

## Climate Scientists Watch Their Words, Hoping To Stave Off Funding Cuts? By Barbara Hersh

November 29, 2017 *National Public Radio*

Scientists appear to be self-censoring by omitting the term "climate change" in public grant summaries. An NPR analysis of grants awarded by the National Science Foundation found a steadily decreasing number with the phrase "climate change" in the title or summary, resulting in a sharp drop in the term's use in 2017. At the same time, the use of alternative terms such as "extreme weather" appears to be rising slightly.

5 The change in language appears to be driven in part by the Trump administration's open hostility to the topic of climate change. Earlier this year, President Trump pulled the U.S. out of the Paris climate accord, and the President's 2018 budget proposal singled out climate change research programs for elimination.

Meanwhile, the Environmental Protection Agency has been systematically removing references to climate change from its official website. Both the EPA's leader, Scott Pruitt, and Secretary of Energy Rick Perry have  
10 said they do not accept the scientific consensus that humans are causing the planet to get warmer. As a result, many scientists find themselves in an uncomfortable position. They are caught between environmental advocates looking to recruit allies and right-wing activists who demonize researchers and denigrate their work. "In the scientific community, we're very cautious people," says Katharine Hayhoe, the director of the Climate Science Center at Texas Tech. "We tend to be quite averse to notoriety and conflict, so I absolutely have seen  
15 self-censorship among my colleagues. [They'll say] 'Well, maybe I shouldn't say it that way, because whatever funding organization or politician or agency won't appreciate it.'"

The NSF data appears to bear out the change in language. While the number of grants with the term "climate change" in the public summary has dropped, the number of grants with the terms "environmental change" or "extreme weather" has increased slightly. That suggests that, even if research topics remain the same, the  
20 words scientists use to describe them may change.

"Scientists I know are increasingly using terms like 'global change', 'environmental change', and 'extreme weather', rather than explicitly saying 'climate change'," Jonathan Thompson, the senior ecologist at the Harvard Forest, wrote in an email to NPR. Thompson has been the lead investigator on multiple research projects funded by the NSF in recent years. "This seems to be born out of an abundance of caution to limit  
25 their exposure to any political landmines in what is already an extremely competitive process," he wrote.

Four other climate researchers acknowledged that they had personally removed the term "climate change" from funding proposals or public summaries in the last year, or had advised graduate students who had done so. All were concerned that if they disclosed their names, it could negatively impact their future funding competitiveness. The National Science Foundation is widely regarded to be among the most independent  
30 bodies funding federal research, so it's particularly notable when politics seeps into statements by agency officials.

Earlier this year, the head of the NSF geosciences directorate, William Easterling, fielded a question from a climate scientist about the language used to describe NSF priorities. "Let me just be perfectly honest, the appetite of NSF right now is doing as little as it needs to to, you know, poke the bear, and yet stand by our  
35 scientific principles," Easterling said, according to a report by the American Institute of Physics, a trade group for physicists and engineers. The term climate change, Easterling noted, is "a polarizing icon, for better for worse — obviously for worse, from a scientist's perspective." [...]

This is not the first time scientists have resorted to euphemism to protect their research. Early studies of human sexuality referred to "fertility-related behavior." Stem cell research was referred to by some Bush-era  
40 researchers as "therapeutic cloning."

The web of alternative language can be confusing to policymakers and frustrating for universities and other institutions that support science. Some are concerned that the language scientists use to describe climate change research may lead to similar problems. And, anecdotally, some scientists worry that political pressure may be driving young scientists away from climate studies. "Some people have shifted away from climate  
45 research altogether," in recent years says Philip Mote, the director of the Oregon Climate Change Research Institute at Oregon State University. The perception of censorship and fierce competition for funding could lead talented students to more lucrative fields such as software development.

Avoiding the term "climate change" could also lead to a more fractured scientific community. Climate change research is an inherently interdisciplinary field and shared terminology allows people to collaborate, either  
50 through interagency groups or through university departments that reflect the larger trends in available funding. "If we all have to go off in different directions to keep the science moving forward, we lose that community," says Dietze. "We won't gather and work together."

"This is the biggest environmental challenge in human history," says Mote. "Absent political winds, I don't think researchers would avoid using the term 'climate change' to describe it."

## Bagehot - The monarchy is at its strongest in years, unlike the government

*The Economist*, May 19th 2018

1 A ROYAL wedding is as good a time as any to conduct an audit of the British constitution. Walter Bagehot, the editor of *The Economist* in 1860-77, argued that the constitution was divided into two branches. The monarchy represents the “dignified” branch. Its job is to symbolise the state through pomp and ceremony. The government—Parliament, the cabinet and the civil service—represents the “efficient” branch. Its job is to run the country by passing laws and providing public services. The dignified branch governs through poetry, and the efficient branch through prose. Today, the dignified branch is adapting to an age of populism much better than the efficient branch. Twenty-odd years ago it looked as if the monarchy was in an advanced state of decomposition. The ill-starred marriage of Prince Charles and Diana Spencer undermined the monarchy’s claim to unify the country through dignity. [...]

10 At the same time, the efficient branch went from strength to strength. Tony Blair and Gordon Brown modernised the Labour Party and went on to modernise the state, giving the Bank of England its freedom, devolving power to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and spring-cleaning government departments. The efficient branch even had to step in to save the dignified branch from itself. Mr Blair pronounced Diana “the people’s princess” as the queen remained in her Scottish castle, and persuaded the palace to set up a committee to look at the Crown’s future.

15 Today the situation has been reversed. The efficient branch is in its worst state since the 1970s. The two main parties have been captured by their extremes. The prime minister lacks authority. Westminster has been rocked by scandals about sexual harassment and bullying. The Home Office is in turmoil. The government is preparing for Brexit, its most complicated task since the second world war, without a majority in the Commons or a consensus in its own ranks. Brexit has confronted the efficient branch with an existential crisis. By calling the referendum, David Cameron not only betrayed the efficient branch’s guiding principle (that you keep the most difficult decisions for yourself) but also opened the door to a populist revolt. The efficient branch now has an agonising choice: implement a policy that it believes to be foolish, or frustrate the “will of the people”. Hence the paralysis—and the preoccupation with damage-limiting fudges.

25 The dignified branch, by contrast, is thriving. The queen represents stability in an unstable world, as well as unity in a polarised one. She has spent 66 of her 92 years on the throne and has survived 12 prime ministers and innumerable political crises. The royal household has done a good job of moving Prince Andrew and his ilk into the background and replacing them with a new generation. Prince William and Kate Middleton look exactly like the dignified mannequins that Bagehot’s constitution demands.

30 The marriage of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle is likely to be another brilliant chapter in this story of renewal. There are blemishes; Ms Markle’s family look almost as strange as the Windsors. But the happy couple nevertheless offer the dignified branch a chance to reinvent itself for a more multicultural and touchy-feely age. Ms Markle is a mixed-race American divorcee. As an actress, she has had the ideal training for her odd new career. Harry combines an easy charm with a sense of vulnerability, talking openly about undergoing therapy to recover from the horrors of his upbringing, particularly his mother’s death.

### God save the queen

35 The dignified branch nevertheless has a problem waiting in the wings, in the form of the future Charles III. A new book by Tom Bower, “Rebel Prince”, paints an unflattering picture of the world’s oldest intern. Charles is both entitled and whiny. He lives in six houses but complains about his lot. He is astonishingly selfish, fretting about global warming while travelling by private jet. The really worrying thing about Charles is not that he is a weak man but that he is a surprisingly strong one. He has a wacky but well-worked-out philosophy: New Ageism meets neo-feudalism. He has a record of getting what he wants. He forced a reluctant establishment to accept the “horsey home-wrecker”, Camilla, as his wife. He takes on what he regards as vested interests, berating architects for building carbuncles, opposing genetically modified crops and savaging modern educational theories. He has advanced his causes by writing to politicians and lobbying behind the scenes. This would be manageable if his beliefs were all barmy. The problem is that some of them, like his environmentalism, have proved both popular and prescient.

40 Being both determined and right is a wonderful thing in a politician but a dangerous one in a constitutional monarch—particularly when determination shades into pigheadedness and rightness comes with a hefty dose of foolishness. Charles would be well advised to spend the rest of his internship digesting Walter Bagehot’s great book, “The English Constitution”, which lays out, in pellucid prose, not only what a modern monarch should do but also what he shouldn’t. Otherwise, he may find himself doing to the dignified branch what the referendum has already done to the efficient.

## ***Masterpiece Cakeshop's Surprising Breadth: The Supreme Court granted constitutional religious liberty to corporations—without explaining why.*** By Adam Winkler, June 06, 2018, *Slate*

After the Supreme Court handed down the decision in *Masterpiece Cakeshop Ltd. v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission*, the same-sex wedding cake case, there was fast consensus that the ruling was a “narrow” one. The court, commentators insisted, had avoided creating any meaningful precedent and punted on the big and potentially difficult questions in the case pitting the baker’s freedom of expression and religion against the same-sex couple’s civil rights and equality. Yet, while the justices certainly found a convenient way out—the court unexpectedly held that the Colorado Civil Rights Commission violated the First Amendment free exercise of religion by expressing hostility to the baker’s religious beliefs—the decision has the potential to be quite broad. Although the justices never explicitly said so, the court seems to have quietly established that business corporations have religious liberty rights under the First Amendment to the Constitution. If that is right, then *Masterpiece Cakeshop* could be a groundbreaking decision with profound reverberations in American law.

As cases like *Citizens United* remind us, business corporations have won an ever-larger number of individual rights under the Constitution. Religious liberty, however, has remained one of the few constitutional rights corporations had not been held to have. (*Hobby Lobby* held that corporations have religious liberty under a federal statute, which unlike the Constitution could be repealed by ordinary legislation.) *Masterpiece Cakeshop* subtly extends this right to corporations. And, in time, the case may well be used by many other business corporations whose owners have religious objections to same-sex marriage, LGBTQ rights, or birth control. Over and over again, corporations have won rights through Supreme Court decisions that provide little justification for why corporations should be able to claim those rights.

Often overlooked in the controversy over the wedding cake was that the lawsuit was brought not only by the baker. It was also brought, as the name of the case indicates, by *Masterpiece Cakeshop Ltd.*, a corporation chartered under Colorado law. That corporation was one of the “people” claiming its rights were violated. And the Supreme Court’s decision in favor of the baker is also a victory for the corporation—one that may enable future businesses to assert that they too have been victims of religious discrimination.

Emphasis on *may*. For, like so many of us, the justices too gave scant attention to the fact that a corporation was involved in this case. Justice Anthony Kennedy’s opinion for the court discusses the facts exclusively in terms of the baker—someone who clearly has religious liberty rights under the First Amendment—and never even mentions the most controversial question of the corporate entity’s religious freedom. One possibility, then, is that future courts, when confronted with corporate assertions of religious liberty, will say that

*Masterpiece Cakeshop* leaves the issue open and sets no definitive precedent.

History, however, suggests another outcome. Over and over again, corporations have won rights through Supreme Court decisions that, like *Masterpiece Cakeshop*, provide little or no justification for why corporations as such should be able to claim those rights. In the 1880s, the Supreme Court held that business corporations have equal protection and due process rights with no explanation; the court simply dropped a sentence in an opinion saying they did. In the 1930s, the court ruled that corporations have First Amendment press freedoms, again without offering any reasons for including corporations.

More recently, in cases like *Adarand Constructors Inc. v. Peña*, the court has allowed business corporations owned by whites to assert they’ve been victims of racial discrimination by affirmative action policies—once more with not a single sentence devoted to explaining why corporations, which have no obvious racial identity, should be able to assert this right. None of this is to say that these decisions are all wrong. But it highlights a pattern of corporations winning rights without the justices giving the question much thought. Even if *Masterpiece Cakeshop* does effectively extend First Amendment religious liberty rights to corporations, that right remains limited under current doctrine. In the 1990s, the court held in the *Employment Division v. Smith* case that the free exercise of religion did not require exemptions from generally applicable laws, such as civil right laws. Those are the types of laws businesses would be most likely to challenge.

But how long will *Smith’s* rule last? Justice Neil Gorsuch, an avowed originalist, began his concurring opinion (in which Justice Samuel Alito joined) by calling *Smith* “controversial in many quarters” and citing two law review articles making forceful originalist arguments against *Smith*. It was a clear signal to lawyers that at least some of the justices are ready to read the First Amendment to require exemptions for businesses like the bakery here—and presumably many other businesses whose owners have religious objections to things like same-sex marriage and birth control.

While *Masterpiece Cakeshop* was narrow in important ways, it also lays the groundwork for a new era in which business corporations can pick and choose—not only which customers they will sell wedding cakes to but also which laws they will be bound to follow.

**“Liam, We Talked About Your Focus!”** By AMY SHEARN JUNE 01, 2018 *SLATE*

My young son is obsessed with baseball, so for the past four springs I've spent many golden evenings and hazy weekend mornings watching father-son psychodramas play out on the Little League fields of Prospect Park. As a dyed-in-the-non-performance-wool indoors kid who never played any sport ever, I approach these 5 practices and games as an anthropologist might. And I have come to the conclusion that to watch a Little League game in 2018 is to see a microcosm for the confused state of contemporary malehood.

Little League has always been about teaching boys how to be men. While the original league was invented in 1939, it wasn't until the post-WWII years that organized youth sports really took off. Middle-class American families were buying houses in suburbs and seeking community in these brave new subdivisions. Little 10 League offered a way to get to know the neighbors while keeping the nuclear family firmly in place: Dad coached, Son played ball, while Mom and Sis cheered them on. (Girls weren't allowed to play until 1974.) The war had necessitated some confusing gender-role shifts, but now all those Rosie the Riveters could be shuffled back to the sidelines, while families focused on sculpting the next generation of soldiers.

What's more, a changing world order meant that being a “team player” suddenly had cultural capital. 15 America's postwar economy supported fewer people making a living by farming or working as self-employed tradesmen. Instead of being their own bosses, more and more men were donning suits and joining large companies. Little League and the other organized youth sports that followed were handy tools for teaching boys how to be the team-playing men they would need to be, whether they were headed to the trenches or a cubicle.

20 From what I've observed, however, learning to be a team player is no longer the focus of youth baseball, or at least not in the Pony Leagues of our urban corner of the world. The teams never really gel as teams. (Perhaps that happens in older age groups, when the kids are more likely to be there because they want to be and not just because their parents signed them up?) The coaches' focus tends to be on the basics, and the basics tend to be what each kid can do to get on base. And the dads hang around practices and games like cargo-pants-clad 25 personal managers, each intensely and noisily coaching only his own son. And the dads don't hold back—I've never seen parents shout at their own children as much as I do during Little League, and I've been to Disneyland.

The living-vicariously sport parent has become a cultural meme, but honestly I never see fathers yelling at the coaches or the ump's or even the teams, merely their own tiny sons. I've lost count of how many dads I've 30 heard tenderly reminisce about their own baseball years, only to then turn on their young with surprising ferocity. These are 6- and 7- and 8-year-olds, who still spend a lot of time on the field spinning around until they fall down, picking dandelions in the outfield, or jumping directly upon their friends. My husband (not a yeller, thank God) suspects that the intensely dyadic attention circuit also has to do with today's dads wanting to be more involved with their kids' lives than their own fathers were, but not always knowing exactly how to 35 temper that. [...]

So if Little League was once about preparing boys to become team-playing, nuclear-family-focused men, what is it doing now? It doesn't seem to me that this springtime ritual is actually about preparing today's youths for the Yankees bullpen. It doesn't really seem to be about community either; the team families are cordial, but everyone's lives are complicated and busy, and when parents aren't focused on their own kid—when he isn't 40 at bat or pitching, that is to say—they have their noses in their phones, waiting out the languid, two-hour-minimum games.

No, it seems clear to me that the current subtext of Little League is the development of the individual—that extreme, individualistic work ethic called for by late capitalism. Every time I see a dad with a red face hustle over and yell-whisper into his minishortstop's face, the messaging isn't *Listen to Coach*, or *Help your 45 teammate*. It's: *Liam, we talked about your focus. You have to stay focused.*

And why not? Americans don't place the same trust in corporate leaders or organizations of any kind as we did in the 1950s. Even in TED-talk-enlightened early-education circles, the talk is less about “team players” and more about “grit” and “agency.” It's every man for himself in the gig economy! And so we teach our children, whether we mean to or not, to look out for themselves, to strive for personal excellence, and that 50 their net worth—even to their fathers—is directly linked to how perfectly they can do a thing.

My son loves Little League. He also loves the raggedy pickup games he and my husband rustle up at our local blacktop baseball diamond. But what my son loves even *more* is all-day baseball camp, where the coaches are semipro players and the parents aren't around. I ask him, do the coaches yell at the kids? They do, he answers happily. They yell at all of us at the same time.

## What Kind of Monuments Does President Trump Value?

Robinson Meyer, 25 Aug 2017, *The Atlantic*

1 On Thursday morning, President Donald Trump announced his unequivocal support for preserving statues of Confederate generals and leaders, moving a step past his previous statements that the fate of the statues should be left to cities and states. In full, his tweets read: "Sad to see the history and culture of our great country being ripped apart with the removal of our beautiful statues and monuments. You can't change history, but you can  
5 learn from it. Robert E Lee, Stonewall Jackson—who's next, Washington, Jefferson? So foolish! Also the beauty that is being taken out of our cities, towns, and parks will be greatly missed and never able to be comparably replaced!"

It was not the first time he had spoken about monuments—national or otherwise. In April, Trump ordered the Department of the Interior to review whether every national monument created since 1996 should be eliminated  
10 or shrunk from its current size. His order put protections for tens of millions of acres of public land in doubt.

These are not the same type of monuments, of course. The Confederate monuments that Trump describes are stone or bronze depictions of leaders who took up arms against the United States. They are scattered across the entire country but concentrated in the Southeast. (There are also assorted plaques.) The national monuments of Trump's April executive order, meanwhile, are areas of federally owned land set aside for their natural beauty or  
15 cultural significance. They are somewhat akin to national parks, except that a president can unilaterally designate a national monument under the Antiquities Act of 1906. A national park can only be created by an act of Congress. One of the sites most likely to be downsized is Bears Ears National Monument in southeastern Utah, which was created by the Obama administration in December of last year. It encompasses more than 2,000 square miles of wilderness—desert, shrub, canyon, and peak—including two enormous buttes that give the area its name.

20 Since the late 1990s, some Republicans, especially in the West, have argued that national monuments created by the Clinton and Obama administrations were too large and exceeded the Antiquities Act's authority. Bears Ears came under particular attack. "The Antiquities Act does not give the federal government unlimited power to lock up millions of acres of land and water, and it's time that we ended this abusive practice," said Trump as he signed the order. He promised to "return control [of the land] to the people, the people of all of the states, the people of  
25 the United States."

Another group of people responded very differently to the Bears Ears announcement. Five indigenous nations lobbied the U.S. government to preserve the land, saying it holds historical, cultural, and sacred significance to their people. "[The designation of Bears Ears] actually brought tears to my face," said Eric Descheenie, a member of the Navajo nation and an Arizona state legislator. "It's so hard to even try to add up what this really means. At  
30 the end of the day, there's only a certain place in this entire world, on Earth, where we as indigenous peoples belong." The Antiquities Act was written more than a century ago in part to prevent "pothunting," the theft of indigenous artifacts from unprotected sites on public land. Bears Ears, which contains dozens of uninhabited Native cultural and archaeological sites, had been the target of considerable pothunting.

In 2009, federal agents raided the nearby town of Blanding, Utah, arresting 17 suspects and seizing thousands of  
35 allegedly stolen artifacts. Locals say that the raid was too broad and that it led to tragic consequences. Many also believe that pothunting is a way of life.

But the huge number of artifacts the raid recovered shocked Native nations into action. Indigenous leaders felt that some kind of lasting federal protection must be extended to the Bears Ears area, and they worked with Utah's congressional delegation for years to try to secure protection.

40 Half a decade later, when the tribes felt that avenue had failed, they asked the Obama administration to extend protection to the area. It granted their request. Supporters of Bears Ears describe the park as the first national monument created in collaboration with indigenous nations.

What is beautiful about the statues? As my colleagues Yoni Appelbaum and Adam Serwer have written, they represent traitorous leaders of a military campaign as cruel and brutal as it was grounded in violent racism.

45 Far from being hand-crafted by artists, many of the Confederate monuments put up between 1895 and 1915 were mass-produced by firms in the North. Other monuments were installed later.

The national monuments currently under review by the Trump administration are scattered across the West. They include two vast oceanic preserves in the central Pacific. [...]

The excitement with which the president defends one kind of monument, while undermining another, does raise  
50 the question: What kind of history does the president value? What does it look like when history is destroyed? And what kinds of beauty and culture can be truly lost—what treasures of the United States can, once removed, never by human hands be comparably replaced?

**The six weeks that brought Cambridge Analytica down.** By Olivia Solon & Emma Graham-Harrison, 3 May 2018 *THE GUARDIAN*

This week, Cambridge Analytica announced that it, along with SCL Elections, the UK entity owned by the former CEO Alexander Nix, was shutting down over mounting legal fees and what it described as a “siege of media coverage” that drove away “virtually all of the company’s customers and suppliers”. The company – which was created with an initial \$15m investment from the hedge fund billionaire Robert Mercer – maintains it has done nothing wrong and has been killed by negative PR. No announcement has been made about the fate of the parent company, SCL Group, a UK defence contractor which has been in business for 30 years.

The beginning of the end for the data analytics firm was on Saturday 17 March, when the Observer and the New York Times published interviews with the whistleblower Christopher Wylie. This followed more than a year’s worth of reporting on the company by the Observer. The first piece, in February last year, triggered two legal investigations, both of which are continuing: one by the Electoral Commission into what work the company did for Nigel Farage’s Leave.EU campaign and whether it had been properly declared, and the other by the Information Commissioner’s Office, which also announced a wider inquiry into the use of data in politics. Wylie detailed how the software program at the heart of Cambridge Analytica was created, and how the company collected the data of tens of millions of Facebook users for commercial use, in violation of the social media giant’s own rules. “We exploited Facebook to harvest millions of people’s profiles. And built models to exploit what we knew about them and target their inner demons. That was the basis the entire company was built on,” he said.

By late 2015, Facebook found out that information had been harvested on an unprecedented scale, but at the time it failed to alert users and took only limited steps to recover and secure the private information of more than 50 million individuals. Cambridge Analytica went on to work for Donald Trump’s campaign, and its executives would later claim to undercover reporters that the company played a pivotal role in his victory.

Facebook attempted to dampen the impact of Wylie’s whistleblowing interviews by publishing its own mea culpa and banning Cambridge Analytica and SCL Group from its platform, hours before publication but two years after the data breach was first reported. It argued it had asked Cambridge Analytica to delete the Facebook data after the Guardian’s 2015 article and had taken the company’s word when it said it had done this.

When the stories came out they prompted international outrage, and made Cambridge Analytica an unlikely household name. And so started six weeks of pain for the firm. [...]

By 10 April, British and US lawyers had launched a joint class action against Facebook, Cambridge Analytica and SCL for allegedly misusing the personal data of more than 71 million people. The lawsuit claims the firms obtained users’ private information from the social network to develop “political propaganda campaigns” in the UK and the US. That same week, Zuckerberg faced 10 hours of questioning by members of Congress. He remained calm and composed, showing remorse and deference and highlighting the changes Facebook had already made. He pledged to do more to protect privacy and prevent foreign interference in elections.

Nix was summoned to appear before a British parliamentary committee on fake news the following week for questioning over “inconsistencies” in evidence he had given the committee in February, when he claimed: “We do not work with Facebook data, and we do not have Facebook data.” However, on 17 April he cancelled his appearance, citing the ICO’s ongoing investigation into his company. Damian Collins, the chair of the digital, culture, media and sport committee said: “We do not accept Mr Nix’s reason for not appearing in a public session before the committee. “There is ... no legal reason why Mr Nix cannot appear.”

Cambridge Analytica held a press conference on Tuesday 24 April, in which it stated that the data it licensed from the academic Aleksandr Kogan’s company Global Science Research was “ineffectual” and therefore it did not use it in Trump’s 2016 presidential campaign.

Spokesman Clarence Mitchell said the company tested to see if Kogan’s personality types could improve the performance of advertising campaigns but that that they “underperformed when compared to more traditional ways of grouping people by demographics”. The damage was already done. Cambridge Analytica’s clients and suppliers had, the company said, jumped ship after the firm was “vilified for activities that are not only legal, but also widely accepted as a standard component of online advertising in both the political and commercial arenas”.

On 2 May, the same day that Cambridge Analytica announced it was going into liquidation, Chris Vickery of the data security firm Upguard gave evidence to the digital, culture, media and sport committee that the Trump campaign had access to psychological profiles derived from Facebook data, that AIQ and Cambridge Analytica were technologically entwined and that illegal co-ordination of data by leave campaigns was “indisputable”. Although Cambridge Analytica might be dead, the team behind it has already set up a new company called Emerdata. According to Companies House data, Nix is listed as a director along with other executives from SCL Group.

## After the suffragettes: how women stormed Westminster

100 years ago, the first women got the right to vote - and stand for parliament. So what are the new challenges facing female politicians?

Helen Lewis, *The New Statesman*, 25 January 2018

- 1 It takes a few minutes to find the right cupboard – tucked in a stairwell behind the elaborate organ in the chapel of St Mary Undercroft, just off Westminster Hall. When the Houses of Parliament are sitting, a small but steady stream of visitors take it in turns to walk into the tiny room. Then they shut the door. That means they can see the brass plaque that was stealthily installed there by the late Labour MP Tony Benn. “In this broom cupboard Emily Wilding Davison hid herself, illegally, during the night of the 1911 census,” it reads. “In this way, she was able to record her address, on the night of that census, as being ‘the House of Commons’, thus making her claim to the same political rights as men.” Davison did not live to see women have the vote – she was killed after running into the path of the king’s horse and trying to pin a rosette on it during the 1913 Epsom Derby. But as the centenary of that landmark legislation approaches, that simple plaque in a broom cupboard reminds us of both the endurance of the suffragettes, and their non-militant sisters the suffragists, and the sheer variety of tactics they employed.
- 5 Davison was not the only suffragette to protest the collection of the census. Across the country, women refused to stay in their homes and be counted – since the political system ignored their voices by denying them the vote, why should they co-operate with the system? Several hundred gathered at a skating rink not far from the headquarters of the Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU) on the Aldwych in central London. The Votes for Women newspaper of 14 April 1911 published a photograph of the gathering – there were speeches and, yes, there was skating – and reported the activities of other refuseniks, who maintained “that they were not persons in the eyes of the law, and that they refused to give the government any information which might lead to more oppressive laws for women being made”.
- 10 One group gathered in a private house a few miles outside Edinburgh, where they enjoyed supper, “a political and historical guessing game with prizes, and a whist drive”. A member of the Men’s Political Union wrote on his census form, under the infirmity column: “All wide-awake and fit in body and limb. Votes for women!”
- 15 As ever, the relentlessly militant Davison wanted to go further. By the night of the census, she was already on parliament’s index expurgatorius for throwing a hammer through a window of the Lords in 1910 and later hiding in a ventilation shaft overnight in the hope of jumping out and accosting the prime minister.
- 20 Her memories of “Black Friday” – which took place on 18 November 1910 – would also have been fresh. Suffragettes had gathered at Caxton Hall in Westminster, hoping to hear about the progress of the first Conciliation Bill, which promised to extend the vote to property-owning women. Instead the then Liberal prime minister, Herbert Asquith, announced that he was dissolving parliament to hold a general election.
- 25 The suffragettes were bitterly disappointed. Annie Kenney, a former mill worker – and a rare working-class woman near the top of the Pankhurst-dominated WSPU – compared the response to a “storm-burst”. In her autobiography, *Memories of a Militant*, she wrote: “All the clouds that had been gathering for weeks suddenly broke, and the downpour was terrific. There was not one of us would not have gone to death at that moment, had Christabel [Pankhurst] so willed it.”
- 30 As Diane Atkinson relates in her new history of the suffragettes, *Rise Up Women!*, a group then tried to enter parliament to speak to the prime minister. It included: Emmeline Pankhurst, the WSPU leader; 74-year-old Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, the first woman to qualify as a surgeon in Britain; the physicist Hertha Ayrton, who won the Hughes Medal for her work on electric lighting but was refused fellowship of the Royal Society; and Princess Sophia Duleep Singh, the daughter of a Sikh maharaja and a god-daughter of Queen Victoria. [...]
- 35 Looking back, there will never again be another thunderclap like that of 1918 in British politics. Thanks to the enfranchisement of younger men alongside the first women, the electorate tripled. The fight for the vote united women from all backgrounds, even though histories have tended to concentrate on the charismatic, sometimes dictatorial Pankhursts. Now, the inequalities affecting women are more diffuse, and their solutions are inevitably more partisan.
- 40 What is undeniable is that the centre ground has shifted. We have a Conservative prime minister who calls herself a feminist; an SNP leader and First Minister who speaks regularly about her desire to be a role model to girls; and a deputy leader of the Liberal Democrats, Jo Swinson, who is pregnant with her second child (and watched her partner, Duncan Hames, become the first MP to take a baby through the division lobby).
- 45 The Labour Party, although it still hasn’t had a female leader, has enough talented women MPs that it would be no trouble to assemble a kick-ass, all-female shadow cabinet.
- 50 Women on top? Not quite. But a century after the first women got the vote, we are more powerful than ever.

## The arts world sees working-class people as a problem to be solved

*Publicly funded art is still dominated by a privileged elite who fail to engage the majority of the population*

Javaad Alipoor, *The Guardian*, 5 June 2018

- From Edward Bond's generation of working-class writers to the flowering of companies that relied on enterprise allowance in the 1980s, theatre is often at its best when there is a broadening in the backgrounds of those who are making it. The majority of artistic directors, producers and chief executives in British theatre are still white, privately educated men. A hugely disproportionate number of directors, writers and actors come from privileged backgrounds. Theatre has long been the development ground for TV and film so what can seem like a parochial discussion about representation in theatre actually affects the ability of our country to see and shape itself. Debate around class in the arts still draws on middle- and upper-class stereotypes of working-class life. Just like the conversation around ethnic diversity, we are often talked about rather than talked to. What is weird is the way that working-class artists talk about ourselves: our conversations always seem to begin with someone telling me how hard they had it growing up. I grew up in one of two mixed-race families in a white working-class estate in Bradford; we never talked about ourselves like that. People who are broadly working class, those in households with the median income or less, are by definition not a minority. It's only in the elite-dominated world of the arts that they are seen that way.
- In the first Blair administration, artists were encouraged to think about the "social outcomes of their work". For years, state-subsidised art has struggled to justify its purpose, from the idea that we fund what is good for people (as in John Maynard Keynes's view of the Arts Council) to subsidising the creation of a national culture that binds communities together, or more recently the idea of this investment as subsidy in the creative industries. Theatre was complicit in the soft privatisation of education, health and community resources that the "third sector" of charities, voluntary organisations and other non-state, non-private bodies led. Where social services had existed as part of a minimum social welfare contract, youth services, along with social services and mental-health charities began to compete for funding on grounds of delivering to agendas in areas such as citizenship, community cohesion and crime prevention. Theatre organisations were part of this shift. Arts funding might finance a drama about the psychological impact of austerity on working-class people – just as brutal cuts were being made to mental health services and the NHS.
- The arts world has turned working-class people into a problem to be solved rather than audience members or artists to be developed. Focusing on the poorest in society also dodges the main question we should be asking: why is it not only the super-exploited but the majority in this country who do not engage with subsidised theatre or arts? These are people who fill out football stadiums, comedy clubs, gigs and commercial theatres, often paying more for tickets than is charged by state-subsidised productions. Folk who can afford a big night out, but don't want to spend it with us.
- We need to find a way of reconnecting with the idea of theatre as a "big night out". Kate Wasserberg's recent production of *Rita, Sue and Bob Too* attracted working-class audiences all over the UK that wouldn't usually engage with theatre. And it's not coincidental that a play by Andrea Dunbar, an iconically working-class writer, achieved this. We need to be making theatre that seeks interlocutors, rather than just presenting it to audiences.
- We need to make sure that there are ways into the sector for more working-class artists. We need people from those backgrounds in positions of leadership – not only as artistic directors, producers and CEOs but as board members. Boards of school governors and mosque committees are more representative of working-class communities than are theatre boards.
- [...] It's one thing to find a new audience through adaptations of iconic novels or films. It's another to fundamentally change the makeup of who is creating and watching the work. Theatre that captures working-class attention with the playfulness of contemporary app design, the popularity of live music performance and the participatory value of contemporary craft is going to take a generational effort to build. And it can only be built by finding allies in other arts, the commercial sector and politics.
- Working-class people aren't some tiny minority of our society to be managed and transformed; we are most of this country. When we make democratic and representative theatre that reflects this reality, in front of audiences that do so, too, we will be future-proofing our communities.



## The Museum That Places the Bible at the Heart of America's Identity

Emma Green, 26 Nov 2017, *The Atlantic*

1 The Museum of the Bible has officially opened its doors, flanked by two giant golden tablets of scripture. The building stands just blocks from the National Mall and offices of the House of Representatives; the top floor offers a spectacular view of the Capitol nearby. Unlike the taxpayer-funded Smithsonian, the museum is privately owned. Even so, it has been positioned by its creators as a national museum, physically placing America's religious history at its political center. [...] Although the museum takes a global perspective on the Bible, it is preoccupied with the question of whether America is a biblically rooted nation. While the exhibits portray some conflicting views, the message is clear: The country was forged through Christianity. Video clips show black-shirted actors reciting speeches from the Founding Fathers on religious freedom and the importance of Christianity. Displays explore how Christian preachers used the Bible to justify slavery, revisit the 1920s Scopes trial over evolution, and highlight the Supreme Court's role in shaping public prayer. Careful attention is paid to the black-church tradition and the history of gospel music; Martin Luther King Jr. figures prominently in the contemporary gallery on the second floor.

It is a one-sided story of America, or perhaps a multi-faceted look at a limited narrative of history. The museum is not focused on non-Christian religious minorities or secular culture; it's not all that interested in the deism of Thomas Jefferson or the Ku Klux Klan's religiously justified violence. Perhaps that's not the mission—after all, the museum is dedicated to the story of the Bible. The question is whether its telling is too neat and straightforward, or whether it presents a narrative its visitors are expecting to find. This is not an easy challenge to overcome—and it's common to all curators. At the Israel Museum, for example, "most of the people who come to the [Shrine of the Book] are non-Jews," said Roitman. "They are looking for Jesus. They are looking for John the Baptist. They want very much to make the linkage between these artifacts and the characters [in the New Testament]." While all curation involves some sort of interpretation, he said, "I'm very careful not to say what they expect from me to say."

Museums constantly have to grapple with the question of who they're for—and in the case of Bible-related museums, whether they have a pluralistic or particular interpretation of what the Bible is. "We do not teach religion," said Amanda Weiss, who oversees the Bible Lands Museum in Jerusalem. "We are a universal institution for people of all faiths. We take that extremely seriously, because the Bible is a history book that has been written by many different hands over generations." The idea that a museum could present the Bible through the lens of multiple cultures is relatively new in the world of museums, Weiss said: When she first started, "to talk about the Jewish roots of Christianity, people would look at you like you were a little bit crazy." The Museum of the Bible is a strong signal that alliances between certain communities of Jews and American Christians are becoming more common, in that it emphasizes a shared Jewish-Christian history of the book. And the museum's leaders claim to take a universal approach to the Bible, similar to Weiss's. "We want to make sure we're inclusive ... to not over-represent some groups over others," said Seth Pollinger, the director of content at the museum. "We're not focusing on proving or demonstrating the truth of what's in the Bible or advocating its historical accuracy."

It has had to overcome significant suspicions in the process, though. When Weiss first considered a partnership with the Museum of the Bible, she was wary of proselytization. Eventually, she agreed to a joint exhibit in Jerusalem. After "some bumps on the road," including a misunderstanding over displaying a depiction of the crucifixion in a museum heavily trafficked by observant Jews, "the learning curve of the Museum of the Bible team was phenomenal," she said. Weiss keeps a picture of herself, Steve Green, the Museum of the Bible's president Cary Summers, and Benjamin Netanyahu on the wall of her office. The memento is an appropriate symbol of the Museum of the Bible, which was brought to life by powerful backers. During the opening ceremony, the gospel giant CeCe Winans sang "Amazing Grace" and her song "Let Them Fall in Love," asking God to bless those who don't follow him. Eric and Lara Trump, the president's son and daughter-in-law, were among the attendees at the museum's opening gala. Earlier this year, museum leaders hosted a luncheon that included Department of Education Secretary Betsy DeVos and several cabinet-secretary spouses, according to Johnnie Moore, who runs a Christian public-relations firm. He estimated that "easily ... half" of America's most influential and affluent evangelical families took part in the museum's opening festivities. While the museum may disappoint those who hope or fear "to walk in the door and ... be hit over the head with Christianity every step of the way," as Weiss put it, it is still a remarkable assertion of American religious identity in the nation's capital. Those who visit now have "this other point of reference," Wuerl said. "A political point of reference, and a spiritual one."

## **Black Panther roars. Are we listening?**

Benjamin Woo, 15 Feb 2018, *theconversation.com*

1 Marvel Studios' *Black Panther*, opening tonight in theatres across Canada and the United States, is pretty much guaranteed to be a hit. It set records for advance ticket sales on Fandango, its soundtrack album debuted in the No. 1 spot on the Billboard charts and industry estimates point to opening-weekend revenues as high as US\$170 million. Director Ryan Coogler and star Chadwick Boseman appeared on the cover of the industry trade magazine *Variety*, while *British GQ* styled actor Michael B. Jordan to recall Black Panther Party activists. The red-carpet premiere made a splash on celebrity and fashion blogs, and it's the most-tweeted-about film of the year. Marvel's had big hits before. But this feels like something different.

5 The *Black Panther*, also known as King T'Challa of Wakanda, was created as a comic book hero in 1966 by artist Jack Kirby and writer/editor Stan Lee. Although considered the first Black superhero in American 10 comics, this is not the first time we've seen a Black superhero in the cinema. Comedian Robert Townsend gave us Meteor Man in 1993, Shaquille O'Neal portrayed the DC Comics character Steel in 1997 and Wesley Snipes starred as Blade the Vampire Hunter in three films beginning in 1998. This is, however, the first Black-led superhero film since comic book movies became, in the words of Liam Burke, "modern Hollywood's leading 15 genre." Much as T'Challa's first appearance in print — in the *Fantastic Four* issue #52 in July 1966 — predated the founding of the Black Panther Party by a few months; the decision to bring him to the silver screen 50 years later ran ahead of major shifts in the discourse about diversity and representation in the entertainment industries.

The project was announced as part of Phase Three of the Marvel Cinematic Universe in October 2014, a few months before April Reign launched the hashtag #OscarsSoWhite to draw attention to the racialized economy of recognition in Hollywood, and more than a year before the #whitewashedOUT campaign focused on the 20 casting of white actors in roles written as Asian or Asian-American. It came before *Moonlight*'s dramatic win for Best Picture at the 2017 Academy Awards. Sight still unseen by most, *Black Panther* has been embraced as a triumphant rejoinder in our long, difficult conversations about race and the legacies of colonialism and slavery. *The New York Times Magazine* hails it as a "defining moment for black America," while *The Globe and Mail* says its treatment of the Black experience "resonates across the diaspora." In a short video clip I first encountered 5 on Twitter, three young men admire the film's poster, exclaiming, "This is what y'all feel all the time? I would love this country, too." Activists, educators and scholars from racialized communities have long raised concerns about under-representation and stereotyping in the media and their impact on self-esteem and identity. While it is difficult to draw a direct, causal line from watching a movie to an improved sense of self-worth or well-being, it is undeniable that *Black Panther* —with its nearly all-Black cast, stylish use of hip-hop, lush costuming, and 10 setting in the proudly uncolonized, technologically advanced nation of Wakanda —is giving many of us who have felt under-served by Hollywood a language with which to speak our aspirations.

While echoing the broad picture of under-representation, research conducted by Darnell Hunt, Ana-Christina Ramón and Michael Tran at UCLA's Ralph Bunche Centre for African American Studies also points to the positive incentives towards diversity. Canada and the U.S., which together make up the "domestic" film 5 market, are becoming more diverse, and young people, who are the biggest purchasers of cinema tickets, are the most diverse of all. As a result, according to Hunt, Ramón and Tran, films with diverse casts have higher global box returns and higher returns on investment. In a *New York Times* roundtable, Coogler suggested that commercial media production provided a space that could harmonize marginalized communities' aspirations for representation with economic imperatives: "They say it's the studio system, but it's really the people system. It's 10 who's running the studio? How are they running it? When you look at Disney with [Tendo Nagenda, executive vice president for production at Walt Disney Studios, and Nate Moore, a producer at Marvel Studios and an executive producer of "*Black Panther*"], it's a place that's interested in representation, not just for the sake of representation, but representation because that's what works, that's what's going to make quality stuff that the world is going to embrace, that's what leads to success."

15 *Black Panther* is a case in point. Coogler and his stars speak movingly about the experience of making this film and what it means to them as African-Americans with more or less immediate connections to Africa. But, at the same time, the studio's embrace of diversity is also a highly strategic move — 18 films into their mega-franchise. While some critics have begun to call out the ossifying house style of "Marvel movies," Coogler (like Taika Waititi, director of the recent *Thor: Ragnarok*) brings a distinctive aesthetic sensibility and critical 20 reputation to bear. The studio may have gambled that the Black film-goers who supported recent films like *Hidden Figures* and *Get Out* would pick up the slack as producers reach deeper and deeper into Marvel Comics' catalogue for characters with less existing brand recognition.

## For God's Sake, *New York Times*, #MeToo Is Not Going to End Flirting And Fun Sex

By Christina Cauterucci, Jan. 5, 2018, *Slate* "The XX Factor/What Women Really Think"

Today's hottest #MeToo take comes from the *New York Times* opinion page, where Daphne Merkin argues that the movement to expose a widespread culture of sexual harassment and abuse has gotten out of hand. Merkin draws liberally from a genre of #MeToo criticism advanced by the *New Yorker's* Masha Gessen, in addition to plenty of conservative columnists, in recent months. The school of thought holds that, in our eagerness to bring the worst of the wrongdoers to long-overdue justice, women are ruining the lives of innocent men, punishing good people for being bad flirts, and threatening to make consensual sex a rare, robotic experience.

Merkin's op-ed takes nearly every objectionable pillar of this increasingly tired argument and makes its fallacies even plainer. In that sense, it's a useful document for those of us who've been covering this cultural moment and its various strains of backlash. Merkin seems to want to delegitimize efforts to establish standards of sexual consent and hold accountable those who violate them. Instead, she illuminates a growing gap between women whose experiences and identities allow them to shrug off sexual harassment and women whose livelihoods are threatened by it. Merkin seems to think the former have little to learn from the latter. The first red flag in this piece is her repeated identification of anonymous assenting sources as "feminist." In this context, the word is employed as a shield to deflect any future critics (hello!) from arguing that these "feminists" have it all wrong when it comes to consent. But the word *feminist* means nothing when it's paired with a position that diminishes the rights and safety of women: Think of self-identified feminist Ivanka Trump, or the pro-lifers who argue that "protecting" women from abortion is a feminist act. When I've discussed the #MeToo movement with skeptical men, about half the time, they've invoked unnamed female friends who supposedly agree that too many innocent men are being mowed down by an overzealous mob. These friends serve the same purpose as Merkin's "feminists"—to give unearned credence to a dubious claim about what exactly women deserve, and to make one person's opinion sound like the consensus of a formidable multitude.

And Merkin's friends sure sound committed to some pretty clearly anti-feminist beliefs. "Grow up, this is real life," one "feminist" friend purportedly said of the still-growing wave of sexual harassment accusations. Another wondered, "Whatever happened to flirting?" By answering today's messy, imperfect, entirely vital response to one of the most damaging symptoms of gender inequality with an entreaty for women to "grow up," these voices undermine the very foundation of feminism and, indeed, any social movement: the belief in, and desire to fight for, a better future. Feminism means taking steps toward a world where "real life" doesn't mean smiling and swallowing a hump in your throat when a senator grabs your ass during a photo-op, and where "flirting" doesn't mean an older, married colleague kissing you on the mouth at what you were led to believe was a business meeting.

Merkin's genre of #MeToo suspicion is deeply concerned with the need for specificity, with taking each separate allegation against each accused perpetrator and evaluating it on its particular merits. Yet few of the essays written in this vein offer many, if any, specific examples of good-natured flirting that has been met with undue punishment or innocent men who've been tarnished by false proclamations. Merkin mentions Garrison Keillor, Jonathan Schwartz, and Ryan Lizza—but in all three of these cases, accusers have declined to share their accounts of what happened. The exact circumstances of these allegations may still be mysterious to the public, but it's misleading to frame these as straightforward instances of men being unduly censured. And in all these cases, investigators privy to the accusers' accounts have determined that the men's actions were severe enough to warrant dismissal from their workplaces. How can Merkin enact "due process," as she requests of the rest of us, when she's only heard one side of the story? She calls accusations of harassment and abuse "life-destroying denunciations," a patent falsehood. A famous millionaire who loses a job has hardly had his life destroyed.

The Gessen and Merkin school of thought also lacks any meaningful blueprint for how institutions might stop a Matt Lauer or a Harvey Weinstein while allowing other forms of sometimes-consensual, sometimes-nonconsensual sexual advances to continue. Of course there's a distinction between rape and groping, and between groping and a lewd remark. But in the context of workplace harassment, when administrators tolerate low-level offenses, people are sometimes empowered to push the boundaries even further, priming witnesses to ignore high-level stuff when it happens. People worrying that #MeToo is a "sex panic" believe the problem lies in a few bad actors and their stomach-churning offenses. If the magnitude of the movement has demonstrated anything, it's that there's an entire spectrum of sex-based abuse of power that lets those bad actors flourish. It's not ancillary to the problem. It's the root of it.

## No, Mexico Is Not Paying For Trump's Wall — You Are. By S. V. Date 01/23/2018 *THE HUFFINGTON POST*

Remember that multi-billion-dollar “great wall” that presidential candidate Donald Trump said Mexico would pay for?

Well, it turns out that under President Donald Trump, you, the American taxpayer, will be paying for it instead.

A promise that Trump made the day he rode down his escalator in Trump Tower to announce his candidacy and then repeated, in city after city, has quietly fallen by the wayside. Proposals floated recently by the administration and congressional leaders vary from spending \$1.6 billion in the coming year to start building the wall to the \$20 billion that Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer offered to support last week. So far, none of those plans appears to include any language that would seek reimbursement of the cost from Mexico, whose leaders have stated flatly that they would not be paying. Trump's chief of staff, John Kelly, conceded as much during a Fox News interview last week. “In one way or another, it's possible that we could get the revenue from Mexico but not directly from their government,” he said.

