 a year by Soros as part of a plot to oust the President. Since then, Soros has been used as a scapegoat for effectively anything that relates to the anti-Trump agenda.

Last autumn, thousands of migrants from Honduras left for the USA in search of a better life, a month before the midterm elections that threatened to weaken Republican control in Congress. The 'migrant caravan' was immediately linked to Soros, whilst a video emerged of money being handed out to migrants that was then subsequently retweeted by President Trump. However, footage soon emerged that the video was actually



from Guatemala, not Honduras and the video was entirely unrelated to the video retweeted by the President. Six days later a pipe bomb was found in the mailbox of Soros' mansion, containing a picture of Soros marked with the letter X. The bomb was later linked to a van covered in pro Trump and anti-Democrat stickers and a Florida man called Cesar Sayoc was arrested. His social media accounts were full of anti-Soros memes and he later pleaded guilty to over 65 counts including the intent to kill.

5 days after the bomb was delivered to Soros' house, a white man walked into a synagogue in Pittsburgh and murdered 11 Jews. The gunman believed in a theory called 'white genocide', a theory that white people are being replaced by immigrants and will ultimately be exterminated. The supposed mastermind of this theory? Who else but George Soros.

The vilification of Soros has expanded far beyond the US. It is in his own country, Hungary, where Soros has been demonised the most. Despite spending hundreds of

millions of dollars on free school meals, human rights projects and a new university, the Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban claims Soros has a secret plan to flood their country with migrants and destroy their nation. The Hungarian government has spent 100 million Euros on a media campaign warning voters not to let Soros 'have the last laugh' and introduced what it calls 'Stop Soros' laws, criminalising help for illegal immigrants and taxing support for organisations 'promoting migration.'

So how did this happen? In 2013, Orban approached the US political consultant Arthur Finkelstein for help to get re-elected. Finkelstein figured the best way for Orban to be re-elected was to find a new enemy so that people become 'scared of your opponent and never talk about your own candidate's policies, they don't matter at all.' Finkelstein suggested Soros, hated by the far left for being a capitalist, but hated by the far right for being Jewish; the irony of it all that Finkelstein was a Jew himself. Viktor Orban won by a landslide. After the election, the crackdown on Soros-funded organisations intensified and last May the Open Society, a charity funded by Soros closed its office in Hungary.





# Marginal Gains

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## Watch this movie!

By Laura Jones

Fahrenheit 11/9, written and directed by Michael Moore, tries to tackle one of the biggest mysteries in American politics: how the hell did Donald Trump become president of the United States?

Moore starts from the very beginning of Trump's journey – where he made a fake announcement about running for president of the United States after he found out that Gwen Stefani was being paid more money for appearing on The Voice than he was for starring in The Apprentice. He paid extras \$50 each to be his cheering supporters to show that he was more popular than Gwen Stefani. However, his plan backfired, and NBC decided to cut business ties with him. With nothing to lose, he attended his first rally which was booked and paid for prior to being fired. To his utter astonishment he was met with adoring crowds that appealed to his narcissistic nature.

A big part of the documentary focuses on something that wasn't initiated by Trump but is significant because of the effects it had on Trump's success in 2016. In 2010, Rick Snyder was elected Governor of Michigan and vowed to run Michigan like a business. What followed was nothing short of an ethnic cleansing. Snyder targeted poor African American communities and put them under emergency management, allowing him to remove elected mayors and replace them with his cronies. This was a deliberate plan to privatise public services so people like him could make more money. He offered lucrative contracts to make a new and unnecessary water pipeline which would benefit investors, campaign donors and banks. Suddenly, children began losing their hair and coming out in skin rashes, and it was found that there were high levels of lead in the water that were poisoning the people of Flint. Snyder ignored the problem until GM motors complained that the water was corroding their car parts. As they were a major

campaign contributor, Snyder switched the water back for GM motors only and the rest of the population of Flint was left drinking the contaminated water. There were mass public demonstrations which forced Snyder to acknowledge this catastrophe but by then it was too late: the people of Flint had been poisoned.

Finally, what resonated with me from this documentary was the scary comparison between Trump and Adolf Hitler. Ruth Ben-Ghiat a Professor of History at NYU, describes how in History people like this get legitimised and then take over. Over the past three and a half years Trump has been subtly throwing in the idea of an extended presidency past two terms, which constitutionally is not allowed. Ghiat described these as 'trial balloons' where you throw an idea out that

previously was unthinkable, making it a serious topic that people will consider. The documentary makes a connection between the actions of Trump and Hitler in their desire to control the media. Trump knows what he is doing, when he says the words 'fake news'; he is making sure that when charges of corruption and wrongdoing come forth nobody believes the media, and people believe him just like they did Hitler. His 2020 campaign ad features promises of over 1 million new jobs, companies investing billions in America, the stock market reaching all time record highs and the country strong again - just like Hitler's promises of making Germany great again.

I would urge everybody to watch this documentary - Michael Moore has been incredibly successful in exposing Trump and highlighting the issues Americans face with gun laws, racism, youth disillusionment, a growing wealth divide and a shortfall in democracy.