He added that the U.S. could possibly recover some money through visa fees or through the ongoing renegotiations of the North American Free Trade Agreement. Kelly also said Trump's thoughts about the wall were not “fully informed” during the campaign, and that the president had subsequently “adjusted” his views. Trump, presumably in response to Kelly's remarks to Fox and his reported statements to Democratic lawmakers earlier that Trump had “evolved” from his original position, insisted that his views on the wall had not changed one bit. “The Wall is the Wall, it has never changed or evolved from the first day I conceived of it,” he wrote on Twitter the following morning. Trump's White House did not respond to queries about the issue.

Republicans who worked for Trump's rivals during the presidential primary campaign said he got away with his “making Mexico pay” promise because no one took it seriously. “It was just another laugh line,” said Rick Tyler, who worked for Texas Sen. Ted Cruz. “This is a great publicity stunt gone awry.”

“We thought it was preposterous,” said John Weaver, who ran Ohio Gov. John Kasich's campaign, adding that he was more dismayed that Republicans in Congress went along with the idea. “It's one thing for this knucklehead to come down the escalator and say Mexico is going to pay for the wall. It's another thing for these members of Congress to agree with him,” Weaver said. “Yeah, he's a fool. But what are they?”

Unlike many of his campaign positions that were drafted weeks or months into his presidential run, Trump's promise to build a structure along the southern border was central to his June 2015 candidacy announcement. “I would build a great wall, and nobody builds walls better than me, believe me, and I'll build them very inexpensively,” Trump boasted. “I will build a great, great wall on our southern border. And I will have Mexico pay for that wall. Mark my words.” That vow drew an enthusiastic response, and Trump began including it in his standard stump speech. Often it would be in a call-and-response format, with Trump asking: “Who's going to pay for the wall?” and the crowd shouting: “Mexico!” [...]

Trump's commitment to forcing Mexico to pay, though, was called into question in August 2016 during his visit to that nation to meet with its president, Enrique Peña Nieto. The Mexican leader said later that he brought up the topic and stated clearly that Mexico would not pay for the wall, and that Trump did not try to pursue the matter. And when the two leaders spoke by phone just a week into the Trump administration a year ago, Trump reportedly acknowledged that Mexico wouldn't pay for the wall but asked Peña Nieto not to mention that publicly, so as to avoid embarrassing the new U.S. president.

“You cannot say anymore that the United States is going to pay for the wall. I am just going to say that we are working it out,” Trump said, according to a leaked transcript of the call. “Believe it or not, this is the least important thing that we are talking about, but politically this might be the most important (thing to) talk about.” Since then, though, Trump has returned to claiming that Mexico would pay for the wall's construction — “in some fashion.” “Mexico will pay. In some form, Mexico will pay for the wall,” Trump told reporters at a recent meeting with GOP lawmakers at the presidential retreat at Camp David.

Trump did not elaborate, so what precisely that “form” would be remains unclear. Tyler said he doesn't think any of those details matter. Most of the country dislikes and distrusts Trump, while his hardcore base of support — the 25 to 30 percent of the nation that polls show still supports him strongly — isn't really interested in a wall as much as an end to undocumented immigration, Tyler said.

“They don't care. His base is a group that feels like the reason their wages haven't gone up all these years is illegal immigration and bad trade deals,” Tyler said. “That's what they've been led to believe.”

**Soros-backed campaign to push for new Brexit vote within a year** By Daniel Boffey and Richard Partington 29 May 2018 *THE GUARDIAN*

A campaign to secure a second Brexit referendum within a year and save the UK from “immense damage” is to be launched in days, the philanthropist and financier George Soros has announced. The billionaire founder of the Open Society Foundation said the prospect of the UK’s prolonged divorce from Brussels could help persuade the British public by a “convincing margin” that EU membership was in their interests. In a speech on Tuesday ahead of the launch of the Best for Britain campaign – said to have already attracted millions of pounds in donations – Soros suggested to an audience in Paris that changing the minds of Britons would be in keeping with “revolutionary times”.

Best for Britain had already helped to convince parliamentarians to extract from Theresa May a meaningful vote on the final withdrawal deal, he said, and it was time to engage with voters, and Brussels, to pave the way for the UK to stay in the bloc. It is expected to publish its campaign manifesto on 8 June.

Soros, 87, said: “Brexit is an immensely damaging process, harmful to both sides ... Divorce will be a long process, probably taking more than five years. Five years is an eternity in politics, especially in revolutionary times like the present. “Ultimately, it’s up to the British people to decide what they want to do. It would be better however if they came to a decision sooner rather than later. That’s the goal of an initiative called the Best for Britain, which I support.

“Best for Britain fought for, and helped to win, a meaningful parliamentary vote which includes the option of not leaving at all. This would be good for Britain but would also render Europe a great service by rescinding Brexit and not creating a hard-to-fill hole in the European budget. “But the British public must express its support by a convincing margin in order to be taken seriously by Europe. That’s what Best for Britain is aiming for by engaging the electorate. It will publish its manifesto in the next few days.”

Soros said he feared the EU could be heading towards another major financial crisis triggered by austerity and populist political parties intent on blowing the bloc apart. Sounding the alarm as financial markets fell into turmoil on Tuesday amid a deepening political crisis in Italy, Soros said the EU had lost its way since the 2008 banking crash and required radical transformation in order to survive. “The EU is in an existential crisis. Everything that could go wrong has gone wrong,” he said.

However, Soros said he was convinced it was the ideal time for the EU to reform itself and prepare the ground for the UK staying inside the bloc. “The economic case for remaining a member of the EU is strong, but it will take time for it to sink in,” Soros said. “During that time the EU needs to transform itself into an association that countries like Britain would want to join, in order to strengthen the political case. “Such a Europe would differ from the current arrangements in two key respects. First, it would clearly distinguish between the European Union and the eurozone. Second, it would recognise that the euro has many unresolved problems and they must not be allowed to destroy the European Union.” [...]

Hungarian-born Soros said an “addiction to austerity” at the heart of Europe was harming economic development, which had in turn been exploited by populist politicians to stoke anti-EU support. “As a result [of austerity], many young people today regard the EU as an enemy that has deprived them of jobs and a secure and promising future,” he said. Soros said there were still steps that could be taken to make the EU more appealing to ordinary voters who had been let down by Brussels since 2008.

Calling for an EU-funded Marshall-style plan for Africa worth about €30bn (£26bn) a year, he said migratory pressures across Europe could be relieved by helping developing nations. He called for the EU to abandon rules requiring member states to join the euro, lest they eventually combine with other EU rules to “destroy” the project altogether.

Echoing a call made by David Cameron before the Brexit vote, he argued for the EU to allow member states to pursue “multi-track” relations with the bloc, rather than “ever closer union”.

“Europe needs to do something drastic in order to survive its existential crisis. Simply put, the EU needs to reinvent itself,” he said.

This year, Soros moved to defy his critics over his £400,000 donation to Best for Britain by pledging an additional £100,000 to support efforts to fight Brexit. OSF’s total funding for pro-Europe campaigns and organisations is now at more than £800,000.

## The trouble with charitable billionaires

Carl Rhodes and Peter Bloom, 24 May 2018, *The Guardian*

- 1 In February 2017, Facebook's founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg was in the headlines for his charitable activities. The Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, founded by the tech billionaire and his wife, Priscilla Chan, handed out over \$3m in grants to aid the housing crisis in the Silicon Valley area. David Plouffe, the Initiative's president of policy and advocacy, stated that the grants were intended to "support those working to help families in
- 5 immediate crisis while supporting research into new ideas to find a long-term solution – a two-step strategy that will guide much of our policy and advocacy work moving forward". This is but one small part of Zuckerberg's charity empire. The Initiative has committed billions of dollars to philanthropic projects designed to address social problems, with a special focus on solutions driven by science, medical research and education. This all took off in December 2015, when Zuckerberg and Chan wrote and published a letter to their new baby Max. The
- 10 letter made a commitment that over the course of their lives they would donate 99% of their shares in Facebook (at the time valued at \$45bn) to the "mission" of "advancing human potential and promoting equality". The housing intervention is of course much closer to home, dealing with issues literally at the door of Facebook's Menlo Park head office. This is an area where median house prices almost doubled to around \$2m in the five years between 2012 and 2017. More generally, San Francisco is a city with massive income inequality, and the
- 15 reputation of having the most expensive housing in the US. Chan Zuckerberg's intervention was clearly designed to offset social and economic problems caused by rents and house prices having skyrocketed to such a level that even tech workers on six-figure salaries find it hard to get by. For those on more modest incomes, supporting themselves, let alone a family, is nigh-on impossible.
- Ironically, the boom in the tech industry in this region – a boom Facebook has been at the forefront of – has been
- 20 a major contributor to the crisis. As Peter Cohen from the Council of Community Housing Organizations explained it: "When you're dealing with this total concentration of wealth and this absurd slosh of real-estate money, you're not dealing with housing that's serving a growing population. You're dealing with housing as a real-estate commodity for speculation."
- Zuckerberg's apparent generosity, it would seem, is a small contribution to a large problem that was created by
- 25 the success of the industry he is involved in. In one sense, the housing grants (equivalent to the price of just one-and-a-half average Menlo Park homes) are trying to put a sticking plaster on a problem that Facebook and other Bay Area corporations aided and abetted. It would appear that Zuckerberg was redirecting a fraction of the spoils of neoliberal tech capitalism, in the name of generosity, to try to address the problems of wealth inequality created by a social and economic system that allowed those spoils to accrue in the first place.
- 30 It is easy to think of Zuckerberg as some kind of CEO hero – a once regular kid whose genius made him one of the richest men in the world, and who decided to use that wealth for the benefit of others. The image he projects is of altruism untainted by self-interest. A quick scratch of the surface reveals that the structure of Zuckerberg's charity enterprise is informed by much more than good-hearted altruism. Even while many have applauded Zuckerberg for his generosity, the nature of this apparent charity was openly questioned from the outset.
- 35 The wording of Zuckerberg's 2015 letter could easily have been interpreted as meaning that he was intending to donate \$45bn to charity. As investigative reporter Jesse Eisinger reported at the time, the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative through which this giving was to be funnelled is not a not-for-profit charitable foundation, but a limited liability company. This legal status has significant practical implications, especially when it comes to tax. As a company, the Initiative can do much more than charitable activity: its legal status gives it rights to invest in other
- 40 companies, and to make political donations. Effectively the company does not restrict Zuckerberg's decision-making as to what he wants to do with his money; he is very much the boss. Moreover, as Eisinger described it, Zuckerberg's bold move yielded a huge return on investment in terms of public relations for Facebook, even though it appeared that he simply "moved money from one pocket to the other" while being "likely never to pay any taxes on it".
- 45 The creation of the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative – decidedly not a charity organisation – means that Zuckerberg can control the company's investments as he sees fit, while accruing significant commercial, tax and political benefits. All of this is not to say that Zuckerberg's motives do not include some expression of his own generosity or some genuine desire for humanity's wellbeing and equality. What it does suggest, however, is that when it comes to giving, the CEO approach is one in which there is no apparent incompatibility between being generous,
- 50 seeking to retain control over what is given, and the expectation of reaping benefits in return. This reformulation of generosity – in which it is no longer considered incompatible with control and self-interest – is a hallmark of the "CEO society": a society where the values associated with corporate leadership are applied to all dimensions of human endeavour.

## The English question: What is the nation's identity?

Mark Easton, Home Editor of BBC News, 3 June 2018

1 I spent St George's Day this year in Nottingham, among a large crowd bedecked in the red and white of their national saint. "Why can't we celebrate St George?" they asked me. "The Irish, Scots and Welsh have their national days. Why can't we English have ours?" The irony was obvious. No-one had suggested they couldn't. Indeed, a huge St George's flag was draped across the town hall and police were good-naturedly marshalling  
5 hundreds of patriots to the main square. The lord mayor of Nottingham, in full regalia, had given the official send-off. I have encountered such defensiveness many times. There is a commonly held belief that, for all its size and influence within the union, England is treated like an embarrassing uncle at a wedding.

10 It is fair to say that the politics of devolution over the past 20 years have focused attention on the identity politics of other parts of the United Kingdom. The appropriation of the St George's flag by elements of the far right has also intensified squeamishness for English nationalism. But the relationship between the people of England and the country in which they dwell is fundamental to understanding the volatility of contemporary politics. Which part of the UK presents its greatest existential challenge? Scotland as it tests the waters of independence? Northern Ireland with its borders buffeted by the winds of Brexit? The nationalist flames of the Welsh dragon, perhaps?

15 The answer, I believe, is to be found buried in the soil of England. A quarter of the population believe English interests should be prioritised, even if that were to threaten the United Kingdom. England has long been the conundrum at the heart of the union, which is why, two years ago, I proposed the BBC should conduct a comprehensive survey of English identity. I suggested that until we understood what England means to its people, predicting its future would be very difficult. The day I was due to discuss my plan with senior editors was 20 February 2016. The meeting never took place, of course. That morning David Cameron announced the UK would

20 hold a referendum on our membership of the European Union. Almost two years later and 'The English Question' project did finally get the go-ahead. Working with the pollsters YouGov and academics, we devised a questionnaire on identity and belonging, to be completed by more than 20,000 people in England. Although the focus of the research was England, we also commissioned surveys in Scotland, Wales and in Northern Ireland to compare and contrast attitudes across the kingdom.

### 25 Identities intertwined

All of us have multiple identities, of course. We may have a strong sense of belonging to one nation or more than one. We may feel powerful allegiance to a county or a city. People in England may feel English, British, something else or a mixture. [...] The English identity emerges as more exclusive while the British identity is seen as more inclusive. Among those who call themselves English rather than British, only a third say the  
30 country's diversity is an important part of their identity. Among those who describe themselves as more British than English, the figure is two-thirds.

### Better in the past?

The greatest contributors to English identity, the survey suggests, are the natural landscape and the nation's history. The strongest image of England is a pre-industrial bucolic nation populated by well-mannered and  
35 virtuous citizens. People generally see England as conservative and traditional rather than liberal and outward-looking. There is more than a hint of nostalgia about people's sense of Englishness. Almost three times as many of its residents think England was 'better in the past' than believe its best years lie in the future.

In Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, by contrast, significantly more people think their country's best years lie ahead rather than behind them. So while the rest of the UK feels pretty optimistic about their prospects,  
40 England seems particularly glum. The more English people feel, the more retrospective they are, and English wistfulness is particularly strong among those who voted to leave in the Brexit referendum. England's Christian tradition is important for almost half of Leave voters, but only 29% of remain voters. Leave voters are significantly more likely to talk of Englishness in terms of history, fair play, tolerance, plain-speaking and friendliness than those who wanted to remain. But not everyone is comfortable calling themselves English. Eight  
45 out of 10 people regard it as a strong part of their identity but fewer than six in ten say it is a source of pride.

For some it is the opposite: among graduates, the young, Labour and Lib Dem voters, remain voters, Londoners, Mancunians and Liverpoolians, roughly one person in 10 says they would be embarrassed to describe themselves as English. Nevertheless, the interlaced English and British identities remain an important part of how the people of England see themselves. For many it seems the two are almost interchangeable, reflecting an enduring loyalty  
50 and love for the nation, its story and its values. Being English is more than a factual statement about place of birth or citizenship. It is an attitude and a state of mind.

## FCC Repeals 'Net Neutrality' Rules For Internet Providers. By Alina Selyukh, *NPR*, December 14, 2017

After a brief security evacuation, U.S. telecom regulators have voted to repeal so-called net neutrality rules, which restrict the power of Internet service providers to influence loading speeds for specific websites or apps. After weeks of heated controversy and protests, the Republican majority of the Federal Communications Commission voted along party lines on Thursday to loosen Obama-era regulations for Internet providers. The rules, put in place in 2015, banned cable and telecom companies from blocking or slowing down any websites or apps. They also prohibited broadband providers from striking special deals that would give some websites or apps "priority" over others.

The FCC's dramatic course reversal in favor of Internet service providers has propelled the once-wonky issue of net neutrality into the mainstream, turning it into an increasingly political matter. Advocacy groups are expected to press Congress to stop the FCC's vote from taking effect under the Congressional Review Act. Net neutrality. It's a principle that Internet providers should be neutral gateways that provide equal access to all legal web content. The FCC's decision is otherwise slated to go into effect in the coming weeks, after a review by the Office of Management and Budget. [...]

In undoing the regulations, the FCC has reasserted one of the net neutrality requirements: that Internet providers — such as Comcast, Verizon and AT&T — disclose to their users what exactly they do to web traffic. This will essentially shift all enforcement to the Federal Trade Commission, which polices violations rather than pre-empts them through regulations.

Broadband companies have been saying that they do not intend to block, slow down or prioritize any web traffic as a result of this repeal, arguing that it's not in their interest to aggravate their users by messing with their Internet traffic.

Net neutrality activists, however, have been rallying widespread protests against the vote, saying the repeal will empower broadband companies to act as gatekeepers of the Internet, for example allowing them to prioritize their own video-streaming services. Consumer interest groups have told NPR that they are also planning to pursue a lawsuit challenging Thursday's FCC decision, which would be the fourth related court case in a decade. (An appeal of the 2015 rules by AT&T, CenturyLink and a telecom trade group is pending at the Supreme Court.) Additional legal challenges are pending from several state attorneys general, including from Washington and New York states. They have argued, among other things, that the FCC rushed the procedure and ignored a massive outpouring of millions of public comments.

The commenting process has been mired in controversy after several reviews found a number of the comments to be fraudulent or duplicative, using fake names, fake addresses and even names of dead people.

FCC Chairman Ajit Pai, who voted against the rules in 2015, has portrayed the Obama-era regulations — which put broadband providers under the strictest-ever FCC oversight — as government "micromanaging the Internet." He and broadband companies have argued that the regulations have stifled innovation and investment in broadband networks.

"What is responsible for the phenomenal development of the Internet? Certainly wasn't heavy-handed government regulation," Pai said on Thursday, adding his oft-repeated line that "there was no problem to solve. The Internet wasn't broken in 2015, we were not living in some digital dystopia. ... It is time for us to bring faster, better and cheaper Internet access to all Americans."

Large tech companies — such as Netflix, Google and Facebook — have long spoken in support of strict net neutrality rules. However, as they've grown in size, their advocacy has become more muted, putting on the forefront smaller competitors like Etsy and Vimeo, which argue that startups stand to lose the most on an Internet that allows for special "priority" traffic deals.

"I have heard from innovators, worried that we are standing up a 'mother-may-I' regime, where the broadband provider becomes arbiter of acceptable online business models," Democratic FCC Commissioner Mignon Clyburn said in a blistering dissent on Thursday, adding, "When the current 2015 net neutrality rules are laid to waste, we may be left with no single authority with the power to protect consumers."

In a statement, the Internet Association, which represents dozens of tech companies, called Pai's repeal "a departure from more than a decade of broad, bipartisan consensus on the rules governing the internet" and amounted to "relying" on Internet providers "to live to their own 'promises.'"

Republican FCC Commissioner Mike O'Rielly called the concerns of potential net neutrality violations "guilt by imagination" and "baseless fear-mongering." He said, "I'm simply not persuaded that heavy-handed rules are needed to protect from hypothetical harm."



## US and Europe face an 'increasingly loveless marriage' after Trump's Iran deal withdrawal. By Garret Martin, May 16, 2018 *THE CONVERSATION*

Beyond its potentially dramatic consequences for Middle East stability, Trump's May 8 decision to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal has also damaged the United States' relations with its European allies. France, Germany and the United Kingdom worked with the Obama administration to barter the United Nations-

5 approved Iran agreement in 2015. Now, the three European signatories must figure out how to save that deal and continue working with a U.S. president who has mostly shown them contempt. As a scholar of transatlantic relations who has followed the Iran deal for years, I am frankly skeptical that Europe can manage either. The United Kingdom, France and Germany tried desperately to convince the U.S. not to withdraw from the Iran deal, which is a signature achievement of EU foreign policy that took a decade of painful diplomatic efforts to

10 seal. Starting in January, senior European officials began meeting frequently with their American counterparts to address Trump's objections to the deal, which is designed to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons. Since his 2016 presidential campaign, Trump has scorned restrictions in the deal that diminished over time, condemned Iran's ballistic missile program and criticized Iran's generally bellicose behavior across the Middle East.

15 In Europe's view, the nuclear deal is working. The International Atomic Energy Agency has confirmed that Tehran has complied with the terms of the accord, halting uranium-enrichment activities and submitting to invasive international inspections. British Prime Minister Theresa May asked Congress to stand by the deal in January. In late April, French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel even traveled to Washington to personally urge Trump not to abandon it.

20 Their efforts came to naught. The remaining signatories – Russia, China and the three European nations – are now in flurry of diplomatic activity trying to salvage their agreement. An American withdrawal endangers its survival because of the country's sheer economic muscle. Trump's threat to impose "the highest level of sanctions" – targeting both Iran and nations that do business there – could easily make the deal unworkable. [...]

25 In addition to re-imposing sanctions on Iran, the White House has given foreign firms operating in Iran up to 180 days to wind down business there or else be barred from the U.S. banking and financial system. These measures could hit several major European firms particularly hard. The French oil company Total and German industrial manufacturer Siemens, to name a few, both recently signed major contracts in Iran. They may be able to appeal to the U.S. government for exemptions on a case-by-case basis.

30 To protect European businesses from punitive U.S. sanctions, one option would be to revive and amend the EU's 1996 blocking regulation. That rule, passed after the U.S. Congress levied sanctions against Iran and Libya, shielded European firms from U.S. secondary sanctions by declaring them unenforceable within the EU. The European Investment Bank could also consider providing smaller firms – those without a stake in the U.S. market, say – credit lines and financing to create a safer, more stable environment for doing business with Iran.

35 The most extreme retaliatory option would be for the EU to levy sanctions on U.S. assets in Europe. As Jeremy Shapiro of the European Council on Foreign Relations recently commented in *The New York Times*, Europe must now decide "not if they stick with the deal but will they stand up to the American effort to unravel it." Ultimately, I believe that European companies would be wary of risking U.S. sanctions. Trade with Iran has rapidly increased since the deal went into effect in 2016, but it still represents less than 1 percent of the EU's

40 global trade. The U.S. is the EU's largest trading partner, responsible for nearly 17 percent of all trade. Diplomatic slights aside, in purely business terms, France, Germany and the U.K. know that the U.S. can take away far more than Iran can give. Macron, Merkel and May thus face a dilemma: how to salvage their relationship with a U.S. president who has just demonstrated exactly how little he thinks of them. Trump's jettison of the nuclear accord is the latest in a series of rebukes to Europe. Since taking office, Trump

45 has moved the U.S. Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem – which the EU opposed – and withdrawn from the Paris climate agreement. He also wants to impose tariffs on European steel and aluminum imports. European leaders could limit discord by appeasing Trump, while waiting out his administration. Europe remains dependent on the U.S. for its security. And, in any case, getting all 28 members of the EU to agree to take any punitive measures against the U.S. would be a tall order. In the meantime, the president's "America

50 First" foreign policy could significantly damage the multilateral international order to which the Europeans are committed. My best guess is that the U.S.-Europe relationship will become an increasingly loveless marriage. These old allies will cooperate on a transactional basis on areas of common interest, such as counterterrorism and trade. But the shared world vision that has defined this partnership since World War II could very well be lost.

## The House of Lords is out of control — it's time for abolition

Brendan O'Neill, *The Spectator*, 11 May 2018

1 The Lords have lost it. They're out of control. They have taken a wrecking-ball to the government's plans for Brexit 14 times in recent weeks, putting themselves on a war footing with the people we actually elect. They are behaving like they did in the first decade of the 20th century when they arrogantly vetoed the Liberal government's People's Budget. 'The House of Lords regards all our liberties and political rights as enjoyed and as enjoyable only so long as they choose to let us go on having them', fumed Winston Churchill back then. 5 Where's the modern Churchill to put these ermine-robed loathers of the largest democratic vote in British history, the vote for Brexit, back in their place?

There should be public uproar, even public protest over how the Lords are behaving. These unelected bishops, pampered appointees and failed or ageing politicians are trying to scupper Britain's most populous act of 0 democracy. They have voted against the government's EU Withdrawal Bill 14 times. This week they voted to keep Britain in the European Economic Area, which would in effect mean having a kind of single-market relationship with Brussels. They have voted to keep the EU's Fundamental Charter of Rights on British statute books post-Brexit, to give the Irish government an effective veto on post-Brexit border arrangements, and to 5 allow parliament to frustrate and possibly even scupper the Brexit deal. All against the wishes of the Tory government that got 13,636,684 votes at last year's General Election — which is 13,636,684 more votes than any of these pontificating peers ever received for their spot in the second chamber.

Some argue it's all fine, because the Commons can just override the peers' votes. This misses the point. What the Lords are doing — and what they know they are doing — is emboldening members in the Commons to follow their own Brexit-bashing instincts against the wishes of the 17.4m. And they are also sending out a very powerful 0 message to Brussels that the British establishment, especially the dustier, more aloof, more pleb-fearing wing of it, is happy to take its side and make life harder for Brexit and its backers. The peers, these unelected enjoyers of privilege and men of God and sharp-elbowed political players, are playing a knowing and deeply cynical game: they're using their archaic clout to put a black cloud over Brexit, over a mass democratic vote for change. [...]

Bernard Jenkin, who chairs the Commons public administration and constitutional affairs committee, is dead 5 right when he says the peers are 'drunk with their own prejudices'. And their key prejudice is that they know better than us, or than the people we elect. By dint of their education, or their faith, or their moving and shaking in the worlds of politics, these appointees think they are wiser than the strange-looking, strange-accented little people they drive past on their way to the chamber every day and thus deserve an extra say.

Karan Bilimoria — or Baron Bilimoria — wrote in the *Guardian* about how the House of Lords' 'expertise and 0 independence' means it is perfectly placed to put the brakes on aspects of Brexit. By expertise they mean they're cleverer than us. And by independence they mean they don't have to seek the support of the public in the way commoner politicians do. The cluelessness of the old establishment never ceases to amaze me. Here we have a billionaire (Bilimoria founded Cobra beer) insisting that he and other wealthy or influential people should get to pore over the political desires of hoi polloi and the government we elect. And thus do they confirm in the eyes 5 of millions of people that they were right to vote for Brexit and to stick one in the eye of an establishment that seems aloof, entitled, arrogant, and ridiculous.

When the Lords vetoed the People's Budget and infuriated Churchill, other political leaders and the public, the Parliament Act of 1911 was passed to restrict their power. We now need to think about taking other, possibly 0 even more severe measures against the second chamber. My preference is that we abolish it. There is no place in a modern country for an unelected second chamber. Give us a referendum on abolishing the Lords, Mrs May. It could be your Churchill moment.

**White politicians were coercing African-Americans to vote long before civil rights. By Richard Johnson, June 5, 2018, *THE CONVERSATION***

During a recent campaign rally in Tennessee, Donald Trump claimed that most African-Americans have been voting for the Democratic Party for over a century. He told supporters, "African-Americans vote for Democrats, for the most part. Vast majority. They've been doing it for over a hundred years."

A number of commentators have pointed out that Trump's comment is historically inaccurate because most African-Americans in the south could not vote until the Voting Rights Act was passed in 1965. Additionally, many African-Americans who could vote before the 1960s – located mostly in the north – were supporters of the Republican Party, the party of Lincoln and emancipation. This was especially true before Franklin Roosevelt introduced the New Deal during the Great Depression, but well into the 1960s moderate-to-liberal Republican candidates still won sizeable shares of the black vote.

Yet while Trump's statement was clearly ignorant, he did accidentally stumble into an overlooked part of American history. In Tennessee, where he made his comments, African-Americans have indeed been voting – and voting Democratic – for more than a century. But this isn't a grand tradition of multiracial democracy; it's part of a history of machine politics.

White political bosses exploited black Tennesseans in the early 20th century to secure their own power. In fact, paradoxically, bosses used the institutions of the segregationist Jim Crow regime designed to deny African-Americans' access to the ballot as a means of coercing them to vote for Democratic candidates.

This played out on a grand scale in Tennessee's largest city, Memphis, which to this day has the state's greatest share of black residents. In the first half of the 20th century, Memphis politics were dominated by local Democratic Party leader E H "Boss" Crump, who was described by Time magazine as "the most absolute political boss in the US". Crump personally selected nearly every Memphis mayor and municipal leader, as well as many statewide politicians, from roughly 1909 until 1948.

In order to do this, Crump allowed African-Americans to vote.

Crump paid black residents' poll taxes and coerced them into supporting his candidates as a bloc in exchange for protection from physical violence. The Colored Democrats Club of Memphis was described as "the African-American wing of the Crump organisation". This protection was of vital importance for black Memphians who had been terrorised by the city's white population for decades. While guaranteeing security from physical violence is a basic function of the modern state, many parts of the US existed in a condition of little less than racialised anarchy until well after World War II. Public officials refused to protect citizens from physical harm on the basis of race.

And so it went in Memphis. In reaction to the presence of black federal soldiers in the city in 1866, a white riot erupted: the mob murdered 46 black residents, raped five black women, and burned all 12 of Memphis's black schools, four black churches, and 91 homes.

Crump suppressed the Klan and prevented lynchings so long as African-Americans voted for his Democratic candidates, but he remained personally committed to white supremacy, abandoning Harry Truman in the 1948 election in protest at Truman's support for civil rights. He was also prepared to permit violence against black citizens who did not follow his political imperatives. When Reverend George Long invited union leader A. Phillip Randolph to speak to his black congregation about trade unionism in 1944, ignoring Crump's instructions, he was badly beaten by white thugs. Crump turned a blind eye.

Because of its relatively high proportion of black voter registration, Tennessee was one of only three states in the former Confederacy not to receive any coverage under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, which placed areas with historically low African-American electoral participation under heightened federal surveillance of changes to electoral law. In 1960, the average proportion of African-Americans registered to vote in the south was 30%, but in Tennessee it was as high as 60%. African-Americans in Memphis probably voted at higher rates than anywhere else in the pre-Voting Rights Act south.

This should not be mistaken for evidence that a multiracial democracy predated the Civil Rights era. Like many African-Americans in the north, black southern voters were dependent on the forbearance of violent and corrupt white-dominated political machines. These organisations made only minor concessions but otherwise fundamentally preserved the segregation and discrimination that African-Americans were forced to endure.

Until the mid-20th century, many essential features of a democracy – free and fair elections, multiparty competition, universal franchise, free assembly and speech – were withheld from millions of US citizens. For that reason, it is impossible to describe the US as having been a full democracy for any more than five decades. This fact should be basic to every American's understanding of their country's development – but many (white) Americans prefer to imagine their country as one of the world's oldest democracies. In fact, it only joined the club relatively recently.

## This zombie grammar school policy will only harm crisis-hit schools

Fiona Millar, 13 May 2018, *The Guardian*

- 1 It's a mystery. In what are undeniably challenging times for schools, education secretary Damian Hinds last week had headteachers eating out of his hand with a major speech addressing concerns about school inspections, funding and workload. Barely seven days later, any political capital gained was squandered at a stroke with the news that, at a time of near-bankruptcy for some schools, £50m would be set aside for grammar school expansion.
- 5 This is the zombie policy that won't die. The idea of creating new grammar schools, currently not permissible in law, was seen off at the last election by Theresa May's lost majority. But creating more grammar school places, especially if they are on separate sites from existing schools – one of these has already opened 10 miles away from its home grammar school in Kent – could be equally damaging. Many fully comprehensive areas would feel the impact of what are effectively standalone schools eating into their catchment areas.
- 10 The arguments in favour of such a move are flimsy, often based on the anecdotes of a few high-profile public figures whose life chances were transformed by passing the 11-plus. But anecdote is not a good basis for hard policy, and the facts are clear. The majority of children in grammar schools have always come from better-off homes. This fact goes back to the 1959 Crowther report and, 60 years on, is reflected in the government's own data, which shows that on average 3% of pupils in grammar schools come from poorer homes while the national
- 15 average is around 14%.  
Meanwhile secondary modern schools, which no one is campaigning to bring back, always admitted a disproportionate number of children from poorer families. So grammar schools do little for social mobility. Overall results in fully selective areas are no different from those in similar, fully comprehensive local authorities – something Hinds should know as he represents a constituency in one of those areas. The most recent analysis
- 20 of the government's extensive pupil datasets – by Durham University – reveals that in fact grammar schools add barely any value. Their stellar results simply reflect the higher prior attainment of their pupils. Since access to many grammar schools is now governed by industrial-scale private tuition, this may tell us more about parental bank balances than natural "ability".  
And therein lies the most objectionable aspect of selective education: the notion that intelligence, ability and
- 25 human potential are rigidly fixed and can be reliably verified by one arbitrary test taken when some children have just turned 10 years old. The idea that there are "clever" children and the rest belongs to an era when it was taken for granted that only a small elite was suited to an academic education.  
So why do it? In the past six months I have been researching a new book, *The Best for My Child: Did the schools market deliver?*, looking at education policy since the 1988 Education Reform Act, which ushered in the idea of
- 30 parental choice, diversity and a quasi-market in which selective education has been allowed to flourish.  
My overall conclusion is that the politicians are facing such monumental challenges in education that they either bury their heads in the sand or revert to small-scale gimmicks. Some of those market reforms – more accountability to parents, for example – had a positive impact on schools and encouraged the weaker schools to improve. But the schools market also entrenched an existing steep hierarchy in English education.
- 35 Popular schools haven't expanded to accommodate all comers, as pure market advocates predicted. The use of overt and covert selection means some choices are available only to a select group of parents who can afford hefty fees, move to the catchment area of a successful school or afford private tuition to pass high-stakes entrance exams. The often toxic relationship between parental choice, admissions practices, house prices and performance measures has led to alarming school-level segregation in some communities. This in turn affects social cohesion
- 40 and pupil outcomes, as well as the ability of some schools to both compete in crude league table measures and recruit good staff.  
Thirty years on from the 1988 Act, English schools face a funding crisis, a teacher recruitment crisis and, according to the Education Policy Institute, it will take half a century to reduce the gap in outcomes between children of different backgrounds. In this context, the fact that the latest announcement is yet another attempt to
- 45 tinker with the market – the £50m will apparently be conditional on grammar schools admitting handfuls of extra-low-income pupils – tells us how destitute the education policy debate really is.  
Even the Labour party, currently conducting a policy consultation, has little to say on grammar schools or the market. One would have thought that at least its National Education Service would have the principle of fully comprehensive education – still the best way to combine choice with fairness and more equal outcomes – at its
- 50 heart. Campaigns against the new policy will no doubt get into gear, especially where expansion and grammar "annexes" are planned. But none of these is a substitute for radical reform to ensure the schools market does the best for all children, not just a few. Hinds almost convinced us he got that, then blew it.

## I'm northern and working class – I was made to feel unwelcome at Cambridge

Tom Rasmussen 20 October 2017, *The Independent*

1 Today Labour MP for Tottenham, David Lammy, published the findings of a recent Freedom of Information request which looked to profile the diversity – in terms of ethnicity and socioeconomic background – of students who received a place at Oxbridge in the last seven years. And, not surprising to many, the results are bleak. The statistics show that more offers were made to Etonians than to kids on free school meals across  
5 the whole country. 82 per cent of placeholders in 2015 came from the top two social classes, and only one in four colleges across Cambridge made offers to black applicants, each time offering a meagre one or two places.

Another finding, perhaps surprising to many, shows that more offers were made to applicants from just five home counties than to applicants from the whole of the North of England. Between 2010 and 2015, Cambridge made more offers to applicants from Oxfordshire, than to applicants from Leeds, Liverpool and  
10 Manchester combined. And while both universities report an increase in admissions from state schools across the country, the figure fluctuating between 55 and 60 per cent since 2005, it's deeply unimpressive when a mere 7 per cent of the population is privately educated.

The bias in favour of the country's social, educational and financial elite is shockingly unbalanced and irresponsible, especially when Oxbridge alone receives £800m a year of taxpayer money. But it's not shocking  
15 to northern, working-class or BAME students. This kind of barring from elite institutions is incredibly commonplace, even when the grades and talent are there – and in abundance, I might add. As a working-class person from Carnforth (a small town right next to Lancaster), I was one of the lucky few who bucked the statistics and advice which told me I'd never get a place, receiving an offer back in 2010 to study Veterinary Medicine at Queen's College Cambridge – which according to Lammy's previous report was a marginally better year in terms  
20 of diverse acceptances.

It was a dream come true: a “boy-done-good” story which made my parents, and myself, incredibly proud. Against the odds, from one of the town's roughest schools, I'd got the offer, got the grades, and excitedly purchased a suit from the discount section at Preston Debenhams ready to “go up” – as they call it – to Cambridge. Before I got there, I didn't have a clue about the class, race, or the North-South divides that apparently every  
25 other educationally or financially privileged kid did, and would spend their time patronisingly explaining to me. I, and the few other students in my year who fell outside of the white, upper-middle class, public-school educated norm, knew how unlikely our attendance at this crippling elite university was – and we were constantly reminded of it.

People were proud of the bombastic fact that “they'd never been to the North”, that “anywhere North of  
30 Zone 2 is far enough for me”, their comments laced with classist implications that the apparently culturally barren “North” wasn't worth a visit. Professors and lecturers were shocked by my accent, my mode of speaking and reasoning, with one Director of Studies once asking me if “Cambridge was really the right place for someone like me”, after I'd got a particularly mediocre 2:1 in a mock exam. In the end, I departed the Vet Med course, graduating in History of Science instead, desperate not to spend another three years in clinical school feeling like  
35 a leper because of my working-class background.

There were so many instances, shared by so many like me, of people explaining – and through that, reifying – the class, North-South and race divides. These constant encounters solidified the feeling that nobody really wanted you there, but they had to take you because your presence was helpful for balancing out statistics like those published by Lammy today. I only ever felt tokenistic, like my presence was at worst an administrative  
40 error, and at best a box to be ticked.

Class and race divides are entrenched both in the application-acceptance system, and also once you're through the giant oak doors of whatever college you're unlikely to get a place at. While graduates of these two towering institutions continue to furnish our courts, banks and parliament, the country's elite will continue to fail those they are put there to represent, their disconnection from people who fall outside of their social and racial  
45 category leading to no real understanding of what a life different to theirs is like.

Lammy suggests that a decentralised application system is required to tip the scales in the Oxbridge application race, instead of leaving it to a tiny few inside the strongholds of these intimidating colleges. I would add that admission positions must be actively given to people from diverse backgrounds: those who can understand the challenges and scepticism people from ethnically diverse backgrounds face in trying to gain access  
50 to the elite insides of Oxbridge – a place which is evidently, both from statistics and personal experience, structurally designed to keep us out.

## Inside the Tory effort to win back the young: 'We're not even allowed to use the word cool now'

*Tory chiefs know there is a crisis in their party's relationship with young Britons, but do they have the will to fix it?*

Joe Watts, *The Independent*, 3 October 2017

1 In a tucked away corner of Conservative conference is a room with a zany-coloured sign hosting chat about what young people need while the rest of the party buzzes around it. It's not a shadow of the teaming, throbbing World Transformed festival organised by Momentum at Labour's conference. It's not even a poor relative of events run by the defunct Conservative Future group. But it does say something about the state of the relationship

5 between young people and the Tories, and it's a message that has party chiefs in a cold sweat.

They know the average age of a Tory member is now 60-odd, that the party lacks young legs to tread streets campaigning and that two thirds of under-40s backed Jeremy Corbyn at the election. But they think the crisis could be even worse. There is a deep fear several generations of Britons will never give the Tories a second look and, even more appalling for Conservatives, will abandon the idea that free markets are what you build a country

10 on. You can see it in Theresa May's bid to make her tuition fees 'freeze' the big conference opening announcement, and in Eric Pickles's call for a "vibrant youth wing" as part of his post-mortem of the election.

But even those tentative moves have met with muted approval in Manchester. The idea of a youth wing run from CCHQ even has senior ministers cringing. One cabinet level source told *The Independent*: "The problem with this kind of thing is, that if you make a group and say this is cool. It automatically is no longer cool. "We're not even

5 allowed to use 'cool' now, my daughter told me not to. "In fact, it's not even the word anymore, there's some other word now."

Stephen Canning, a councillor and former deputy chair of Conservative Future, shut down in the wake of a bullying scandal, is one who fears a generation is about to grow up without knowing the arguments for capitalism.

[...]

10 But beyond the policy offer there is a wider battle looming that the Tories need a plan for, about young people's place in a capitalist country. Labour is already ahead of the game in convincing young voters that the answer is an empowered state and a more socialist society, in part because of its clear and easily saleable policies – free tuition fees, free adult education, more money for the NHS and government house building. Senior Tories admit Labour's narrative is attractive – one in which young people have lost out to the capitalists and corporations, in which only the state is powerful enough to ensure they have the life chances their parents had. One told *The*

5 *Independent*: "We know [Corbyn] can't pay for it, but neither can we. He can promise the world from opposition, but in terms of spending we can only offer bare bones. "We cannot win a bidding war with him to buy the youth vote, and we shouldn't try to get into one." Electoral strategists always say winning over voters is about making them think your values are their values, and that's where the Tories want to take the fight. They know Corbyn can mirror young people on equality, on helping the downtrodden and his Labour is currently closer to them on

10 social values – caring for animals instead of hunting them, for example, or eschewing Trump's America. Critics also say the Tories fell further behind with young voters when May came to power and ditched David Cameron's socially liberal Toryism for something more rightwing.

Shorthouse is one of them. He said: "The Hard Brexit vision, the hard line approach on immigration, the scepticism of human rights, specifically wanting to repeal the Human Rights Act, criticism of 'citizens of

5 nowhere' and that internationalist outlook – that will have collided with the liberal centre-ground views and values that a lot of young people had."

May has made an effort at conference to refocus her agenda on the 'burning injustices' in society, with a major review expected next week into how ethnic minorities fare in modern Britain likely to appeal to young voters' egalitarian sentiments. Bright Blue's polling shows other areas where the Tories could win back ground –

10 revealing climate change is the second highest issue for under-40s, second only to health, and is actually the top issue for 18 to 28 year olds. But whether May can go further on social liberalism or the environment while the right of her party has a firm hold on things is a question yet to be answered. She will say in her conference speech on Wednesday that it is for her Government to take the fight to Labour. But if she wants to win back young voters, there may still be one or two battles to win round the cabinet table.

## How Brexit threatens both peace and identity in Northern Ireland

*Theresa May is risking everything in her search for a "good" Brexit deal*

Scott Gilfillan, *The New Statesman*, 22 December 2017

- 1 I was only four years old on 8 November 1987, the day that an IRA bomb ripped the heart out of my hometown of Enniskillen, County Fermanagh. Timed to detonate just as local people were gathering for the annual Remembrance Sunday ceremony at the town's Cenotaph, it was one of the most notorious atrocities of Northern Ireland's so-called 'Troubles' – a painfully inadequate term to describe the carnage visited upon the town that
- 5 terrible day. Of the eleven people killed by the blast, three were married couples, five were women, and six were pensioners. Sixty-three others were injured, including thirteen children, and a twelfth victim died in 2000 after spending thirteen years in a coma from which he never recovered. All but one of the victims were civilians, there simply to honour the Enniskillen men – Catholic and Protestant alike – who had fought and died in the two world wars. Thirty years on, the families they left behind that day are still waiting for justice.
- 10 The world may have largely forgotten the Troubles, but the people of Enniskillen have not. Like many parts of Northern Ireland, this small border community still bears scars from those dark days, and at last month's ceremony to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the Enniskillen bombing it was clear that the pain remains very real for many. I may not remember the events of 8 November 1987, but like anyone over the age of thirty I do remember how the Troubles shaped the world in which I grew up. I remember the gaping hole near the Cenotaph
- 15 where the building that housed the Poppy Day bomb once stood. I remember the distinctive sound of RAF Chinooks flying over my house while I played in our back garden, the stern looks on the faces of the British soldiers patrolling through the streets of Enniskillen during the day, and the daunting sight of army checkpoints erected to stop vehicles entering the high street at night. I remember the nightly news stories of bombings, shootings and kneecappings across the province – reports that were so frequent they could hardly be considered
- 20 'news'.  
More than anything, I remember the tortuous years of the peace process – the deadlines that came and went, the ceasefires that were triumphantly declared only to collapse a few months later, the negotiations that were on one day and off the next, and the seemingly endless discussions over decommissioning, civil rights, prisoner releases and other complex issues I only vaguely understood at the time. Through it all I remember the growing clamour
- 25 from the people of Northern Ireland for a peace deal that would not only put an end to the violence but also give both sides of the community a say in how they would be governed in the future. When a chance for such a deal finally arrived with the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in April 1998, an overwhelming majority grabbed it with both hands. Although too young to vote in favour of the agreement myself, I remember the overriding sense of hope across the province that the Troubles were finally coming to an end.
- 30 I am part of a relatively small generation of people from Northern Ireland who are old enough to remember the Troubles but young enough not to have experienced the worst of them. I understand why the forces of unionism and nationalism remain strong in the province, and yet feel comfortable with the emergence of a uniquely Northern Irish identity that has enabled younger people from both sides of the community to throw off the sectarian shackles of the past. I do not remember the darkest days of the 1970s and 80s, and yet am glad that
- 35 people ten years younger than me did not experience what I did growing up. I am not defined by those experiences, and yet the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 was the defining geopolitical moment of my life. This explains why I feel so alienated by today's politics of extremes, and so perplexed by the growing appeal of populists who argue that there are simple solutions to difficult problems. It is why I suspect there would never have been peace in Northern Ireland had those involved at the time stuck to their ideological principles as
- 40 doggedly as some of today's political leaders, or refused so stubbornly to see the other side of the argument when competing national interests are at stake.  
Nowhere has this been more evident in recent months than in the Brexit negotiations, where Northern Ireland has become a pawn in a game of political chess between London, Dublin and Brussels. When I last wrote about this issue back in April (before the snap general election was called), I was already concerned that Theresa May's
- 45 myopic focus on Brexit was undermining the delicately balanced political settlement that delivered peace in Northern Ireland. I cited the increasingly partisan approach that the Tories had adopted towards the province since 2010 as evidence of their inability to understand the damage that perceptions of favouritism in London could do to that fragile peace. I also warned that relying upon unionist votes to deliver a hard Brexit would make it impossible for the British government to act as an honest broker in Northern Ireland in the future. Eight months
- 50 later, my concern that Theresa May did not appreciate the fragility of the peace process has turned to alarm that she seems willing to destroy it simply to secure a 'good' Brexit deal.

## Identity crisis: Britain needs a national identity register

*The Economist*, 5 May 2018

*The Windrush scandal was caused by the lack of a simple way to perform migration checks*

1 THE harassment of the Windrush generation of Caribbean migrants is a shameful chapter in Britain's history, and ministers are paying for it. One home secretary resigned on April 29th; her predecessor, Theresa May, now the prime minister, is weakened. It falls to Sajid Javid, who took charge of the Home Office this week, to clear up the mess.

5 There is little to like about Mrs May's migration policy. The state-led hounding of thousands of law-abiding British citizens was a side-effect of the "hostile environment" for illegal immigrants that she created as home secretary.

10 Indeed, Mrs May's rigid insistence on reducing net inflows to the arbitrary level of 100,000 a year created a hostile environment for all migrants, not just the illegal ones (see article). Landlords, employers and others were given new duties to check people's migration status. The result has been that those with incomplete paperwork have been denied homes, jobs and public services, and have even been locked up. Mrs May sent mobile billboards bearing the legend "GO HOME OR FACE ARREST" to migrant-heavy districts. She ridiculed "citizens of nowhere" and threatened to make companies publish lists of their foreign workers (before backing down). Cowboyish Home Office officials desperate to reach their targets have used any excuse to notch up ejections.

5 Claiming to crack down on illegal migrants, they even broke the law themselves.

2 For all its shortcomings, Mrs May's approach does contain one idea that is worth preserving: enforcement should happen inland, not just at the border. Most of Britain's half-million or so illegal immigrants did not enter the country illicitly but have overstayed their visas. Furthermore, from the camps of Calais to the Mediterranean sea, there is plenty of evidence that fortifying borders does not stop lots of people continuing to try to cross them. The result is migrants' suffering, extra cost to taxpayers and a bonanza for people-smugglers.

5 The Windrush debacle highlighted that Britain has no easy way of carrying out this inland enforcement. The government's guide for landlords who need to verify tenants' migration status is 35 pages long. If landlords get it wrong they risk a fine or even imprisonment. Researchers have shown that, unsurprisingly, they tend to err on the side of caution, rejecting those without passports (and especially those who are not white). The result is pressure against all migrants, and also against ethnic minorities, British or otherwise. After Brexit the problem will be worse, as 3m Europeans will be allowed to remain permanently but without passports.

10 The scandal has rightly provoked calls for an overhaul of migration enforcement. Any rethink must get to the root of the problem. This is not that Britain checks the status of migrants, as any country must if it values the rule of law. The real shortcoming is that Britain, rarely among advanced countries, lacks a simple, non-discriminatory way to check the identity of its population. Under Mr Javid it should get one.

5 Liberals, including this newspaper, have argued against national identity registers on the basis that they invade privacy and aid oppression by the state. But the balance of this trade-off has changed. In a globalised world more people spend time travelling, studying or working abroad, and access to labour markets and public services depends on their exact status. Proving identity thus matters more than ever. Countries like Britain that lack an ID register rely on other proofs—bank statements, tax records, phone bills—that are even more intrusive. As for the risk of oppression, the Windrush affair shows that it is not just all-knowing states that have the power to persecute their citizens. It was precisely the opacity of information that the Home Office exploited in order to pursue many thousands of people who had a right to be in Britain.

### Papers please

10 Setting up an identity register would not be cheap or easy. A previous, abortive effort to roll out ID cards a decade ago was priced at about £5bn (\$7bn). It would probably have to involve an element of amnesty for those caught up in a Windrush-style trap of missing paperwork. But Brexit is forcing Britain to think hard about matters of migration and citizenship. Taking back control of who enters the country is one of the biggest prizes advertised by Brexiteers. To do that, Britain must first have a better idea of who is already there.



Impeaching Trump: could a liberal fantasy become a nightmare? By *Ganesh Sitaraman* 22 May, 2018 *THE GUARDIAN*

Should members of Congress impeach Donald Trump? The billionaire Tom Steyer thinks so. He stars in TV ads calling for impeachment and has set up a "Need to Impeach" campaign to build national support for removing the president. The House minority leader, Nancy Pelosi, doesn't think so. She says talking about impeachment is "a gift to Republicans". The former Senate majority leader Harry Reid also doesn't think so. "I've been through 5 impeachment," he said, "and they're not pleasant."

So who is right?

In their terrific, accessible, and thoughtful new book, *To End a Presidency: The Power of Impeachment*, the Harvard law professor Laurence Tribe and the constitutional lawyer Joshua Matz do better than offering a simple yes or no: they give us a framework for thinking about the question. Tribe and Matz argue that too many people 10 think of impeachment as a mechanical process: if there are "high crimes and misdemeanors", then there must be impeachment. They disagree. Instead, they argue that anyone thinking about impeachment needs to consider three critical questions: "Is removal permissible?", "Is removal likely to succeed?", and "Is removal worth the price the nation will pay?"

The virtue of this framework is that it is both legal and prudential, and the book provides a helpful guide to 15 impeachment on both counts. Tribe and Matz shine in making constitutional law accessible, and they show both that impeachable offenses extend beyond criminal activities and that not all illegal actions are impeachable. They also explain step-by-step how the process works, from impeachment by the House of Representatives to a trial in the Senate, with the chief justice of the supreme court presiding. Along the way, they point out amusing anecdotes. For example, Chief Justice Rehnquist remarked of his limited duties during the trial of Bill Clinton: "I 20 did nothing in particular, and I did it very well."

Even if impeachment is warranted and even if they get the timing just right, impeachment is still risky. But perhaps the greatest contribution of the book is when Tribe and Matz consider the constitutional and political dilemmas of whether and when to impeach a president. For example, if impeachment proceedings begin too quickly, those pursuing removal risk not having sufficient evidence or adequate public deliberation. And if a 25 hasty impeachment attempt fails, the president might think himself bulletproof – inviting even greater overreach. Waiting to impeach also has serious risks. While Congress dilly-dallies, a president might continue to engage in dangerous behavior that puts the nation at risk, and a president under the dark cloud of investigation might throw a Hail Mary (like starting a war) in order to boost his popularity. In addition, the simple fact of delay might acculturate people to the bad behavior and in the process normalize the president's conduct.

30 Unfortunately for members of Congress, this isn't a Goldilocks story. Even if impeachment is warranted and even if they get the timing just right, impeachment is still risky. It locks up the White House and Congress in extensive proceedings, preventing them from addressing the nation's pressing issues. It could potentially reshape the separation of powers, depending on the justifications for impeachment.

Bill Clinton speaks before the House of Representatives in 1998 after it voted to impeach him. Photograph: 35 Susan Walsh/Associated Press

And it could backfire. Particularly in a polarized era, the president's supporters might see impeachment as a coup d'état designed to nullify the outcome of a democratic election – and that might further entrench those opponents into their partisan corner. Indeed, conservative groups are already calling conversation about impeachment a "coup" attempt against Trump – and are using this to mobilize supporters for the midterm elections.

40 In light of these considerations, will attempting impeachment save the republic from a dangerous president? Will it advance a political movement? Or will it just unleash a tit-for-tat process that results in more polarization, political hardball, and escalating threats?

In the last few decades, "impeachment talk" has been on the rise, with partisans on both sides raising the specter of exercising this grave power more and more frequently. And in a post-Citizens United world, we should expect 45 billionaires on the right and left to try to shape the political landscape in support of impeaching presidents they dislike. If taken to an extreme, the result could be that frequent impeachments will turn the president into a prime minister, and our government into something more like a parliamentary system.

There are alternatives to impeachment. Tribe and Matz discuss the possibility of censure – congressional condemnation of a presidential action. While censure doesn't remove the president from office, it makes it less 50 likely that bad behavior will serve as precedent for future generations, and it might weaken the president politically. Unfortunately, they say less about vigorous, unrelenting oversight of the executive branch – of investigations that shine the spotlight on wrongdoing while building support for policy reforms. These tools get too little attention when compared with the far flashier process of impeachment.

Which brings us back to debates over Trump. To their great credit, Tribe and Matz didn't write a legal brief or a 55 political strategy memo. They instead make clear to anyone even contemplating impeachment that the decision to end a presidency isn't simple or straightforward.

## Here come the boys: inside the gentlemen's club today

Eleanor Dougherty, *JNews*, 26 January 2018

As widespread condemnation erupted this week over reports of sexual harassment and propositioning at a men-only fundraising event for the Presidents Club in London, focus has now shifted to the secretive world of all-male gentlemen's clubs.

Though change is coming in the military – from September, women will be able to join the RAF Regiment – many men-only clubs of all shapes and sizes will be under intense scrutiny. And nowhere had the assumed glamour and power as that of the newly-unfashionable gentlemen's club.

According to the Association of London Clubs, there are 55 members clubs in London. Of those, 20 are all-male. These include White's, the club David Cameron left during his time as prime minister, and Brooks's, established in 1762, following the founders' blackballing from White's. Then there's the Beefsteak Club, where the waiters are called "Charles" to avoid members getting confused; at Pratt's, the serving staff are called "George" and "Georgina". The Turf Club, established 1861, is thought to be the smartest of the lot.

Harry Mount, editor of *The Oldie* and a member of the Beefsteak, defended the tradition of clubland: "I sometimes do talks at the University Women's Club in Mayfair [an all-female club on Audley Square] but I wouldn't expect to be able to join, and I don't feel excluded for not joining," he said.

A member of the all-male Savile Club agreed: "People have every right to associate with whoever they want. Clubs are just a place where men can enjoy the company of men without the feeling that they have to watch what they say all the time."

### An interesting place for interesting people

His club is one, he says, for "interesting" people. "There are plenty of women whose company I enjoy who would fit in there." One Old Etonian in his sixties doesn't understand why anyone would consider male-only clubs a problem. "Men are often alone in London, and it's just easier to go to your club. If you're alone, you're likely to meet people who you would be otherwise interested to meet."

This is because clubs select their membership, not just by whether you can pay annual fees of up to £2,000, but on spirit too. One society figure was recently "blackballed" from a club for not fitting the criteria; in 1993, Jeremy

Paxman was refused membership by the Garrick Club. The politician Godfrey Bloom is a member of the all-male East India Club, where women are welcome as guests. "The American Bar at the East India Club on a Friday night is full of girls having a lovely time. I'm all in favour of it," said Mr Bloom. Membership for women would be a bridge too far, though. "It wouldn't be popular with members' wives," he added. "They wouldn't like the concept of alcohol and women together."

The voices in support of gentlemen's clubs are cross-generational. One 28-year-old investment banker has his name down for a Pali Mall club. "Clubs like that continue to be one of the best sources of concentrated networking," he says. But he's all for equality. "The idea behind these clubs is to be a place to have interesting conversations with interesting people. Generally, a person isn't interesting because of their genitals. It is baffling that an oaf with a penis is better qualified to join a club than a female QC."

A 26-year-old member of the East India can't fault it. "I mostly use it as a place to entertain," he said. "My flat is pretty small so it's handy on that front." Other millennials see no appeal to clubland whatsoever. Says one political adviser: "Why would I pay thousands of pounds for a club, the purpose of which is to have a private place for a drink, to meet interesting people, and go to parties, when I can get all of that working in Parliament?"

### Stuffy and weird

A Tory researcher pooh-poohed all-male clubs London-wide: "Members tend to fall into three groups: the proper poshos for whom these places were built; the desperate middle-class kids who wear pocket watches and pretend to be the proper poshos; and then the small number of decent people."

One civil servant scoffed at the whole idea: "These are the kind of places that entrench the professional viability of mediocre white men. The fact that a 20-something can go and find someone several rungs up in his chosen

career and benefit from that relationship professionally is anti-meritocratic. I don't want to be mistaken for the kind of man who needs that leg up."

## “It’s Your Data” By April Glaser, April 11, 2018 *SLATE*

In Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg’s second session with lawmakers this week, there were a few high points, many low points, and an absurd number of deflected or unanswered questions. But between all of the bromides and promises to get back to members of Congress with answers to questions that he claimed he didn’t know, a pair of exchanges stood out—and revealed the limits of the company’s promises that it gives people complete control of their data.

In a line of questioning from Rep. Ben Lujan, a Democrat from New Mexico, Zuckerberg allowed that his company creates profiles on people who *don’t actually use* Facebook—what are sometimes referred to as “shadow profiles.” This was important for a number of reasons—chief among them because across two days of testimony to Senate and House committees, Zuckerberg repeatedly hammered on the point that Facebook doesn’t own user data and that users have control over how their data is shared on Facebook.

“I believe that everyone owns their own content online, and that’s the first line of our terms of service if you read it,” Mark Zuckerberg told Rep. Marsha Blackburn, a Republican from Tennessee, about an hour into Wednesday’s hearing. The idea that people who use Facebook own their data and can choose how that data is used was a frequent Zuckerberg talking point on Tuesday and Wednesday (not to mention one that his PR team had included in his notes, which the public caught a glimpse of on Tuesday after he left them visible long enough for a journalist to snap a photo).

But about an hour and a half later, Lujan drilled down on the issue, pushing Zuckerberg on whether his platitudes about not owning our data squares with reality. “Facebook has detailed profiles on people who have never signed up for Facebook, yes or no,” the congressman asked, noting that these non-Facebook user profiles are often called shadow profiles, a term Zuckerberg claimed he wasn’t familiar with. Then the congressman asked again: “It’s been admitted by Facebook that you do collect data points on average nonusers. My question is, can someone who does not

have a Facebook account opt out of Facebook’s involuntary data collection?”

To that, Zuckerberg gave a nonanswer. “Anyone can turn off and opt out of any data collection for ads, whether they use our services or not,” the CEO said. “But in order to prevent people from scraping public information, which again, the search feature you brought up only showed public information, people’s names and profiles and things they’d made public. Nonetheless, we don’t want people aggregating even public information. So, we need to know when someone is trying to access our services.” Beyond the fact that this wasn’t coherent, it also wasn’t an answer to the question, which Lujan picked up on right away, noting that when people who aren’t Facebook users visit Facebook to opt out of data collection, Facebook directs them to sign up for Facebook in order to opt out. Having a Facebook account appears to be the only way to do that.

Another representative, Republican John Shimkus of Illinois, asked Zuckerberg why Facebook tracks people who are logged off Facebook across different devices, to which the CEO replied that it’s for security and ad reasons. The security reason, he said, is that Facebook wants to know how many public pages someone is looking up or scraping, even when they’re not logged in, which ostensibly is useful to prevent mass harvesting of public profile data. For ads, the reason is that they run an ad network off Facebook, and collecting data of people off Facebook is one way that ad networks target people and make money. Zuckerberg said that if people want they can opt out of the ad network. Of course, as Lujan pointed out, to opt out Facebook asks that you log on.

All of which means that Zuckerberg’s repeated cries that people who use the internet—not even just people who use Facebook—have control over their data on Facebook isn’t really true in practice. To opt out of Facebook’s data collection, first you’d have to even know a service you’re not on is collecting your information, and then you’d have to sign up for that service to opt out of it. (There’s a joke about Kafka to be made somewhere in there.) And, of course, to be on Facebook means the company is collecting data about you no matter how restrictive you make your settings—unless you delete your account, but even then, it may be collecting data about you anyway. The whole thing is a head trip, and more than anything it reveals how we can never really control how Facebook collects data. If you can’t even evade the company’s data collection by abstaining from having a Facebook profile, what choice do you really have?

Hopefully, Congress will continue to worry about this—and consider how to make companies that collect data on people without their consent or knowledge to quit it. But doing that would require some kind of lawmaking or directive from our elected representatives—something that, to judge by this week’s hearings overall, may be something they’d rather not have to do.

## Faith and higher education can intersect in many different ways. By Erasmus, Jun 13th 2018, *THE ECONOMIST*

### *An ever-shifting relationship between campus and church*

THE PRESIDENT of one of America's best-known Catholic places of learning came this week to his alma mater, Oxford University, and with some fanfare delivered a lecture on the future of higher education. His hosts included Chris Patten, the eminent Conservative politician who is now Chancellor of Oxford University and happens to be a fellow Catholic.

So did the visitor, whose academic interests include medieval theology, deliver a lament over the weakening Christian connections of places like Oxford, which emerged in a 12th-century world where learning and public activity of any kind were almost inseparable from religion? Did he deplore the fact that Oxford had incubated the "new atheist" movement? No, Father John Jenkins, the president of Notre Dame University, did nothing of the kind. Instead, he emphasised the spirit of inquiry, dispute and interrogation that characterised Oxford from its earliest days and argued that the same spirit could and should guarantee the future of universities as physical places, as opposed to the hubs for e-learning which some people anticipate.

An essential characteristic of medieval Oxford, he said, consisted of "practices of common inquiry at the highest level that serve both to advance knowledge and understanding and to train the minds of students through participation in such inquiry." The same healthy spirit pervaded today's best universities, where now as in the past "the most valuable learning is often of a tacit sort, when a student observes how a seasoned scholar addresses a problem, wrestles with an objection, formulates a creative solution." Such techniques could be learned more easily at close quarters, in a long-established bastion of learning, than by computer: that alone boded well for the future of real-world colleges.

To some American conservatives, this emphasis on free-ranging inquiry, rather than the axioms of faith, will only confirm what they suspected: that Notre Dame and other historically Catholic colleges are drifting far from their Christian roots and are on the road to becoming virtually identical to secular places of learning. But the real situation is more interesting. In the ecology of American higher education, there are many different relationships with religion. There are zealously Christian establishments like Liberty University in Virginia, which may be the largest non-profit college in the world, with 15,000 students at its Lynchburg campus and another 110,000 engaged in online learning. First-year students take Bible classes and there is a "code of honour" that bars extra-marital sex. At the other extreme, there are state universities which have never had any particular connection with religion. There are also mighty institutions like Harvard and Princeton, where the training of ministers was originally the main activity but theology is now a minority interest.

America's 250 or so Catholic colleges and universities, including the 28 which are run by the Society of Jesus, have their own place in this kaleidoscope. A growing number have lay presidents. These places encourage applications from Catholic students, but they are also competing hard to attract a cohort of young Americans for whom "none" is an increasingly popular answer to questions about religious affiliation. They are vying for the same academic prizes as purely secular establishments.

The net result, especially at the Jesuit campuses like Georgetown, Fordham and Boston College, is a culture that fuses a broadly Catholic ethos with intensive engagement with the secular and non-Catholic world. This reflects the Jesuit tradition of operating at the outer edge, between Catholicism and other cultures. In several cases, this translates into a strong emphasis on comparative religion, including the study of Christian-Muslim relations.

Father Jenkins's vision of an education which is Catholic in origin but emphasises free inquiry raises all manner of dilemmas. Won't this untrammelled investigation eventually lead the inquirers to abandon completely the straightjacket of religion, as has been the general trend in the Western world for several centuries? To this question, in private conversation, Father Jenkins gives a careful answer. All inquiry, he says, begins with certain postulates, and its pursuit is made possible by a "moral framework" including a sense of the purpose, scope and limits of human knowledge. If the postulates of religion are false, then it is logical to expect that people will in due course abandon them. But if they are true, they will continue to provide many people with an indispensable framework for their investigations into reality.

The hard fact is that "revealed religion" (the idea that the most important truths have been disclosed by God, or are still being disclosed) will always be in some tension with empirical investigation. Even Islam, which places overwhelming stress on revelation, wrestles with that question. One of the answers it offers consists of a saying attributed to Muhammad: "Seek knowledge even as far as China." That is a principle to which culturally adventurous Catholic educators can relate.

## The British Museum gleams with stolen riches from its colonial past – but Asian names are too 'confusing' for inclusion

Shazia Awan, 14 Sep 2017, *The Independent*

- 1 When you have a name that perhaps sounds a little different – unusual, perhaps – some might ask: “How is that pronounced?”, comment: “Oh, that’s lovely”, or even: “What does your name mean? What are the origins?” As someone with one of those names – Shazia Awan – I’ve taken it in my stride while growing up in Wales, just as my sisters did too. What’s in a name? Well, an awful lot about identity, culture, heritage, for starters. The name of a person is a fairly fundamental thing to at least try and get right – at least, that is, if you have any basic manners or sense of social cohesion.

As a proud Welsh East African Asian, with a wealth of culture and heritage (which I’m always very happy to talk about), I was more than a little taken aback to see a curator from the British Museum (from the Asian collection, no less) say this week that they just find Asian names terribly confusing, erm, because, well, teenagers just find them too hard to understand. During an #AskACurator Twitter session with curator Jane Portal, the main British Museum account tweeted, in a conversation about labelling and making information accessible in the exhibits: “We aim to be understandable by 16-year-olds. Sometimes Asian names can be confusing – so we have to be careful about using too many.” Imagine the uproar if a museum anywhere in the world said the array of beautiful Celtic names are simply too confusing to include in full: Anwen, Carwyn, Seren, Myfanwy. I could go on.

- 5 Not only do the British Museum, who have since apologised, look foolishly dismissive of young people and what they have the ability to grasp (in this case likely the arduous task of saying a friend’s name correctly) but this position is incredibly insulting to any British person whose culture or heritage means that they don’t have a quintessentially British name. In pretty much every museum and many a school lesson, we are exposed to the Greek and Roman historic names for objects, places, gods and people. But, apparently, any names that link to Asia are just a little bit too much for your average teen to cope with. Perhaps, if this article ended up enshrined in the hallowed halls of the British Museum, I could be Sharon Owen. Is that less difficult? What message does this send to young British people with Asian names here in Britain and other western countries?

Let’s not forget that the British Museum is a public body, sponsored by the UK government’s Department of Culture, Media and Sport with the aim of holding a collection of work representative of world cultures for the “benefit and education of humanity”. What benefit it is to tell millions of people in the UK – people whose taxes pay toward the upkeep of the museum – that their names are too long and confusing to bother about, I’m not entirely sure. The British Museum received £39.2m revenue and £2.6m of capital grants in aid from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in 2015/16. Perhaps a small amount of this might usefully have gone on equality and diversity awareness training for the curators.

- 2 The most disappointing thing about this whole sorry affair for the British Museum, of course, is that the tweet was composed by someone whose job title is “Keeper of Asia”. If anything, we should be holding the British Museum to a higher standard than other institutions on cultural sensitivity. It is, after all, meant to be an institution promoting learning and an awareness of cultural heritage. Moreover, there should surely be some self-awareness there: it’s all too obvious that the British Museum gleams because of the looting of countries with these confusing foreign names. Indeed, as others have observed on numerous occasions, any visitor to the museum from a colonised country is aware of their own past the minute they step into the museum: history, jewels and finery ripped away from their country to be held in Britain, a colonial cultural massacre of sorts in itself.

The days of the British Raj are long dead. With that, the arrogance and sheer ignorance of saying people have “confusing Asian names” should have died. But alas the British Museum has shown us in one single social media blip that cultural imperialism is very much alive and kicking. The truth is that young people aren’t so unsophisticated that they can’t pick up a name. If they can navigate the complex world of social media, they can certainly pronounce a less familiar name. The rather harsher reality that the British Museum have to face up to is that the names they class as confusing are only such because the staff presume they are. In this case, such a blunder is reflective of not having a diverse workforce. The British Museum really must do better – a lot better.

**To infinity and beyond: Trump has big plans for Nasa – but is it just a fantasy? By Alan Yuhas, The Guardian, 26 Dec 2017**

The world is not enough for Donald Trump: he has declared space “the next great American frontier” and mused to Congress that “American footprints on distant worlds are not too big a dream”.

Earlier this month, the president ordered the agency to head back to the moon. “This time we will not only plant our flag and leave our footprint, we will establish a foundation for an eventual mission to Mars, and perhaps someday to many other worlds beyond,” he said, before signing the new policy for Nasa.

The potential moon mission harkens back to policy under George W Bush, who in 2004 asked the agency to “gain a new foothold” there. His successor, Barack Obama, prioritized instead a 2030s mission to Mars, a program that has inched along due to its relatively low levels of funding.

Trump’s proposals leave many questions unanswered – a timeline, budget, specific goals and methods – and space policy experts expressed cautious optimism tempered by deep skepticism about the details.

“It could be a significant, almost historic step – if it is followed through,” said John Logsdon, professor emeritus at George Washington University and founder of the Space Policy Institute. “The proof is in the pudding, and the pudding is whether there is meaningful funding.”

For years, Nasa has worked on a deep space capsule and its Space Launch System, the most powerful rocket it has ever developed, with Mars in mind, although its current plan included a hypothetical pit stop in lunar orbit – the Deep Space Gateway, a space station that could be used as a staging post for deep space missions or landing on the moon’s surface.

Casey Dreier, director of space policy at the Planetary Society, an advocacy group, said that Nasa can adjust its plans to focus squarely on landing on the moon, but that “space policy is a big ship to turn”.

He added: “It ultimately comes down to: what do you want to get out of the moon? Maybe you can get water out of the surface and get rocket fuel out of it and it can be a fueling depot. But it’s like building a gas station in the middle of the Alaskan wilderness before you’ve even built a road. There is no pre-existing business model on the moon.”

Nasa will have at least some competition. China has sent three robotic landers to the moon since 2007, with more in mind, and Moon Express, a private American venture aiming to win a \$30m prize offered by Google, has a 2018 launch date and ambitions to mine the moon.

But would-be space entrepreneurs have run into regulatory hurdles, namely the Outer Space Treaty, signed in 1967, which holds that no country can claim a celestial body, and that governments supervise non-governmental organizations – like businesses – in space. In 2015, Obama signed a law that gave companies “space resource rights”, and earlier this year members of Congress proposed creating an “Office of Space Commerce”. But for now the legislation, like hopes to mine asteroids, remains far ahead of the actual technology.

Like Bush and Obama before him, Trump has encouraged private companies to fill the gaps. SpaceX and Blue Origin, owned by billionaires Elon Musk and Jeff Bezos respectively, are developing their own “heavy” rockets and space tourism programs. In February, Musk announced that two private citizens had bought tickets for a flight around the moon in 2018, though SpaceX has never flown a crewed mission or tested its heavy rocket. The first test flight is set for January, and a spokeswoman declined to give any new details about the moon mission.

But Congress, which sets Nasa’s budget, holds most of the power over Nasa’s ambitions – and moon base dreams require moon base money. After John F Kennedy’s call to put astronauts on the moon, Nasa received an 89% budget increase; the agency spent about \$207bn, adjusted for inflation, across the Apollo missions.

[...]

Trump has proposed cuts to earth sciences and canceled an asteroid mission, but many of Nasa’s other plans are still in place. Missions like the James Webb Space Telescope remain works in progress, and next summer the agency will launch a new Mars lander, to study the planet’s interior, as well as a car-sized spacecraft to fly into the atmosphere of the sun. In August, a spacecraft called Osiris Rex should arrive at the asteroid Bennu, where it aims to retrieve about two ounces of asteroid to bring back to earth.

Meanwhile the Kepler spacecraft is still hunting new planets, and the Voyager and New Horizon vessels are cruising into the farthest reaches that humanity has ever explored. Science advocates like Buzz Aldrin, the second man to walk on the moon, have continued to press the president to support space exploration.

“Infinity and beyond!” Aldrin joked to the president in June.

“This is infinity here,” Trump replied. “It could be infinity. We don’t really don’t know. But it could be. It has to be something. But it could be infinity, right?”

## Why Europeans Turned Against Trump. By Richard Wike, May 29, 2018 *THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY*

With the Trump administration's recent withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal, the already rocky relationship between the United States and its European allies has become even more tenuous. For many Europeans, Trump's decision to pull the United States out of the Iran accord crystallizes what they dislike about his approach to world affairs: Instead of multilateralism, it's America First.

Across much of Europe, anti-Americanism appears to be on the rise. Polls show plunging ratings for America, and European leaders are once again critical of Washington's foreign policies. Commentators are issuing dark warnings about the fate of the transatlantic alliance. Angela Merkel, the chancellor of Germany, has said that Europe can no longer rely on the United States and that it must "take destiny into its own hands."

The Trump presidency evokes memories of the George W. Bush era, when opposition to the Iraq War and U.S. foreign policy was strong, and transatlantic tensions ran high. After the interlude of the Obama years, European public opinion about the occupant of the White House is once again strikingly negative. Trump's ratings in Europe look a lot like those of Bush at the end of his presidency, as the 2017 Pew Research Center Global Attitudes Survey illustrated. In France, for example, just 14 percent said they had confidence in Trump's international leadership, essentially the same as the 13 percent Bush registered in 2008. (During his presidency, Obama never dipped below 80 percent confidence among the French.) And just as in the Bush years, many Europeans are critical of a U.S. foreign policy that seems to disdain international cooperation.

But there are also some important differences between the Trump and Bush eras. The current round of anti-Americanism is taking place at a moment of anxiety about the fate of the U.S.-led world order and the relative decline of American power. Anti-American sentiments in Europe have often been linked to fears about expanding U.S. military power, economic clout, or the pervasiveness of American culture. These days, by contrast, Europeans seem less concerned about an unrestrained "hyperpower" flexing its muscles around the world, and more worried about an America withdrawing from the transatlantic relationship. [...]

Obama was much more popular in Europe than Bush, but even his administration occasionally bred fear and resentment. His increased use of drone strikes against terrorists in places like Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia was widely unpopular. Meanwhile, Edward Snowden's revelations about U.S. surveillance around the world highlighted what many saw as a troubling new dimension of American power: the capacity to reach through cyberspace and monitor the communications of almost anyone, anywhere. And the Snowden story had serious effects on American soft power. Pew surveys found that the share of the public who believed the U.S. government respected personal liberty declined in many nations following the disclosures. This issue was particularly important in Germany, where the United States reportedly eavesdropped on Merkel.

In contrast, Trump-era European anxieties are driven less by fears of unchecked American power, and more by a sense that the United States is stepping back from the world order it helped design.

The fate of that order has been the subject of considerable debate since Brexit and Trump's election. Facing external pressure from the rise of China and other emerging powers, and internal stress from surging populism, the Western nations that shaped the international system for seven decades appear wobbly. And many Europeans believe the hegemon of the U.S.-led order is in decline. Pluralities of those Pew surveyed last year in France, Germany, and Britain, said China—not America—is the world's leading economic power. A less-powerful America means uncertainty for the international system that has brought relative peace and prosperity to Europe for seven decades.

In addition to decline, many see disengagement. European publics have reacted negatively to some of Trump's key policies, especially those that pull the United States back from its international commitments. Most of those in the European nations we polled opposed U.S. withdrawal from climate change accords, trade agreements, and the Iran nuclear deal. And Europeans generally do not like to see America throw up barriers—both literal and figurative—between itself and the rest of the world. Trump's proposed wall on the Mexican border meets with strong opposition from most Europeans, and to a lesser extent so does the idea of preventing people from certain majority-Muslim nations from entering America.

European leaders have often complained about what they see as Trump's lack of commitment to the transatlantic partnership, and to the values that undergird the system built by the Western powers. Without criticizing Trump directly during his recent address to the U.S. Congress, French President Emmanuel Macron nonetheless encapsulated European critiques of the American leader's worldview: "We can choose isolationism, withdrawal, and nationalism. It can be tempting to us as a temporary relief to our fears. But closing the door to the world will not stop the evolution of the world."

So while Trump's ratings resemble Bush's from a decade ago, the tone of Europe's critique is somewhat different. Whether it's Iran, trade, climate change, or calling into question the value of long-standing alliances such as NATO, Europeans now regularly lament U.S. disengagement rather than an overreach of American power. Many see an America pulling away from the world order it shaped, the colossus at twilight, turning inward as other powers rise.

**Britain doesn't just glorify its violent past: it gets high on it** By Afua Hirsch, 29 May, 2018 *THE GUARDIAN*

It feels like I live in the middle of a culture war. On one side is a kind of state-sponsored amnesia. It's pervasive. It's an Oscar-winning movie perpetuating the idea that Winston Churchill stood alone, at the Darkest Hour, as Nazi fascism encroached, with Britain a small and vulnerable nation isolated in the north Atlantic. In reality the United Kingdom was at that moment an imperial power with the collective might of Indian, African, Canadian and Australian manpower, resources and wealth at its disposal.

It's also Poland passing a law so that errant historians, survivors or Auschwitz guides who raise the inconvenient fact of Polish complicity in atrocities now risk up to three years' imprisonment. It's Tennessee in the US legislating against the removal of Confederate statues when, as the former New Orleans mayor Mitch Landrieu puts it, they "purposefully celebrate a fictional, sanitised Confederacy; ignoring the death, ignoring the enslavement, and the terror that it actually stood for".

On the other side are those who understand that historical narratives, monuments and statues are not some pristine record of history, but projects – often created long after the event they remember – that have weaponised history against specific groups. This is why South Africans question statues that glorified apartheid, why Native Americans protest against Thanksgiving, why indigenous Australians required a correction to the ludicrous ideas that Captain Cook "discovered" their continent or that they should celebrate the intrepid explorers who massacred their ancestors. [...]

My entry into this war zone happened by accident a year ago, when I suggested on these pages that we take another look at Nelson's legacy. I wasn't actually waiting in a bulldozer, ready to storm Trafalgar Square, as some people seemed to believe, but simply calling for an appraisal of the hitherto obscured facts.

Those facts remain of minor consequence to the vocal and influential parts of British society that regard the act of raising them as heretical. The instinct is to shoot the messenger. Our great white male media grandees – it is a remarkably consistent demographic – meet simple statements of fact about the historical record with hysterical, table-thumping personal attacks. It's the kind of lashing out that happens when you try to wean someone off an addiction. In this case, Britain is addicted to glory.

It's understandable: it must feel nice. But, like all addictions, it brings out the worst in our psyche. Making a TV documentary on this subject that will air on Tuesday night, I was told British people should be proud of our empire because our colonies were better run than those of the Belgians or those under Nazi rule. As the rapper and activist Akala says memorably in his new book, *Natives*: "It's true, but it's a shit boast."

When the supply of glory is threatened, the gloves are off. Racial slurs become acceptable; the threats begin. One respected academic told me he was advised that if he pursued the study of Churchill's responsibility for the number of deaths in the Bengal famine, his academic career would be compromised. This is the level of censorship to which we are willing to stoop.

Britishness – at least this patriotic, defensive, glory-addicted version of it – seems to be in a highly fragile place. It cannot withstand being problematised or critiqued. Many of those I've raised this with in recent weeks feel especially aggrieved that someone who was apparently "allowed" into Britain's educational and professional establishments should feel anything other than gratitude. Being privileged, and black, and then having the audacity to use my intellect and education to challenge the narrative those establishments handed me down, seems to prove particularly irksome.

But we can't detoxify Britishness and build it into a more robust, less fragile identity, until we do this work. We need to assess the true legacy of empire and the impact of its loss. We need to unpick the idea of glorious Britannia that defeated Napoleon and Hitler to find out what wrongs are still lingering in our midst. These wrongs do linger, because people on the other side of the imperial experience – descended from the enslaved, from the victims of colonial wars or from ravaged and exploited nations of empire, as hundreds of thousands of British people now are – are unwilling to accept the idea that the lives of their ancestors are worth less than those of the glorious British perpetrators we celebrate.

I'm one of them. And when I am accused of "coming here" and "attacking our culture", it becomes abundantly clear that the fact that someone like me is British, and that Britain is also the country made possible by the labour, wealth and culture of my antecedents, still hasn't actually sunk in.

That's why this is not actually about statues, monuments or history, but about culture and narrative, and who gets to feel the "high" of glory. People who had that luxury stripped away from them several centuries ago already know it's not that simple. But in Britain, there are so many still looking for their next hit.



**Brexit and Britain's two-faced ruling class.** By Simon Kuper *Financial Times*, March 29, 2018.

Even many Brexiters believe their own ideology in theory but not in detail. Brexit hasn't unfolded as they expected. By the end, hardly anyone in the Soviet ruling class believed in communism. People mouthed slogans like "dictatorship of the proletariat" knowing it was all nonsense. These days, Vladimir Putin's Russia has its own two-faced ruling class, writes Peter Pomerantsev in his 2014 book *Nothing Is True and Everything Is Possible*. Television producers pump out propaganda, then switch on opposition radio after work. "Orthodox" oligarchs sing hymns to Russian religious conservatism — and keep their money and families in London. These people have a public self, and a private one. Pomerantsev finally fled the falsehoods for London, "where you don't have to split yourself up into little bits. Where words mean things."

He may now regret moving. Brexit has created a two-faced ruling class in London too. Very few British politicians, civil servants, business leaders or even many Brexit-cheerleading journalists believe the official state ideology of Brexit. They just mouth the slogans. The populist policy of Brexit has made the populist claim come true: Britain's elite lies. And this will worsen after Brexit.

It wasn't so bad at first. After Brits voted for Brexit in 2016, many establishment Remainers thought: "Well, it's what the people want and maybe they're right. I'll try to make it work." The elite at that point had lost confidence in its own instincts. Why not pursue global trade deals, cut immigration and fund the NHS instead of Brussels? People like Theresa May did their best to love Big Brother.

But after 21 months of attempting Brexit, they have given up. May never says she would vote for Brexit now. Asked recently if Brexit was worth it, she waffled. Singling her out is unfair. Most senior Conservative and Labour politicians are biting their tongues. To make things worse, most also can't admit they oppose their own party leaders. Only a few powerless rebels such as Anna Soubry and Chuka Umunna are free to live in truth. Even many Brexiters believe their own ideology in theory but not in detail. Brexit hasn't unfolded as they expected. When Daniel Hannan said during the referendum campaign that obviously Brexit Britain would stay in the single market, and Michael Gove that it would "hold all the cards" in negotiations, they probably believed it. Now they are stuck. These people aren't naive. They are the educated elite, merely masquerading as anti-expert populists. I suspect they quietly believe the Treasury's assessment that global trade won't replace lost European trade.

Caught between fantasy and reality, Brexiters become tempted to deceive. In December, Brexit minister David Davis suggested a freshly agreed divorce deal with the EU wasn't "legally enforceable". That reduced European trust, already strained daily by Boris Johnson. The old saying "An Englishman's word is his bond" is becoming hilarious.

Meanwhile, I've yet to meet a civil servant who admits to believing in the biggest project of their careers. One diplomat told me years ago that the one thing that could ever get him to resign from public service was Brexit. Today he is helping drive it. It used to be said British diplomats were sent to lie abroad for their country. Now they lie for Conservative party unity.

Many business leaders fear that a hard Brexit will damage their companies but keep quiet to avoid upsetting ministers or consumers. Paul Drechsler, president of the Confederation of British Industry, recently implored them: "Tell your story. The real risk is to say nothing — and reap the blame later for our silence now."

In the media, the BBC curtails the instincts of its mostly Remainder journalists. A colleague at one big Brexit-supporting newspaper told me "95 per cent" of its journalists oppose Brexit. Another friend puts the figure at his pro-Brexit paper at "80 to 90 per cent". He tries to switch his mind off Brexit. At least Remoaners like me believe the stuff we write, pointless as it is.

If Brexit ever happens, and British officials start chasing trade deals, the dissembling will get worse. We'll then mostly be courting autocrats: Gulf states, China, Russia. Trade isn't their priority, but they like other British assets: the "light-touch regulation" City of London (meaning a laundry for dirty money); the British-gentleman fantasy (starting with a place at boarding school); Britain's ruling party (the wife of one of Putin's former ministers paid the Tories £160,000 to play a tennis match with Johnson and David Cameron); elections (as well as Cambridge Analytica, many foreign outfits want to meddle); and media (the UK's loud global voice is worth buying).

For universities losing European research grants, autocrat donors stand ready. Oxford already has the Blavatnik School of Government, funded by the Ukraine-born tycoon who is Britain's richest man (and a Trump donor). Gulf money finances Islamic studies at several universities. Foreigners have learnt the UK is for sale. Britain's ruling class hasn't prepared the population for pain from Brexit, notes Alan Finlayson of the University of East Anglia. Any hardship will further dent trust in government. The backlash could be either extreme nationalist or extreme left, while the ruling class whines: "But we never believed the silly idea to start with!"



## The fight over a customs union is a proxy for a bigger Brexit battle

TRADE WARS *The Economist*

Apr 25th 2018

IT WAS hardly discussed during the referendum campaign. Yet the question of whether to seek a customs union with the European Union after Brexit has become an unexpected political flashpoint. Theresa May's government is against the idea, but fears that Parliament is not on its side. Earlier this month the House of Lords voted that Britain should stay in a customs union. With Labour and a clutch of Tory rebels in favour, the 5 Commons may soon follow suit.

The customs union is really a proxy for a bigger question: how closely aligned should Britain stay with the EU after Brexit? Mrs May is in a quandary. She wants to reassure pro-Brexit Tories that she is sticking to her red lines of leaving the single market and customs union, creating scope for regulatory divergence and an independent trade policy. But she also wants a workable deal that satisfies businessfolk and prevents a hard 10 border in Ireland.

It is not hard to see why most businesses and trade unions want a customs union. By eliminating customs and rules-of-origin checks, it would facilitate goods trade between Britain and the market that takes almost half its exports. Promised free-trade deals with third countries like America are uncertain and would not make up for lost EU trade. Even after a transition period, Britain may lack the staff, computer systems and sheer physical 15 space needed for customs controls at its ports.

Then there is the Irish border. The government has promised to avoid infrastructure, checks or controls, either through a "customs partnership", under which it would collect duties on behalf of the EU, or with whizzy and untested new technology. Brexiteers point to the EU's borders with Switzerland or Norway as examples to follow. Yet this ignores that both do in fact have border infrastructure, checks and controls on lorries. The 20 Commons Northern Ireland committee has said there are no examples anywhere of similar borders without physical customs controls.

This may explain why the EU does not believe in the government's solutions. It insists instead on a third, fallback option that keeps Northern Ireland in a customs union and in tight regulatory alignment with Ireland. In the formulation that Mrs May accepted in principle in December, any such answer would have to apply to 25 the whole country, to avoid a border in the Irish Sea. David Davis, the Brexit secretary, calls this idea a reserve parachute that will not be used. He believes the EU's emphatic rejection of Britain's preferred two options is a mere negotiating tactic.

The customs union has disadvantages besides making free-trade deals with third countries harder. As Turkey has found in its customs union with the EU, it does not cover services, which make up some 80% of Britain's 30 economy. And it would mean that any future EU trade deals would open Britain's market to third countries, without giving it reciprocal access. Moreover, a customs union alone would not avert an Irish border. That would also require close alignment with single-market rules for most goods, most notably agrifoods.

The cabinet, like Parliament, remains split over the customs union. Brexiteers are worried. Several fear that Mrs May's customs partnership, which Jacob Rees-Mogg, one Tory MP, calls "cretinous", could evolve into a 35 customs union. Some have taken to labelling the customs union a protectionist racket, wrongly claiming that it means heavy tariffs on African farm exports (most of which are in fact tariff-free). Yet hints from the EU that it might offer Britain some say in future trade deals will keep the customs union option very much alive.

The government will surely put off any binding votes on the matter for as long as it can, perhaps until the autumn. Mr Davis hinted this week that the Irish border question may not be settled before October, or even 40 later. He noted that Leo Varadkar, the Irish prime minister, had said he would prefer a good agreement to an early one. Yet the ultimate Brexit deadline of March 29th 2019 cannot be easily postponed. And there will be many chances for Parliament to force the customs issue before then.

## Why 'Powellism' versus 'Enochonomics' tears liberals apart

### OPEN MARKETS

May 2nd 2018, *The Economist*, by R.C.

FOR a politician whose influence peaked in the 1970s and who died in 1998, Enoch Powell has been enjoying an impressive afterlife. It is almost impossible to escape him in Britain. The 50th anniversary of his notorious "Rivers of Blood" speech against mass immigration has prompted a deluge of editorials, articles, television and radio programmes, protests and debates. Some have even tried to pin the recent Windrush scandal over threatened deportations on him.

5 Yet to focus solely on his views on immigration would be to miss the complexity of his politics, and his significance for contemporary liberals. For Powell was much more than just a racist reactionary, easy to dismiss in any debate on what an open society should look like.

Certainly, he always regarded himself as a high Tory. To prove it, he learned to hunt. But, awkwardly for liberals, he was also a fervent believer in free markets and free trade, years before Margaret Thatcher ever started talking about Thatcherism. Powell  
10 was advocating monetarism in the House of Commons in the late 1950s.

Moreover, he believed in the extension of personal freedoms. During the 1960s he was one of only four Conservative front-bench MPs to vote for the legalisation of homosexual acts between consenting adults in private. He also voted to end the death penalty. He believed passionately that every citizen should be equal before the law. He gave one of his most famous parliamentary speeches denouncing the murder of Kenyans by British officials in the Hola prison camp during the Mau-Mau  
15 rebellion in 1959.

And, of course, he was also passionately against Britain joining the EU, or the European Economic Community as it was known in his day. He believed that the EEC would not only restrict free trade by putting up barriers to trade with non-European countries. He also warned that it would end British sovereignty. For the very same reason he was also, almost uniquely for a Tory MP, strongly anti-American, resenting Britain's post-war acceptance of its role as America's "poodle", as the critics would  
20 have it.

What to make of this bundle of apparent contradictions, or "Powellism" as *The Economist* first dubbed it in July 1965? He was a free-trader, but against the free movement of labour. His "Rivers of Blood" speech was racist in tone, and certainly incited racism (he became a hero to far-right groups), but he was for strict equality before the law.

For Powell, there were no contradictions. He was a trained classicist, not an economist (just like Boris Johnson, the current  
25 foreign secretary) and for Powell the survival and nourishing of the nation-state was the most important duty of a statesman. In the British context, specifically, he believed that this fundamental sense of nationhood—what it means to be "English", as he always called it—was most clearly expressed in the tradition of parliamentary sovereignty, and the rule of the sovereign through Parliament. He did not use the word, but he believed in English exceptionalism, that the country had a unique history, spirit and character that had to be defended and preserved.

30 Seen through this prism, all the pieces come together. Free trade and free markets had made Britain a rich country, while Keynesianism and 1950s-style consensus politics, he believed, were ruining the economy. Powell also followed the Hayekian line that economic freedom, where wealth was dispersed as widely as possible, was a bulwark against political tyranny. Above all, however, reverting to economic liberalism in Britain was perfectly compatible with English parliamentary sovereignty. The EEC and America, however, certainly were not: adhering to both meant an automatic diminution of Parliament's power to  
35 determine the nation's destiny.

[...] Powellism, as described above, has a very modern ring to it. He probably would have been a fan of Vladimir Putin; Donald Trump's "America First" doctrine would doubtless have met with his approval, although maybe not Mr Trump's assault on free trade. The modern UK Independence Party (UKIP) is wholly inspired by Powell, and forced David Cameron into holding the fateful Brexit referendum in 2016. Many of the Brexit ministers are Powellite in some of their outlook; the increasingly  
40 restrictive immigration policies owe much to the concerns first voiced by Powell. By lighting the touchpaper of anti-immigrant sentiment in 1968, he invented modern populist politics—particularly the kind fomented by society's most educated or richest.

So what should liberals learn from Powell? Perhaps it's the idea of what might be called "Enochonomics". First, that most people are motivated by more than economic gain. Powell articulated this point for his own era, and over the past 40 years public opinion has clearly travelled in his direction. Secondly, the nation-state, and particularly "England", really matters to  
45 most people. Powell was wholly wrong that mass immigration could change a historic sense of Englishness—but he was right that most people still care deeply about their sense of country. Liberals will have to learn to articulate a sense of patriotism—it does not necessarily have to slip over into xenophobic nationalism. Lastly, democracy and accountability matter. His original arguments against the EEC, that it was an unaccountable bureaucracy making laws with no regard for national parliaments, were exactly those that won the day in June 2016. "Take back control" would be a fair summary of Powellism.

50 In some ways Enoch Powell forces us back to the drawing board. He has some harsh lessons for liberals.

*The New Yorker*

## The World that Wayne LaPierre and Donald Trump Live in

Adam Gopnik, February 24, 2018

1 It's rare to see what's sold as a mutual political affinity revealed as a raw power relationship, but that is what  
happened to Senator Marco Rubio at the CNN town hall on Wednesday night, in Sunrise, Florida. Would the senator  
refuse to take money from the N.R.A., a senior at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, who had survived the  
murder of his peers, asked. Rubio, the realities of Republican Party power shining like perspiration on his face,  
5 refused not only to make that pledge but to make even a semi-plausible defense of why he would not, as would once  
have been, in the old-fashioned sense, the politic thing to do. The audience booed.

Wayne LaPierre, the executive director of the N.R.A., in a speech the next morning to the Conservative  
Political Action Conference, outside Washington, D.C., made evident the deeper social compact that gives the gun  
lobby such power in the face of all reason and, at the moment, universal grief. The issue, as LaPierre presented it, is  
10 no longer simply defending guns. The tattered old apologies by the way of hunting and target shooting and even self-  
defense are absent. Guns now are the symbol of a license to hate the other: the liberals and the media and the rest who  
are part of a "socialist wave." He told the CPAC audience, "You should be frightened. If they seize power, if these so-  
called European socialists take over the House and the Senate, and, God forbid, they get the White House again, our  
Americans freedoms could be lost and our country will be changed forever."

5 Instead of even defending the N.R.A.'s peculiar reading of the Second Amendment, which literally excises  
the "well-regulated militia" part as though it had never been written, LaPierre ranted against Democrats. The villains  
included Bernie Sanders, Kamala Harris, Chuck Schumer, and by implication, Barack Obama—as though the  
Republican Party wasn't fully in control of all the levers of the federal government. He also warned against the F.B.I.,  
Saul Alinsky, George Soros, Michael Bloomberg, and Tom Steyer. (Though LaPierre evinced no such freedom-loving  
20 worries about of the presence of France's Marion Maréchal-Le Pen, the extreme-right niece of Marine Le Pen who  
spoke at CPAC an hour after him.) What LaPierre seemed to be saying was that true Americans need a right to a lethal  
weapon in order to show that they can't be intimidated by their political opponents. To an astonishing degree, his  
argument has become bald and brutal: you *ar* the gun that you own.

15 And yet, in the face of this absolute rejection of reason, we're being suddenly bombarded with the idea that  
what really needs to happen is for citizens on different sides of the issue to reconcile with one another. As a matter of  
practical politics—and there is no higher calling in a democracy than practical politics—it would be wonderful to  
come together on, say, an assault-weapons ban like the one that once worked, within limits, in this country from 1994  
to 2004, when Congress failed to renew it. But, this week, the Florida legislature, again with an audience of students  
30 watching, voted against even considering such a ban, including one on the AR-15, the gun used in the Parkland  
massacre. At the CNN town hall, after Rubio was asked about a ban, he said that, given all the legal loopholes,  
legislators would end up having to ban all assault weapons, a line that was met by cheers. The next day, Rubio  
tweeted that even a ban on semiautomatic weapons "is a position well outside the mainstream."

35 Earlier this week, David Brooks got into perhaps undue trouble for contending, in the *Times*, that people in  
blue states are apparently responsible, through their condescension and their certainty, for driving red-state people to,  
well, cling to their guns after gun massacres. "The people who defend gun rights believe that snobbish elites look  
down on their morals and want to destroy their culture," he wrote. "If we end up telling such people that they and their  
guns are despicable, they will just despise us back and dig in their heels." Blue-state people need to put on a show of  
"respect" for the gun enthusiasts, because, without that, "we don't really have policy debates anymore. We have one  
40 big tribal conflict, and policy fights are just proxy battles as each side tries to establish moral superiority." Others  
have taken this line of reasoning into previously unexplored areas of fatuousness, so one can read in Friday's *New  
York Post* that a desire to own an AR-15, in its cultural context, is "no different from wanting a Louboutin or a Birkin  
bag."

45 The trouble is that what most of the blue-state people want is not a tribal triumph, to be cured by an act of  
obedience, but rather actually to end gun violence. A lethal weapon designed solely to devastate a human body and  
explode the organs inside is, as a matter of inarguable fact, nothing in the world like a Birkin bag. It is odd that the  
same people who are usually so ready to condemn any form of moral relativism are so eager to embrace *this* kind. It's  
wrong, they often tell us, to say that this or that element of Islamic practice is just "their culture"; but we should tip-  
toe around people who keep military weapons of mass killing, because, you see, it's theirs. There may indeed be some  
50 among them who do believe that bags and small-arms artillery are alike. But many views widely held are wrong. You  
should always try to meet the other side halfway, but you can only meet people halfway when you are both living on  
the same planet. [...]

*The Washington Post*

## Steve Bannon's Clever Idea to Save the GOP from Brutal Midterms

Fareed Zakaria, June 1, 2018

1 The Republican Party faces dim prospects in the midterm elections. But it doesn't have to be that way, says  
Stephen K. Bannon, the chief ideologist of the populist wave that brought Donald Trump into the White House. "If  
the Republicans continue on the path they are on," Bannon told me Thursday, "they will lose 40 seats in the House  
and President Trump will be impeached." He presented an alternative that strikes me as clever, and it's a strategy  
8 that Trump himself seems to instinctively get.

Bannon was in Rome to learn from and provide support to the unusual coalition of populists and nationalists  
who together won half the vote in Italy's recent elections and have formed a government. Bannon sees that sort of  
coalition — mixing left and right, old and young — as his goal for the United States. "Europe is about a year ahead  
of the United States. . . . You see populist-nationalist movements with reform [here]. . . . You could begin to see the  
10 elements of Bernie Sanders coupled with the Trump movement that really becomes a dominant political force in  
American politics." (This column draws on an on-air interview he did with me for CNN, as well as a subsequent  
conversation.)

The Republican Party's strategy, for now, appears to be to make the midterm elections a series of local  
contests focusing on the tax cut and the healthy economy. Bannon views this as fundamentally misguided. "You  
15 have to nationalize the election," he said. Bannon understands that voters are moved from the gut more than through  
a wonky analysis of taxes. "This is going to be an emotional [election] — you're either with [House Minority  
Leader] Nancy Pelosi or you're with Donald Trump. . . . Trump's second presidential race will be on Nov. 6 of this  
year."

Bannon is most focused on the issue of immigration because it hits both the heart and the head. "Immigration  
20 is about not just sovereignty, it's about jobs." He believes that the Trump coalition can attract up to a third of  
Sanders supporters who see trade and immigration as having created unfair competition for jobs, particularly for  
working-class blacks and Hispanics. He advocates appealing directly to those voters, saying, "You're not going to  
be able to take the Hispanic and black community from the STEM system in grammar school to our best  
engineering schools . . . to the great jobs in Silicon Valley, unless you start to limit these H-1B visas and this unfair  
25 competition . . . from East Asia and South Asia."

Now this strikes me as entirely wrong. The reason that not enough Hispanic and black students end up in  
Silicon Valley has much more to do with a broken education system, particularly for poorer kids, than the modest  
number of skilled Asian immigrants who get work visas. The most likely result of limiting these visas is that  
30 talented immigrants will simply go elsewhere — Canada, Britain, Australia — and start successful companies there.  
And, in fact, there is lots of evidence this is already happening.

But Bannon is right that this is a brilliant electoral strategy. The idea of greater immigration controls has an  
undeniable mainstream appeal. The Democratic Party is too far to the left on many of these issues, embracing  
concepts such as sanctuary cities, which only reinforces its image as a party that is more concerned with race,  
35 identity and multiculturalism than the rule of law.

Where Bannon is analytic and historical, Trump is instinctive. But the president appears to see the situation  
similarly. I wrote last month that Trump would try to fight the midterm elections on immigration and added, "Do  
not be surprised if Trump also picks a few fights with black athletes." In recent weeks, the president has labeled  
immigrant gang members "animals" and suggested that football players who silently protest police violence against  
blacks should leave the country.

40 Bannon thinks Trump is just getting started in nationalizing the election around immigration. He predicted the  
next major battle would be over the proposed wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. "The wall is not just totemic. The  
wall is absolutely central to his program. . . . As we come up on Sept. 30, if [Congress's] appropriations bill does  
not include spending to fully build his wall . . . I believe he will shut down the government."

45 Sadly, but not surprisingly, Bannon doesn't think the fighting and the rancor in the United States are going  
away any time soon. The "battle between nationalists and globalists is at the fundamental roots of what America is,  
what America will be," he said. "This is very healthy, and . . . I think this is going to go on for a long time. . . .  
We've got a lot more fighting and a lot more scar tissue to go over."

## The Tories haven't just popularised Islamophobia – they've gentrified it

OPINION Nesrine Malik

Sun 3 Jun 2018, *The Guardian*

The Conservative party has a problem with Muslims. It is not a few bad apples; not a few social media posts taken out of context. The problem has been growing unchecked for years, despite warnings by Muslim party members, and has now become so normalised that incidents are being reported with alarming frequency. Last week, the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) called for an independent inquiry into Islamophobia following more-than-weekly occurrences in the party 5 last month. In these past four weeks alone, Conservative party representatives and candidates have called Islam "the new Nazism", posted a picture of bacon on a door handle as a way to "protect your house from terrorism", and shared an article that called Muslims "parasites" who "live off the state and breed like rabbits".

Muslim party members also reported casual racism linked to the religion, and conversations where it was heavily implied or overtly spelled out that to get ahead in the party, they had to shed as much of their Muslim identity as possible. This 10 is now a pattern. Peter Osborne wrote last week that in his research over the years he has shown that it is impossible for a practising Muslim to make his or her way to the very top of the Tory party.

Prejudices do not just land at the door of certain parties. They bubble upwards from some foundational corruption. There is a reason that the anti-Muslim bigotry that has developed over the last two decades nested on the right, and found a home in the Conservative party. There is an overlap between specific antipathy towards Muslims and general hostility 15 towards immigration, a cornerstone Tory attitude. And there is a reason it has intensified under the auspices of today's party. A nativist government tone sharpened after the Brexit vote and overtures to the far right have won over Ukip voters and even ex-BNP supporters.

Just as antisemitism on the left arises from a warped, conspiratorial view of a world in which Jews are enablers of powerful interests that conspire against the weak, anti-Muslim prejudice on the right arises from an obsession with 20 immigration gone haywire, hence Muslims are hordes, invaders, breeding like rabbits and changing the culture with their creeping sharia.

Hate speech against Muslims also conveniently channels a racial element that on its own would meet with far more opprobrium. There are many fig leaves that cover the naked prejudice, such as: people have legitimate concerns about immigration; Muslims change the culture of a place far more than people of other religions do; is it so wrong for a nation 25 to want to preserve its culture? A handy manual for this sort of obfuscation is Douglas Murray's *The Strange Death of Europe*: a masterclass in how xenophobia can take on a respectable shape by sublimating prejudice towards Muslims – and by extension immigrants – into a legitimate cultural anxiety.

But the biggest fig leaf of all is that, somehow, it is all just legitimate criticism of Islam, that no one really has an intrinsic problem with Muslims. There is not much value in arguing against this logic because it is a set-up. Those who have been 30 grappling with the whole "Islam is not a race" diversion for a while now know that it is obvious that hate speech, mockery, calling for internment and damaging people's employment prospects, as studies have found, is not a legitimate interrogation of a faith. The religion-not-race canard is a threadbare semantic excuse deployed cynically by those who know that, once the religion element is stripped away, all that is left is the racist bigotry.

A party that engages in populist rhetoric against immigration, the party of the Windrush scandal and the "go home" vans, 35 is the natural home for the politics of fear. Zac Goldsmith's shameful smear campaign against Sadiq Khan still stands as its monument. On Sunday morning, the home secretary, Sajid Javid, dismissed the MCB's claims, citing its supposedly "favourable comments" on extremists, and refusing to engage with the fact that senior Tories, journalists and junior party members have all made the same claims. This is deliberate strategy. Raise the spectre of extremism and just hope everyone moves on.

40 Of course legitimate interrogation of Islam can be, and is often, mislabelled as anti-Muslim prejudice, just as legitimate interrogation of Israel is often mislabelled as antisemitism. But it really is not hard to also see that, just as antisemites use Israel to hide their prejudice against all Jews, anti-Muslim bigots use Islamic extremism to excuse theirs.

But the similarity ends there when it comes to popular condemnation. The difference in the public outcry against Labour and Conservative failures to tackle effectively race and prejudice issues in their parties is telling. We have become inured 45 to the sharpness of the tone against Muslims, because criticising Islam has lent a civilising comfort to those who just don't like Muslims, and Islamophobia has been successfully twinned with immigration in the public consciousness. There will be precious few pundits calling for an inquiry or radio shows asking callers whether Theresa May is fit to lead a party whose members bully and stigmatise Muslims. There will be few voters at the ballot box who will shun the Tory party because it makes their fellow citizens feel unsafe. [...]



## **For the UK to survive, it needs to be less London-centric**

Ruth Davidson, *The Financial Times*, MAY 20, 2018

I believe in political unions. Britain is leaving one next year, but it must protect and enhance another, our own. That union, the United Kingdom, remains under threat. The Scottish Nationalist government continues to press for a second independence referendum. Having lost the arguments during the 2014 plebiscite, it is expected to publish this week a new blueprint for independence to keep the issue alive.

5 Nicola Sturgeon, first minister, has staked her reputation within the SNP on delivering a second attempt. All the indicators are that she wants to press ahead and seize the shot at history that eluded her predecessor Alex Salmond. It is unlikely Ms Sturgeon's latest efforts will be met with enthusiasm from Scottish voters. People are weary after more than a decade of SNP rule, in which grievance politics have taken precedence over schools, the economy and building a sustainable health service. And, contrary to popular belief, Brexit has not  
10 eroded support for the UK despite a majority of Scots voting for Remain. If anything it has reminded folks that constitutional change brings insecurity and uncertainty. If leaving the EU is a bad thing, as the SNP insist, why is leaving a union four times more important in terms of trade to Scotland somehow a virtue?

That said, we cannot be complacent. As long as our future relationship with the EU is in flux, it would be foolish to assume that the current trends on Scotland remaining in the UK will hold and that the threat of separation  
15 has gone away. The SNP is in power north of the border and will use that clout to drive a wedge between Scotland and the rest of the country. So we unionists must work hard to bolster our case for the union.

At a conference organised by the Policy Exchange think-tank tomorrow, I will explain just how we will do that. Our union is a unique creation and I treasure its very messiness. I love being a Scot, I also value being British. I adore the fact that the UK does not force me to choose between the two — nor rank them, nor seek to limit  
20 my identity.

The only trouble is that this messiness can sometimes lead to indifference about our fate. We are, after all, a country that four years ago, only woke up to the possibility of our being extinguished about a week before the Scottish independence referendum took place. To ensure that does not happen again, we all need to give a little more care and attention to maintaining the union.

25 Devolution has transformed the UK's political structures over the past 20 years. Government must develop better practices to ensure this constitutional reality is properly recognised. And while it is hard for Whitehall to build a relationship with Edinburgh, where one half wants to end that relationship, it must endeavour always to do so.

We also need to spread the benefits of the union fairly and equally around the nation. The UK is still too  
30 London-centric. As befits one of the world's great cities, the capital gobbles up talent, money and status. It is government's job to ensure that more of this ends up in the other great British metropolitan areas in our regions and in our nations. The Conservative government in Westminster is already delivering on its manifesto promise to move Channel 4 out of London.

But this should be just the start. More cultural institutions — like the British Museum — should set up second  
35 homes outside the capital. More government posts should be based in other parts of the UK.

With Brexit, we have an opportunity to ensure the powers that return to these shores are based nearer the communities they serve. Most of the UK's fish, for example, are caught in waters off Scotland. So I believe most of the UK's fishing infrastructure should be based north of the border.

This is not an anti-London argument. Indeed it was London which showed how we come together as a nation  
40 during the Olympics in 2012. The huge success of that event was that it allowed Britons to feel they had a stake in their country; that this event was ours. That should be our goal so people, including those who currently support independence in Scotland, feel the UK is theirs too.

*The writer is leader of the Scottish Conservatives*

*The Los Angeles Times*

## Enough is Enough

The *Times* Editorial Board, August 20, 2017

1 These are not normal times. The man in the White House is reckless and unmanageable, a danger to the Constitution, a threat to our democratic institutions.

5 Last week some of his worst qualities were on display: his moral vacuity and his disregard for the truth, as well as his stubborn resistance to sensible advice. As ever, he lashed out at imaginary enemies and scapegoated others for his own failings. Most important, his reluctance to offer a simple and decisive condemnation of racism and Nazism astounded and appalled observers around the world. With such a glaring failure of moral leadership at the top, it is desperately important that others stand up and speak out to defend American principles and values. This is no time for neutrality, equivocation or silence. Leaders across America — and especially those in the president's own party — must summon their reserves of political courage to challenge President Trump publicly, loudly and unambiguously. Enough is enough.

10 Some people clearly understand this. On Monday, after Trump suggested that “alt-left” counter-protesters were as much to blame as Nazis and white supremacists for the fiasco in Charlottesville, a courageous CEO — Kenneth Frazier, the chief executive of Merck & Co. — resigned from the president's American Manufacturing Council in protest. His departure, which the ever-gracious president greeted with derision, led to an exodus of other commission members.

15 Also last week, five members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff issued a tacit rebuke to the president by condemning racism and hatred in Charlottesville. Denouncing Nazis and Klansmen is not exactly controversial or cutting-edge in 2017, but for the generals to take on the commander in chief is, to say the least, highly unusual.

20 Many Republicans and conservatives have broken ranks as well in recent months, dismayed by the daily chaos, belligerence and mismanagement. Sens. John McCain (R-Ariz.), Lindsay Graham (R-S.C.) and Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.) have been outspoken critics. Max Boot, David Frum and other conservative public intellectuals have written articulately about the failures of the Trump presidency; the venerable conservative magazine *National Review* has as well. On Friday, former GOP presidential nominee Mitt Romney said Trump's response to Charlottesville had “caused racists to rejoice,” and that if he didn't apologize it could lead to “an unraveling of our national fabric.” These votes of no-confidence from fellow conservatives and Republicans are powerful indictments. But where are the rest?

25 Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) and Rep. Paul D. Ryan (R-Wis.) are the two most-powerful men in Congress. Both have fired off the occasional potshot but for the most part have stood firmly behind this wildly flawed president, despite the taunts and insults Trump hurled at them from his Twitter redoubt. What holds them back? Craven, self-serving political calculations designed to protect their careers, and dwindling hope that the president, despite everything, will help them move their long-delayed legislative agenda. Their silence is shameful.

30 How about the more rational members of Trump's Cabinet? They should be fleeing the administration, refusing to stand mutely against the wall at his press conferences while he steps on their messages and undermines their best efforts.

35 Many rank-and-file GOP members of Congress are simply too scared of alienating Republican voters or of enraging a vindictive Trump or of provoking a primary challenge from the right funded by the Koch brothers or the Mercer family. They should wake up and declare their independence. In California, the pressure is sometimes in the other direction. For instance, Rep. Darrell Issa (R-Vista), a Trump supporter who won reelection in 2016 by an extraordinarily narrow 2,348 votes, knows he needs to distance himself from Trump if he hopes to win reelection in 2018; he has done so, slowly, a bit. It would be nice if he did so on principle, but in the end, he and his colleagues may be more persuaded by Trump's low favorability ratings and the near certainty of challenges from Democrats in the midterm election.

40 Men and women of conscience can no longer withhold judgment. Trump's erratic nature and his impulsive, demagogic style endanger us all. Republicans and conservatives around the country should be just as concerned as Democrats about Trump's conflicts of interest, his campaign's relationship with the Russians and whether he engaged in obstruction of justice. They should call him out when he sows division, when he dog-whistles, when he emboldens bigots. They should stand up for global human rights, for constructive engagement with the rest of the world and for other shared American values that transcend party allegiances.

45 Rejecting the president of one's own party could mean alienating friends, crossing allies, damaging one's chances of advancement or risking one's career altogether for a matter of principle. But that's the very definition of leadership. No one can sit on the sidelines now. It's time for Republicans to show some spine.

50



## The Daily Beast

### Charlie Sykes: Trump and a Gutless GOP Wrecked the Party

Lewis Beale, October 1, 2017

1 The long-time Trump-hating conservative has a new book, in which he turns his wrath on the legislators who shed ideology for any chance to win and debase genuine conservatism. Charlie Sykes isn't the only person to recognize that the Republican Party has gone batshit crazy, but in many ways he's one of the more interesting voices to comment on the phenomenon. A former conservative talk show host in his native Wisconsin, Sykes was on the "Never Trump" train from the beginning, watching with horror as the orange-haired one won his party's presidential nomination, then the office itself, then saw how members of the party managed to justify their support for a man he describes as "an utterly unqualified reality TV star."

5 "The capacity of Republicans to rationalize their support appears to be bottomless," says Sykes, whose forthcoming book, *How the Right Lost Its Mind*, is the political equivalent of the most frightening Stephen King novel you've ever read. "I am less horrified by Trump himself than by what he has done to the rationalizers and enablers. Why are you people defending this, why don't you see what he's doing to your own cause?"

10 Well, it may be about tax cuts, immigration, and other aspects of the conservative political agenda, but as Sykes, who is now a regular on MSNBC, says in the book, "after Trump's defeat of Hillary Clinton, the Democrats need to perform an autopsy; the Republicans need an exorcism." Sykes see Trump as a symptom of forces that have thoroughly corrupted the GOP—celebrations of nativism and authoritarianism, while ignoring birthers, racists, and conspiracy theorists in its midst (say hi to Alex Jones and Matt Drudge), the toxic rhetoric of Fox News and right-wing talk show hosts, the politics of paranoia (again, say hi to Alex Jones and Infowars) and a conservative base that is now essentially post-literate.

15 "You can't separate what's happened in our political world without talking about the degradation of our culture," says Sykes in an interview with The Daily Beast. [...] Or, as he says in the book, referring to the rise of alternative right-wing media, "The vast majority of airtime was not taken up by issues or explanations of conservative approaches to markets or the need to balance liberty with order. Why bother with such stuff, when there were personalities to be mocked, conspiracy theories to be shared, and left-wing moonbats to be ridiculed?"

20 Not that Sykes is letting the Democrats off the hook. He says liberals painting everyone they disagree with as racist or homophobic is driving their traditional blue-collar constituency into the arms of the nutters. And, he says, after noting that the Bernie Sanders/Elizabeth Warren wing of the party only guarantees more electoral losses, "As shambolic as this president is, there's a possibility the Democrats will blow it again. They don't seem to have a coherent response to him, which is just to criticize him, which might be enough. But the divisions among the Democrats, their lack of aspirational leadership, should be of concern. I think it's conceivable that the Republicans will keep control in 2018, and Trump could be re-elected in 2010."

25 That thought is as frightening to Sykes as it is to the Dems. And he's not the only conservative who thinks that Trump is an existential threat to the party, the country, and the globe. In his book, Sykes mentions conservative thinkers like Ross Douthat, Charles Krauthammer, and George Will, who have been highly critical of the president. But he also recognizes that Trump's most hard-core supporters do not read these guys, and are, in fact, "post-literate and in the alternate reality bubble. One of the shocks of recognition is the real conservative movement turned out to be this layer-thin pie crust over the conservative movement; the people I read no longer are read by the vast number of conservatives. All of those thinkers have effectively been excommunicated in the era of Trump."

30 Like Sykes himself, whose anti-Trumpism and connections to MSNBC have now made him a pariah in some quarters. "Watching the transition after he nailed the nomination, I saw Republicans who had no illusions about Trump, deciding they were going to go along—it was like watching *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*," says Sykes. "And there was a backlash against those who did not change their position. I was accused of being a sellout, people said they were not going to listen to me again, I was a traitor." One person Sykes is definitely disappointed in—although they remain friends—is Speaker of the House Paul Ryan, whom he has known, and respected, for years. "I have said Ryan has struck a Faustian bargain," says Sykes. "I think he is fundamentally decent, but is unwilling to take Trump on, and is willing to stay on his good side to get tax cuts. And he has made the calculation that as speaker he doesn't have the independence to comment on every stupid tweet."

35 So Sykes might as well ask, "What is to be done?" the same question Vladimir Lenin once posed in an early 20th century political pamphlet. And it's not as if he doesn't have some answers, since Sykes is the first one to admit that conservatives have their own particular policy flaws. "Conservatives have to move from radical change agents to say, 'How can we do no harm?' How can we maintain prosperity without maintaining this massive gap in income inequality? We're still stuck with 'zombie conservatives,' people who apply lower tax rates to every economic situation. Can we at least have policies that relate to conditions on the ground?" [...]

Esquire

## Republicans Need a Better Response Besides Quitting

Charles P. Pierce, October 24, 2017

This is something of an earthquake, and the epicenter for the moment is in *The Arizona Republic*: “Condemning the nastiness of Republican politics in the era of President Donald Trump, Sen. Jeff Flake on Tuesday announced he will serve out the remainder of his term but will not seek re-election in 2018. The bombshell, which Flake, R-Ariz., intended to detail Tuesday afternoon on the Senate floor, will further roil Republican hopes of keeping the party's 52-seat Senate majority in the midterm elections of Trump's first term, when the president's party historically loses seats in Congress. It also likely will upend the race for Flake's seat. Flake, one of the Senate's more prominent critics of President Donald Trump, has been struggling in the polls. He told *The Arizona Republic* ahead of his announcement that he has become convinced “there may not be a place for a Republican like me in the current Republican climate or the current Republican Party.””

Now that last part is intriguing because, rather than duck into the warm rhetorical embrace of Our Polarized Age, Flake says flatly that the Republican Party has become so nutso bananas that there's no place for even a bog-standard Reagan conservative like himself to feel comfortable. It is true that Flake had a long push up a dirt road to get re-elected, and it is also true that his departure, along with that of Brave Bob Corker, accelerates the process by which the Republican majority in the Senate is transforming itself into a babbling replica of the Republican majority in the House, a process that is evidence enough of the virulence and the spread of the prion disease that has been eating away at the party's higher functions for four decades.

But, still, this strikes me as a signifying event, if only because Republicans like Flake and Corker apparently see leaving office the only viable response to the fact that the president\* is steering their party—and the country—over a cliff. If there ever was needed more evidence that movement conservatism, in its not-entirely-insane persona, is a spent force in American politics, watching Flake and Corker go scarpering away from public service would be it. Reaganism is long gone, and its pale progeny has been rendered irrelevant in the face of outright political thuggery. For Republican conservatives, it is Trump or the abyss.

“Among Republican primary voters, there's overwhelming support for Trump's positions and “behavior,”” Flake said, and one of their top concerns is whether a candidate is with the president or against him. While Flake said he is with Trump on some issues, on other issues he is not. And Trump definitely views him as a foe, having denounced Flake publicly and called him “toxic” on Twitter. “Here's the bottom line: The path that I would have to travel to get the Republican nomination is a path I'm not willing to take, and that I can't in good conscience take,” Flake told *The Republic* in a telephone interview. “It would require me to believe in positions I don't hold on such issues as trade and immigration and it would require me to condone behavior that I cannot condone.””

These are noble sentiments, to be sure, although one could ask Flake in all good faith where in the hell he's been over the 40 years of Republican politics that made Trumpism inevitable. One also feels constrained to point out that, unlike his colleague from Arizona, John McCain, Flake voted to strip millions of Americans of their healthcare, and that one of his last acts before hitting the silk was to vote on a budget resolution that is as full of moonshine as any Republican budget proposal has been since the party decided to take Arthur Laffer seriously. Besides, it's hard to parse Flake's logic as anything but abject surrender to the monster that finally chewed itself out of the lab. As he said in his speech today to the Senate: “It must also be said that I rise today with no small measure of regret. Regret, because of the state of our disunion, regret because of the disrepair and destructiveness of our politics, regret because of the indecency of our discourse, regret because of the coarseness of our leadership, regret for the compromise of our moral authority, and by our – all of our – complicity in this alarming and dangerous state of affairs. It is time for our complicity and our accommodation of the unacceptable to end.”

Is he offering his career up as a blood sacrifice? Is he offering it up as an appeal to conscience? “See what you've done, you coarse and compromised moral authority, you have deprived the Republic of me, Jeff Flake.” There not having been much of a conscience in the Republican Party at least since it first cut a paycheck to Lee Atwater, Flake is pretty much shouting down a well here. “We must never regard as ‘normal’ the regular and casual undermining of our democratic norms and ideals. We must never meekly accept the daily sundering of our country—the personal attacks, the threats against principles, freedoms, and institutions, the flagrant disregard for truth or decency, the reckless provocations, most often for the pettiest and most personal reasons, reasons having nothing whatsoever to do with the fortunes of the people that we have all been elected to serve. None of these appalling features of our current politics should ever be regarded as normal.”

Again, I find it hard to reconcile this existential threat to the country's politics with Flake's decision to leave office instead of fighting it. He recognizes the problem and has decided, with quite a bit of thought, that he doesn't have the belly to fight it. Fair enough, but please, spare us the anguished *cri de poulet*. [...]

*The New York Times*

## Franken Should Go

Michelle Goldberg, November 16, 2017

Oh no, not Al Franken, too.

Before Thursday, I'd hoped Franken would run for president in 2020. A hugely gifted communicator with entertainment chops, he seemed well suited to take on Donald Trump, assuming the demagogic showman seeks re-election. A decade ago, when Franken first considered running for Senate, I spent a few days trailing him around Minnesota and found him serious, earnest and decent. As a lawmaker he's been — in what now seems an awful irony — great on issues of sexual assault. He was behind one measure that made it easier for people who are sexually victimized while working for defense contractors to find justice and another ensuring that survivors don't have to pay for their own rape kits. He hired feminist women, including Stephanie Schriock, who managed his 2008 campaign and is now president of Emily's List. Sure, Franken made plenty of sexist jokes when he was with "Saturday Night Live," but I thought he was one of the good guys. (I thought there were good guys.)

Then I saw the photo. On Thursday morning, Leeann Tweeden, a former model and radio news anchor in Los Angeles, accused Franken of harassing her during a 2006 U.S.O. tour to entertain American troops abroad. She wrote that he talked her into doing a sketch in which he kissed her, and that he insisted on a rehearsal, during which he "mashed his lips against mine and aggressively stuck his tongue in my mouth." This story alone might not have gotten Franken in much trouble — even if Tweeden had been able to get people to believe her, Franken could have explained it away as acting. But there's a disgusting, indelible photograph from the cargo plane that took them home from Afghanistan. In it, Tweeden has fallen asleep in her flak jacket, and Franken, grinning at the camera, appears to grope her breasts. The picture was included on a commemorative CD sent to participants by the trip photographer. Tweeden wrote that when she saw it: "I felt violated all over again. Embarrassed. Belittled. Humiliated." No wonder; the picture is utterly dehumanizing.

Soon after the news broke, Franken issued a terse apology, saying the photo "was clearly intended to be funny but wasn't. I shouldn't have done it." I read that and thought: You have to resign now. But then Franken put out another, better statement, saying he felt disgusted by his former self: "It's obvious how Leeann would feel violated by that picture. And, what's more, I can see how millions of other women would feel violated by it." He asked for an ethics investigation into his conduct and for the opportunity to make things up to his female supporters. I found this persuasive and would like to see Franken redeem himself, but I still don't think he can.

There's a strong argument against Franken's resignation, one not entirely motivated by partisanship, since a Democratic governor would appoint his successor. When that photo was taken, Franken was a comedian, and at the time comedians enjoyed wide cultural license to behave offensively. Tweeden told Fox News that, horrified as she was by the picture, she doesn't think he needs to resign over it. "People make mistakes," she said. The more we learn about how grotesquely prevalent sexual harassment is, the more I wonder if we can really toss aside every man who has ever crossed a line, and if we do, how many will remain.

The feminist Jacobin in me thinks: Who cares? Replace them all with women! But I doubt this frenzied moment ends with the collapse of patriarchy. Like Rebecca Traister, a *New York magazine* writer, I worry that there will be overreach and then a fierce and ugly backlash, as men — but not only men — decide we can't just go around ruining people's lives and careers by retroactively imposing today's sexual standards on past actions. Besides, as more and more men get swept up in this moment of reckoning, we're going to have to figure out some mechanism by which those accused of offenses that fall short of assault can make amends and get their lives back.

So my first instinct is to say that Franken deserves a chance to go through an ethics investigation but remain in the Senate, where he should redouble his efforts on behalf of abuse and harassment victims. But if that happens, the current movement toward unprecedented accountability for sexual harassers will probably start to peter out. Republicans, never particularly eager to hold their own to account, will use Franken to deflect from more egregious abuse on their own side, like what Trump and Roy Moore are accused of. Women with stories about other members of Congress might hesitate to come forward. That horrifying photo of Franken will confront feminists every time they decry Trump's boasts of grabbing women by the genitals. Democrats will have to worry about whether more damaging information will come out, and given the way scandals like this tend to unfold, it probably will.

It's not worth it. The question isn't about what's fair to Franken, but what's fair to the rest of us. I would mourn Franken's departure from the Senate, but I think he should go, and the governor should appoint a woman to fill his seat. The message to men in power about sexual degradation has to be clear: We will replace you.



## Don't be fooled – these free-speech obsessives approve of no-platforming

George Monbiot, Wed 10 Jan 2018, *The Guardian*

When people obsess over a trivial issue, it usually means they are avoiding a more important one. The intense focus on student politics, and in particular no-platforming, by middle-aged journalists – columnists and leader writers at the *Telegraph*, *Spectator*, *Times*, *Mail* and *Sun* – suggests to me that there is something they would rather not see. [...] Why does this issue command such attention? What is it that these people would prefer not to see? Perhaps it is the far graver no-platforming that prevails across adult public life.

For instance, the incoming vice-chancellor of Edinburgh University is a man whose views, if they belonged to a student, would be quickly condemned. In his current post, as University of Hong Kong vice-chancellor, he signed the following letter: "We treasure freedom of expression, but we condemn its recent abuses. Freedom of expression is not absolute, and like all freedoms it comes with responsibilities. All universities undersigned agree that we do not support Hong Kong independence, which contravenes the Basic Law."

Digging his hole deeper, he now claims that the phrase "recent abuses" refers not to the pro-independence protests at universities but to unrelated instances of hate speech. How can this meaning be deduced from the letter? Is a man who first rails against free speech, then engages in such sophistry, fit to serve in this role? Shouldn't the minister responsible... take an interest in the matter? Or is easier to attack a handful of confused 18-year-olds?

Another resounding silence concerns the US government's deletion from its websites of thousands of documents that mention climate breakdown. The US agriculture department instructs that the terms "climate change" or "greenhouse gases" should not be used in its publications; and the federal government bans the words "vulnerable", "entitlement", "diversity", "transgender", "foetus", "evidence-based" and "science-based" from an agency's budget reports. This is real censorship, not a feeble attempt by a few teenagers to prevent their peers using trigger words. Could it be that our free speech crusaders quietly approve?

Lord Lawson gave a lecture last year, claiming that "the suppression of freedom of speech in the universities now is one of the great problems of our time". Somehow he forgot to mention that he served in the government that banned Sinn Féin and 10 other organisations in Northern Ireland from being heard on television and radio broadcasts, regardless of what they were saying. This was not an occasional no-platforming but full-on prohibition.

But perhaps the real discomfort is that the worst no-platforming of all takes place within our newspapers. In the publications most obsessed with student silliness, there is no platform for socialism, no platform for environmentalism, no platform for those who might offend the interests of the proprietors. In the *Telegraph*, as its former chief political commentator Peter Osborne says, there is no platform for criticism of – or even embarrassing news about – some of its major advertisers.

In the *Daily Mail*, Dominic Sandbrook warned that universities "are becoming bubbles of received opinion, echo chambers in which the same lazy prejudices ... reverberate unceasingly." Yes, that's the *Daily Mail*, which has made its own contribution to free speech on campus by calling on readers to report views it disagrees with: "Have you – or do you know anyone – who has experienced anti-Brexit bias at university? Email [university@dailymail.co.uk](mailto:university@dailymail.co.uk)."

A column in the *Sun* warns: "Universities risk looking more like places of darkness, intolerance and ignorance." This admonition comes from a newspaper that during the EU referendum campaign, according to research at Cardiff University, published 220 pro-leave letters and one pro-remain letter.

The newspapers that claim to be so incensed about no-platforming are not above seeking to deny people a platform. When the broadcaster Chris Packham spoke out against the shooting industry, both the *Mail on Sunday* and the *Telegraph* published articles that sought to have him sacked from the BBC. The BBC resisted this attempt, but – disciplined by both press and government – across much of its output it has unthinkingly succumbed. For instance, while it broadcasts series such as *Mary Berry's Country House Secrets* and *Elizabeth & Philip: Love and Duty*, it provides no documentary platform for those who seek to break the stranglehold of patrimonial wealth and power. Where's the balance?

I'm not claiming that journalists try to distract attention from their own industry. Quite the opposite. Projection is something we do unconsciously, to avoid facing uncomfortable truths. We should all seek to challenge ourselves unceasingly, in the forlorn hope of combating this tendency.

I believe that a healthy media organisation, like a healthy university, should admit a diversity of opinion. I want the other newspapers to keep publishing views with which I fiercely disagree. But they – and we – should also seek opposing views and publish them too, however uncomfortable this might be. Otherwise media organisations are vulnerable to the charge they level so freely at students: creating a safe space in which only the views they find congenial are heard.

Yes, to use their unpleasant term, there are some snowflakes at university. But there's a blizzard in the newspapers.



## Sounding the death knell for Corbynmania

May 4th 2018, *The Economist*

by BAGEHOT

THIS was a bad night for Jeremy Corbyn, Labour's hard-left leader. It would be too much to say that the wheels have come off the Jeremy bus or that the Jeremy Express has hit the buffers. But the shine has definitely come off Mr Corbyn's halo.

The Conservative Party has been in power either in its own right or as the dominant party in a coalition for eight years of low growth and public-spending restraint. Having foisted a referendum on the country to solve an internal party battle, the Conservatives are now making a hash of taking Britain out of the European Union.

The past few weeks have seen crisis piled upon crisis: most obviously the Windrush crisis (whereby British citizens from the Caribbean have been threatened with deportation because, through administrative oversight, they don't possess the necessary documentation) but also the crisis over breast cancer screening (whereby thousands of women missed tests through administrative oversight) and the crisis of party management (whereby the prime minister failed to command a majority in Cabinet for her "customs partnership" with the European Union). And yet the Labour Party has failed to make the election breakthrough that it had hoped for—and that it had foolishly trailed in the past few weeks.

The party consolidated its position in the big cities, making gains in London, denying the Tories control of Trafford, one of the richest places in Greater Manchester, and taking control of Plymouth. But it failed to make advances in smaller towns. It lost ground in traditional working-class areas such as Wigan, Bolton and Dudley. It failed to take the Conservative crown jewels in London, Westminster and Wandsworth. The Conservatives even took back Barnet, which has a significant Jewish population, from no overall control. In terms of pure numbers Labour won the night. In terms of expectations they lost.

This raises significant questions about Jeremy Corbyn's leadership. Mr Corbyn's centrist critics argue that a more moderate Labour leader would have had a very different night: he (or she) would have barnstormed the big cities, particularly London, where moderate Tories are furious about Brexit, advanced in the small towns, where people are fed up with austerity, and consolidated his hold over traditional Labour areas, where people are desperate to punish the Tories after eight years in power. They worry about the "Corbyn ceiling": that Mr Corbyn is simply too left-wing to reach significant parts of England. He can pile up votes in big cities where there are lots of ethnic minority voters and young people. But he can't reach Middle England. They also worry about the "Corbyn effect": that the hard-left's penchant for bullying is giving liberal voters who turned to Mr Corbyn in the last general election pause for thought.

[...] Two of Mr Corbyn's most valuable assets are clearly on the wane. One is his reputation as a secular saint: a reputation that had crowds at Glastonbury serenading him with "ooh Jeremy Corbyn" and thousands of young people (many with names like Tancred and Tarquin) joining Momentum. Here time was as important as the anti-Semitism row. Mr Corbyn has been party leader since 2015. Being party leader means that you do things that regular politicians do. You appear at prime minister's question time, sack unruly shadow ministers, wear a suit and tie, and, even if you're Jeremy Corbyn, compromise with reality. You become one of "them" rather than one of "us". The other is the bump that he got from the last election. Mr Corbyn built up huge political capital because he massively out-performed expectations in 2017, winning 40% of the vote compared with Ed Miliband's 31% and denying Theresa May an overall majority. But as his capital begins to age attention is shifting to a different question: why isn't the Labour Party thrashing a hapless Tory government?

A weakened Mr Corbyn could spell a much more fractious atmosphere in Westminster. Mr Corbyn's impressive performance in the general election put paid to attempts by Labour MPs to replace him with a more moderate figure. The party may see a resumption of such attempts—and with it a renewed struggle between the parliamentary party, on the one hand, and pro-Corbyn activists such as the Momentum group on the other. The Conservative Party has got into the habit of treating Mr Corbyn as their chief whip: all you need to do is threaten rebels with the possibility of prime minister Corbyn and they will vote for anything. Rebels may now feel emboldened to push their causes even harder than they have.

Mr Corbyn has a proud history of leaving commentators with egg all over their faces. He can summon up charisma when he needs it and has an extraordinary ability to keep battling on regardless of circumstances. He also has some huge advantages on his side. A Tory party that is deeply divided over the most important issue facing the country; an establishment that thinks that Brexit is a Tory-made disaster; a generational divide that has left people under 40 struggling to get their feet on the property ladder; and a widespread sense that the country's infrastructure, from the NHS to the transport system, is on the verge of collapse. Even so, Corbynmania is now officially dead.

## The British right's propaganda is an affront to democracy

Nick Cohen, *The Observer*, Sun 15 Oct 2017

It's easy to dismiss the Tory right as stupid: too easy if you wish to stop Brexit or limit the damage it will cause. As insults go, it is mild. The right has no plan beyond a desire to turn Britain into a Randian dystopia where regulations vanish and the state withers. It has no policy beyond a nostalgic hope that Britain will sail across the wide blue oceans and conquer new markets as our imperial ancestors conquered them before.

- 5 The right offers religion, not politics. Its faith is without blemish, the gospel runs. If Brexit fails, that is not because the faith is false but because heretical traitors, judges, civil servants and EU governments have schemed to defeat it. "He that doubteth is damned," said St Paul. "For whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Boris Johnson agrees.

- 10 Thatcherism, Britain's last revolt of the right, was preceded by years of hard planning in the Centre for Policy Studies and Institute of Economic Affairs. If you were around in the 1970s, you might have loved or loathed it. But you could not deny the right had built a programme for government. Today, there is no plan, no programme, no nothing. Instead of being populated by serious thinkers, Brexit's thinktanks are filled with propagandists, tabloid hacks and tax-exile newspaper proprietors. Boris Johnson and Michael Gove are columnists turned politicians. The *Sun*, *Telegraph*, *Mail* and *Express* do not just cheer on the cause while the grown-ups make the real decisions, as they did in Margaret Thatcher's day. They are what brains the Brexit campaign possesses.

- 15 Dominic Cummings, the director of Vote Leave, demonstrated the frivolity of the enterprise last year when he wiped his own campaign's website after the referendum. It as if he was admitting the promises Johnson and Gove had made to 17.4 million voters were worthless. Now the heist had been pulled, he would destroy the incriminating evidence.

- 20 A global movement against over-mighty states in Ronald Reagan's America and Mikhail Gorbachev's Soviet Union sustained the Thatcher government. The Brexiters have no one beyond Donald Trump and they don't really have him. Along with all his other faults – the racism, the narcissism, the incessant mendacity – Trump is an "America first" protectionist. He will never give us a sweetheart deal to make up for lost European markets, even if Congress let him (which it would not).

- 25 The Brexiters have no allies, only enemies. Men such as Daniel Hannan and Bernard Jenkin have been fighting their opponents in the Tory party for 30 years. The wounds are too deep, the scars are too thick, for them to admit now the other side may have a point. If they once had a conception of Britain's interests and the welfare of its citizens, they forgot it long ago. Beyond the desire to create an isolated state in the Atlantic, where welfare and regulations are slashed and climate change denied, is a more primal impulse. They cannot concede an inch to enemies, who have belittled them for most of their adult lives. Compromise in these psychological circumstances feels like a betrayal, even if the only compromise demanded of them is a compromise with reality.

- 30 So be my guest and say that Brexit is a movement of organised stupidity. But accept that as propagandists the Brexiters are anything but stupid. They have been the most brilliantly successful manipulators of public opinion in modern British history.

From the point of propaganda, their vices are virtues. During the referendum, the Remain campaign mocked Brexiters' inability to offer the British a coherent account of our future. But laughter was misplaced. The inability to level with the public made the Leave campaign a moving target that never offered its opponents a clear line of attack.

- 35 The religious insistence that supporting Brexit is a matter of faith, not reason, has the propaganda benefit of keeping supporters in line. Despite the collapse in the pound and living standards, despite the descent of the negotiations into the mire, not one prominent supporter of Brexit has admitted to the smallest doubt. The normal arguments of politics no more exist on the right than they do in the Church of Scientology. Who will break ranks when they know a movement run by vicious hacks will denounce them as traitors? Newspaper proprietors have power without responsibility, Stanley Baldwin said, the "prerogative of the harlot throughout the ages".

- 40 [...] The failure of Jeremy Corbyn and the Labour frontbench to challenge the right is as irresponsible as the right's failure to protect the national interest. Instead of listening to them, listen to the men and women who are prepared to fight in the Liberal Democrats, Scottish Nationalists and on the Labour backbenches. They know the best tactic is the simplest. "They hate it when you throw their words in their faces," Labour's Chuka Umunna told me. "They start shouting, 'You want to refight the referendum'."

- 45 To which the only response is, you promised to cut immigration, boost prosperity, secure global trade deals and restore parliamentary sovereignty. You can't just wipe that off the web and pretend it never happened.

You do not win by treating 17.4 million people as stupid. You win by treating them as democratic citizens with the right to punish the men who made impossible promises. Once it is clear they will never be kept and were never meant to be kept, the question arises: is it time to think again?

*The Nation*

## The American Impulse to Equate Guns With Freedom and Masculinity With Violence is Killing Us

Joan Walsh, October 2, 2017

1 On Sunday morning, the president of the United States humiliated his secretary of state, derided diplomacy as “wasting time,” mocked North Korea’s national leader as “Little Rocket Man,” and renewed his macho threat to “do what needs to be done” to thwart North Korea’s nuclear program—at the UN last month he said he might “need” to “destroy” the country. As always, analysts struggled to make sense of Trump’s tweets—geopolitically,  
5 psychologically—but the conclusion seemed inescapable that he is itching for a military conflict with a nuclear-armed adversary.

On Sunday night, a 64-year-old retiree by the name of Stephen Paddock took at least 10 rifles, some of them semi-automatic or automatic weapons, to the 32nd floor of the gilded Mandalay Bay resort casino, and gunned down hundreds of people, killing at least 50, in the deadliest mass shooting in modern American history. Paddock  
10 shot his prey from up high and watched them scatter, like ants, like animals. There is no connection between Trump’s threat and Paddock’s massacre, except a profound lack of empathy, a toxic male willingness to indulge grievances (we don’t yet know Paddock’s, but we soon will) with violence, and an obsession with the display of absolute power.

Maybe it’s because I went to bed fearing a war, even a nuclear conflict, with North Korea, and woke up to random bloody gun terror at a country-music concert in Las Vegas that I see the two tragedies as entwined. There is  
5 something deeply wrong with the American male identification of guns as a symbol of freedom. We need to translate that correctly: By this definition, it is the capacity for brutal violence that is also a symbol, maybe even a prerequisite, of freedom. Of almost strictly male freedom, we must emphasize. This set of values wasn’t invented by the madman in the White House; he is just a symptom of a country and an electorate that value guns over children’s lives. On social media today I saw a heartbreaking impotence among many pundits and political activists, repeatedly expressed  
10 this way: If we didn’t do something to regulate guns, especially automatic weapons, after the 2012 Sandy Hook massacre—in which 20 first-graders and six school staffers were murdered—we’ll never do anything. I don’t share that point of view, but I understand it.

Once again, the National Rifle Association has blood on its hands. At one time a respectable organization of gun owners promoting proper gun use and gun safety, three decades ago the NRA began to turn itself into a trade  
15 association for big gun manufacturers, and a purveyor of canny right-wing paranoia designed to spur gun sales. In the 1990s, as right-wing anti-government zealots began a backlash against what they perceived as a Democratic administration intent on taking their guns and their freedom, the NRA channeled that paranoia. Even after the bombing of the Oklahoma City federal building in 1995 by government-hating extremists, NRA head Wayne La Pierre was describing Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms agents as “jackbooted government thugs” in a fundraising  
20 letter. Guns went from being something used to hunt or—perhaps, in a rare event—to protect oneself and one’s family, to being a symbol of individual sovereignty and freedom from control of government. The Obama administration was a great gift to the NRA; gun and bullet purchases soared after the election of our first black president. Nonetheless, the NRA spent \$30 million to elect Trump, who spoke at its national convention and praised LaPierre as a patriot.

Trump repaid the NRA’s investment by signing a bill that lifted Obama-era limits on gun sales to the  
25 mentally ill. Yet, with the departure of the Obama administration, gun sales have sagged; the first black president is no longer around to take your guns, and the NRA-loving Trump is in the White House, so maybe it’s safe to stop hoarding guns? Not so fast, said the NRA. In a despicable propaganda video earlier this year, NRA cheerleader Dana Loesch spun a lurid tale of Black Lives Matters protesters and Women’s Marchers as the latest threat to guns and, yes,  
30 freedom. Hollywood liberals, the fake-news media, as well as an ex-president (you know whom they mean) are painting Trump as an illegitimate “Hitler.” Only the NRA—and, yes, more guns—can protect your freedom.

On Monday morning, Trump again repaid the NRA’s \$30 million investment with a pathetically passive statement that described the Las Vegas massacre as though it were a natural disaster, never once mentioning the  
35 weapons of hell that caused it. He called it “an act of pure evil,” extolled the bravery of police and first responders, and made appeals for love, prayers, and unity. He displayed his trademark lack of empathy about the victims’ families: “We cannot fathom their pain or imagine their loss.” What a strange thing to say: Many of us can, and if we can’t, it’s our human responsibility to try, to bear witness. If we really can’t fathom their pain or loss, we don’t have to do anything about it.

Sadly, we are unlikely to do anything about it. In the wake of the murders, gun stocks are soaring,  
40 anticipating a rise in gun sales as the result of a possible move to restrict firearms such as used to be routine after a bloody spree like this one. I don’t think the gun industry has much to worry about. [...]

## Jeremy Corbyn is pitting Britain's Muslims against Jews

Ed Husain, *The Daily Telegraph*, 6 June 2018

In recent days, we have seen the worst elements of Jeremy Corbyn. Behind the veneer of an affable, bearded chap I see a sinister Marxist who believes in class warfare and also in pitting Britain's Muslims against Jews.

Under Corbyn, the Labour party has a serious and sustained problem with Jew-hatred. Rightly, for months, there has been scrutiny of increased instances of anti-Semitism, with suspensions and investigations including the departure of Corbyn's long-term ally Ken Livingstone. Lifting from the Soviet Union's playbook of diversionary tactics, Corbyn has now accused the Conservatives of "Islamophobia". This is the worst form of whataboutery, but I believe there is something darker at work.

For more than a decade, Corbyn has been a vocal supporter of the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) and a friend to several of its leaders. To their shame, the MCB – who were first to call for an inquiry into Islamophobia in the Tory party – have used the term as a political card, mimicking homophobia. Anti-Muslim bigotry undoubtedly exists, but it must be more than merely a stick with which to beat the Conservatives, a political party which gave the world a Muslim chairperson, a culturally Muslim Home Secretary and prime ministers that host Iftar and Eid gatherings in Downing Street.

Perhaps, then, this is not about Islamophobia. To put it crudely, Britain's Jews offer no more than 300,000 votes. To be seen as hostile to Jews and Israel, in order to gain some of the votes of almost four million British Muslims, is therefore worth the trade-off. There are at least thirty seats where the "Muslim vote" can help Labour win. That is a convenient political calculation, but it is also based on deep conviction.

The surge of Momentum activists taking over the Labour party has ensured that Islamists are in their midst. For almost twenty years now, there has been an alliance between Jeremy Corbyn's anti-Iraq war coalition and organisations linked to the radical Muslim Brotherhood, including the British Muslim Initiative, Muslim Association of Britain, and the Muslim Council of Britain. They have grand names, but they are essentially cut from the same ideological cloth of opposing the West, seeking to destroy Israel and to create Islamist governments across the Middle East.

For years, Corbyn has spoken of Hamas and Hezbollah as his friends and allies. That friendship, combined with the hard-Left's hatred for America and capitalism made Islamists and Leftists a coalition against the Conservatives. This grouping is now in the leadership of the Labour party.

Most ordinary British Muslims live their lives away from this activism of anger and opposition. Sajid Javid was right to say that the MCB does not represent Britain's Muslims, but they pretend to be Antonio Gramsci's "organised minority controlling a disorganised majority".

We forget at our peril that the MCB's long-term leader Sir Iqbal Sacranie (yes, knighted) led campaigns against freedom of expression, saying that "death" would be "too easy" for Salman Rushdie. This is the same MCB that refused to attend Holocaust Memorial Day for years, and which, after the July 7 terrorist attacks, blamed British foreign policy for the deaths of innocents in London. A poll by Policy Exchange found that only 2 per cent of UK Muslims saw themselves as represented by the MCB.

Rather than celebrate Britain's diversity, or cherish the individual freedoms that this great country provides to all its citizens, we have a Labour leadership that regards us as monolithic blocs of votes. True to its collectivism, it now sees Muslims, gay people, "the workers" simply as groups to mobilise. But Muslims are not a monolith. If they were, then George Galloway, who has called Corbyn his "friend", would have won in Tower Hamlets and Bradford.

Margaret Thatcher broke the back of socialists seeing "Muslim" as a bloc by putting people like my family on the property ladder. Aspiration is what we want, not handouts and humiliation. The Conservatives must reconnect with all of Britain's people and remove the racism of low expectations and collectivism that grips Labour under Corbyn.

*Ed Husain is author of The House of Islam: A Global History (Bloomsbury) and a senior fellow at Civitas*





## The House of Lords is leaping to the defence of UK democracy

Vince Cable, *The Financial Times*, May 11, 2018

The Brexit referendum set up an unprecedented — and thoroughly confused — collision between parliamentary and plebiscitary democracy in the UK. And its latest manifestation, the stand-off between the government and the House of Lords, has propelled our constitutional peculiarities into the spotlight.

“It is undemocratic and totally unacceptable that a bunch of unelected peers should be flouting the will of the people expressed through the Brexit referendum,” so Disgusted from Kent told me in the course of a radio phone-in.

As an elected member of the other House I should be sympathetic. After being ejected from the Commons in 2015, I decided to fight my way back in rather than gracefully retire to the Lords. I have in the past voted to abolish the upper chamber entirely, in the good company of Dennis Skinner and Jeremy Corbyn — indeed, I rather liked the *Daily Mail* headline this week: “It’s time to pull the plug on the House of Lords.”

10 I am still sufficiently radical to want to light a bonfire under our antiquated constitutional arrangements — not least the weird, unaccountable hybrid of appointed, hereditary and clerical peers. And I welcome converts to the cause. But we are in a fix.

Parliament legislated for an advisory referendum, but the government has chosen to treat it as binding. It has also ceded a “meaningful vote” on the outcome of Brexit negotiations. This could, in theory, undo the referendum. Some parliamentarians regard the economic structures of the EU — the single market and the customs union — as inherent to EU membership; others 15 regard them as discretionary. Individual MPs divide between those who see it as their duty to honour, variously, the popular vote across the country, the popular vote in their own constituencies, loyalty to their party and/or its leadership, or their personal views. The outcome is unpredictable and that uncertainty is feeding into negotiations for which the government is both horribly unprepared and internally divided.

The House of Lords adds another dimension to the debate and division. In most democratic countries the second chamber 20 enjoys the legitimacy of direct or indirect election. The House of Lords does not. It exists solely by virtue of the inability of MPs to agree on an alternative. Indeed, there are some delicious ironies in the fact that those who now parade as the sans-culottes of the Brexit revolution were, only a few years ago, the champions of aristocratic reaction. When the coalition government sought to make the Lords predominantly elected, one of the most eloquent defenders of the status quo was Jacob Rees-Mogg. He, with Brexiters John Redwood, David Davis, Bill Cash and dozens of other Tory MPs rebelled against more democracy. They 25 are now hoist with their own petards.

[...] With the minds of their lordships uncluttered by concerns about re-election (or, in Labour’s case, deselection), they have been able to dwell on the quaint notion of the national interest. They have been able to deconstruct the idea of the “will of the people”, recognising that the Leave vote represented the opinion of a narrow majority of voters and a minority of the electorate. The simple binary choice obscured an array of alternative relationships with the EU.

30 As a consequence, Brexit legislation, starting with the EU withdrawal bill, has been subject to far more forensic, well-informed and rigorous scrutiny in the Lords than the Commons. The process of critical scrutiny has led to the government being defeated 14 times. Many of these votes reasserted constitutional principles that were being compromised. “Taking back control” means asserting parliamentary authority, not an overweening executive. Some amendments are, however, substantive. Most significantly, the amendment this week for continued participation in the European Economic Area saw 17 Conservative rebels 35 and 83 Labour peers defy Mr Corbyn’s orders to abstain.

The government has a nuclear option: to create a vast number of new Conservative peers to swamp any opposition, thereby making the biggest chamber in the world, ahead of the Chinese National People’s Congress. But it has so far retained a sufficient sense of the ridiculous not to detonate.

When this legislation comes back to the Commons there will be an opportunity for considered reflection, provided by the 40 Lords, and ministers would be wise to make use of it. It may instead seek to steamroller its legislation through, hoping it can minimise Conservative rebellion and rely on Mr Corbyn’s continued Brexit sympathies. Legislation then goes back to the Lords where, according to convention, there will be token resistance leading to acquiescence: so called ping pong. Or so Downing Street hopes.

Such acquiescence would come at a heavy price: greater resistance in both the Commons and Lords to future Brexit bills (there 45 are seven more on the way) and the risk of comprehensive rejection of the whole package when it faces a vote in the autumn. The triumph of plebiscitary over parliamentary democracy is very far from guaranteed. We shall doubtless hear more from Disgusted of Kent.

*The writer is leader of the Liberal Democrats.*

*Slate*

## Lawyers Aren't Wizards

Dahlia Lithwick, July 21, 2017

1 The pattern is so familiar that it almost starts to feel rational. Nearly every day, for the six-month slog that has been the Donald Trump presidency, it's gone like this: The president or someone in his administration does something previously unthinkable, then legal pundits take to Twitter and the airwaves to ponder whether it was legal or constitutional or criminally prosecutable.

5 Can the president truly continue to enrich himself and his family by leveraging his office to benefit from foreigners? Can the president really fire the FBI director and admit he was thinking about the Russia probe while doing it? Can the president leak classified information to the Russians in the Oval Office? Can the president's son take a meeting with Russians who are promising dirt on Hillary Clinton? Can he do that with multiple campaign advisers in the room? Can the president's son-in-law attend such a meeting and still retain his security clearance?

10 Today, we have a new set of questions to toss on the pile: Can the president really pardon himself and all his friends, family, neighbors, and pets, plus fire Robert Mueller, plus threaten his attorney general? More often than not, the answer, as it has been since the Merrick Garland blockade in the Senate, is: "norms, not laws." While there may or may not be specific constitutional or statutory bulwarks that prohibit what the president does every day, each time we take to the rabbit holes and alleyways to chase them down, the formal answer is either a lawyerly "it depends" or an even more lawyerly "it depends what the courts will say."

15 Please don't get me wrong. I continue to believe the law and lawyers will eventually save us all, or at least die trying. But the real answer to the myriad legal and constitutional questions Trump raises with each exhale is, of course, that the legalities don't matter because he doesn't care, and he either fires, berates, or isolates the lawyers around him who do care. This is asymmetrical warfare insofar as the people who continue to think in terms of the rule of law mistakenly believe that there might be legal solutions.

20 The Framers erected an edifice of law intended to constrain power, and the president believes that framework is made of spun sugar and cobwebs. The United States is a nation built upon, as John Adams told us, "a government of laws and not of men." The Trump administration adheres to no law, and whatever men or women keep faith with the law rather than him are discredited as biased against the president. This only goes one way: Norms are for losers, and laws are for poor people. And now Trump has his dream team of mob lawyers and mad dogs hard at work proving that the only lawyer *without* a disabling conflict of interest is the one pledging fealty to him.

25 The rule of law is precisely as robust as our willingness to fight for it. Don't expect congressional Republicans to squawk. They will fight for the rule of law and the norms of good governance at precisely the moment when their jobs are on the line. The promise of a raft of newly minted blogger-judges and tax cuts will always win out over fealty to the Constitution. This is a problem that requires our focused long-term attention to money in politics, partisan gerrymandering, and voter suppression. And this is, in the end, a problem only because Americans—myself included—are prey to a form of magical thinking about law and the Constitution. The Framers believed the law would fix it, and that makes it easy to hope that the lawyers will fix it. The lawyers became the wizards, and the Constitution became a book of spells, and the best thing a citizen could hope to do is make a donation to a group of lawyers who could perform the right incantations, fondle the correct talisman, and save democracy.

30 There is an inspiring, entrenched public certainty that "the law" can fix everything. It's a certainty that lets us hang back and hope for the lawyers and their laptops to swarm the airports and save the day. The Framers were largely lawyers, and I think they may have contemplated an army of citizen-lawyers—or at least citizens sufficiently vigilant about constitutional norms and the threats of genuine authoritarianism—who would take to the streets themselves rather than hoping that the American Civil Liberties Union and Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington and the Electronic Privacy Information Center could take care of it. (Although let the record reflect that these groups and the many others like them are flat-out heroes and even wizards in their own right.) But the law is slow and reactive, and it is methodical and conservative by design. It depends on a vast machinery of lawyers and judges acting soberly and carefully, which is why it's so very maddening, and also heartening, in perilous times. The rule of law is precisely as robust as our willingness to fight for it. And to fight for it is not quite the same thing as to ask, "Isn't there a law?" While a nation founded on laws and not men is a noble aspiration, I am not certain that what the Framers anticipated was a constitutional regime predicated on the Harry Potter hope that all the lawyers would fix all the stuff while everyone else crossed their fingers and prayed. [...]

*The New York Times*

## Facebook is Ignoring Anti-Abortion Fake News

Rossalyn Warren, November 10, 2017

1 Last year, just weeks before the election, an article from a site called Mad World News began circulating  
around Facebook. The headline read "Before Applauding Hillary's Abortion Remarks, Know the One Fact She  
Ignored." In the article, the writer says she wants to expose Hillary Clinton's lies about late-term abortions. She argues  
5 that a baby never needs to be aborted to save a mother's life but doesn't cite any sources or studies, and presents  
anecdotes and opinion as fact. Midway through the story, she shares an illustration of what she calls a "Partial-Birth  
Procedure" — a procedure banned in the United States. In it, she describes how a doctor "jams scissors into the baby's  
skull" and how "the child's brains are sucked out." "Don't let these lies kill another child in such a horrific manner," she  
says, concluding the piece. The article was engaged with at least 1.1 million times, making it the most-shared article  
about abortion on Facebook last year, according to BuzzSumo, a company that tracks social sharing.

2 Last week, the company's general counsel appeared before Congress alongside his counterparts from Twitter  
and Google to testify on the company's role in distributing misinformation ahead of the 2016 presidential election.  
Facebook says it's taking "fake news" seriously. It has a label for "disputed" stories, brought in independent fact-  
checking partners and allows users to report false articles. It's not clear whether these attempts to tackle misinformation  
5 will work; critics have called them ineffective and slow. But there's another problem, too. So far, Facebook and the  
public have focused almost solely on politics and Russian interference in the United States election. What they haven't  
addressed is the vast amount of misinformation and unevicenced stories about reproductive rights, science and health.

Evidence-based, credible articles about abortion from reputable news outlets like *The New York Times* and  
*The Washington Post* didn't make it to the top of the list of "most shared" articles on Facebook last year, according to  
BuzzSumo. But articles from the site LifeNews.com did. LifeNews, which has just under one million followers on  
0 Facebook, is one of several large anti-abortion sites that can command hundreds of thousands of views on a single post.  
These sites produce vast amounts of misinformation; the Facebook page for the organization Live Action, for instance,  
has two million Facebook followers and posts videos claiming there's a correlation between abortion and breast cancer.  
And their stories often generate more engagement than the content produced by mainstream news organizations, said  
Sharon Kann, the program director for abortion rights and reproductive health at Media Matters, a watchdog group.  
15 People on Facebook engage with anti-abortion content more than abortion-rights content at a "disproportionate rate,"  
she said, which, as a result of the company's algorithms, means more people see it.

Facebook's current initiatives to crack down on fake news can, theoretically, be applicable to misinformation  
on other issues. However, there are several human and technical barriers that prevent misinformation about reproductive  
rights from being identified, checked and removed at the same — already slow — rate as other misleading stories.

20 First, the question of what's considered a "fake news" site is not always black and white. Facebook says it has  
been tackling the sources of fake news by eliminating the ability to "spoof" domains and by deleting Facebook pages  
linked to spam activity. For example, this year Facebook identified and deleted more than 30 pages owned by  
Macedonian publishers, who used them to push out fake stories about United States politics, after alarms had been  
sounded about sites in the country spreading misinformation about the 2016 campaign. (Facebook says some of the sites  
25 may have been taken down for other terms-of-service violations.) But anti-abortion sites are different. They do not  
mimic real publications, and they publish pieces on real events alongside factually incorrect or thinly sourced stories,  
which helps blur the line between what's considered a news blog and "fake news."

Second, Facebook says one of its key aims in tackling fake news is to remove the profit incentive, because it  
says "most false news is financially motivated." It says it hopes to do that by making it more difficult for the people  
30 behind the fake news sites to buy ads on its platform and by detecting and deleting spam accounts, which it says are a  
major force behind the spread of misinformation. However, the incentive for the people who write content for anti-  
abortion news sites and Facebook pages is ideological, not financial. Anti-abortion, anti-science content isn't being  
written by spammers hoping to make money, but by ordinary people who are driven by religious or political beliefs.  
Their aim isn't to profit from ads. It's to convince readers of their viewpoint: that abortion is morally wrong, that autism  
35 is caused by vaccines or that climate change isn't real.

Finally, public pressure influences where Facebook directs its attention. Facebook may be focused on fake  
news and the United States election now, but its efforts to prevent the spread of misinformation in the buildup to the  
election were practically nonexistent. It took action only after intense scrutiny. Now Facebook and its fact-checking  
partners say its focus is "on the worst of the worst, on the clear hoaxes spread by spammers for their own gain." Simply  
40 put, without increased pressure, Facebook's technical efforts and its human efforts, like fact-checkers' trawling through  
flagged content, make it likely that the company, in the months to come, will be seeking out only the "obvious" flags of  
fake news stories and not the misinformation that is fueled by real people with no financial incentive. That is why those  
of us who are concerned by the misinformation around reproductive rights need to make ourselves heard. [...]

*The New York Post*

## **We're still better off with Trump**

Michael Goodwin, January 6, 2018

1 Now that Steve Bannon has carried his political jihad to its logical conclusion, martyrdom never looked so  
meaningless. A bright and talented man has sacrificed himself over nothing more significant than anger and vanity.  
Consider a recent report that Bannon was mulling the idea of running for president in 2020. Presumably that was part  
of his plan to elect a batch of Roy Moores, depose Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and reshape Congress to match  
5 his own definition of economic nationalism. As such, Bannon's decision to go out in a blaze of personal attacks on the  
president and everybody else in the White House does Donald Trump and the GOP a giant favor. Bannon may live to  
fight another day, but, thankfully, Bannonism is dead.

10 But what of Trumpism? Is "Fire and Fury," the Michael Wolff book where Bannon leaks and vents, the  
beginning of the end of Trump's presidency? Maybe — but probably not. After all, every previous media-hair-on-fire  
moment has come to a forgettable dead end. This time could be different, but more likely, the latest explosion of  
gossip and sniping marks just another day on the razor's edge. This is the essential nature of the Trump presidency,  
where catastrophe is always a heartbeat away. It will be like that as long as he's in the Oval Office. This is who  
15 Trump is, and a year into his presidency, there is no reason to believe he will change. A penchant for creating  
melodrama seems essential to his being. One result is that reports of his imminent demise have been near-constant  
ever since he came down the Trump Tower escalator in June 2015. Those predictions have been nonstop — and  
always wrong. Of course, this time could be different. Or maybe the next time will. Or maybe not.

20 Meanwhile, his is turning out to be an enormously consequential presidency. So much so that, despite my  
own frustration over his missteps, there has never been a day when I wished Hillary Clinton were president. Not one.  
Indeed, as Trump's accomplishments accumulate, the mere thought of Clinton in the White House, doubling down on  
Barack Obama's failed policies, washes away any doubts that America made the right choice. This was truly a change  
election — and the changes Trump is bringing are far-reaching and necessary.

25 The economic boom is the most obvious difference voters got by electing him. The tax law he campaigned  
on, fought for and signed promises to add new dimensions to the boom and should fuel growth and new opportunities  
for millions of people. Generations of families will lead better lives as a result, while a Clinton presidency would have  
been an orgy of regulations aimed at strangling capitalism's last animal spirits. How many thousands of points lower  
would the Dow be?

30 But the Trump effect is not limited to the economy. Think of the difference between Neil Gorsuch and a  
Supreme Court justice Clinton would have picked; now multiply that difference throughout the judicial food chain.  
Think of Trump's policy toward Israel. Would Clinton dare to right historic wrongs and declare Jerusalem the capital  
of the Jewish state? Never. Like Obama, she would have given the Palestinians a heckler's veto — and paid them  
millions more for their obstinance. And what of North Korea? While Trump's taunting of Rocket Man makes me  
uneasy, the big difference is that he refuses to accept a nuclear North Korea. Clinton, on the other hand, would have  
35 adopted the Obama policy of "containment," which is a diplomatic fig leaf for appeasing a madman with nukes. Take  
Iran. Clinton shared Obama's fantasy that there are "moderates" among the mullahs eager to play nice, so she backed  
the nuclear deal that is helping to finance Iranian war and aggression in the Mideast. Similarly, Clinton probably  
would repeat Obama's 2009 mistake and remain silent during the current demonstrations against the regime, while  
Trump is making it clear America stands with the demonstrators.

40 If Clinton had been elected, we would not know that top FBI leaders conspired against Trump to help her.  
Her financing of the Russian dossier would still be a secret, and there would be no knowledge that the FBI used her  
dirtiest trick to spy on Trump associates. Russian collusion would have been accepted as fact without a shred of  
evidence. Even with Trump in the White House and Republicans controlling Congress, getting the truth about the  
deep state's political meddling is proving difficult. But with Clinton in the White House, there would be no search and  
the truth of what looks like an unprecedented scandal would remain hidden forever. Likewise, Clinton as president  
would face no further scrutiny over the classified email mess despite the rigged FBI probe that cleared her. And the  
45 revived examination of her pay-to-play arrangements as secretary of state would never have been considered.

There is another potential consequence of the election, too. With Bill and Hillary in the White House,  
would the *New York Times* have outed Harvey Weinstein as the sexual monster he seems to be? I think not, for that  
would have embarrassed the Clintons because of their own sketchy past on the subject. In that case, the #MeToo  
movement would not exist and the predators, most of them media and Hollywood liberals, would still be in power.

50 These are just some of the many reasons why a Trump presidency, chaos and all, continues to be the course  
correction America needed. Here's hoping, then, that the latest predictions of his demise, like all those that came  
before, turn out to be premature.

*The New Republic*

## Donald Trump is Killing Us

Ryu Spaeth, August 14, 2017

1 As the crisis this weekend in Charlottesville, Virginia, reached its depressing nadir, a grim joke (is there any  
other kind anymore?) circulated through social media that went something like this: We are going to miss those  
5 days when all we had to worry about was a nuclear war with North Korea. The days in question, of course, came  
earlier that very week, when President Donald Trump ratcheted up tensions with Kim Jong-Un's regime by  
declaring that he would unleash "fire and fury" on the country if it continued to threaten the United States. On  
Friday, mere hours before hundreds of neo-Nazis and white supremacists marched on Charlottesville to protest the  
removal of a statue of Confederate general Robert E. Lee, Trump tweeted that a military option for North Korea  
was "locked and loaded." For no apparent reason at all, he then threatened Venezuela with possible military  
intervention.

10 What followed was a weekend of miserable hate theater: a sea of angry white faces, suffused with  
torchlight; the swastikas and Confederate flags on parade through the streets of an American city; the anti-Nazi  
counter-protests, which were disrupted when a car slammed into the crowd, scattering demonstrators like so many  
bowling pins and killing one woman; and the president of the United States refusing to condemn all this, saying  
15 "many sides" were responsible for what had happened in Charlottesville. It was a moment that will live in infamy,  
a low point for a presidency that seems to be composed of nothing but low points. And North Korea faded into  
what seemed like the distant past, another pile of wreckage in the great ruin that this president has made.

20 But what these crises also have in common is the psychological effect they have on the rest of us, joining a  
long chain of crises to form a single ur-crisis that hangs over our heads like a sword and from which there is no  
guarantee of reprieve. America has long been a country of hate and prejudice, of war and belligerence, but the last  
week was the latest evidence that there is something new and disorienting and dangerous afoot. It feels as if the  
whole world is coming off its hinges, and the vast majority of us can do nothing but watch it happen. [...]

25 I am hardly alone in feeling this way. On one level, there is a widespread feeling of paralysis in the face of a  
rolling catastrophe that is impossible turn away from. But on another, there is also a creeping sense of  
meaninglessness, a suspicion that so many of the things we used to cherish—reading a novel, going to work—are  
not quite as important as we once thought, especially when compared to the national disaster that encompasses our  
lives and threatens to upend them.

30 As Morgan Jerkins recently reported for the *New Republic*, publishers are having a difficult time selling  
books that aren't somehow associated with Donald Trump. There just isn't interest. People have told me that they  
worry that their jobs are trivial, even when those jobs are the fruition of lifelong dreams. And though I work at a  
political magazine and engage in these issues every day, I confess that I felt a similar pang of pointlessness when I  
saw a photo of a young black man coolly torching a Confederate flag with what appeared to be an aerosol can. In a  
universe that has been tipped on its head, it was a rare act with meaning.

35 Charlottesville and Donald Trump's response to it were uniquely upsetting. When there are literal Nazis and  
Klansmen on the streets and the president refuses to condemn them by name, it both takes us to new heights of  
despair and provokes a desire for a more visceral response—to spit in the face of evil. But Charlottesville was  
merely one incident, and there have been countless more that have prompted similar feelings of helplessness, from  
the splitting up of immigrant families to the near-death of Obamacare.

40 There is so much selfishness and ignorance and hatred in this country, and they have found their  
concentrated embodiment in Trump, who bludgeons us with the worst aspects of humanity every single day. This is  
self-evidently traumatic for the body politic, harming our capacity for empathy and reason and decency. And yet it  
is difficult to express just how awful it is: how it makes us worry for our children in existential terms, how it makes  
our lives a little more sordid every day, how it slowly bleeds our world of joy and purpose.

45 The traditional response to bad presidents is to resist, to organize, to prepare for the next election—to have  
faith, even if everything else fails, in democracy. But democracy already failed us once, handing the presidency to  
a man who lost the popular vote by a resounding margin. It has been subverted by gerrymandering, and is being  
weakened by those working to keep minorities and the poor from the polls. It was compromised by the intervention  
of a foreign government, and the president is reluctant to even acknowledge that fact, let alone make sure it doesn't  
happen again. And even if Trump were to be swept from office in 2020, this country will not magically return to  
the pre-Trump status quo. The damage he has already inflicted, and that he will undoubtedly continue to inflict  
50 over, God help us, three more years, will take a long time to undo, if it can ever be undone. [...]



## The collapse of Carillion is not an argument to end outsourcing

Bronwen Maddox January 19, 2018, *The Economist*

The trickiest talk I've ever had to give was to a gathering of one of Britain's big contracting groups. An enterprising chief executive had gathered together his 300 top managers in one of those pillared country mansions that in Jane Austen would have been the residence of a desirable male suitor, but is now a corporate conference centre. His aim, he explained, was to discuss big themes in a way that brought his staff together. Good luck, I thought; all they had in common was the fact that their ultimate employer did a lot of work for the UK government. But they were a talkative crowd and politics and global trends took us a long way towards his goal. In the coffee break, though, they broke again into their separate groups.

The collapse of Carillion — taken into liquidation with cash of £29m while owing its banks £1.3bn — has shone a light on a little-understood sector that provides many people's most direct contact with government. Hospital catering, GPs' out-of-hours services, air traffic control, parking regulation, road building, nuclear weapons — the array amounted to about £100bn or 15 per cent of public spending by 2014-5. Yet its biggest providers — Serco, Interserve, Capita, G4S, Amey, Carillion and more — are hardly household names.

The past week has pointed not just to serious misjudgments by Carillion's management. It has also revealed confusions about when it makes sense for government to subcontract work. But for all the problems, it would be a loss if politicians jettisoned the three-decade project of contracting, as Labour says it would very likely do in power. That would deprive taxpayers of the benefits when outsourcing does work, in the haste to get rid of the cases when it emphatically doesn't. The notion of outsourcing government work on a large scale first arose in the Thatcher era and continued under John Major. But it really flourished under Tony Blair, driven by Gordon Brown as chancellor. It sprang from the belief that the private sector was more efficient, and also from the desire to transfer risk to the private sector. Ministers reckoned that these benefits would be greater than the profit margin the firms would charge. The private finance initiative had a specific aim on top: to build schools, hospitals and infrastructure without adding debt to the government's balance sheet.

The record shows, for a start, that the sector needs close scrutiny. There have been regular scandals of incompetence or poor value for money. In 2013, for example, Serco agreed to hand back £68.5m to the taxpayer after overcharging on its contract for electronic monitoring of offenders. Prisoners escaping from G4S supervision have become the stuff of jokes. This week, the National Audit Office, the government spending watchdog, said that taxpayers were spending billions of pounds extra on hospitals and schools funded by PFI.

But experience also shows that contracting tends to work well if three conditions are met: there is a market in the service; the difference between good and bad performance can be measured; and the service isn't integral to the purpose and reputation of government.

Catering fulfils all of those. Probation services fulfil none, and have become a case study of what not to do. Hospital cleaning sounded like a perfect candidate, but cleanliness turned out to be so integral to the performance of hospitals that some have concluded that outsourcing was a mistake.

The Carillion episode points first to management failures. The board failed to manage liabilities after acquisitions and kept paying dividends as cash flow evaporated. There are also questions about government supervision. But it also sheds light on the other side of the story — that the government has got extremely good at driving down margins, to the benefit of the taxpayer. Too good, many in the sector now say.

[...]. What now? Government should conduct a proper review of the capitalisation of the industry and of the margins it offers. This should be part of a wider review about what can successfully be outsourced and what should be kept in state hands. That review will expose in turn one weakness of the debate — that the quality of available data on the contracts is abysmal. Government and companies could both remedy this.

The collapse of Carillion should prompt a review of outsourcing, but not its rejection. We must not confuse the failure of a mismanaged company with the failure of the whole idea. It would be a black comedy, after all, if Labour got into power and demanded to take the contracts back — at just the point when companies concluded that the taxpayer was getting such a good deal they'd be delighted to oblige.

*The New York Times*

## **America's New Religion: Fox Evangelicalism**

Amy Sullivan, December 15, 2017

To hear the Christian right tell it, President Trump should be a candidate for sainthood — that is, if evangelicals believed in saints. “Never in my lifetime have we had a Potus willing to take such a strong outspoken stand for the Christian faith like Donald Trump,” tweeted Franklin Graham, the son of the evangelist Billy Graham. The Dallas pastor Robert Jeffress sees a divine hand at work: “God intervened in our election and put Donald Trump in the Oval Office for a great purpose.” Testimonials like this confound critics who label conservative evangelical figures like Mr. Graham and Mr. Jeffress hypocrites for embracing a man who is pretty much the human embodiment of the question “What would Jesus not do?”

But what those critics don't recognize is that the nationalistic, race-baiting, fear-mongering form of politics enthusiastically practiced by Mr. Trump and Roy Moore in Alabama is central to a new strain of American evangelicalism. This emerging religious worldview — let's call it “Fox evangelicalism” — is preached from the pulpits of conservative media outlets like Fox News. It imbues secular practices like shopping for gifts with religious significance and declares sacred something as worldly and profane as gun culture.

Journalists and scholars have spent decades examining the influence of conservative religion on American politics, but we largely missed the impact conservative politics was having on religion itself. As a progressive evangelical and journalist covering religion, I'm as guilty as any of not noticing what was happening. We kept asking how white conservative evangelicals could support Mr. Trump, who luxuriates in divisive rhetoric and manages only the barest veneer of religiosity. But that was never the issue. Fox evangelicals don't back Mr. Trump despite their beliefs, but because of them.

Consider the so-called War on Christmas, which the president has made a pet crusade. Mr. Trump has been sharing Christmas greetings since October, well before decorations had even shown up in most stores, when the Values Voter Summit crowd gave him a standing ovation for declaring, “We're saying ‘Merry Christmas’ again!” He has spent November and December taking victory laps, telling crowds at political rallies in Utah and Florida that “Christmas is back, better and bigger than ever before.” Every one of Mr. Trump's predecessors declared “Merry Christmas,” too — including Barack Obama, whose message at last year's Christmas tree-lighting ceremony was virtually indistinguishable from Mr. Trump's. What matters to Fox evangelicals, though, is not that Mr. Trump observes Christmas but that he casts himself as the defender of the Christian holiday. From the beginning, the War on Christmas was a homegrown Fox News cause, introduced by the so-named 2005 book by John Gibson, a former Fox News host, and promoted annually by Bill O'Reilly. But it was never really a religious argument. Mr. O'Reilly and company weren't occupied with defending belief in the Virgin Birth or worrying that the celebration of Christ's birth had become too commercialized.

[...] These days, even though Mr. O'Reilly declared “victory” last year in the War on Christmas, Fox News still gives the supposed controversy wall-to-wall coverage and has folded it into the network's us-versus-them, nationalist programming. The regular Fox News viewer, whether or not he is a churchgoer, takes in a steady stream of messages that conflate being white and conservative and evangelical with being American. The power of that message may explain the astonishing findings of a survey released this month by LifeWay Research, a Christian organization based in Nashville. LifeWay's researchers developed questions meant to get at both the way Americans self-identify religiously and their theological beliefs. What they discovered was that while one-quarter of Americans consider themselves to be “evangelical,” less than half of that group actually holds traditional evangelical beliefs. For others, “evangelical” effectively functions as a cultural label, unmoored from theological meaning.

But if the conservative media has created a category of Fox evangelical converts, it has also influenced the way a whole generation of churchgoing evangelicals thinks about God and faith. On no issue is this clearer than guns. In fall 2015, I visited Trinity Bible College, an Assemblies of God-affiliated school in North Dakota, to join the conservative evangelical students there for a screening of “The Armor of Light,” a documentary by the filmmaker Abigail Disney. The film followed the pastor and abortion opponent Rob Schenck on his quest to convince fellow evangelicals — the religious demographic most opposed to gun restrictions — that pro-life values are incompatible with an embrace of unrestricted gun access. I found Mr. Schenck compelling, and my editor had sent me to see if his target audience bought the arguments. It did not.

As two dozen of us gathered for a post-screening discussion, I was both astonished and troubled, as a fellow evangelical, by the visceral sense of fear that gripped these young adults. As a child in the Baptist church, I had been taught to be vigilant about existential threats to my faith. But these students in a town with a population of some 1,200 saw the idea of a home invasion or an Islamic State attack that would require them to take a human life in order to save others as a certainty they would face, not a hypothetical. [...]

## British democracy is failing. Let's finish the suffragettes' job

Phil McDuff, *The Guardian*, Tue 6 Feb 2018

In 1997, when the economist Amartya Sen was asked what he thought the most important development of the 20th century had been, he chose the establishment of democracy as a "universal value".

To understand what he meant by this, consider the extraordinary way that our understanding of democracy has changed in a brief century in this country. When the Representation of the People Act was passed – giving some women the vote in the UK – it was not uncommon to talk in terms of whether groups, or even whole countries, were "ready for democracy". In just a century we have moved from viewing democratic norms and systems not as a goal to which societies should aspire, but the means by which they achieve their aspirations.

Democracy can't simply be reduced to holding elections and calling it done. A society is more or less democratic depending on many interacting systems and institutions. Whom we vote for, how they are chosen, how our votes are counted, how we can talk and argue about our choices, all these things form part of the democratic system that can either give people control over their lives and a voice in their society, or take that control and voice away.

Despite the achievements of the women who won the right to vote in 1918, there are many who would argue that our electoral system still silences more voices than it amplifies. Among those are the campaign group Make Votes Matter, the cross-party campaign for proportional representation in the House of Commons. They have picked the centenary of the Representation Act for an event they call Hungry for Democracy, where campaigners will be giving up food for 24 hours in an echo of the strategy of hunger striking used by the Suffragettes, to draw attention to the disproportionality of the current system.

The event will also be marked with vigils in London and Sheffield. Natalie Bennett, the former leader of the Green party, will be taking part in the Hungry for Democracy North vigil at Sheffield Town Hall – just around the corner from where the first women's suffrage organisation in the UK was formed in 1851. She points out that in the last election "68% of votes didn't count", thanks to a system that rewards winners with 100% of the power, regardless of how marginal their electoral majority is.

Stephen Kinnock MP, who will be taking part in the vigil in Parliament Square, told me he thinks it's "absurd" that the number of MPs doesn't match up with the number of votes a party gets. In his view, the first-past-the-post (FPTP) system heavily favours a thin sliver of the electorate who live in 100 or so swing constituencies at the expense of everyone else. He believes strongly that "there should be no such thing as a safe seat," and that all MPs should have to "fight for every vote".

He told me that he thinks one of the reasons we have such a "deeply imbalanced economic reality" is because the electoral system incentivises governments to behave in this way to secure re-election. This is in line with Sen, who famously argued that while democratic values such as inclusion and representation are objective goods regardless of outcome, they also work to achieve good outcomes, and mitigate against bad ones.

[...] We also should not overlook the private sector. For most people the authority with the most direct control over their lives is not the government but their employer. Yet we consider it entirely justifiable for a great leader to run major firms entirely as command economies. There is evidence that greater workplace democracy increases both productivity and employee well-being, as well as the copious evidence from firms such as RBS, Carillion and Enron that dictatorial central control is just as open to abuse and corruption when you're running a business as it is when you're running a state.

Yet there is no challenge to the cult of the CEO, no matter how many of them are found to be committing acts of vandalism against their own companies and leaving them as worthless husks that government has to step in to salvage. The push for outsourcing in government can be seen in this respect as an attempt to minimise the level of control that individual workers have over their workplaces, to reduce every employee down to a function rather than a person.

A friend of mine once described the UK as "the world leader in legacy problems". We were often either the first or among the first to adopt systems, and as a result can find ourselves trying to implement 21st-century ways of working with institutions built for the 17th century. We hamstring ourselves by resting too much on our history, holding too tightly to things because they're ours rather than because they're good. Change for change's sake is not the answer, but we need to be testing and examining our democracy. What are the outcomes that we want to see? Do our current democratic institutions achieve or hinder those outcomes? And if they do not do what we want, how can we change them so they do?

Kinnock says that campaigners for women's suffrage were "looking for a system that gave a voice to everyone", and that 100 years later we're still not there. It's time to consider whether the best way to honour their legacy is not simply to celebrate their achievements a century ago but to push forward with our own reforms and bring our democratic systems into the 21st century.



### Britain now has a four-party system

BAHEHOT | *The Economist*, Sep 30th 2017

THE election in June saw the return of two-party politics. Labour and the Conservatives increased their share of the vote to 82%, from 65% in 2005. Yet look a little more closely at the two great parties that are currently holding their annual conferences—Labour in Brighton this week and the Conservatives in Manchester next—and you see a more complicated picture. Under Jeremy Corbyn, Labour is divided into two sub-parties: a moderate Social Democratic Party and a socialist Corbynite Party. The Conservatives are an uneasy coalition of Whigs and Tories. The Corbynite Party was in charge in Brighton. Most of the trade unionists and activists who filled the hall were Corbynites, and Momentum, the molten core of Corbynism, helped to put on a parallel conference, "The World Transformed". Tom Watson, officially Labour's deputy leader and unofficially one of the commanders of the anti-Corbyn resistance movement, even treated the conference to a rendition of "Oh, Jeremy Corbyn", the favourite chant of the faithful, in an abject admission of defeat. But the Social Democrats were nevertheless in evidence. Blairite MPs walked the seafront with rictus smiles. Labour First, a moderate pressure group, complained loudly that the left had stitched up the conference by denying speaking roles to centrists, most notably Sadiq Khan, the mayor of London (the organisers eventually relented). One moderate complained that he felt like a stranger in his own party. The sort of people who used to stand outside the hall handing out leaflets were now inside.

The Corbynites and Social Democrats differ fundamentally on the meaning of the election, in which Labour dramatically increased its vote-share but fell 64 seats short of a majority. Len McCluskey, the leader of the pro-Corbyn Unite union, gave vent to the Corbynite interpretation when he told the conference that he was tired of "whingers and whiners" who point out that Labour didn't win. "I say we did win. We won the hearts and minds of millions of people, especially the young," he insisted. Mr Corbyn told a fringe meeting that Labour would have won outright if the campaign had lasted another week. On this analysis, the task now is to work harder at selling Corbynism to the people.

The Social Democrats, meanwhile, believe that Labour lost a winnable election by backing a candidate and a set of policies that stand far outside the mainstream. The psephological evidence points in both directions. Mr Corbyn pulled off a remarkable feat by getting 40% of the vote. But his party is running neck-and-neck with the Conservatives in the polls, despite the fact that the government is doing its best to tear itself apart. A more centrist politician could be leading by double figures.

The Conservatives' Manchester conference will be no less confusing. It will be shared by the Whigs, a cosmopolitan party that wants Britain to remain as close as possible to Europe, and the Tories, a nationalist party that worries about immigration and cultural change. The Whigs are mostly young and urban—David Cameron's Notting Hill set writ large—while the Tories are older and rural. The Whigs think the Conservative Party must move with the times in order to survive, whereas the Tories think that moving with the times will mean surrendering everything they hold dear. Like the Corbynites, the Tories have numbers on their side. The Conservative Party enjoys impregnable majorities in places like Hampshire East, but has recently lost metropolitan beachheads such as Kensington and Battersea.

The Conservatives are just as divided over the meaning of the election as Labour. The Tories think that Theresa May's strategy of advancing into culturally conservative working-class areas in the north was a brilliant idea badly executed. The party came close to winning a slew of Brexit-voting seats such as Bishop Auckland in north-east England. The Whigs agree that it was badly executed but think it was a foolish idea in the first place. By embracing social conservatism and little-England nationalism, the party alienated metropolitan Britain without breaking the working class's tribal loyalty to Labour.

These divisions are not clear-cut. Some Conservative Brexiteers, such as Daniel Hannan, are radical Whig free-traders who liken the EU to the protectionist Corn Laws of the 1840s. Some of Labour's chief Social Democrats, such as Mr Khan, have made a show of bending the knee to Mr Corbyn. The party conferences underline the fact that political parties are as much social organisms as political ones: an excuse to get drunk, have a good time and hang out with friends.

Yet Brexit is testing party managers' skills to the limit. In government, the Conservatives cannot avoid making divisive decisions over Brexit. The party also contains a core of fanatics who have no intention of allowing the triumph of Brexit to be betrayed. Labour is also split. Mr Corbyn is cool on Europe partly because, as a socialist, he regards the EU as a constraint on policies such as nationalisation and partly because, as a party boss, he realises that many working-class Labour voters supported Brexit. By contrast, Labour's Social Democrats are passionately pro-EU.

In Britain tribal loyalties usually trump ideological divisions. But occasionally ideological divisions prove too wide to manage, particularly when allied with economic interests. [...]

*The New York Times*

## **Billionaires Desperately Need Our Help!**

Nicholas Kristof, November 15, 2017

It is so hard to be a billionaire these days!

A new yacht can cost \$300 million. And you wouldn't believe what a pastry chef earns — and if you hire just one, to work weekdays, how can you possibly survive on weekends? The investment income on, say, a \$4 billion fortune is a mere \$1 million a day, which makes it tough to scrounge by with today's rising prices. Why, some wealthy folks don't even have a home in the Caribbean and on vacation are stuck brooding in hotel suites: They're practically homeless! Fortunately, President Trump and the Republicans are coming along with some desperately needed tax relief for billionaires.

Thank God for this lifeline to struggling tycoons. And it's carefully crafted to focus the benefits on the truly deserving — the affluent who earn their tax breaks with savvy investments in politicians. For example, eliminating the estate tax would help the roughly 5,500 Americans who now owe this tax each year, one-fifth of 1 percent of all Americans who die annually. Ending the tax would help upstanding people like the Trumps who owe their financial success to brilliant life choices, such as picking the uterus in which they were conceived.

Now it's fair to complain that the tax plan over all doesn't give needy billionaires quite as much as they deserve. For example, the top 1 percent receive only a bit more than 25 percent of the total tax cuts in the Senate bill, according to the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. Really? Only 25 times their share of the population? After all those dreary \$5,000-a-plate dinners supporting politicians? If politicians had any guts, they'd just slash services for low-income families so as to finance tax breaks for billionaires. Oh, wait, that's exactly what's happening!

Trump understands, for example, that health insurance isn't all that important for the riffraff. So he and the Senate G.O.P. have again targeted Obamacare, this time by trying to repeal the insurance mandate. The Congressional Budget Office says this will result in 13 million fewer people having health insurance. But what's the big deal? The United States already has an infant mortality rate twice that of Austria and South Korea. American women are already five times as likely to die in pregnancy or childbirth as women in Britain. So who'll notice if things get a bit worse?

Perhaps that sounds harsh. But the blunt reality is that we risk soul-sucking dependency if we're always setting kids' broken arms. Maybe that's why congressional Republicans haven't bothered to renew funding for CHIP, the child health insurance program serving almost nine million American kids. Ditto for the maternal and home visiting programs that are the gold standard for breaking cycles of poverty and that also haven't been renewed. We mustn't coddle American toddlers. Hey, if American infants really want health care, they'll pick themselves up by their bootie straps and Uber over to an emergency room.

Congressional Republicans understand that we can't do everything for everybody. We have to make hard choices. Congress understands that kids are resilient and can look after themselves, so we must focus on the most urgent needs, such as those of hand-to-mouth billionaires. In fairness, Congress has historically understood this mission. The tax code subsidizes moguls with private jets while the carried interest tax break gives a huge tax discount to striving private equity zillionaires. Meanwhile, a \$13 billion annual subsidy for corporate meals and entertainment gives ditch diggers the satisfaction of buying Champagne for financiers.

Our political leaders are so understanding because we appear to have the wealthiest Congress we've ever had, with a majority of members now millionaires, so they understand the importance of cutting health insurance for the poor to show support for the *crème de la crème*.

Granted, the G.O.P. tax plan will add to the deficit, forcing additional borrowing. But if the tax cut passes, automatic "pay as you go" rules may helpfully cut \$25 billion from Medicare spending next year, thus saving money on elderly people who are practically dead anyway. If poor kids have to suffer, we may as well make poor seniors suffer as well. That's called a balanced policy. More broadly, you have to look at the reason for deficits. Yes, it's problematic to borrow to pay for, say, higher education or cancer screenings. But what's the problem with borrowing \$1.5 trillion to invest in urgent tax relief for billionaires?

Anyway, at some point down the road we'll find a way to pay back the debt by cutting a wasteful program for runny-nose kids who aren't smart enough to hire lobbyists. There must be some kids' program that still isn't on the chopping block.

The tax bill underscores a political truth: There's nothing wrong with redistribution when it's done right.

## Tories pay for forgetting Macmillan's courageous pragmatism

Martin Wolf, May 3, 2018, *The Financial Times*

Harold Macmillan is perhaps the most under-rated of the UK's postwar prime ministers. He also embodied a form of conservatism I have come to admire and whose disappearance, in the contemporary Conservative party, is so destructive. Indeed, today's dominant element is not conservatism, but reaction, a spirit Jacob Rees-Mogg exemplifies. What was the spirit of Macmillan's conservatism? Courageous pragmatism.

5 This is not how Macmillan seemed to me during his time as prime minister from 1957 to 1963. The late Peter Cook's brilliant take-off in *Beyond the Fringe* made him a laughing stock to many of my generation. By the end of his term in office, this upper-class Edwardian seemed hopelessly out of touch.

This view was juvenile. Macmillan fought with distinction in the first world war, developed the idea of a "middle way" in the 1930s, opposed Neville Chamberlain's Munich agreement with Adolf Hitler, served in government throughout the second world war and became a startlingly successful housing minister. Under him, the country built 300,000 houses a year. Why is this now impossible?

Yet it is for two strategic decisions that Macmillan deserves most respect: he persuaded the Conservative party to abandon imperialism and to embrace the European Economic Community. These decisions were born of a conservative spirit: do not to rush into change but accept it when it is necessary to do so.

15 In 1960, in South Africa, Macmillan gave a rightly famous speech, in which he said: "The wind of change is blowing through this continent, and whether we like it or not, this growth of national consciousness is a political fact. We must all accept it as a fact, and our national policies must take account of it." Many Conservatives were far from reconciled to the loss of empire. Macmillan recognised that it was inevitable. He would not, as Winston Churchill would have done, fight futile wars to preserve it.

20 Then, in 1961, Macmillan took the step that, to his mind, naturally followed from this realisation: the application to join the European Economic Community. The cabinet agreed on this policy for three reasons: to improve the UK's mediocre postwar economic performance; to prevent the UK's isolation from the huge market being created on its doorstep; and to forestall the political marginalisation that would otherwise befall an offshore island shorn of imperial grandeur and industrial leadership.

25 Under Macmillan's leadership, it was a Conservative government that took this remarkably bold step. The Labour party was deeply split over Europe. The Conservatives instead made a sober and pragmatic decision to accept the implications of the profound postwar change in the country's position.

The UK had long struggled to prevent the emergence of a unified Europe under hostile control. Now it was confronted with a friendly, peaceful and uniting Europe. The UK had once taken advantage of its insular position to build a vast commercial empire. But that world had disappeared. The time had come to recognise that the UK, while different in important ways, was — and always would be — enmeshed in the fate of the European continent of which it was a part. Isolation could, in the postwar world, no longer be splendid.

Things have changed since 1961, but not that much. The weight of the UK in the world has diminished yet more. The Commonwealth has drifted further apart, partly (but not mainly) because of the UK's entry into the EU.

35 The EU has long since ceased to be economically dynamic. But the UK, alas, is no better: it ranks top in inequality and close to the bottom in prosperity among the countries of northern Europe. The EU is far and away the UK's most important market. The influence of the UK on the world has been much enhanced by membership of the EU, as informed people in the Commonwealth know. Macmillan's logic still holds: the UK has indeed now chosen impotent isolation.

40 Would Macmillan be surprised by the reversal? Anybody who experienced the catastrophes of the first half of the 20th century had to be aware of the risks of passionate follies. Yet he would also recognise a bitter irony. In rejecting his application in 1963, Charles de Gaulle, then president of France, argued that "the nature, the structure, the very situation . . . that are England's differ profoundly from those of the continentals."

Macmillan, the pragmatic Conservative, proposed a sensible shift in Britain's stance in the world. But de Gaulle was more right than he was. Insularity has finally overwhelmed Macmillan's common sense.

45



## The Good Friday agreement is 20 – and Britain can't afford to forget it

Martin Kettle, Thu 5 Apr 2018, *The Guardian*

Like most people of my postwar generation in Britain, I started thinking about Northern Ireland only when the shooting started. I had no family connection with Ireland. We never learned about Ireland at school. I didn't read a book about Ireland until I was at university. And I never went to Ireland, north or south, until I was in my 20s.

My guess is that most of this was pretty typical of its era. As a boy, I knew Northern Ireland was part of the United Kingdom. But what else? George Best was about as far as it went. The Irish seemed to be like us but were not talked about with affection, the way Australians were. Later I learned why that was. But the fact that Northern Ireland was in effect a one-party state, in which half of the population was routinely discriminated against, was simply not on our radar.

All that changed with the start of the Troubles. For the next 30 years, it was impossible to be British and not know about Northern Ireland, even if you didn't want to. I first heard Ian Paisley speak in 1967. In 1973, I heard the car bombs explode outside the Old Bailey. In 1996, an IRA bomb wrecked part of the Guardian's printworks in London's Docklands. But then, in 1998, all that stopped.

The Good Friday agreement, which was signed 20 years ago next week, did not solve all the problems in Northern Ireland. Much of it was based on an agreement to disagree – including even about what to call the deal itself. But it was a historic and massively beneficial trade-off for the people of the north. It brought peace. It brought fairness. Above all, it brought a new kind of ordinary life.

And with the coming of ordinary life, there slowly grew up once more in Britain a kind of neglect of Ireland. Eventually, after a few false starts, Northern Ireland began to govern itself. After a while, British politicians did not need to get involved so much. Understandably, Gordon Brown spent less time thinking about Ireland than Tony Blair and John Major had done; David Cameron and Theresa May spent even less. Political leaders in Britain did not want to get sucked in. Even in the Irish Republic, there was a certain distance and a long slow sigh of relief.

In one sense, the return of neglect represents a continuity. English, later British, indifference to Ireland has deep roots. Many would use much stronger language, especially about the era when English Protestantism was at its most militantly anti-Catholic. My generation of English people wasn't the first to be brought up in ignorance about Ireland. But that habit of ignorance was an institutionalised one. English schools have never taught their pupils much about the history, literature or culture of Scotland or Wales, never mind Ireland, and they don't do so now.

In another way, though, the lack of interest in Ireland makes benign sense. There is far more cooperation and mutual respect than there was before. Much of this has to do with being in the European Union for so long. But it is also because the world is much more connected and liberal than it was. British and Irish people inhabit shared cultures without thinking or fretting about it. Most of us should be fine with that.

Brexit clearly threatens this. The harder the border between north and south, the more reckless the UK's decision to leave the EU will be judged. But even a hard border would be unlikely to herald the return of the bomber and the gunman, or the redeployment of thousands of troops, or the reimposition of a discriminatory sectarian state in the north. The collective failure in Northern Ireland can't be blamed just on Brexit.

It is a fact that the 20th anniversary of the Good Friday agreement is not getting anything like the attention it merits in Britain. This neglect should cause great concern. This was, after all, a historic deal for both islands. It reflected extraordinarily well on all those who crafted it. It established, you might almost say, a new sort of truth about the importance of compromise in politics. Yet the silence across much of the UK media on the subject is deafening – and dishonourable.

[...] May has been caught out by the inexperience she shares with her generation. In particular, she has consistently misjudged the DUP. She gave them a Westminster pact last summer when she didn't need to do so, misread their readiness to endorse the first phase of the Brexit deal in December, and rushed prematurely to Belfast to sign off on a resumed power-sharing deal that Foster could not deliver, possibly because her party's Westminster MPs pulled the rug from under her feet.

Making a success of the agreement of two decades ago requires knowledge, attitude and will on all sides. Britain displays none of these things with the requisite consistency any more. The result is a huge missed opportunity. The people of these islands have rarely been more convergent or neighbourly than they have been over the past 20 years. But it is hard to believe that the same will be said after the next 20.

*Politico*

## The GOP Identity Crisis

Rich Lowry, September 27, 2017

1 The Republican Party can't pass Obamacare repeal but it can nominate Roy Moore.

2 This is the state of the GOP in a nutshell. It is a party locked in mortal combat between an establishment that  
3 is ineffectual and unimaginative and a populist wing that is ineffectual and inflamed. It is rare for a governing coalition  
4 to have a bitter factional fight—usually the party out of power deploys the circular firing squads—although, on the other  
5 hand, this particular coalition isn't doing much governing.

6 By the hard numbers, Republicans are in robust good health. They have unified control of the federal  
7 government and the most governorships and state legislative seats since the 1920s. Conservatives control the Supreme  
8 Court. Yet, Trump's ascendance created an identity crisis in the party that hasn't been resolved, and the hope it could be  
9 papered over with legislative accomplishments and signing ceremonies has come a cropper.

10 It'd be hard to design a primary fight more characteristic of the GOP's current state than Luther Strange vs.  
11 Roy Moore. There is nothing distinctive about Strange except his height, his name and the dubious circumstances of his  
12 appointment. He was the state attorney general investigating disgraced Gov. Robert Bentley, who ended up appointing  
13 him to the Senate seat vacated by Attorney General Jeff Sessions not long before Bentley resigned because of a sex  
14 scandal. Since Strange had attained the sainted status of incumbent and would be a thoroughly adequate time-server, the  
15 establishment piled in behind him like it was trying to save Arthur Vandenberg.

16 Of course, the prospect of Moore had something to do with the effort. The twice-former chief justice of the  
17 Alabama Supreme Court is to the judiciary what Joe Arpaio is to sheriffdom—neither was particularly good at their  
18 precise duties, but both had a knack for the theatrical, polarizing cause. It isn't shocking that Moore prevailed. Sharron  
19 Angle, Christine O'Donnell and Richard Mourdock all won primaries in 2010-2012 in less conservative states based on  
20 anti-establishment energy, although under a Tea Party/constitutionalist rather than Trumpist/populist banner. The  
21 difference between Moore and these antecedents is that he's running in a state so red that he can survive whatever  
22 outlandish statements he adds to his oeuvre between now and the December special election.

23 It is an irony that in a race featuring a candidate as Trumpian as they come—though, unlike Trump, Moore is  
24 a fervent Christian conservative—Trump was on the other side. The president presumably won't let that happen again,  
25 and has duly scrubbed his Twitter account of his erstwhile Big Luther boosterism.

26 The biggest loser in Alabama was Mitch McConnell. He is certainly the best Republican Senate leader in a  
27 generation (sorry, Bob Dole, Trent Lott and Bill Frist). The conservative grass roots, though, has never been fond of  
28 Senate leaders who inevitably reflect the caution and process-obsession of the institution. McConnell is canny,  
29 experienced and tough-minded, and the Neil Gorsuch nomination will always be a testament to his skills. But the failure  
30 of Obamacare repeal has made him increasingly radioactive with Republicans nationally.

31 This sentiment is unlikely to be expressed in ways that make it easier to get anything done, as Moore's victory  
32 proves. Flame-throwing and ill-informed, the presumptive next senator from Alabama is not going to help forge  
33 legislation. His backers say he supports the Trump agenda, but Moore was against the Graham-Cassidy health care bill  
34 that the president desperately wanted to get over the finish line.

35 The result in Alabama will render Trump even more up for grabs everywhere else. Is he going to simply move  
36 on and work with the congressional leadership on the next big priority, tax reform? Is he going to exercise the "Chuck  
37 and Nancy" option? Is he going to double down on his base and resume afflicting the comfortable of the GOP  
38 establishment as he did in the primaries? All of the above? Does he know?

39 Trump's problem isn't that he threw in with the establishment, as his most fervent supporters believe; it is that  
40 he threw in with an establishment that had no idea how to process his victory and integrate populism into the traditional  
41 Republican agenda. One of the many causes of the failure of Obamacare repeal is that Republicans didn't emphasize the  
42 economic interests of the working-class voters that propelled Trump to victory (and Trump showed little sign of caring  
43 about this himself). Out of the gate, tax reform looks to have a similar problem — the Trumpist element is supposed to  
44 be a middle-class tax cut, but it's not obvious that it delivers one.

45 This gets to a fundamental failing of the populists. House Speaker Paul Ryan isn't supposed to be the  
46 populist; Trump is. But the president and his backers haven't even started to seriously think through what a workable  
47 populist platform is besides inveighing against internal party enemies, igniting cable TV-friendly controversies and  
48 overinvesting in symbolic measures like The Wall. If the populists don't like the results, they should take their own  
49 political project more seriously, if they are capable of it.

50 A success on taxes would provide some respite from the party's internal dissension, yet the medium-term  
51 forecast has to be for more recrimination than governing. Whatever the core competency of the national Republican  
52 Party is at the moment, it certainly isn't forging coherence or creating legislative achievements.

*The New York Review of Books*

**Year One: My Anger Management**

Katha Pollitt, November 7, 2017

1 The other day, a friend of mine, a liberal Democrat, said that he had to admit his life hadn't changed since  
Trump was elected. Well, I said, It's only been eight months. Give him time! What I wanted to say was, How nice  
for you. Tell it to that undocumented teenage girl who was blocked for a month from getting an abortion while held  
5 in a Texas detention center. Tell it to the Muslim family that a Connecticut neighbor of mine saw a white guy  
shouting at in the Big Y supermarket parking lot: Go back to your own country! Tell it to my daughter-in-law who  
got the hairy eyeball from a passerby for speaking Spanish on the street to her little girl. (And this was in  
Bloomington, Indiana, a large and pleasant university town.) Tell it to Myeshia Johnson, widow of one of the  
soldiers killed in Niger, who was dragged through the mud because Trump couldn't make a sympathy call sound  
sympathetic. Tell it to the Puerto Ricans and Virgin Islanders still waiting for power and clean water more than a  
10 month after Hurricane Maria. I didn't say any of that, of course. I'm working on suppressing my rage.

Unlike my friend's, my life has changed a lot in the year since Trump was elected. Not materially, except  
for the fact that my stepson and daughter-in-law moved to Canada partly because, as non-citizens, they worried for  
their futures here in the US. I mean psychologically. I sometimes feel like I'm a different person now. I'm fidgety  
and irritable and have trouble concentrating. For months after the election, I could hardly read, except for books  
15 about Roman history, which turns out to be full of Trumps: fantastically rich sociopaths obsessed with crushing  
their enemies. My work seems trivial: Given what we are facing, what difference does one  
more *Nation* column make? I might as well be an ancient Egyptian scribe logging production figures for cat  
mummies. In the old days, the days before Trump, it bothered me that so many people loved things I thought were  
stupid. Now I just think, Go ahead, enjoy yourself. Maybe your Batman DVDs will comfort you when we're  
20 wandering around in the ashen hellscape of whatever apocalypse Trump will bring down upon us.

But the main difference is that I hate people now. Well, not all people, of course. Just people who voted for  
Trump. People who do their own "research" on the Internet and discover there that President Obama is a Muslim  
and Michelle Obama is a man. People who use the n-word and can't even spell it right, because—have you  
noticed?—Trump supporters can't spell. Well-off people who only care about lowering their taxes. People who said  
25 they couldn't vote for Hillary because of her emails. Excuse me, sir or madam, can you explain to me what an email  
server even is? People who didn't believe Trump would bring back coal or build the wall or Make America Great  
Again, but just wanted to blow things up. Congratulations! We are all living in the minefield you have made.

I know what you're thinking: you are the problem, Katha, alienating Trump voters with your snobbish  
liberal elitism and addiction to "identity politics." Yes, I wanted them to have health care and child care and good  
30 schools and affordable college and real sex education and access to abortion and a much higher minimum wage.  
And yes, I wanted the wealthy to pay more taxes to provide for it all. Obviously, this offended the pride of the  
stalwart, mostly white citizens of Trumplandia, possibly because a good proportion of white people would rather  
not have something if black people get to have it, too. As for pussy-grabbing, sheesh! Men will be men, get over  
yourselves, ladies. None of *that* is "identity politics," though. It is just America.

35 Actually, Trump voters are not the only people I hate. I also hate Jill Stein voters and Gary Johnson voters  
and Bernie deadenders with their ridiculous delegates math and people with consciences so delicate they could not  
bring themselves to pull the lever for Hillary so they didn't vote at all. I hate everyone who thought there was no  
"real" difference between the candidates because Hillary was a neoliberal and a faux feminist and Trump was not so  
bad. I hate people who spent the whole election season bashing Hillary in books and articles and Facebook posts  
40 and tweets, and then painfully, reluctantly dragged themselves out to vote for her, as if their one little, last-minute  
ballot cancelled out all the discouraging and dissuading they'd spent six months inflicting on people. I especially  
hate everyone who thought that electing a reactionary monster would be okay because it would—or could, or might,  
who can tell?—bring on the revolution. Looking at you, Susan Sarandon and Slavoj Zizek! You are idiots and my  
heart seethes with wrath against you.

45 And of course, I hate myself, too. That's how hate works. I didn't do enough. I donated the max but I could  
have given more, I could have written more and better, I could have gone to Pennsylvania as I did for Kerry and  
Obama. What was I doing instead that was so important? I don't even remember. I suppose, like almost everyone  
else, I thought she would win. So really, Trump's victory is my fault, too. And so is the fact that every day my mind  
is full of him with his absurd tweets, his jibes and jeers and boasts and lies, tromping through my brain in his  
50 lumpish, lumbering way. TRUMP trump trump trump, TRUMP trump trump trump. [...]

## Harry and Meghan, or hostile environment: which is the real spirit of Britain?

Matthew d'Ancona, *The Observer*, Sun 20 May 2018

The rest of the world is baffled by Britain – and understandably so. In the opening ceremony of the 2012 London Olympics, directed by Danny Boyle, we dramatised a confidence, openness and multiplicity that only a nation at ease with itself could muster. The global “soft power” of our language, cultural and scientific institutions, and international development programmes – still ringfenced by the Treasury – remains formidable. And on Saturday, hundreds of millions around the world watched the royal wedding: as glorious a fusion of pageantry and pluralism, of monarchy and modernity, as you could hope for.

Yet this spirit of generous self-assurance has its evil twin. We are also the country of Brexit; of Nigel Farage; of Jacob Rees-Mogg posing outside No 10 to deliver a petition demanding cuts to the aid budget; and, most recently and shamefully, of the Windrush scandal.

10 Which is the authentic Britain? Open or closed? Warm or frostily parochial? Both, I suppose. Most countries are, to use a word much-loved by Nick Clegg, “bicephalous”: two-headed and contradictory. The question we should ask in 2018 is: which of the two heads dominates?

On my travels in the past year, I have encountered understandable confusion about our national trajectory. To crunch a complex series of perceptions into a seriously oversimplified narrative, the view from beyond our shores runs as follows: Britain was in terrible shape in 1979. Margaret Thatcher’s shock therapy, painful for a great many, laid the foundations of renewed national prosperity. Labour’s election in 1997 marked a determination to match economic growth with social justice and liberalism.

According to this happy version of events, the 2012 Olympics represented the culmination of more than three decades of regenerative work: a global festival in which Britain declared itself to be both open for business and open in spirit. Into which narrative, the rusty spanner of Brexit was thrown with clanking ferocity four years later. Suddenly, Britain was declaring its furious hostility to “mass immigration”, to its putative imprisonment as a “vassal state”, to the supposed mutilation of its island heritage. Optimism had yielded to fear. We were, to quote Nigel Farage’s vile poster, at “breaking point”. You can forgive the rest of the world its perplexity. When, exactly, did Britain decide angry nativism was the way forward?

This global confusion about who we are and what we want has profoundly practical consequences. Ask any senior diplomat or chief executive and they will tell you the same thing: namely, that technical detail forms the structure of any deal, alliance or treaty, but that the much more nebulous question of culture, shared ideals and emotional identity determines the foundation. Trade agreements and investment decisions are not decided by algorithm alone. Each side must ask: what sort of partner am I aligning myself with? Will my employees be heading towards an outstretched hand or a “hostile environment”?

If I had to single out the principal cause of our national identity crisis, I would cite the catastrophic absence of leadership on immigration policy. The issue has maddened us, unnecessarily and tragically. It has drained much of our national confidence, made us mean, bred an uncharitable insularity.

In their words, deeds and tactical silences, politicians of both main parties have allowed a series of myths to enter and settle into mainstream discourse: that migrants depress wages and take jobs from indigenous citizens; that migrants are a drain on the taxpayer; that only the “metropolitan elite” benefits from migrant labour; that migrants are more likely to commit crimes. All this is rubbish, and deserves to be robustly and repeatedly dismissed as such – not left to fester in the national consciousness. I also believe immigration is culturally enriching.

[...] In cabinet, I am told, even the arch-Brexiteers declare that national prosperity should not be sacrificed to the achievement of arbitrarily low net migration targets. Well, thanks a lot. Now they spot the flaw in the plan.

To be fair to the Brexit secretary, David Davis, he has repeatedly conceded that immigration policy post-Brexit will require many exemptions to meet the needs of the labour market. And as for all those shiny trade deals we are promised after 29 March 2019: the immigration minister, Caroline Nokes, told a Commons committee in February that visas could “absolutely” be exchanged for commercial access in future negotiations.

Brexit encapsulates this cognitive dissonance and its damaging consequences: it is about much more than our institutional relationship with the EU. I long for political leaders with the courage and candour to declare that the great challenges facing this country – automation, fiscal fairness, entrenched poverty, human longevity – have nothing to do with immigration, race or the much-needed influx of newcomers. That it has taken a royal wedding to reinstate this straightforward truth should shame our drab political class.

## Is the new left-wing insult "gammon" racist towards white men?

ANOOSH CHAKELIAN, *THE NEW STATESMAN*, 14 MAY 2018

The new left's online lexicon has always riled its political opponents. Ever since Jeremy Corbyn rose to power, young, media-savvy supporters on social media have developed their own slang. Their leader is the "absolute boy"; if you're a Labour moderate or Corbynsceptic, you're a "melt"; "centrist dads" whine about Brexit and long for the days of "common sense" politics; and "slugs" – political enemies – can be "salted".

5 When I asked those who use this language about it last year, I ended up describing a whole new political culture. The slang has helped to create a united community, but has also been used by Corbyn supporters to define themselves against the general dismissal and mockery from the mainstream political commentariat.

Their name-calling and in-jokes felt alienating to some online (who were at the receiving end), but politics has never been short of idiosyncratic insults ("melts" personally reminds me of Margaret Thatcher's "wets"). The new left lingo grew out of a particularly confrontational time in British politics – let's not forget Corbyn-backing MPs being called "moronic" by Labour commentator John McTernan on live TV, and the *FT* columnist Janan Ganesh tweeting (then deleting) that Corbynistas were "thick as pigshit".

10 But the latest insult has caused the most backlash. "Gammon" has increasingly become shorthand for a conservative middle-aged man, who is raging and red in the face when voicing his opinions, which are generally unimaginative tropes swallowed straight from right-wing tabloids.

15 Going by my memory, "gammon" was first used as a political put-down in columns by *The Times* journalist Caitlin Moran, who used the term to describe the infamously puce David Cameron when he was prime minister. In 2010, she described him as "a C-3PO made of ham", and wrote of his "resemblance to a slightly camp gammon robot". Last year, a tweeter pointed out the identical scarlet and irate expressions of *Question Time* audience members during the post-general election special, calling them the "Great Wall of gammon". This led to the use of a hashtag to mock over-representation of middle-aged white men: "#wallofgammon".

20 But the first person to popularise the term among the new left was Matt Zarb-Cousin, Corbyn's former spokesperson. He called a man "gammon" who defended Jacob Rees-Mogg, after protestors interrupted the Tory MP's speech at a university in February. It was then that some replying to Zarb-Cousin's tweet online referred to the word as a racial slur – an accusation resurrected over the weekend by the Democratic Unionist Party MP Emma Little-Pengelly. "I'm appalled by the term 'gammon' now frequently entering the lexicon of so many (mainly on the left)," she tweeted yesterday. "This is a term based on skin colour and age – stereotyping by colour or age is wrong no matter what race, age or community."

25 But like reverse sexism, this argument doesn't wash among the left – particularly not when used by right-wingers who usually reject what they dismiss as "identity politics".

30 "It's funny that it's the same people who would say 'oh, it's political correctness gone mad' for anything regarding women or queer people or ethnic minorities, who are like 'oh my God, I am the victim of a hate crime – someone call Trevor Phillips!'" says Ash Sarkar, senior editor of left-wing platform Novara Media. She rejects the idea that "any observation of skin tone ever is therefore racist. Racism is obviously intimately connected with our material condition", arguing that it's unlikely anyone who has been called a "gammon" has been "violently arrested, denied employment or attacked in the street – because that's not the same as something like the n-word or p\*\*i". She feels the main reason the term riles people up is because their claim to having "common sense" politics is being questioned. "If you are a white, property-owning, middle-aged, middle-England man, which is kind of the figure being held up here, you're used to your politics being universal," she says. "If you name it *and* make fun of it, you are *really* questioning that claim to authority."

40 Yet a *Times* column this morning suggests there is a class-based element to the insult. "It is obviously a statement about culture and class," writes the columnist Lucy Fisher. "Gammons are backward, provincial embarrassments." Although she does concede that it has been aimed at "wealthy aristocrats" as well as "unskilled workers" and "small business owners".

45 Without a demographic study of the consumption of gammon (get on it, British Attitudes Survey), it's difficult to tell which class with which it's most associated. As a rather old-fashioned, traditionally English food, it rings truer to me as a lampoon of older people who are suspicious of change – stereotypical diners in National Trust property canteens and country pubs. (The only time I've encountered gammon while out on the campaign trail was when I had lunch with Ken Clarke in his Nottinghamshire constituency just before the 2015 election.)

One thing certainly up for debate is whether name-calling based on someone's appearance is where the new progressive culture wishes to be. [...]

50 Yet, for all the lack of table manners, taking offence on behalf of politically-engaged white men and the disenfranchised gammon-eating masses in Labour's industrial heartlands feels like a bit too much to swallow.



*National Review*

## Trump's Tweets Are Damaging the Republican Character

David French, October 12, 2017

The vast majority of commentary about Donald Trump's tweets centers on Trump: What do they say about his state of mind? Do they signal a change in American policy? Will he follow through on his threats? Is he a master media manipulator or just angry? Is he playing nine-dimensional chess or is he simply undisciplined and impulsive? I want to focus on another question entirely: What are Trump's tweets doing to the political character of his Republican supporters? I focus on his tweets because they're the primary way he communicates directly to America.

Yes, Trump has some set-piece speeches, and yes he still holds the occasional rally, but he stubbornly clings to his smartphone as a direct line to voters. His tweets reach beyond the relatively small slice of Americans who read political Twitter. They're reproduced in hundreds of news articles, they dominate cable news, and their substance spreads across America in countless debates and arguments. In short, they define our national political conversation. They are also often absurd and unhinged. Take yesterday, for example, when he launched yet another series of tweets against the "fake news" media, culminating with a direct threat: "Network news has become so partisan, distorted and fake that licenses must be challenged and, if appropriate, revoked. Not fair to public! — Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) October 12, 2017"

It shouldn't take a lawyer to note that any action to challenge "licenses" on this basis would be unconstitutional. It's Civics 101: The First Amendment protects press freedom, and that protection is easily broad enough to encompass any effort to silence journalists simply because the president believes their work is "partisan, distorted and fake." Yet, incredibly, across the country rank-and-file Republicans react to such messages not by rebuking Trump but by trying to find a way to rationalize or justify them. Many go even further, joining Trump in his attacks regardless of their merit. These folks are degrading their political character to defend Trump, and the damage they do to their own credibility and their party's in the process will endure long after he has departed from the political scene.

Trump is stoking a particularly destructive form of rage — and his followers don't just allow themselves to be stoked, they attack Trump's targets with glee. Contrary to the stereotype of journalists who live in the Beltway and spend their nights at those allegedly omnipresent "cocktail parties," I live in rural Tennessee, deep in the heart of Trump country. My travels mainly take me to other parts of Trump country, where I engage with Trump voters all the time. If I live in a bubble, it's the Trump bubble. I know it intimately. And I have never in my adult life seen such anger. There is a near-universal hatred of the media. There is a near-universal hatred of the so-called "elite." If a person finds out that I didn't support Trump, I'll often watch their face transform into a mask of rage. Partisans are so primed to fight — and they so clearly define whom they're fighting against — that they often don't care whom or what they're fighting *for*. It's as if millions of Christians have forgotten a basic biblical admonition: "Be angry and do not sin." Don't like the media? Shut it down. Don't like kneeling football players? Make them stand. Tired of American weakness overseas? Cheer incoherent and reckless tweets as evidence of "strength."

The result is a festival of blatant and grotesque hypocrisy. Republicans are right now in the process of demanding that every Democrat and every progressive celebrity of any consequence denounce Harvey Weinstein. Yet when Donald Trump faced serial accusations of sexual assault after being caught on tape *bragging* that he liked to grope women, many of these same members of the Republican base were furious at those conservatives who expressed alarm. When serial sexual-harassment allegations claimed the careers of Bill O'Reilly and Roger Ailes, many of these same members of the Republican base accused the media of "taking scalps."

On a vast scale, members of the Republican base are defending behavior from Trump that would shock and appall them if it came from a Democratic president. There is of course always a measure of hypocrisy in politics — partisanship can at least partially blind us all. But the scale here beggars belief. Republicans never would tolerate a Democratic president's firing an FBI director who was investigating the president's close aides and then misleading the American people about the reason for that firing. They would never tolerate a Democratic president's specifically calling for unconstitutional reprisals against his political enemies. They would look at similar chaos and confusion in a Democratic White House and fear a catastrophe. Even worse, Republicans are — to borrow my friend Greg Lukianoff's excellent phrase — "unlearning liberty." For example, for many years conservatives focused on ways to protect free speech, an essential liberty under attack from intolerant campus leftists and a larger progressive establishment that labeled dissent as "phobic" or bigoted. Now? Republicans defend Trump's demands for terminations and economic boycotts against football players who engage in speech he doesn't like. "Well, it's not technically illegal," they say, knowing full well the chilling effect such language will have and knowing full well that they would be howling in anger if President Obama had ever expressed a similar desire to squelch, say, Tim Tebow's prayers. [...]

Vox

## 20 of America's top political scientists gathered to discuss our democracy. They're scared.

Sean Illing, October 13, 2017

1 Is American democracy in decline? Should we be worried?

2 On October 6, some of America's top political scientists gathered at Yale University to answer these questions. And nearly everyone agreed: American democracy is eroding on multiple fronts — socially, culturally, and economically. The scholars pointed to breakdowns in social cohesion (meaning citizens are more fragmented than ever),  
5 the rise of tribalism, the erosion of democratic norms such as a commitment to rule of law, and a loss of faith in the electoral and economic systems as clear signs of democratic erosion.

10 No one believed the end is nigh, or that it's too late to solve America's many problems. Scholars said that America's institutions are where democracy has proven most resilient. So far at least, our system of checks and balances is working — the courts are checking the executive branch, the press remains free and vibrant, and Congress is (mostly) fulfilling its role as an equal branch. But there was a sense that the alarm bells are ringing.

15 Yascha Mounk, a lecturer in government at Harvard University, summed it up well: "If current trends continue for another 20 or 30 years, democracy will be toast." Nancy Bermeo, a politics professor at Princeton and Harvard, began her talk with a jarring reminder: Democracies don't merely collapse, as that "implies a process devoid of will." Democracies die because of deliberate decisions made by human beings. Usually, it's because the people in power take democratic institutions for granted. They become disconnected from the citizenry. They develop interests separate and apart from the voters. They push policies that benefit themselves and harm the broader population. Do that long enough, Bermeo says, and you'll cultivate an angry, divided society that pulls apart at the seams.

So how might this look in America?

20 Adam Przeworski, a democratic theorist at New York University, suggested that democratic erosion in America begins with a breakdown in what he calls the "class compromise." His point is that democracies thrive so long as people believe they can improve their lot in life. This basic belief has been "an essential ingredient of Western civilization during the past 200 years," he said. But fewer and fewer Americans believe this is true. Due to wage stagnation, growing inequalities, automation, and a shrinking labor market, millions of Americans are deeply pessimistic about the future: 64 percent of people in Europe believe their children will be worse off than they were; the number is 60 percent in America. That pessimism is grounded in economic reality. In 1970, 90 percent of 30-year-olds  
25 in America were better off than their parents at the same age. In 2010, only 50 percent were. Numbers like this cause people to lose faith in the system. What you get is a spike in extremism and a retreat from the political center. That leads to declines in voter turnout and, consequently, more opportunities for fringe parties and candidates.

30 Political polarization is an obvious problem, but researchers like Przeworski suggest something more profound is going on. Political theorists like to talk about the "social compact," which is basically an implicit agreement among members of society to participate in a system that benefits everyone. Well, that only works if the system actually delivers on its promises. If it fails to do so, if it leads enough people to conclude that the alternative is less scary than the status quo, the system will implode from within. Is that happening here? Neither Przeworski nor anyone else went quite that far. But we know there's a growing disconnect between productivity (how hard people work) and compensation  
35 (how much they're paid for that work). At the same time, we've seen a spike in racial animus, particularly on the right. It seems likely there's a connection here.

40 Przeworski believes that American democracy isn't collapsing so much as deteriorating. "Our divisions are not merely political but have deep roots in society," he argues. The system has become too rigged and too unfair, and most people have no real faith in it. Where does that leave us? Nowhere good, Przeworski says. The best he could say is that "our current crisis will continue for the foreseeable future."

45 We've heard a lot of chatter recently about the importance of democratic norms. These are the unwritten rules and the conventions that undergird a democracy — things like commitment to rule of law, to a free press, to the separation of powers, to the basic liberties of speech, assembly, religion, and property. Daniel Ziblatt, a politics professor at Harvard, called these norms "the soft guardrails of democracy." Dying democracies, he argued, are always preceded by the breaking of these unwritten rules. Research conducted by Bright Line Watch, the group that organized the Yale conference, shows that Americans are not as committed to these norms as you might expect. It's not that Americans don't believe in democratic ideals or principles; it's that our beliefs scale with our partisan loyalties. Vox's Ezra Klein explained it well in a recent column: "People's opinions on democracy lie downstream from their partisan identity. If it had been Trump's voters who had seen the Electoral College, gerrymandering, and Russia turn against  
50 them, then it would be Trump's voters vibrating with outrage over the violation of key principles of American democracy." [...]

## The countryside's immigration problem

Stewart Dakers, *The Spectator*, 2 June 2018

One day there won't be anyone to deliver the mail any more, and then what will the City types do? I heard this prediction more than 20 years ago when I worked behind the bar at one of the pubs here in my rural town. At the time I considered it melodramatic, but now it seems like straight prophecy.

Quite out of sight of central London — and other metropolises — the English countryside is suffering from a terrible immigration problem. These migrants don't arrive on the back of lorries or in overcrowded boats, but in removal vans, carrying laptops and trailing children.

Unable to afford the space they need for their second or third child in the inner suburbs of their overpriced cities, frightened/brick-rich metropolitans are migrating to the countryside to gazump their way into the housing market.

In our town, 30 miles from the capital, the average house price is 13 times the average national wage. Wherever there's a pleasant place and housing within spitting distance of a metropolis, locals are being pushed out.

This is not gentrification, but rather social cleansing on a grand scale, and it won't end well. As that pub-goer foretold all those years ago, able, qualified and dedicated job-holders are being displaced. Ten years ago it was bin men and classroom assistants pushed to the periphery of Home Counties life; now it's teachers, nurses, physiotherapists. Anyone on an average wage is increasingly unable to afford to live within a reasonable commuting distance of their workplace, meaning our suburban utopias will soon become dystopias of understaffed services.

However, the greater loss is something less material: community. Community is about shared lives, informed by diversity, in age, aptitudes, attitudes, ideology, background. It is about 'locus', local people taking part. In the past couple of years alone, scores of well-established locals have been dislocated to towns more than 50 miles away with more affordable rents. So Reg, for instance; more than a bin man, he was a stalwart of the local boys' footie club; or Gloria, a physiotherapist, who organised the cookery classes for single parents; or Jane, a classroom assistant who administered a book club. All have since closed for lack of replacements, while the annual fête for which Charlie, a postman, was the prime mover, has struggled since he left.

And there are hundreds more Glorias, Regs, Janes and Charlies, the lifeblood of community, all priced out by the ballooning property market inflated by metropolitan demand. Their replacements from central London haven't the time or the inclination to commit to civic duties — and besides, their friends live in Notting Hill.

As the natives leave, so the institutions they supported begin to collapse: the Rotary, Lions, Round Table, Masons. Their fundraising creates events which form the local calendar: firework displays, duck races, music gigs, carnivals, fun days. These are experiencing rapid decline. Brendan, this year's president of the local Rotary, told me that the average age of its members is 70, and there are few new members in the offing. These agencies of charity were designed to attract the active participation of men and women working locally, but there are no large employers left in our town and the only work the migrants bring is for domestic service, baristas and nailbar staff.

There are civic-minded volunteer types who remain, but too often they're tied up with their own concerns. This is the grandparental generation. I live and work among them and I know how stretched they are by their own kin. My neighbour Joan, for instance, is preoccupied attending her 90-year-old mother, and helping out with the grandchildren so that their parents, aka her children, can fulfil the jobs which pay their mortgage.

There are scores like Joan who can no longer organise fêtes, hold collections, man stalls, referee sports, run WIs, Scouts, Guides. Nor have they the time to occupy the more formal roles as trustees, school governors, committee members and church councillors which enable civic engagement. The new immigrants can't and won't fill the gaps. They crowd the early morning trains and return post-children's bathtime, knackered. I meet them in the gym on weekends and only the other day David, something in the City, was telling me in the locker room how he was working a 12-hour day and then on call for the other 12 hours.

With the servicing class displaced, the caring class otherwise engaged, the business class shrinking, the commuting class exhausted, there is no one to hold the town centre together.

And already metropolitan behaviour is coarsening our once-gentle town. The digital era brings with it impatience and ungraciousness — Monica, the *Big Issue* seller, is lucky to shift a dozen copies on a good Saturday — on roundabouts, at traffic lights, in doorways, on the pavement, at the till, in queues. Our town, along with many others, is sinking under the dead weight of dormitory-dwellers who can neither invest in its community nor participate in its life.

## The Windrush scandal unmasks the colonial attitudes of British Conservatives

Paul Mason, *The New Statesman*, 26 April 2018

When Amber Rudd threatened to jail landlords renting homes to illegal immigrants at the Conservative party conference in 2016, she framed the policy as an act of political liberation. For five years, under the coalition, Theresa May had been "held back" by the Lib Dems. "Freed from the shackles", it turned out, the new Prime Minister would be able to inflict organised cruelty anyone suspected of being illegal – which of course means people who look or sound non-British, or are non-white.

Renting a flat, getting a minicab license, using the NHS – the routines of everyday life would become a filter against illegal migration. People whose status was doubtful would effectively be faced with a border patrol every day.

We've seen the results in the Windrush scandal. Rudd's 2016 speech was designed to give permission to the xenophobia that had built up and burst through during the Brexit referendum campaign. As Rudd acknowledged, there was no way to target East and South Europeans as long as we were inside Europe, so the people targeted would be mainly from the Commonwealth and the Middle East.

Not only did the system set about destroying the lives of black Caribbean Britons who could not produce the right papers; the political system and most of the media ignored the issue.

I met Amber Rudd once, on *Question Time*, and she struck me as a genuinely liberal, civilised, humane and democratic politician. How could someone like that stand up at Tory conference demanding employers make "lists of foreign workers"? How could she be the one inflicting mental torture on Jamaican pensioners?

There is only one concept that explains it: colonialism. Yet the deep-rooted colonial attitudes through which white British people appoint themselves superior to those who were once their colonial subjects is the ultimate taboo issue in this country.

The Commonwealth heads of government meeting showed how the taboo is maintained. The Commonwealth is supposed to be a voluntary association of equals. Yet it was still "persuaded" to appoint the future King of England as its next boss. And when prime ministers from across the Caribbean asked to meet Theresa May about the Windrush crisis, they were initially dismissed as time wasters.

We need to understand what colonialism was, and what it did. Its roots were economic. Without the Portuguese, Dutch and then British mercantile empires, capitalism could never have taken off. The meagre financial systems and irregular surpluses inherited from late-stage feudalism could not, on their own, produce the vast wealth that accumulated by the 18<sup>th</sup> century in Lisbon, Amsterdam and London.

Since market-based systems require the formal equality of participants, the colonial empires had to be justified by categorising the human race. At the bottom were the indigenous peoples of places like Australia or New Caledonia, both formally classified by colonial governments as sub-human. Then there were black Africans, who were enslaved and around whom their white owners created a unique ideology of hatred. Then the brown peoples of Asia, seen as "cunning" or "lazy", and incapable of achieving anything without a kick up the arse from a British soldier.

In order to justify the theft of their natural resources, the imposition of lop-sided trading rules, cartels, slavery, bonded labour and the rape of their children, colonial subjects had to be classified as subordinate human beings.

In colonial ideology, the problem was not cruelty of the coffee planter or the slave ship owner. The fallibility was all on the side of the subject peoples themselves – above all their alleged low intelligence, which the ethnographic science of the 19<sup>th</sup> century devoted itself to proving.

Aimé Césaire, the Martinique-born French philosopher and poet, once said that fascism was simply colonialism applied to Europe. What the Germans did to the Poles and the Jews, they had first practised on the Herero population of what is now Namibia. The light brown uniforms of Hitler's original paramilitaries were military surplus from the Afrika Korps of imperial Germany, and hundreds of those who wore them on the streets of Berlin in the 1920s had worn them during the Namibian massacres of 1904-7, an event now recognised by the UN as genocide.

But what about the Brits? The most infamous atrocities of the British Empire include the 1943 Bengal famine, in which millions died; the slave trade, in which it is estimated at least 3.4 million black people were transported on British ships; the Irish Famine of the 1840s which killed a million – plus the numerous massacres and "native wars" in which rifle and artillery fire was turned against civilians or villagers armed with spears.

Behind these actions lay a racism which was bred into generation upon generations of Brits, rich and poor. Winston Churchill said, after the Bengal famine: "I hate Indians. They are a beastly people with a beastly religion. The famine was their own fault for breeding like rabbits." But like Rudd, he was only echoing what his voters thought.

The colonialist mentality is still deeply rooted in British conservatism. It is the secret of their ability to treat each other, and fellow Europeans politely, but to treat people from the former colonies as troublesome, stupid, irrelevant people – whose rights are contingent on our whims or policies. [...]

## Don't underestimate Jacob Rees-Mogg - he is the Corbyn of the Conservative Party

John Rentoul, *The Independent*, 3 February 2018

It is time to take Jacob Rees-Mogg seriously. When the bookmakers made him favourite as next Tory leader in November, I thought it was evidence of the naivety of political betting. I did not doubt his appeal to Conservative Party members, but thought that his support among his fellow Tory MPs was limited.

The only way he could become leader is if he were one of the two candidates chosen by MPs for the final ballot of the members in the country. And I thought other MPs regarded him with that special condescension they reserve for "characters", that is, quixotic loners.

Last month, however, one of the many mistakes Theresa May made in her reshuffle was her failure to make him a minister. Within moments, Rees-Mogg was elected - unopposed - as chair of the European Research Group, the main grouping of Brexit true believers in the Commons. That gives him a bloc of at least 50 MPs, not all of whom would vote for him in a leadership contest but enough of whom might to get him to the last two.

That is why I take seriously what Professor Philip Cowley said this week after he interviewed Rees-Mogg in front of an oversubscribed audience at Queen Mary University of London: "I'll make only one observation, based on last night. If he stands in any forthcoming leadership contest, if he gets through to the last two, he'll walk it."

There are two "ifs" there. One is whether he could make it to the all-member ballot: yes he could. The other is whether he wants to be leader and therefore, if there is a contest before 2022, prime minister. Of course he does. In the old days people might have become MPs because they wanted to serve their constituents from the back benches in comfortable obscurity, but not today. In that respect, Rees-Mogg is a modern man.

But being old-fashioned is his appeal. Cowley said of Tory members: "They'll love him because he is unapologetic. No triangulating. Argues for capitalism, unashamedly. He's basically a pinstriped Conservative Corbyn."

Indeed, Rees-Mogg came top of the Conservative Home survey of Tory members this week, albeit with only 21 per cent of responses from a self-selecting sample (ahead of Michael Gove on 16 per cent). But Cowley is right that his pitch cuts through with the Tory electorate.

"It is not a facade," Rees-Mogg told Cowley. "I am who I am." Well, yes, but who are we really? Jeremy Corbyn's Castro-capped Bennism is not a facade either, and yet it turns out to be remarkably flexible on the question of Brexit.

Corbyn exploits his reputation, acquired in decades as a quixotic backbench loner, for constancy of principle. Such backward-looking traditionalism gives him the authenticity that is the magic ingredient of modern politics. It is genuine, but it can also be finessed for convenience.

It is the same with Rees-Mogg. He is genuine, but his opposition to abortion, for example, is something he has said he would never seek to impose by law on others. His courtly Roman Catholic gentleman act is not an act, but it is a form of attention-seeking.

He talks about his nanny, who looked after him and who now looks after his children, not wanting him to change their nappies as if this were normal, but he knows perfectly well it isn't and he revels in people's reactions.

Thus the people who disrupted his speech at the University of the West of England yesterday might as well have been paid to do so by the Moggmentum campaign. The story was big on mainstream and social media, and it was all about Rees-Mogg standing up to bullies. He has done it before ("Jacob Rees-Mogg politely takes on angry protesters at Conservative Party conference") and every time it makes him stand out more clearly in a politics painted in broad brushstrokes of primary colours.

This time it got him on the *Today* programme this morning, so that the row over his accusation that Treasury civil servants breached impartiality - the absurd charge that they doctored the figures to undermine Brexit - could rumble on for another day.

I thought Corbyn's dogmatic anti-capitalism and anti-imperialism was a minority interest that wouldn't work in British politics, but I overlooked the importance of his authenticity. It hardly mattered what it was about: one or two themes struck a chord and his unchanging commitment to them raised his profile.

I am not making that mistake again. Get ready for Jacob Rees-Mogg, Prime Minister.

*New York Magazine*

## Our National Narratives Are Still Being Shaped by Lecherous, Powerful Men

Rebecca Traister, October 30, 2017

And the stories keep on coming: about how political pundit Mark Halperin rubbed his erect penis against younger female colleagues (a claim he denies); how *Artforum* co-publisher Knight Landesman touched young female employees against their will and told one of them that she needed to be “more open to physical contact to succeed”; how Amazon Studios head Roy Price propositioned a producer, assuring her, “You will love my dick”; about New Orleans restaurateur John Besh, whose organization is alleged to have been a hotbed of harassment; about Ben Affleck, who groped women in public; about *New Republic* literary editor Leon Wieseltier, who’s reported to have thanked a young colleague for wearing a miniskirt to work.

All these variations, all these stories ... I’m so tired. Tired of getting — or hearing about other women getting — grabbed or pinched or demeaned, tired of having had to laugh. I’m tired of feeling paralyzed, unable to confront friends and colleagues about what they just said or did, because we know being the scold is its own form of self-exile, of exposure and vulnerability, of risk. If this were a feminist mini-series, gorgeously shot, with a tidy narrative, this beat — the outpouring of stories and memories we didn’t even know we’d repressed — would be wrapping up, and we’d be moving on to the denouement. But there is no sign of a pause; there are indications that it is just beginning.

In hearing these individual tales, we’re not only learning about individual trespasses but for the first time getting a view of the matrix in which we’ve all been living: We see that the men who have had the power to abuse women’s bodies and psyches throughout their careers are in many cases also the ones in charge of our political and cultural stories.

The media is breaking the news here; the media is also deeply implicated in this news and still shaping how the tale is getting told. Ours is an industry, like so many others, dominated by white men at the top; they have made the decisions about what to cover and how, and they still do. The pervasiveness of these power imbalances and the way they affect how even this story itself is being told are instructive. Here is something you should know, from inside a publication: For every one of these stories of harassment and predation finally seeing the light of day, reporters are hearing dozens more that will not be published, because women won’t go on the record in an industry still run by the people they want to name, or because the men in question aren’t powerful enough to interest those who *are* powerful enough to decide what has news value, or because the damage these men are alleged to have done seems insignificant on a scale that has recently been drawn to accommodate the trespasses of Harvey Weinstein, and of writer-director James Toback, named by more than 300 women (whose accounts he denies).

The accused are men who help to determine what art gets seen and appreciated — and, crucially, paid for. They decide whose stories get brought to screens: There is currently a campaign pointing out that Amazon under Price canceled the proto-feminist show *Good Girls Revolt*, in addition to passing on *The Handmaid’s Tale* and *Big Little Lies*. These decisions matter; they shape what kinds of messages audiences receive and what kinds of characters they are exposed to. They are also the men with the most power to determine what messages get sent about politicians to a country that then chooses between those politicians in elections. Mark Halperin co-authored *Game Change*, the soapy account of the 2008 election (excerpted in this magazine), which featured all kinds of history-making candidates who were not powerful white men. Halperin’s view of Hillary Clinton in particular was two-dimensional: Through his lens, she was a grasping and scandal-plagued woman; her exaggerated misdeeds and the intense feelings she engendered were all part of propelling his profitable narrative forward. His coverage of Trump, meanwhile, in this last campaign cycle, was notably soft, even admiring: Halperin once argued that the sexual-assault claims leveled at Trump would only help the now-president’s brand.

Yet his view of the history we’ve just lived through was the one that was amplified and well compensated; there was not just the book deal but Showtime and HBO deals, too, and a regular perch on *Morning Joe*. (HBO, Penguin, and NBC have dropped him.) The same power that afforded Halperin the ability to allegedly rub up against younger colleagues — colleagues who shared stories with one another but never felt they had enough power to file a formal complaint at ABC, where he held so much sway — also meant that he got to shape the nation’s view of a woman whose political story had already been shaped by other men who abused their power, including her husband and her 2016 opponent Donald Trump, not to mention Anthony Weiner. Lots of people still strain against the argument that gendered power structures helped determine Hillary Clinton’s (and thus our nation’s) fate, but when they do they are too often thinking of gender as an attribute that belongs only to her, the woman, and not to the men whose gender-afforded power ensured that she would have to work around and against so many dicks — by which I mean literal penises — in her efforts to become the first woman president. [...]

*The Washington Post*

## The Steep Price of the Trumpian Circus

E.J. Dionne Jr., April 29, 2018

1 One of the many costs of the Trump era is the dumbing down of our political discourse. The incoherent  
spoken and tweeted outpourings from President Trump and the daily outrages of his administration leave little time for  
serious debate about policy or meaningful dialogue about our larger purposes. In a normal environment, the Republican  
Congress's assault on food-stamp recipients, the administration's waivers allowing states to erode Medicaid coverage,  
5 and Housing and Urban Development Secretary Ben Carson's proposed rent increases for some of the country's poorest  
people would be front and center in the news.

But poor people lack the media cachet of Stormy Daniels, Michael Cohen or a president who rants  
uncontrollably over the phone to his favorite Fox News show or to a crowd of enthusiasts, as he did Saturday night in  
Washington Township, Mich. News outlets are entirely justified in lavishing coverage on the sensational and the  
personal, since developments in these areas are a part of a bigger story that could undermine the Trump presidency  
altogether. Nonetheless, the circus that Trump has brought to town is nearly as much of a threat to a well-ordered  
political system as is Trump himself.

Nothing is significant for long, everything is episodic, and old scandals are regularly knocked out of the  
headlines by new ones. It's a truly novel approach to damage control. And governing? It seems almost beside the point.  
15 Thus does the unraveling of regulatory protections for workers, the environment and the users of financial services rush  
forward with little notice.

This is where the Trumpian circus benefits the Trumpian project. If there are too many scandals for any one  
of them to seize our attention for long, all of them taken together allow what are potentially very unpopular policies to  
take root without much scrutiny.

20 Yes, good journalists are on top of what's happening. But their stories usually get buried beneath reports  
about the latest presidential statement contradicting an earlier presidential statement. Also consider this: Budget director  
Mick Mulvaney last week made a brash admission about his time in Congress. "If you were a lobbyist who never gave  
us money," he said to an audience of banking executives, "I didn't talk to you." In a more innocent age, this confession  
would have provoked sustained indignation over how our political money system fundamentally corrupts our politics.  
25 (And imagine if Hillary Clinton had said such a thing.) But Mulvaney's words just seemed to slide by.

Mulvaney should write thank-you notes to Trump, Cohen and Daniels. Also to Environmental Protection  
Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt, who had to justify his unjustifiable uses of public money before Congress, and  
Ronny L. Jackson, who withdrew from consideration to lead the Department of Veterans Affairs after allegations  
(which he denies) related to, among other things, his dispensing of drugs and his own use of alcohol. But if the severity  
30 of every abuse is relativized, something less tangible but at least as important is lost as well. We are ignoring the  
imperative of shoring up the philosophical underpinnings of liberal democracy.

Intellectual confusion and ambivalence now haunt the West. Older and once vital systems of thought — in  
Europe, Christian democracy and social democracy; in the United States, New Dealism and free-market conservatism  
— have an ever-weaker hold on the popular imagination.

35 This vacuum is filled by strange concepts that hark back to the irrationalism of the 1930s. They include what  
to supporters of liberal democracy are oxymoronic ideas such as "illiberal democracy" or "authoritarian democracy."  
Former secretary of state Madeleine Albright has the intellectual courage to raise the specter that lurks behind these  
terms in her new book, "Fascism: A Warning." She notes that fascism arose at "a time of intellectual liveliness and  
resurgent nationalism coupled with widespread disappointment at the failure of representative parliaments to keep pace  
40 with a technology-driven Industrial Revolution."

In the wake of World War I and the Great Depression, she adds, "the promises inherent in the Enlightenment  
and the French and American Revolutions had become hollow."

Albright is not a catastrophist (and neither am I). But she doesn't mind being called an alarmist. She notes  
"that for freedom to survive, it must be defended, and that if lies are to stop, they must be exposed." We can't just  
45 "close our eyes and wait for the worst to pass."

Yet at a moment when we need politics to be thoughtful and engaging, we have a government whose  
profound swampiness only further deepens public doubts about democracy and encourages us to view public life as  
mere spectacle. It's a very bad time to be distracted by a circus.

## The Palace of Westminster faces up to accusations of sexual predation

BAGEHOT, *The Economist*

Nov 4th 2017

It was only a matter of time before Hurricane Harvey reached the Palace of Westminster. The Weinstein storm has ripped through a succession of institutions that combine male power with blurred lines between professional and social life. Few institutions combine these two things quite as explosively as the Houses of Parliament.

Now it has struck with a vengeance, shaking Brexit off the front pages and even raising questions about the future of the government. Sir Michael Fallon, the defence secretary, has resigned on the grounds that his past personal conduct has "fallen below the high standards that we require of the armed forces". [...]

The revelations are destabilising an already wobbly government. Sir Michael was one of its most experienced figures. He provided ballast against political storms and a bridge between ideologues on both sides of the Brexit divide. Based on what was known at the time of his resignation, his departure has lowered the bar for career-ending conduct. It has also reinforced the sense that the government is at the mercy of events that it cannot control: future revelations could force more ministers to resign or compel the government to withdraw the whip from erring MPs. The focus is now on Mr Green, Theresa May's oldest friend in politics and another emollient figure who has provided political sense in a cabinet that is lacking it.

The scandal raises broader issues about how women are treated in British politics. Parliament has all the characteristics of other male-dominated institutions in spades: family-hostile (and bachelor-friendly) hours, pack behaviour, a culture of drinking. No women sat in Parliament until 1919; as recently as 1997 they made up less than 10% of MPs. When Margaret Thatcher got into the cabinet in 1970 she was only the sixth woman to rise so high.

Politics is also a peculiar business. Social functions and political functions are fused. Campaigns are all-consuming. Pressing the flesh is a way of life. MPs have enormous power over whom they hire, but little guidance in how to manage them. They are not just representatives of the public but businesspeople who run their own offices. MPs who are not lucky enough to have London seats have no choice but to live double lives, spending their weekends in their constituencies and their weeks in the capital. They live double lives in another way, too, arriving in Westminster thinking that they might be the next Winston Churchill or Nye Bevan, but ending up as lobby fodder. The combination of loneliness and frustrated ambition, vanity and disappointment, encourages aberrant behaviour.

Erring MPs are accountable to their parties rather than to more formal bureaucratic structures. And parties have every incentive to keep secret any information that reflects badly on them, since exposing it could cause a scandal or a by-election. Parties can also use such information to keep their MPs in line. Whips' offices maintain "black books" of their own MPs' secrets, to dangle over members threatening to rebel.

There is still a question as to how widespread the most serious offences are. Rumours ranging from consensual affairs, to unspecified "inappropriateness", to serious sexual assaults have been unhelpfully lumped together. Some of the MPs accused of inappropriate behaviour have said they fear a witch hunt that will blur the distinction between facts and gossip, affairs and transgressions, and misjudged passes and coercion. Yet there is a difference between keeping a clear head and downplaying the scandals. Parliament is grappling with two problems: a cultural one of how women are treated in political life and a criminal one of sexual assault. But these two problems can blur into each other. MPs are more likely to abuse their power over their subordinates if they operate in a world of casual sexist banter.

MPs already have a net trust rating of -74%. The latest revelations may entrench contempt for politicians, encouraging the harmful populist rage against "the establishment" and discouraging talented people from working in the Westminster swamp. Yet this week also gave some cause for optimism. The debate has highlighted how far women have advanced in recent years. They now make up a third of MPs and run three of the four countries of the United Kingdom. Digital forums such as WhatsApp give them tools to share their experiences privately and organise resistance. Parliament's debate on sexual harassment on October 30th was notable for its maturity and good sense. John Bercow, the speaker, Andrea Leadsom, the leader of the House, and Harriet Harman, Labour's representative, promised to tackle the problem swiftly. They also demonstrated that they recognise how doing so means addressing attitudes as well as setting up complaints systems.

The MPs' expenses scandal of 2009 diminished Parliament's reputation because MPs collectively failed to deal with the problem quickly and convincingly. There is a chance that, if properly handled, the sexual-harassment scandal could help clean up behaviour in Parliament, improve its reputation and persuade more young people, particularly women, to make a career in politics. Some hurricanes wreak a creative kind of destruction.





## The only thing stopping abortion reform in Northern Ireland is May's lack of political will

Patrick Maguire, *The New Statesman*, 28<sup>th</sup> May 2018

Northern Ireland next. That's the message from pro-choice campaigners in the wake of the Republic's resounding vote to repeal the eighth amendment. The rallying cry has found purchase in Westminster, most strikingly on the Tory frontbench. Penny Mordaunt, the minister for women and equalities, said on Friday that hope for reform in Northern Ireland "must be met".

5 So what is Theresa May going to do about it? Nothing, according to Downing Street. Today's papers carry variations on the same briefing: this is a matter for Northern Ireland and its politicians, so we'll leave it to them. Nothing to see here. Devolution, you see. A No 10 source tells the *Indy*: "The government thinks this is a matter for Northern Irish people and Northern Irish politicians, just as the Irish referendum was a matter for Irish voters and Irish politicians. We think it's absolutely essential that power-sharing is restored at Stormont, and that's where our focus is. The hope is that big issues  
10 like this will bring the two parties together and create an impetus for power-sharing."

There's one big problem with this line. After year and a half of fruitless talks, power-sharing isn't coming back anytime soon. The government's insistence that it will is a fiction, and not a particularly convincing one. Those familiar with the vagaries of how the government runs Northern Ireland – or, rather, how it doesn't – know it well. Since the late Martin McGuinness collapsed the executive last January, the job of the Northern Ireland secretary has largely been to indulge  
15 it.

This means governing on a nod and a wink, and then a shrug. Ministers do the bare minimum from Westminster and civil servants keep things ticking over, powerless to take decisions of any magnitude, however necessary. The justice minister Rory Stewart called it a caretaker administration yesterday, which would be an apt metaphor were it not for the fact that caretakers usually try to hide the fact they're sleeping on the job.

20 When pressed as to what the government intends to do about something pressing, the answer from Karen Bradley and other ministers is always the same: "Sorry, what you're talking about is devolved, so let's get the show back on the road!" Given the unwillingness of Sinn Féin and the DUP to brook the necessary compromise to get back into government, it's always been a weak line. But only now has its weakness been exposed to a wider audience: the denial of basic civil rights inspires a reaction that the minutiae of regional administration does not.

25 Still, the government must stick to the line *ad absurdum* despite popular revulsion and its remoteness from political reality. Legislating for abortion rights would destroy its fiction on devolution. It would mean introducing direct rule and legislating for everything else that needs legislating for in Northern Ireland. It has neither the time, political capital nor parliamentary bandwidth for direct rule, which would create headaches within Westminster, at Stormont and with Dublin.

30 But let's be clear: if May decided to extend abortion rights to Northern Ireland, she could. Human rights are not devolved. Belfast's High Court has ruled the current prohibition on abortion violates human rights law and the UK Supreme Court will soon make its own ruling. Sinn Féin and the DUP have abdicated responsibility on devolved powers in the past, when it has suited them: in 2015 Stormont voted to let Westminster legislate for welfare reform. Formally suspending devolution, which is long overdue, would give her the power to do anything. Karen Bradley has already admitted the  
35 government could legislate to introduce equal marriage from Westminster, and that Conservative MPs would be given a free vote. To suggest immovable constitutional hurdles are blocking the path to abortion reform is a nonsense.

This is really about political will. The constitutional questions Downing Street is hiding behind are a product of its lack of it. The government has no incentive to make reform happen: it cannot afford to rile the DUP and nor does it want direct rule. Even Labour, whose draft general election manifesto initially suggested legislating unilaterally for abortion before  
40 the pledge was watered down, has blanched from making the call explicitly. The DUP, hegemonic in unionism, has no electoral incentive to liberalise or return to Stormont. A referendum is a non-starter: unlike in the Republic, reform could happen without it and all it would do is stir more pointless rancour in a place with no shortage of it.

After these calculations comes the shrug. Without devolution and without direct rule, making things happen in Northern Ireland is too difficult. The government is content to tread water on abortion and everything else until its hand is forced.

45 The courts have already ruled that Northern Ireland's civil servants cannot take ministerial decisions. Perhaps they will rule, again, that its draconian abortion regime violates human rights law. In the meantime, it is the women of Northern Ireland who will suffer.

## The UK's obsession with the 'special relationship', not Donald Trump, is Theresa May's real problem

Mary Dijeovsky, *The Independent*, Thursday 30 November 2017

For what will turn out to be a brief space, no doubt, Brexit was sidelined by the latest UK-US spasm in the time of Donald Trump. MPs indulged in a veritable orgy of Trump-bashing. The BBC fanned the flames by inviting the American media commentator Ann Coulter on to Radio 4's *Today* programme. Asked to follow that, the shadow Foreign Secretary, Emily Thornberry – who seems more and more sensible by the day – sighed theatrically, and said she didn't know where to start.

5 Well, I think I do know where to start, and it is not here. It is with the mysterious hold still exerted by the "special relationship" on those who walk our corridors of power. Without that, this media-political storm would never have assumed the proportions it did.

10 It is true that the various elements of this quarrel are as bad – almost – as they could be: the US President giving mass circulation, via Twitter, to inflammatory anti-Muslim videos; the US President thereby hugely raising the profile of Britain First, the extreme-right outfit that had originally posted the clips; a Prime Minister who was damned if she did and damned if she didn't express her abhorrence in public; and the US President congenitally unable to leave a criticism unanswered.

15 "Don't focus on me, focus on the destructive Radical Islamic Terrorism that is taking place within the United Kingdom," Trump tweeted to Theresa May (getting her Twitter name wrong first time around). It was, Lord Adonis tweeted in turn, perhaps the most "insulting and destructive public communication from a US president to a British prime minister since the American Civil War". Call in the ambassador, he said.

From there things only became more heated. A torrent of furious Brits demanded once again that the US state visit, already scaled back and postponed, should be expunged from the diary altogether. As for an invitation to the royal wedding – well, there are only so many guests you can fit into St George's Chapel at Windsor, so that may not have been a runner anyway – but, clearly, if they had any such pretensions, the Trumps should forget it.

20 With the Prime Minister abroad – sandwiching a trip to Saudi Arabia between Iraq and Jordan – it was Education Secretary Justine Greening (on the media) and Home Secretary Amber Rudd (in the Commons) who were given the unenviable job of telling the country that we should all pretty much lie back and think of the "special relationship" – a relationship so special that no US president, however flaky, and no quarrel, however public, would ever, ever, ever succeed in blowing it off course.

25 "The UK and US have been longstanding allies and our relationship with America is a hugely important one," Greening told the BBC, "and I don't think we should allow this tweet to undermine that in any way." Rudd advised MPs to remember the importance of the transatlantic alliance and that intelligence-sharing had "undoubtedly saved British lives": "That is the big picture here, and I would urge people to remember that."

30 So, you see, it all comes back to the "special relationship", and this is really the crux, because if it were not for the "special relationship", the Prime Minister might not have felt the need to condemn the US President in a public utterance. She could have condemned the videos in public and the President in private – as, in fact, did Boris Johnson. But with a controversial state visit on the cards, and anti-Trump sentiment, in the capital at least, on a seemingly constant high, she had little choice. Then came the backlash from Trump, which was taken far too seriously than it needed to be – we know what Trump is like and how lightly he uses social media, don't we? – and we really shouldn't take the hump. But then there was the Prime Minister's honour

35 to be defended – and that, regrettably, is where we are now.

Is it not beyond time to accept that the UK is an ally of the US, not a special friend? We have parts of our past that are shared, sometimes happily and to mutual benefit, sometimes not. In so far as the special relationship exists at all, it is a lopsided arrangement that allows the UK to fantasise about global power and influence, even as it seeks shelter under the eagle's wing.

40 Where there has been anything akin to a special relationship – in intelligence-sharing to a degree (the one asset identified by the Home Secretary) – we might recall Iraq's non-existent chemical weapons and ask how useful, in recent times, it has really been. That question could be even more pointed, if our intelligence services and ex-spies assisted the electoral anti-Trump efforts (as it would appear).

No wonder UK diplomacy pulled out all the stops to ensure Theresa May became the first foreign leader to visit the White House after Trump's inauguration. No wonder a state visit to the UK was on the table. Such gestures, however, are of far less

45 consequence to Washington than they are to London, where they help to keep the illusion of "specialness" alive.

[...] until this country drops its sense of entitlement towards Washington – and learns how to deal more adroitly with a President for whom social media is one, but only one, tool of communication – it could be hard to prevent this suddenly difficult relationship getting worse.

## Authenticity is the political snake oil of our age

Janan Ganesh, *The Financial Times*, SEPTEMBER 11, 2017

So of the times and so behind them, Jacob Rees-Mogg has lived a paradox this summer. The Conservative MP's refusal to apologise for his high birth turned the Marie Antoinette of the backbenches into a semi-serious candidate for national leadership. Betting exchanges made him second favourite to succeed the prime minister, Theresa May, as leader of the Tories.

5 Authenticity, the star dust of this political age, is what qualified him as a contender, and authenticity is what threatens to scuttle his chances. Last week, Mr Rees-Mogg said that he opposed same-sex marriage, and abortion, even in cases of rape. This horrified audiences that used to cherish him as previous generations cherished Oliver St John-Mollusc and other spoof aristocrats from Monty Python. His calm response was to quote the doctrine of the Catholic church.

10 If his moment has passed, he is entitled to more hurt than he seems to feel. Voters say they want authenticity in their politicians and there is nothing more authentic than a personal commitment to religion as the wider culture renounces the stuff.

That renunciation is measurable. Mr Rees-Mogg spoke out in the same month as the British Social Attitudes survey found that 53 per cent of people professed no religion, up from 31 per cent in 1983. That absolute majority, itself  
15 a first, cloaks some details that point to the eventual death of God on these shores. Seventy-one per cent of 18 to 24-year-olds have no religion, and just 3 per cent of that age group identify with the Anglican church that constitutes the established creed of the realm. Attitudes to homosexuality, sex before marriage and almost all moral questions are continuing their liberal drift.

Other surveys and voting patterns record the young's relative ease with Europe and immigration, too, as well as an  
20 open-mindedness on matters of gender that can flummox those of us who are only slightly older. People are liable to harden with age but it would take some dramatic mid-life conversion to arrest Britain's general trend away from Rees-Moggery.

There is a lesson here for liberals. At the level of electoral politics, it can seem that their cause, and the Enlightenment itself, are under serious threat from the forces of reaction. At the deeper level of demographic  
25 change, the threat is a paper tiger. The vote for Brexit and the subsequent year-long victory lap are as good as things will get for traditional conservatives in their lifetimes. The smarter among them know they are living through a blip, not the start of a new settlement. They have stolen a battle towards the end of a losing war.

There was an elegiac feel to the Europe referendum even at the time: old people voting more as a final act of defiance against social change than in serious hope of restoring the slow, ordered and, yes, religious nation of their  
30 youth. Demographics will not allow conservatives to move Britain even a little bit in that traditional direction after Brexit. If anything, their challenge is to hold the line against an eventual return to EU membership as these voters die and the ideological centre of the country creeps, if not to the left or to the right, then to what is now disparaged as the metropolitan. Is being authentic enough to be a leader?

Those who have suddenly soured on Mr Rees-Mogg deserve no pity. They were happy to buy into him as a curio  
35 from the past until he turned out to have the corresponding views. They might take politics more seriously next time. For now, the minority status of his views does not prove them wrong. It certainly does not make them illegitimate. But they are being eclipsed by the mere passage of time, without his critics having to do anything. Politics is downstream of social change, not the other way round. Liberals, spooked by their electoral defeats in recent years, lose themselves in conjecture about a new party and the search for a leader to avenge their losses.  
40 These efforts are reasonable and may come to something.

But the real fight is, so to speak, out there, in the real world of birth rates, death rates, disrupted family structures, the atomisation of people through technology, new patterns of work, geographic mobility, cultural exposure to the outside world and other impersonal processes that change underlying social attitudes over time.

On that terrain, liberals are rampant. It will show up in electoral outcomes in the future, by which time conservative  
45 aristocrats will still have to make do with a niche role in public life as artefacts wheeled out to amuse a hyper-modern nation. Short-term despair, long-term exuberance: it is a hard attitude to master but, for liberals, it is the right one.

Slate

## Oprah? Really

Osita Nwanevu, January 8, 2018

When world leaders came together in 2015 to settle on a framework for action on climate change, the resulting agreement set a goal of limiting the rise in global average temperatures from preindustrial levels to 2 degrees Celsius by 2100. The climatologist Michael Mann, voicing what has been the scientific consensus for some time, has warned that warming beyond that could lead to “environmental ruin.” Recent research suggests, in fact, that if all carbon emissions worldwide ceased tomorrow, the Earth would still warm as much as 1.3 degrees by this century’s end. If we continue on our current path, we, and our children, and our children’s children, will face a world of not only immiserating and constantly spreading heat and sea-level rise but also intense storms that will devastate major cities, crop failures that will disrupt access to food, violent conflicts over environmental resources, communicable diseases given the conditions to spread far more widely and severely than they otherwise would, and a perpetual refugee crisis dwarfing many times over the Syrian exodus that has been exploited by a resurgent far-right in Europe—one rough guess suggests 1.4 billion people may be displaced by 2060. Many, many people will die.

Averting the worst of all this will not only demand the global leadership of the United States but also sweeping, disruptive, and permanent changes to the American energy economy—changes that will require government action and intervention to a degree not seen since the New Deal. Now. Close your eyes and picture an ideal president. Someone capable of seriously engaging with not only the above but all of the challenges the 21<sup>st</sup> century will require us to face: inequality and economic stagnation for the vast majority of Americans, a health care system that still fails millions, and all the rest. Who have you pictured? Is it Oprah Winfrey? Is it really?

A few decades from now, if some poor historians put themselves through the trouble of assessing the hundreds of thousands of words the major press has dedicated to explaining why and how Donald Trump won the presidency, they will find few of them have been devoted to a fact that contributed to both his rise and the reception of Winfrey’s Golden Globes speech: The major figures on the contemporary American political scene are impossibly boring. With a few notable exceptions, every major presidential contender of our recent past seems small against the backdrop of the grand historical narrative we’ve weaved for ourselves. It is doubtful that there will be a movement someday to carve Marco Rubio into Mount Rushmore; contemporary politicians who speak at places like the site of Lincoln’s “House Divided” speech, as Hillary Clinton did in the summer of 2016, generally come off, to this observer, looking like children wearing their parent’s coats. Bored people can do inadvisable things, especially when alternatives to the status quo seem possible. We recently had a president who seemed, and was at least stylistically, out of the ordinary. He is gone now, although for \$400,000 or so you can have him stir and inspire your corporate function. His absence makes the actual state of American political rhetoric more obvious—if you’re a largely nondescript white man with a clean record who can drone about “common-sense solutions” in a tone that meshes well with stock footage of rolling fields and manufacturing plants of ambiguous productive activity, a party headhunter will assuredly have a look at you.

We’re all, whether we know it or not, a little tired of this. In 2016, half of the country found itself tired enough to elect a television celebrity who, stupid and unpolished as he may be, is at least fascinating to watch and follow. And now, a number of Democrats who’ve spent the year wailing about this find themselves tired enough to consider a TV star of their own for the office. They are not the same, obviously. Winfrey is articulate, has had a career defined more by its successes than its failures, and spoke more frankly Sunday night about the darkness that has shaped our history—racism, patriarchy—than most politicians. She is probably about as decent and noble a person as someone with over 40,000 times the net worth of the average American can be. These are, obviously, all qualities that would make her a highly compelling candidate to an electorate that will want to turn the page from the Trump presidency. It should be just as obvious that these qualities say little about her capacity to preside over a nation that faces a set of intractable and complex structural crises.

None of this is to say that *political experience*—that old, dry chestnut—is what counts the most here. Honesty with ourselves would force us to admit the country would be better off if we replaced every politician currently serving in Washington with a committee of social scientists, historians, and anxious, sweaty climatologists selected from the country’s major research universities at random. This is, of course, not the system of government we have, and we generally prefer filling the major political offices with people who know little, if anything, about the problems they are elected to fix. That’s an inevitable outcome of democracy, but ideally we’d be wise enough to save at least the presidency for those with deep knowledge of public policy. The solution here is to select a president who can shape deep knowledge into a robust, truly ambitious agenda that promises a future for this country beyond the incomprehensible misery we are all barreling toward, a candidate who can wed expertise and vision with the novel political rhetoric and expression voters clearly crave. Finding that person may require us to demand more from the cast of political characters we’ve already given ourselves. It does not require that we settle for Oprah.

*The Daily Beast*

## Time's Up for Comeback Kids Charlie Rose and Bill Clinton

Margaret Carlson, June 6, 2018

Just weeks after being outed and then fired as a serial sexual harasser in the workplace named for him, Charlie Rose tried to launch a second act with a TV show in which he would welcome alleged sexual harassers like himself who feel unfairly abused by an unforgiving public. There, the misunderstood could share their stories in a safe space and feel better about themselves. That died after a story revealing that Tina Brown rightly refused to have any part of it. Weeks after that, Rose is at it again, slated to attend the festivities at Sun Valley in July, according to Bloomberg News, the annual summer camp for billionaires in the hard-to-reach-except-by-private-jet mountain resort in Idaho where Rupert Murdoch, Warren Buffett, Tim Cook, Bill Gates, and Mark Zuckerberg are regulars. Harvey Weinstein was there last year.

You can see why Rose would want to land a spot at the invitation-only event. He was once King of the Mountain, a celebrity journalist giving long-winded answers in the form of questions to other notables. To be back drinking aged whiskey and hobnobbing in an Allen & Company windbreaker would be secular absolution. His show might be bankable, after all. But before he goes, Rose should remember the awkwardness of the dinner I was told about where the Manhattan hosts didn't want to rescind invitations but had to comb the guest list for a woman willing to sit next to him. Then, Rose should watch former president Bill Clinton's brutal interview on the *Today* show and another follow-up at the New York Public Library Tuesday night to see how showing up in Sun Valley might work out. Not so well, actually. The past you think you've shed sometimes clings like a damp bathrobe.

For the putative Comeback Kid, past is present. Clinton wanted to be treated as the once commander-in-chief as he promotes *The President Is Missing*, the beach read he's credited as co-authoring with James Patterson. Instead, Clinton was treated, however gently, like the impeached former president he is, one who it turns out never apologized personally to "that woman," Monica Lewinsky. He's filled with pity, not for a 20-something whose adult life could hardly get off the ground, but for himself and the people peppering him with unfair questions about it. In Clinton's telling he wasn't fighting impeachment as much as defending the Constitution so fiercely that he left office \$16 million in debt. While crying that his questioner was "omitting facts," he didn't mention that the Clintons have made \$240 million, in *Forbes'* estimation, since he left office.

You'd think Clinton would have a prepared answer by now for what happened between him and Lewinsky. He has. This is it.

Clinton is now making appearances to correct appearances, much like he did when he played the saxophone on Johnny Carson's *Tonight Show* to make a near career-ending monologue at the 1988 convention go away. On Tuesday night, Stephen Colbert offered Clinton another do-over, asking him if he understood why some people thought he gave "a tone-deaf response" to NBC's Craig Melvin in light of the #MeToo movement and how he "might reflect on your behavior 20 years ago." First Clinton blame-shifted to unfair editing by NBC but then gradually admitted it wasn't his finest hour, that the Monica Lewinsky affair was painful, something "he's had to live with the consequences every day since."

Next do-over, he should pull out the sax again and feel less of his pain and more of others. That's hard to do for Clinton or Rose who see themselves as victims, not perpetrators, that what they did doesn't amount to a whole hill of beans in this crazy world. No one died, after all. Besides, they are proponents of women, hiring binders full of them and helping many, including those they didn't press for sex. Where's the thanks for that? They're both bitter about a double standard. Why, oh why, are they treated so harshly when our current president is so much worse? Both Rose and Clinton are seeking the stage even as others accused of similar things are unemployable and destitute, with some in ankle bracelets or jail. Both these men continue to lead enviable lives, not stymied in their upward trajectory until relatively late in life when there were no concerns about money. Rose has multiple apartments in New York and Paris, and a house on the ocean in Long Island. Clinton doesn't have quite as many residences but lives larger than he ever thought possible.

Clinton's ice-cold anger comes from losing something he thought he was owed, a third term in the White House, despite his conduct and his wife's complicity in it. She stood by her man on *60 Minutes* and through every bimbo eruption, as his female staff called them, ever since. It's not the only reason Hillary Clinton isn't president but it's certainly one. The one thing most liberals have going for them is that they repent for blindly supporting their leaders when they are wrong, unlike conservatives who loathed Clinton but are blatant hypocrites when it comes to Trump's behavior. No matter what Trump does—pay for an abortion for a porn star (on Fifth Avenue perhaps), the president of the Susan B. Anthony fund said her members would stick with him. Not so the Democratic women who stood by Clinton during impeachment. Many have the decency to regret it, some with unfortunate overcompensation. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand now sees Clinton for who he is. Clinton complains about that, but he's not hurt nearly as much as Sen. Al Franken, whom Gillibrand forced out to expiate her original, Clintonian sin. [...]

*The New Republic*

## The Pathetic Truth About Trump's Culture Wars

Jeet Heer, September 28, 2017

1 Donald Trump is at home on the cultural battlefield, as shown by his legendary feuds with everyone  
from Rosie O'Donnell to Alec Baldwin to Meryl Streep. The more sober members of the press treat Trump's cultural  
wars as a diversion, perhaps intentionally, from his political failures. Yet it is hard to ignore how central cultural  
strife is to Trump's presidency after his latest incitement, attacking Colin Kaepernick and other football players who  
5 have kneeled during the national anthem to protest police brutality. At a rally in Alabama on Friday—ostensibly to  
support Senator Luther Strange, who nonetheless lost in Tuesday's special election—Trump's most passionate  
moment came when he fantasized about punishing politically outspoken football players: "Wouldn't you love to see  
one of these NFL owners, when somebody disrespects our flag, to say, 'Get that son of a bitch off the field right now.  
Out! He's fired. He's fired!'"

10 Trump is a strenuous cultural warrior, but it's not always obvious what he hopes to achieve with the fights he  
picks. He clearly gets a rush from riling up his supporters, both in person and online. According to a report from  
Glenn Thrush and Maggie Haberman in *The New York Times*, the football tirade was "the one part of the trip that  
cheered him up" and he especially enjoyed the "rallygoers' thunderous approval of his attack on Colin Kaepernick."  
By their account, Trump isn't just seeking an ego boost, but strategically is solidifying his bond with his most  
15 passionate fans: "In private, the president and his top aides freely admit that he is engaged in a culture war on behalf  
of his white, working-class base, a New York billionaire waging war against "politically correct" coastal elites on  
behalf of his supporters in the South and in the Midwest. He believes the war was foisted upon him by former  
President Barack Obama and other Democrats — and he is determined to win, current and former aides said."

20 This account only seems partially accurate. It defies belief that the culture wars were "foisted" on Trump,  
since he's been eagerly engaging in them for decades in various forms, going back at least to 1989 when he took out  
a full page ad in the *Times* calling for the execution of the Central Park Five (a group of non-white teens who were  
accused of a brutal rape, which they were later exonerated of).

25 Moreover, it's not at all clear that Trump is "determined to win" the culture war. In politics, victory usually  
involves some element of persuasion—convincing skeptics and even opponents to accept, even if reluctantly, your  
point. Trump isn't pursuing victory of that sort. Rather, he's simply ensuring that both sides become even more  
firmly entrenched in their prior positions. He launched his anti-kneeling cause at a partisan rally of overwhelmingly  
white Southerners. It's hard to imagine a venue better suited to the racial subtext of his stance—and thus, equally  
well suited to ignite a backlash, which Trump got. By Sunday, dozens of players were taking the knee, with many  
30 more registering more moderate forms of protests of locking arms. If the goal was to stop players from taking the  
knee, Trump failed. If the goal was to hijack Kaepernick's protest against police brutality and turn it into another  
Trumpian carnival with himself as both ringmaster and star of the show, then the president succeeded.

35 *Times* columnist Ross Douthat makes a useful distinction between good and bad cultural wars. "A good culture  
war is one that, beneath all the posturing and demagoguery and noise, has clear policy implications, a core legal or moral  
question, a place where one side can win a necessary victory or where a new consensus can be hashed out,"  
Douthat argued. "A bad culture war is one in which attitudinizing, tribalism and worst-case fearmongering float  
around unmoored from any specific legal question, in which mutual misunderstanding reigns and a thousand  
grievances are stirred up without a single issue being clarified or potentially resolved. Unfortunately for us all Donald  
Trump is a master, a virtuoso, of the second kind of culture war—and a master, too, of taking social and cultural  
debates that could be important and necessary and making them stupider and emptier and all about himself."

40 But Trump isn't likely to stop doing it; he doesn't have many other arrows in his political quiver. Working with  
the Republicans has become a chore, since they can't get anything done. He has so little regard for the GOP that  
he childishly mocks senators Mitch McConnell and John McCain in private. Roy Moore's triumph over Strange in  
the Alabama primary this week shows that Trump's power is limited even among his own followers. Foreign policy  
is proving too complicated, so he's delegating decision-making to the military and the former generals working for  
45 him. The ideological foot soldiers of Trumpism, notably Steve Bannon and Sebastian Gorka, have been forced out of  
the White House. And Trump's protectionist agenda has been derailed, with trade hawk Peter Navarro now in  
the humiliating position of serving under free-trader Gary Cohn. Day by day, Trump is losing power. Trump, largely  
because he has no interest or experience in governing, is being boxed in by the Washington establishment he hates  
so much. But he is more than capable of waging culture wars; indeed, it's one of the few things at which he's  
50 genuinely expert. [...]

*The Daily Beast*

## Should Roseanne Barr's Racism Ruin the Legacy of One of TV's Greatest Sitcoms?

Kevin Fallon, May 30, 2018

1 The Roseanne bar was a low one. Shamefully low, even.

2 No matter what you read about supposed unease on the executive floors at ABC and Disney over Roseanne  
3 Barr's views and behavior, all she had to do to keep the revival of her hit TV show on air (and the hundreds of people  
4 who worked for it employed) was not express her racist views. By this point, the network seemed to be tacitly OK  
5 with her having those views. They were hardly a secret. She just had to refrain from tweeting them out to the world to  
6 see, and she couldn't do that. They say when someone shows you who they are, believe them. Roseanne Barr seems to  
7 travel with her own assemblage of flashing neon signs, each blaring "THIS IS ME, Y'ALL!" No matter how much  
8 blame she puts on her confusion over Valerie Jarrett's race, her co-stars for "throwing her under the bus," or,  
9 um, Ambien, she can't unplug those signs. She couldn't leap the moral centimeters required to clear that  
10 bar. Roseanne is canceled. As in, all of *Roseanne* is canceled.

11 There will be no season two of the ABC revival, the writers for which, in a cruel turn of events, were pulling  
12 into the parking lot for their first day of work when the news came. As the day wore on, the punishments escalated.  
13 There will also be no more airing or streaming of the show's original '90s run, with multiple networks including  
14 Paramount, TV Land, CMT, and Hulu pulling their reruns. [...]

15 Removing the *Roseanne* library doesn't erase the culture that led to Barr's racist tweets, nor those who  
16 defended her and who are now leveling accusations of censorship. That culture existed before there was  
17 a *Roseanne* revival, and it exists now that the revival has been canceled. That is something that must be reckoned with  
18 immediately. But, arguably, it must also happen separately from the conversation about the show that turned Barr,  
19 now a martyr for that culture's cause, into an influential public figure. Do we discredit the legacy of that original run  
20 of *Roseanne* and the work that Barr did on it because of the inexcusable behavior she is being held accountable for  
21 now?

22 We are relentlessly engaged in a debate about the art vs. the artist, whether we're talking about the works of  
23 Woody Allen and Roman Polanski, how we view the impact of *The Cosby Show*, what should happen to the creative  
24 output of men felled by the #MeToo movement, or even how the new season of *Arrested Development* plays in the  
25 wake of a disastrously misogynistic interview—not to mention sexual misconduct allegations against Jeffrey Tambor.  
26 But when the art itself is not problematic, and even has tangible value, is it wrong to erase it completely? (There's a  
27 reason that HBO's recent adaptation of *Fahrenheit 451* made headlines for being so timely.) We've been through this  
28 before. In 2015, TV Land pulled *Dukes of Hazzard* from its lineup because its iconic car, The General Lee, was  
29 decalced with a Confederate flag. Maybe the most dramatic example, because of the role it played in changing not just  
30 television, but our culture entirely, is *The Cosby Show*, which saw its reruns pulled from TV Land in 2014 after a  
31 sixteenth woman came forward to allege sexual assault against its star. A lower-profile network, Bounce  
32 TV, scrubbed its lineup of *Cosby Show* repeats following Cosby's recent guilty verdict. It had been the only network  
33 still airing reruns of the sitcom.

34 At the time of *The Cosby Show*'s disappearing, it, like *Roseanne*, had a sort of TV omnipresence. That was  
35 because like *Roseanne*, it was considered one of the best family sitcoms we've ever had, and one of the most  
36 culturally important. While not conflating the actions of Cosby and Barr, the perceived reasoning for ending their  
37 shows' reruns is similar: moral grandstanding borne out of our inability to divorce feelings about performers from  
38 feelings about their performances. Altruistically, it's a line in the sand, a denial of a platform and publicity to those  
39 who don't deserve it when there are other artists who do. Cynically, it's an empty gesture barely disguising a PR  
40 move. When TV Land pulled *The Cosby Show* reruns, *The Daily Beast*'s Tim Teeman wrote that the network was  
41 making the wrong decision. "By continuing to show his sitcom, TV Land would be doing a huge public service in  
42 reminding an apparently unaware public that the actors on our screens are different to the characters they play," he  
43 wrote. "TV Land is not helping Cosby's alleged victims, or making him pay for his crimes, or even helping us  
44 understand those crimes and him, by taking the show off the air." "Blissfully—and not a little moronically—beholden  
45 to TV iconography, we chose to set Bill Cosby in an eternal cuddly sweater," he continued. "That suited us until the  
46 revelation of these alleged, awful crimes. By cutting *The Cosby Show* reruns off, TV Land can't rewrite that history of  
47 myopic glorification, or erase the harsh contours of the real Bill Cosby."

48 We'll concede again that it's unlikely anyone outside of Barr's fringe supporters would stomach endless  
49 reruns of her show right now. Still, there were millions of people eager to watch her revival when her views were  
50 already public knowledge, and these same networks that have since pulled their *Roseanne* reruns had relentlessly  
51 advertised them right up until yesterday. So we could even be wrong about that. [...]

## Britain needs a national identity register

IDENTITY CRISIS | *The Economist*, May 5th 2018

THE harassment of the Windrush generation of Caribbean migrants is a shameful chapter in Britain's history, and ministers are paying for it. One home secretary resigned on April 29th; her predecessor, Theresa May, now the prime minister, is weakened. It falls to Sajid Javid, who took charge of the Home Office this week, to clear up the mess.

5 There is little to like about Mrs May's migration policy. The state-led hounding of thousands of law-abiding British citizens was a side-effect of the "hostile environment" for illegal immigrants that she created as home secretary.

Indeed, Mrs May's rigid insistence on reducing net inflows to the arbitrary level of 100,000 a year created a hostile environment for all migrants, not just the illegal ones. Landlords, employers and others were given new  
10 duties to check people's migration status. The result has been that those with incomplete paperwork have been denied homes, jobs and public services, and have even been locked up. Mrs May sent mobile billboards bearing the legend "GO HOME OR FACE ARREST" to migrant-heavy districts. She ridiculed "citizens of nowhere" and threatened to make companies publish lists of their foreign workers (before backing down). Cowboyish Home Office officials desperate to reach their targets have used any excuse to notch up ejections.  
15 Claiming to crack down on illegal migrants, they even broke the law themselves.

For all its shortcomings, Mrs May's approach does contain one idea that is worth preserving: enforcement should happen inland, not just at the border. Most of Britain's half-million or so illegal immigrants did not enter the country illicitly but have overstayed their visas. Furthermore, from the camps of Calais to the Mediterranean sea, there is plenty of evidence that fortifying borders does not stop lots of people continuing  
20 to try to cross them. The result is migrants' suffering, extra cost to taxpayers and a bonanza for people-smugglers.

The Windrush debacle highlighted that Britain has no easy way of carrying out this inland enforcement. The government's guide for landlords who need to verify tenants' migration status is 35 pages long. If landlords get it wrong they risk a fine or even imprisonment. Researchers have shown that, unsurprisingly, they tend to  
25 err on the side of caution, rejecting those without passports (and especially those who are not white). The result is pressure against all migrants, and also against ethnic minorities, British or otherwise. After Brexit the problem will be worse, as 3m Europeans will be allowed to remain permanently but without passports.

The scandal has rightly provoked calls for an overhaul of migration enforcement. Any rethink must get to the root of the problem. This is not that Britain checks the status of migrants, as any country must if it values the  
30 rule of law. The real shortcoming is that Britain, rarely among advanced countries, lacks a simple, non-discriminatory way to check the identity of its population. Under Mr Javid it should get one.

Liberals, including this newspaper, have argued against national identity registers on the basis that they invade privacy and aid oppression by the state. But the balance of this trade-off has changed. In a globalised world more people spend time travelling, studying or working abroad, and access to labour markets and public  
35 services depends on their exact status. Proving identity thus matters more than ever. Countries like Britain that lack an ID register rely on other proofs—bank statements, tax records, phone bills—that are even more intrusive. As for the risk of oppression, the Windrush affair shows that it is not just all-knowing states that have the power to persecute their citizens. It was precisely the opacity of information that the Home Office exploited in order to pursue many thousands of people who had a right to be in Britain.

40 Setting up an identity register would not be cheap or easy. A previous, abortive effort to roll out ID cards a decade ago was priced at about £5bn (\$7bn). It would probably have to involve an element of amnesty for those caught up in a Windrush-style trap of missing paperwork. But Brexit is forcing Britain to think hard about matters of migration and citizenship. Taking back control of who enters the country is one of the biggest prizes advertised by Brexiteers. To do that, Britain must first have a better idea of who is already there.



## Arresting kids won't stop knife crime. Police should target the men in suits

David Lammy, *The Guardian*, 1 Feb 2018

Last Sunday another teenager, aged just 17, was stabbed in my constituency, Tottenham, and sustained life-changing injuries. The previous Friday, a young man, 23, was stabbed multiple times in the torso.

Across Britain there has been a surge in violent knife crime. More than 37,000 knife offences in England and Wales were recorded last year alone, a 21% increase from the previous 12 months. In the capital, Metropolitan police files show that half of all deaths involving knives are directly linked to the drugs trade and gang turf wars. Many other deaths are a result of the culture of violence that gang activity fosters. And gun crime is soaring too, with more than 6,500 offences in the past 12 months – a 20% increase.

The media and political focus is on the youths – knife arches in schools, stop and search, public awareness campaigns and tougher, mandatory prison sentences for minors found carrying a knife. But while the rhetoric may be reassuring, we are now trapped in an endless cycle of tough-on-crime headlines that will do very little to stop the infanticide before us. This rhetoric implores single mothers, teachers, social workers and communities to do more; but knife crime is not being driven by youths. It is being driven by a sophisticated network of veteran organised criminals.

Young people falling into the wrong crowd in Tottenham, Salford or Croydon know nothing about the trafficking of tonnes of cocaine across our borders every single year. They know nothing of the shipment routes from Central and South America that have made London a cocaine capital of Europe. They know nothing of the lorries, container vessels, luxury yachts and private jets that supply our nation's £11bn-a-year drug market. They know nothing of the dirty money flooding the London property market, hidden behind anonymous shell companies registered in tax havens.

This isn't about kids in tracksuits carrying knives, it's about men in suits carrying briefcases. It is serious criminal networks that are exploiting our young people, arming them to the teeth and sending them out to fight turf wars.

I have seen how the process works. If a minor has a single mother at home, the gangs may threaten to kill her unless the child does their bidding. If a teenager has learning difficulties then they are fair game to be made a drugs mule or foot soldier. Young men are promised the most expensive trainers, the newest smartphone and ready access to women – who in turn are sexually exploited. Children as young as 12 are being pimped to run drugs, cash and guns across "county lines" to the home counties or market towns and set up satellite gang operations.

This is McMafia Britain. Homegrown British criminals akin to the Krays or the notorious Adams family in north London – in league with Russian, Albanian, Somali and Turkish gangs – are trafficking drugs, guns and people across borders and across continents. Liverpool, Birmingham and Manchester, as well as London, are "regional hubs" for criminal networks that are taking heroin, crack cocaine and its associated violence and exploitation into the shires.

Yet we hear precious little about all this from the home secretary, the head of the National Crime Agency (NCA), or the commissioner of the Metropolitan Police. We know that Border Force budgets have been cut by a quarter, and the government has even considered plugging the gaps with volunteers. We know that our police forces have had their budgets cut. We know that the NCA is prioritising cybercrime, child sexual exploitation and terrorism, and doesn't have the resources to tackle these powerful criminal networks. The Home Office's draft Serious Violence strategy fails to even draw the link between organised crime and violence.

It has often been said that the war on drugs has failed. Some politicians and commentators are now arguing for a complete rethink, with decriminalisation or liberalisation touted as the best way to cut off the gangsters' monopoly over the supply of drugs. But the real problem right now is inertia and a lack of political leadership. While the political class dither, Britain has become a European hub of organised crime – and the bodies on our streets tell us that the status quo is failing badly.

We need now to urgently focus on bringing down these criminal empires. Arresting foot soldiers is futile if we don't go after the generals at the top.

• David Lammy is Labour MP for Tottenham

## Good capitalism vs bad capitalism

BAGEHOT | *The Economist*, 7<sup>th</sup> June 2018

THE cabinet has become a killing field of political careers. Four senior ministers have left for the backbenches in the past eight months—and if there is any justice then two more, Chris Grayling, the transport secretary, and Gavin Williamson, the defence secretary, will soon be following them. But one minister is thriving against the odds. Since becoming secretary of state for the environment last June, Michael Gove has revived his reputation and revitalised his department. Some bookmakers put him as the favourite to replace Theresa May as Tory leader.

The skills that have brought him to this unexpected position were on display in a speech he delivered on June 6th at Policy Exchange, a right-of-centre think-tank, about the state of capitalism. He started off by praising the system as the most successful wealth-creating machine the world has seen, but went on to lament “the failure of our current model of capitalism to deliver the progress we all aspire to”. Productivity growth is sluggish. Wage growth has stagnated. Economic insecurity is rife. A well-connected oligarchy is sucking up a disproportionate share of the proceeds of growth. If Jeremy Corbyn, the Labour leader, had spoken in similar terms, the tabloids would be up in arms.

Mr Gove’s speech is a good example of his ability to identify a change of mood in his party and articulate it for the broader public. For most of the four decades following Margaret Thatcher’s election in 1979, Conservatives thought it was enough to praise capitalism and demonise the state. Today, with much of the privatised rail system in chaos and some franchises being taken back under public control, sentient Tories are telling a more complicated story. They are making a sharp distinction between good and bad capitalism, and suggesting a much more active role for the state in promoting the first and tackling the second.

Several ministers have echoed Mr Gove’s thoughts, though none has expressed them quite so vigorously. Mrs May has revived Edward Heath’s talk of “the unacceptable face of capitalism”, a phrase which Thatcherites once dismissed as heresy. Philip Hammond, the chancellor of the exchequer, says he wants to curb capitalism’s excesses. Matt Hancock, the culture secretary, promises to tame the “Wild West” of the internet.

Some of the brightest Tory MPs outside the cabinet are also asking hard questions about capitalism. Jesse Norman is about to publish a book arguing that Adam Smith was a much more complicated thinker than many libertarians, including the Adam Smith Institute, believe. Smith worried that markets were prone to being hijacked by rent-seekers and that companies could become tools of oppression. Right-wing think-tanks are producing blueprints for reforming capitalism, just as they once drew up blueprints for unleashing it.

The Tories are making sure that they praise the good version of capitalism. Liz Truss, the chief secretary to the Treasury, often applauds digital disrupters such as Airbnb and Deliveroo. She frequently pitches her argument to young people, who might be attracted to Mr Corbyn for cultural reasons but who are also keen on starting their own companies or, at the very least, picking the fruits of the entrepreneurial economy in the form of home-delivered meals and Uber rides. The Conservatives are determined not to repeat the mistake of last year’s election, when they lacked a positive economic message to sell.

At the same time, they are targeting bad capitalism. Its most egregious form is cronyism. Many of Britain’s privatised industries are much too close to government. This can lead to dismal service, as on the railways. It also encourages a cycle of connection-greased over-investment, followed by collapse, as in the case of Carillion, a giant outsourcer.

[...]

Another variety of bad capitalism is market dominance. The Social Market Foundation, a centrist think-tank, argues that eight out of ten consumer markets that it examined were dominated by a small number of incumbents. Mr Hammond is pondering whether new regulations are needed to curb the excesses of the internet giants. Backbench Tory MPs routinely complain about the fact that bricks-and-mortar shops are going out of business, turning high streets into mausoleums, while internet-based companies escape from paying taxes.

These new Tory critics of capitalism are less successful at providing solutions than they are at diagnosing the problems. In his speech, Mr Gove put forward a series of clever suggestions—such as creating different classes of shares, so that company founders can retain more control when companies go public—without fleshing out how they might work in practice. They are also guilty of underestimating the forces they are up against. The rewards for lobbying and cronyism are huge. Interest groups have an astonishing ability to grind down reformers—look at the way that Mr Clark’s reforms of corporate governance have been reduced to almost nothing. But these are reasons to redouble their efforts to reform the system, rather than retreat in despair. Mr Gove is surely right that if capitalism’s friends don’t reform the system, then capitalism’s enemies will do it for them.

## The Daily Herald (Everett, WA)

Thursday, December 21, 2017 - 783 words

# Obamacare surprise: Nearly 9 million sign up for the ACA

By Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar / Associated Press

1 WASHINGTON - In a remarkably strong show of consumer demand, nearly 9 million people signed up for  
2 "Obamacare" next year, as government numbers out Thursday proved predictions of its collapse wrong yet again.  
3 The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services said more than 8.8 million people have signed up in the 39 states  
4 served by the federal HealthCare.gov website.  
5 That compares to 9.2 million last year in the same states - or 96 percent of the previous total.  
6 The level exceeds what experts thought was possible after another year of political battles over the Affordable  
7 Care Act, not to mention market problems like rising premiums and insurer exits. On top of that,  
8 the Trump administration cut enrollment season in half, slashed the ad budget, terminated major payments to  
9 insurers, and scaled back grants for consumer counselors.  
10 "This level of enrollment is truly remarkable, especially given the headwinds faced by the program," said Larry  
11 Levitt of the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation.  
12 President Donald Trump insistently predicted "Obamacare" would implode as he pursued unsuccessful efforts to  
13 repeal it in Congress. This week he incorrectly declared the GOP tax bill had essentially repealed it.  
14 Despite all that, more than 1 million new customers signed up last week, ahead of a Dec. 15 deadline for  
15 HealthCare.gov. That's a sign of solid interest in the program, which offers subsidized private health insurance to  
16 people who don't have access to job-based coverage.  
17 It's possible that final HealthCare.gov numbers could end up somewhat higher than reported Thursday, partly  
18 because late sign-ups in the Midwest and the West have yet to be added in.  
19 The nationwide enrollment total won't be known for weeks, since some states running their own health insurance  
20 markets - or exchanges - continue signing up customers through January.  
21 Total national enrollment could wind up near last year's final number of 12.2 million.  
22 "We know anecdotally that many state exchanges are running ahead of last year, (and) we could actually make up  
23 the national enrollment deficit with higher state-run exchange enrollment," said Chris Sloan of the consulting firm  
24 Avalere Health.  
25 Among the HealthCare.gov states, Florida led in enrollments, with 1.7 million people so far. Texas was next, with  
26 1.1 million. Sign-ups for those states could rise, since a deadline extension is available for people in hurricane-  
27 affected areas.  
28 In Austin, Texas, a nonprofit group that helps low-income working people surpassed its enrollments for last year,  
29 and then some. Foundation Communities signed up 5,323 people this year, or about 20 percent more than last  
30 year.  
31 Health insurance program director Elizabeth Colvin credited squads of volunteers who helped steer consumers  
32 through a sign-up process that includes having to estimate their income for next year and other challenges.  
33 "The number that came out today proves that Obamacare is working," said Colvin.  
34 Lori Lodes, a former Obama administration official who once helped direct the enrollment campaign, said it's  
35 likely that last week saw the biggest number of sign-ups in the program's history.  
36 That's certain to lead to more criticism of the Trump administration for shortening open enrollment and other  
37 actions that Democrats call "sabotage."  
38 "The American people surged to defend this historic law from the cruelty of Trumpcare, and they enrolled at a  
39 record pace in quality, affordable health coverage on HealthCare.gov," said House Democratic leader Nancy  
40 Pelosi of California.  
41 However, the administration also took other less noticed steps to facilitate enrollment, such as creating an easier  
42 path for insurers and brokers to sign up customers.  
43 The strong numbers for HealthCare.gov came a day after Trump proclaimed that the GOP tax bill "essentially  
44 repealed Obamacare."  
45 But the tax overhaul only repealed the health law's fines on people who don't carry health insurance, starting in  
46 2019. Other major elements of former President Barack Obama's law remain in place, including its Medicaid  
47 expansion tailored to low-income adults, protections for people with pre-existing medical conditions, subsidies to  
48 help consumers pay their premiums, and requirements that insurers cover "essential" health benefits.  
49 First word of the enrollment numbers came via Twitter from Seema Verma, head of the Centers for Medicare and  
50 Medicaid Services.  
51 She struck an upbeat tone:  
52 "We take pride in providing great customer service," she wrote, congratulating her agency on "the smoothest  
53 experience for consumers to date."  
54 In an interview Thursday with The Associated Press, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky, indicated  
55 he's skeptical at best about revisiting botched efforts to dismantle the health care law.  
56 Bipartisan legislation to shore up insurance markets is pending before the Senate, but its fate is also uncertain.

## Government 'using devolution as an excuse' to avoid abortion reform in Northern Ireland, campaigners warn

Lizzy Buchan Political Correspondent , *The Independent*, 17 March 2018

5 The Government is using “devolution as an excuse” to avoid liberalising abortion laws in Northern Ireland, campaigners claim, saying Theresa May is being “held hostage” by her alliance with the DUP. Ministers have been accused of “extraordinary” inconsistency in their stance, after parliamentary questions revealed that the UK Government might consider imposing same-sex marriage in the province but that it would not intervene on the issue of abortion.

0 Northern Ireland has some of the strictest laws on abortion in Europe, as women are banned from getting terminations in all but the most extreme circumstances. Rape and incest are not deemed valid reasons for seeking abortions. More than 130 cross-party MPs and peers have written to Home Secretary Amber Rudd urging her to relax abortion laws in the province after a key UN committee said forcing women in Northern Ireland to travel for terminations was a “systematic violation” of their human rights.

5 However, such a move could threaten Ms May’s fragile truce with the DUP, a staunchly anti-abortion party who prop up her Government after she lost her majority in last year’s election.

Responding to a parliamentary question from Labour, Northern Ireland Secretary Karen Bradley said the Government would allow “a free vote on matters of conscience such as equal marriage” and insisted Westminster’s power to legislate was “unaffected”, despite the matter being devolved to Belfast.

0 But when asked the same question about abortion, junior minister Shailesh Vara said it was a devolved matter for “locally accountable politicians to consider”.

Labour MP Stella Creasy, who led a backbench revolt that forced the Government to allow Northern Irish women to access terminations on the English NHS, said there was cross-party support for the plans but the questions showed the debate was being stifled.

5 She told *The Independent*: “Using devolution as an excuse not to extend equal access to abortion for women in Northern Ireland doesn’t wash when the Government have made it clear they are happy to intervene to extend same sex marriage rights. “The fight for equality has always been about solidarity and I know women’s rights campaigners and gay rights campaigners alike will be horrified to see the Government be selective in this way.

0 The Women’s Equality Party also pointed to the DUP alliance and warned the Prime Minister against being “held hostage by calculations about parliamentary arithmetic” on vital issues for women.

A spokesperson said: “A situation where women face “systematic violations” of their rights, as the UN committee noted earlier this year, needs urgent remedy and must not be held hostage by calculations about parliamentary arithmetic at Westminster or the inability to reach a power-sharing deal in Stormont.

5 “These parliamentary answers show that the Government, in light of the political impasse at Northern Ireland, acknowledges that Westminster has the power to push forward equality, but denies those powers when it comes to women’s reproductive rights. “The Government is putting its fingers in its ears rather than recognising the unnecessary trauma that women in Northern Ireland have to face by travelling to other parts of the UK to access abortions.”

0 Pro-choice campaigners said lives were being put at risk by “antiquated, offensive laws” in Northern Ireland, which they claim deter women from seeking medical help and see some resorting to buying illegal abortion pills online, which induce them to miscarry. Clare Murphy, director of external affairs at Bpas, an abortion care charity, said: “It seems extraordinary that the Government would think it acceptable to allow a free vote on equal marriage in Northern Ireland if it came before parliament but claim it is out of the question when it comes to women’s access to abortion.

5 “In fact, it is becoming increasingly clear that the Government has both a moral and legal duty to act on the continued criminalisation of women in Northern Ireland.”

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (Cedaw) recently declared that thousands of girls and women were being exposed to “horrific situations”, either by being forced to carry pregnancies conceived through rape and incest to term or having to travel to procure legal abortions.

It said the UK routinely violates the human rights of Northern Irish women by restricting their access to abortion.

0 DUP Chief Whip Sir Jeffrey Donaldson said any attempt to change the law would “completely undermine the devolution settlement” and pointed out that Northern Ireland’s Assembly had voted against abortion for foetuses with terminal illnesses in 2016.

He told *The Independent*: “This is clearly a devolved issue and the Secretary of State was absolutely right. We do not believe it would be appropriate for Parliament to intervene on this matter. “The irony is the law on abortion in

5 Northern Ireland has a fresher mandate than any other abortion law in the UK, having just been voted on by the Northern Ireland Assembly in 2016. “I don’t see how either of the main parties has a mandate to change the law in Northern Ireland and it would completely undermine the devolution settlement.”

Women from Northern Ireland are now able to access free abortions on the NHS in England after more than 100 MPs forced the Government into a U-turn on the Queen’s Speech last summer.

0 The Government declined to comment further, when approached by *The Independent*.

## The roadblock hard Brexiteers can't drive around: Ireland

Polly Toynbee, *The Guardian*, 11 February 2018

Theresa May never cast her deciding vote nor even expressed a view at last week's warring Brexit cabinet committee meetings, deliberately constructed as a five-a-side stand-off. Opening the session on Ireland and immigration, the prime minister reportedly declared, "We don't need to decide anything today." And so they didn't, again. Warfare resumes next week at a Chequers away day. Nineteen long months after the vote, EU negotiators tap their fingers in irritation as Michel Barnier reminds us that "The time is short, very short." The 22 March deadline for agreeing a transition deal may be missed, derailed by the Mogglodytes' objection that it makes us rule-taking "vassals".

There is nothing new for either side to think or say. Brextremists stick their fingers in their ears at each revelation of ill-effects. Take the past few days: we have learned of fruit and vegetables being left to rot in the fields for lack of foreign EU labour, and that road haulage permits will be strictly limited once we depart. Lack of EU nurses worsens the 40,000 NHS nursing vacancies, and the UK will be last to get new medicines. Who knew 90% of official vets in abattoirs, some of whom are already leaving, were EU citizens? Public health laboratories at ports warn they will not be able to cope with import checks, as they too are staffed by EU citizens: food will rot on the quayside. Who knew that Ofcom, on behalf of the EU, checks most broadcasting arriving from non-EU countries? Brexit risks thousands of those jobs.

Day by day, more unconsidered mishaps emerge. Look at last week's cabinet report showing a hard Brexit would wipe out 16% of economic growth in the poorest areas. Yes, that's still phoney-war speculation – but right now, despite the weak pound, the trade deficit is widening as imports increase faster than exports. UK growth lags further behind the EU and the US. It was top of the G7, now it's bottom (...).

But there is one great question: Ireland. The Brexiteers avoid mentioning it, because Ireland is their roadblock. The border is marked by memories of British bad faith that have been gradually healing over 20 years of peace. What a strange irony if Ireland ends up saving us all from ourselves. The border conundrum can only be resolved by forcing May to abandon her contradictory red lines – no customs union, no single market, no European court of justice – and no hard border.

Barnier says Northern Ireland alone could stay in the customs union and the single market. Naturally, the SNP jumped up to say "me too". Maybe the Brexiteers are destructive enough to accept an end to the UK as a price worth paying? But the DUP they depend on rejects outright any border with the rest of us.

In the cabinet committee the Brexiteers reached again for technology for the border; some mentioned drones. But CCTV or automatic number plate recognition cameras would be vulnerable: Northern Ireland's chief constable warned last week that any such technology would be paramilitary targets. Move the border to Belfast, was one Brexit brainwave, but wherever they are, border hangars for lorry customs checks will be emblems of an end to Good Friday peace.

The Irish stand in sadness, dismay and puzzlement. I spoke yesterday to the Irish ambassador, who observes government disarray daily and waits for a sign. He points to the withdrawal agreement, where paragraph 49 is carved in stone. On the border question it says: "In the absence of agreed solutions, the United Kingdom will maintain full alignment with those rules of the internal market and the customs union." There are no other agreed solutions – none. Clarity is needed fast, says the ambassador, "Paragraph 49 is the failsafe." Barnier is only obeying European council instructions: the EU27 are rock-solid on their no hard border promise.

"Full alignment" for Northern Ireland meets its parliamentary test this month, when amendments to trade bills call for staying in the customs union. It would be unthinkable for Labour not to vote for that: its own upcoming away day will certainly agree. Otherwise it sides with Rees-Mogg, Iain Duncan Smith and John Redwood. What's more, "full alignment" will mean near-as-dammit staying inside the single market too, which is just as vital for keeping the Irish border open.

The shadow Brexit secretary, Keir Starmer, says: "No one has explained how the border commitments can be kept unless a customs union with the EU is on the negotiating table and the final deal delivers the benefits of the single market." Never mind the finessed language, watch that turn into a resounding Labour vote when the crunch comes, as Anna Soubry and Ken Clarke rally Tory rebels.

May dares not see off her ultra wing, but parliament looks set to do it for her. The anvil on which a soft Brexit is forged will be Ireland, because there is no other option. Despite history, it stands to be the United Kingdom's saviour.

• Polly Toynbee is a Guardian columnist

## The New York Times

### Late Edition - Final

National, Thursday, February 22, 2018 - 756 words

# First Lady's Parents Hold Green Cards

By EMILY COCHRANE

1 WASHINGTON -- The parents of the first lady, Melania Trump, have obtained lawful permanent residency  
2 in the United States, a lawyer for the couple confirmed Wednesday, but it remains unclear how or when the  
3 couple received their green cards.

4 The lack of clarity about when and how Viktor and Amalija Knavs obtained their legal residencies raises  
5 questions about whether the couple secured their residency through family-based immigration, which  
6 President Trump calls chain migration and has said he wants to restrict. Immigration experts said it would  
7 have been the most direct, and most likely, way for Mrs. Trump's parents, formerly of Slovenia, to get their  
8 green cards.

9 Their immigration lawyer, Michael J. Wildes, declined to offer any details.

10 "It's a privilege to help this family, but I have to respect their privacy as well," Mr. Wildes said in a brief  
11 interview.

12 "Immigration is in our DNA," he added. "We have to take great pride, no matter where somebody hails from,  
13 in that legacy."

14 Stephanie Grisham, a spokeswoman for Mrs. Trump, wrote in an email that she would not comment on  
15 Mrs. Trump's parents because "they are not part of this administration, and deserve their privacy." The  
16 Washington Post first reported the Knavses' immigration status.

17 Under family-based immigration, adult American citizens can petition for residency for their parents, adult  
18 married children and siblings. Mr. Trump would limit that to parents and children under 21.

19 In the Knavses' case, Mrs. Trump, who became a citizen in 2006 after obtaining a green card, would have  
20 sponsored them.

21 "It would be odd if she sponsored her parents and didn't want to talk about that because it's a fairly routine  
22 thing," said Hiroshi Motomura, a law professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, who specializes  
23 in immigration law. "It only becomes sensitive if her husband is taking a position against this."

24 Both of Mrs. Trump's parents have been seen at White House events, celebrated Thanksgiving at Mar-a-  
25 Lago, Mr. Trump's Florida estate, and reportedly spend much of their time with the Trump family. Questions  
26 about their immigration status were raised in recent months as the administration emphasized  
27 stricter immigration reform.

28 About seven million of the 11 million immigrants who obtained green cards between 2007 and 2016 did so  
29 through familial relations, according to data from the Department of Homeland Security.

30 "In some ways, lawful permanent resident status is the best of all visas," said Kevin R. Johnson, the dean of  
31 the law school at the University of California, Davis, who has taught immigration law. "It's the Cadillac of  
32 immigrant visas because it allows you a path to citizenship."

33 But Mr. Trump has vilified the program as a way for terrorists to enter the United States and has called for  
34 aspects of the program to be eliminated as part of immigration reform.

35 "CHAIN MIGRATION must end now!" he wrote on Twitter in November. "Some people come in, and they  
36 bring their whole family with them, who can be truly evil. NOT ACCEPTABLE!"

37 It also might have been possible, Mr. Johnson said, for the Knavses, both in their 70s, to obtain residency  
38 through an investment visa or a work visa, although the latter would involve employer sponsorship. Mr.  
39 Knavs, a former traveling car salesman, and Mrs. Knavs, who used to design patterns for children's clothes,  
40 both appear to be retired.

41 Immigrants can also apply for asylum or enter the diversity lottery, paths that offer limited numbers of visas.  
42 Mr. Trump has also criticized the diversity lottery, which allows admission to immigrants from countries that  
43 do not send many people to the United States.

44 "If somebody came to me and asked me how to become a citizen, the first question I would ask is 'Do you  
45 have an American citizen as a relative?'" said Theresa Cardinal Brown, the director of immigration and cross-  
46 border policy at the Bipartisan Policy Center in Washington. "That is the fastest and most direct route to  
47 getting a green card."

48 In his State of the Union address, Mr. Trump described a four-pillar immigration plan and continued to  
49 criticize the family-based immigration program, eliciting boos from Democrats in the chamber.

50 "Under the current broken system, a single immigrant can bring in virtually unlimited numbers of distant  
51 relatives," he said. "This vital reform is necessary, not just for our economy, but for our security, and our  
52 future."

## The Boston Globe (MA)

Friday, June 1, 2018 - 710 words

# Has Bill Clinton outrun the statute of limitations?

By Joan Vennoch

How long can Bill Clinton get away with this?

1 “Americans must decide who we really are,” reads a headline over an opinion piece written by the former  
2 president. No, Clinton isn’t addressing sexual misconduct — the topic currently dominating the national  
3 conversation, and one with which he has personal experience. Instead, he’s promoting high-minded public  
4 policies that promote “cooperation over conflict and build an economy, a society and a politics of addition  
5 not subtraction, multiplication, not division.”

6 Clinton’s op-ed — an argument against the travel ban which just got the go-ahead from the Supreme Court —  
7 was published on the same day President Trump tweeted that Alabama should support Roy Moore, an alleged  
8 sexual predator of teenage girls who, if elected to the Senate, will back the Republican tax plan. It also  
9 coincides with an op-ed by Billy Bush confirming — in case anyone doubted it — that Trump really did say  
10 “Grab ’em by the pussy” on that infamous “Access Hollywood” tape.

11 When it comes to allegations of sexual misdeeds, Trump and Clinton have a lot in common. Through the  
12 power of strong but very different personalities, both were also able to make ideology not morality the priority  
13 for voters. Now, with the leverage of the Oval Office and a Congress controlled by Republicans, Trump can  
14 deliver on campaign promises like the tax package — all the more reason for his backers to ignore the  
15 allegations dredged up by Bush in his damning op-ed.

16 But the former president is in a much different place. After Hillary Clinton’s loss, the wheels are finally  
17 coming off the Clinton bus. The breakdown of the Clinton machine comes as the country processes a  
18 mishmash of post-Harvey Weinstein sex scandals. That in turn has produced a long-delayed day of reckoning  
19 for Clinton relative to his past transgressions. “The end of shame in America began with Bill Clinton,” wrote  
20 Marc A. Thiessen for The Washington Post. New York Times op-ed writer Michelle Goldberg said she  
21 believes Juanita Broadrick, the woman who accused Clinton of raping her. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, who  
22 occupies the Senate seat once held by Hillary Clinton, said Bill should have resigned after the Monica  
23 Lewinsky scandal.

24 Meanwhile, Clinton’s accusers showed up at the National Press Club last week to remind the public of their  
25 charges against the former president. And Trump is said to be relying on a variation of the legal strategy used  
26 by Clinton back in the 1990s, as the president fends off a defamation lawsuit filed by a former contestant on  
27 “The Apprentice” who claims he sexually assaulted her.

28 With all that, is a Bill Clinton op-ed still a “get” worth getting?

29 Will any future Democrat want Clinton to make the case for his nomination, as the former president did so  
30 brilliantly for Barack Obama at the 2012 convention?

31 On the anniversary of Trump’s win over Hillary, Clinton fielded friendly questions on Conan O’Brien’s  
32 show. How long can Clinton count on hosts willing to skip awkward queries for the prize of booking him as  
33 a guest?

34 Since 2007, Clinton has been hosting meetings with students, university representatives, experts and  
35 celebrities at college campuses around the world, to engage what the Clinton Foundation calls “the next  
36 generation of leaders.” Such a meeting was convened just recently at Northeastern University, featuring Bill  
37 and Chelsea Clinton, Northeastern president Joseph E. Aoun, Mayor Martin J. Walsh and former secretary  
38 of state Madeleine K. Albright. Will a college president say “no” to such a gathering, on the grounds that  
39 Clinton isn’t a role model for young people?

40 Or, has the statute of limitations more or less run out on Clinton, so that he doesn’t really get lumped in with  
41 all the recent bad actors? This is supposedly a watershed moment, with commentators saying sexual  
42 harassment will never again be swept under the rug. If true, I’m not so sure Bill Clinton will be included in  
43 the disgraced-forever basket of deplorables.

44 As Clinton writes, Americans must decide who we really are and what we really care about. He —  
45 and Trump — probably understand us better than we understand ourselves.

## Richmond Times-Dispatch (VA)

Saturday, January 20, 2018 - 817 words

# Autonomy, inclusion, and the abortion debate

Michael Gerson

Column

SOCIAL CONFLICT

Editor's note: In place of Charles Krauthammer, who is still on medical leave, we are substituting a column by Michael Gerson, also with the Washington Post Writers Group.

WASHINGTON

1 Forty-five years after *Roe v. Wade* was decided, the right to abortion that the Supreme Court discerned  
2 remains controversial and disputed.

3 The expectation of legal abortion is deeply embedded in American law and practice. Many states were lifting  
4 restrictions on the procedure even before *Roe*. Justice Blackmun's landmark decision seized upon an existing  
5 social trend. According to a 2017 Gallup poll, 79 percent of Americans think abortion should be legal in  
6 some or all circumstances. A constitutional amendment against abortion - favored by many social  
7 conservatives - is a practical impossibility.

8 But the Supreme Court created a legal regime more extreme than the general consensus. The dogged pro-life  
9 activists who return to Washington each year to protest *Roe* during the March for Life are not alone. In the  
10 same Gallup poll, 49 percent of Americans agreed that abortion is "morally wrong" (compared with 43  
11 percent who find it "morally acceptable"). Just 29 percent believe abortion should be legal in every  
12 circumstance. A number of states have moved to restrict abortion at the edges - requiring abortion clinics to  
13 meet the standards for ambulatory surgical centers, ensuring that abortion providers have visiting privileges  
14 at local hospitals, restricting the procedure after the fetus can feel pain.

15 Why does this issue refuse to fade from our politics? One reason concerns *Roe* itself, which was (as Justice  
16 Byron White put it in his dissent) "an exercise in raw judicial power." Blackmun's ruling does not hold up  
17 well on rereading. His system of trimesters and viability was (and is) arbitrary and medically rootless - a fig  
18 leaf covering an almost limitless abortion right. Blackmun's weak argument largely substituted for the  
19 democratic process in 50 states. Fiat replaced deliberation and democratic legitimacy. This was a recipe for  
20 resentment and reaction.

21 But judicial fiat can't be a sufficient explanation. The *Obergefell* decision legalizing gay marriage in every  
22 state was also sweeping. It has produced almost no political reaction. The contrast to *Roe* could hardly be  
23 starker. And the explanation is rather simple. All the great civil rights movements have been movements of  
24 inclusion. The first modern civil rights campaign - militating for the end of the British slave trade - set the  
25 pattern with its slogan: "Am I not a man and a brother?" Susan B. Anthony asked: "Are women persons?"  
26 The most rapidly successful civil rights movement of our time - the gay rights movement - used the strategy  
27 of coming out to reveal gay people as friends and family members. All these efforts expanded the circle of  
28 social welcome and protection.

29 The pro-choice movement, in contrast, is a movement of autonomy. Its primary appeal is to individual choice,  
30 not social inclusion. And the choice it elevates seems (to some people) in tension with the principle of  
31 inclusion. A fetus is genetically distinct from the mother, biologically human, and has the inherent capacity  
32 to develop into a child. This makes it different from a hangnail or a tumor. At what point does this developing  
33 human life deserve our sympathy and protection? When neurological activity develops? When the fetus can  
34 feel pain? When a child is born? When an infant can think and reason? All these "achievements" are, in fact,  
35 scientifically and ethically arbitrary. They don't mark the start of a new life, just the development of an  
36 existing life.

37 It is the pro-life movement that appeals to inclusion. It argues for a more expansive definition of the human  
38 community. It opposes ending or exploiting one human life for the benefit of another. There are heart-rending  
39 stories that prevent the simplistic application of this approach. But most of the pro-life men and women I  
40 know have the genuine and selfless motivation of trying to save innocent lives.

41 An appeal to choice is undeniably powerful in our time. It seems to be the age of autonomy on both left and  
42 right, from abortion rights to right-to-die laws to marijuana legalization. The assertion of a right is often  
43 enough to end an argument. But there is an ethical and political alternative, emphasizing an inclusive concern  
44 for the common good and solidarity with the most vulnerable members of the human family. Martin Luther  
45 King Jr. called this "the beloved community." It emerges not through the assertion of autonomy, but through  
46 the acceptance of our shared humanity and of the loyalty we owe each other.

47 Both of these priorities - autonomy and inclusion - are strongly present in American history. The abortion  
48 debate falls along this enduring divide, producing a social conflict that will only be managed, not settled.



## Westminster is using Brexit to put devolution at risk. Scotland will not stand for it

John Swinney and Michael Russell, *The Guardian*, 21 February 2018

5 The next few weeks are likely to be as important for Scotland's future as any in our recent history. In the negotiations  
between the UK government and the European Union, the future of our economy and our rights and the prospects for  
future generations will be at stake.

So far, as exemplified by the speech given last week by Boris Johnson, it is the Tory hardliners who have been calling  
the shots. Despite the overwhelming vote in Scotland for remain, the Tories are currently pursuing a hard Brexit no  
matter the cost to jobs and living standards. But Brexit doesn't just pose a threat to our economy, it is now a threat to  
0 the hard-won devolution settlement that people in Scotland voted for so decisively in 1997.

Just as talks between the UK government and the EU are reaching a crucial stage, so are negotiations between the  
devolved governments and the UK government. On Thursday ministers from the various administrations will meet  
again in London. As with so many other aspects of Brexit, this debate is too often shrouded in jargon, which can  
hinder understanding of what is really going on.

5 One of the terms often used is whether there should be "UK frameworks". The point here is whether or not  
arrangements in certain devolved policy areas should be put in place on a UK-wide basis in the event of Brexit.

The Scottish government has always been clear that we are not opposed in principle to such arrangements, where they  
are in Scotland's interests. But because we are talking here about devolved powers, it must be for the Scottish  
parliament to decide if and when these powers should be exercised on a co-operative basis across the UK in the future.

0 However, the UK government's EU withdrawal bill drives a coach and horses through this principle and the  
devolution settlement itself.

This bill should be a relatively uncontroversial technical piece of work to prepare Scottish and UK laws in the event  
the UK leaves the EU. Instead it gives Westminster control of what happens in all of the devolved policy areas, such  
as farming, fishing and the environment, related to our EU membership and will allow the UK government to impose  
5 whatever arrangements it sees fit, regardless of the views of the Scottish parliament.

This is why the Scottish government, the Welsh government, the Scottish parliament and a host of academics and  
legal experts say the bill is incompatible with devolution. It is important to emphasise that at stake is what happens to  
policy areas that are already devolved and currently subject to EU law. The dispute over the withdrawal bill is not  
0 about further devolution or more powers for the parliament (that is an important related debate) but about existing  
devolved areas.

Far from the "powers bonanza" promised by the UK government, this is entirely about Westminster's plan to  
constrain devolved powers, not add to them. Last summer we were startled to discover the UK government had its  
eyes on 111 devolved policy areas. Under these proposals any area that, in the UK government's language,  
"intersected" with EU law would be controlled by Westminster unless and until the UK government decided that such  
5 control was no longer necessary in pursuit of its policy agenda.

Extraordinarily this approach even extended to aspects of the justice system in Scotland, a system that has always  
operated independently from England. This approach and the list of functions was of course completely absurd. But it  
betrays a very clear attitude, that the Westminster government, not the Scottish parliament, should be in control of  
every aspect of the Brexit process, including determining the future for Scotland in wholly devolved areas.

0 After several months of meetings, the UK government has cut the list down. But make no mistake, although the list is  
shorter the demand remains the same: Westminster must decide. This remains a power grab in critical areas at the  
heart of the devolution settlement, areas such as fishing, farming, GM crops, vital aspects of environmental quality,  
food standards and state aid.

(...) We are simply seeking to protect the devolution settlement and to ensure the Scottish parliament has the powers  
5 in full that the people of Scotland voted for.

That would enable this and future Scottish governments and parliaments to act differently in Scotland when that is the  
right thing to do, and also to secure the best deal for Scotland in UK-wide negotiations and frameworks when that is in  
our national interest.

0 Despite our opposition to Brexit we have shown a willingness to compromise by proposing amendments to the  
withdrawal bill, but these were rejected by the Tories at Westminster. Despite promising to bring forward its own  
changes in the House of Commons, the UK government failed to do so. If at this late stage it changes its mind, and  
accepts that co-operation must be agreed, not imposed by Westminster, then a way forward can be found. But  
Westminster should be in no doubt that this is an absolute condition. We will never recommend giving consent to a  
bill that undermines the principles of devolution and the powers of the Scottish parliament that the people of Scotland  
5 campaigned for so long to win.

*John Swinney is Scotland's deputy first minister (SNP) and Michael Russell is Scotland's Brexit minister (SNP).*

## Unbalanced Britain needs more devolution to manage Brexit

Richard Partington, *The Guardian*, 18 February 2018

Throughout the 1980s, a war raged between Westminster and the rest of the country that has had lasting effects. Fearing councils under the control of Michael Foot's Labour opposition, Margaret Thatcher stripped power from town halls in a sweeping political land grab that still marks Britain today.

London's economy during the 1970s and much of the 1980s had more in common with the rest of the country than today. It even grew at a slower pace than many other regions, but the big bang deregulation of financial services in 1986 under Nigel Lawson, then chancellor, helped London's economy to boom — aided by fat profits from investment banks in the City. At the same time, the north's industrial base came under attack from Thatcher's reforms, since when manufacturing as a share of national income has fallen from a quarter to just over 10%.

These two points might sound like ancient history, but they give clues that help to explain the current unbalanced economic picture in Britain, and can be counted among the myriad triggers for the Brexit vote.

It's little coincidence some of the biggest leave votes came from the former industrial heartlands of the north. Power has been sucked from these places, both political and economic.

In its latest health check on the UK economy, issued last week, the International Monetary Fund noted that political power is more heavily centralised in Britain than in many of its major economic rivals. It reckoned this as one of the reasons why some parts of Britain are economically weaker than London and the south-east.

After some progress in recent years with the creation of directly-elected mayors in places such as the West Midlands and Merseyside, and projects such as the "northern powerhouse", the IMF suggested going further. In the fund's typically overwrought language: "Continued decentralisation of governance arrangements could improve the responsiveness of policy to local economic conditions."

Nowhere are the economic imbalances clearer than in the woeful productivity figures for many regions. Fresh data last week revealed some parts of the country such as Wales and the north lag well behind London. They have more in common with parts of eastern Europe than the developed west when it comes to economic output per hour of work, which is key to boosting overall economic growth and pay.

Workers in Blackpool need to toil for a full working week on average to produce the same economic output their peers in London achieve by Wednesday afternoon. An EU analysis found the UK had the widest level of regional disparity across the 28-nation bloc. GDP per capita in west London was 8.6 times as high as in west Wales and the valleys.

All 21 cities and towns in the northern powerhouse region are below the European urban productivity average, and all but two — Leeds and Warrington — are among the bottom quarter of least productive places on the continent. Slow trains akin to buses on rails built to last no more than 20 years during the 1980s still chug their way between these places. No wonder productivity, which can be boosted by better transport links, is so poor.

Not without a hint of schadenfreude have some remainers been quick to point to the dire economic consequences for the leave-voting heartlands of the north-east, Cornwall, Wales and the Midlands. The loss of EU funding and greater trade barriers for car factories in Sunderland or Elsmere Port would hit those people harder than the so-called metropolitan elite, insulated and safe in London's warm embrace. The government's own secret economic analysis leaked to the press last month confirmed those fears.

Rather than criticising parts of the country for a collective cutting off of the nose to spite the face, a blueprint to fix the underlying issues would be more useful. The IMF's idea of more devolution, not less — taking action to boost regional productivity to rebalance Britain — would be a good start.

One of the best ways this could be achieved is through the devolution of the money promised by the Conservatives to replace European funding after Brexit, worth roughly €10.5bn (£9.3bn). The IMF pointed out that relatively low-income regions would be more exposed to a loss of EU funding than most.

Theresa May has promised a "shared prosperity fund" as a replacement, but details are scarce. The Local Government Association, which represents 370 councils in England and Wales, is becoming increasingly concerned about the lack of clarity about how Westminster plans to replace the EU money.

Among the rivalries erupting in the warring Conservative cabinet, there are also tussles between departments about how the fund will be used. Vital questions need to be answered. How much money and control might local authorities get? Will regional mayors have a say? Some are prominent Labour party figures, such as Greater Manchester's Andy Burnham. So the outcome is far from guaranteed.

Getting Brexit right will be hugely important for shaping the UK economy, but the bigger issue for the long run will be boosting productivity. With so much at stake for the regions of Britain, more devolution can help to fix this problem. Greater political division would be the consequence of failing to act.

As the government considers how best to take back control from Brussels, the best option wouldn't be to hoard it in Westminster, but to give it away.

## Scotland's devolution settlement is threatened by Brexit. It needn't be

Jim Wallace, *The Guardian*, 26 February 2018

*Mistrust between Whitehall and the devolved governments has heightened, but a common-sense solution is possible*

5 Established with fanfare from a muted trumpet in October 2016, the Joint Ministerial Committee (European  
Negotiations) was intended "to ensure that the interests of all parts of the United Kingdom are protected and  
advanced, and to develop a UK approach and objectives for the forthcoming negotiations". Ministers committed  
themselves to meet monthly. In 16 months, it met only seven times. In the month before the prime minister sent the  
0 article 50 letter and in the following six months, it didn't meet at all. No meetings of JMC (EN) officials took place  
between February and September 2017. Little wonder that ministers in the devolved administrations complained,  
bitterly, about lack of engagement.

Such a neglectful approach has produced an EU (withdrawal) bill that betrays a lack of sensitivity and even basic  
understanding as to how the devolution settlement works. The Scotland Act 1998 proceeds on the basis that  
5 everything is devolved unless expressly reserved to Westminster. The bill turned that basic principle of devolution on  
its head. Post-Brexit, UK ministers would hoard the repatriated powers in devolved areas and confer them on the  
devolved institutions, as and when they saw fit.

What is needed now is greater transparency. If we could identify the sticking points, we could make our own  
judgments

0 Mistrust between Whitehall and the devolved governments has, unsurprisingly, heightened, leading to unprecedented  
cooperation between the Scottish and Welsh governments, including jointly promoted amendments to the bill. In  
Holyrood, the relevant committee (including three Conservative members) unanimously declined to recommend  
legislative consent to the bill, as drafted. Belatedly, the Scottish secretary of state, David Mundell, admitted that the  
relevant provisions needed surgical amendment.

This cack-handed approach of the UK government has allowed the Scottish government an opportunity to crank up its  
5 already well-oiled grievance machine, making sensible agreement and compromise more difficult.

With a healthy dose of common sense, a feasible solution must be possible. It should be easy to identify where most of  
the 111 powers returning from Brussels, with a Scottish devolution dimension ("intersects" in the new jargon), should  
go. Something as matter of fact as where responsibility for the future of the "energy performance in buildings  
0 directive" should lie is surely not going to trigger a constitutional crisis. The UK government accepts that a good  
number of "intersects" can be repatriated directly to the devolved institutions. The Scottish government has  
acknowledged its willingness to negotiate UK frameworks – for example, to support the functioning of UK markets.  
And last October's JMC set out agreed principles for establishing common frameworks.

Some progress, apparently, was made at last Thursday's JMC. Reports suggest the UK government is willing to flip  
the bill's approach, with all powers going direct to the devolved institutions. But, with a stroke of tactless genius, it  
5 also proposes that UK ministers should have a veto over their use.

It's not unreasonable for the British government to be concerned that if powers are devolved, policies within the UK  
could diverge, pending agreed frameworks being established. But surely it doesn't compromise anyone's principles if,  
during that time, there is an agreed and time-limited moratorium on the use of these powers, with provision for  
ministers to act jointly, should the need for remedial legislation arise.

0 And it's not unreasonable for devolved administrations to have anxieties over what UK ministers might agree to in  
overseas trade negotiations, which could have an impact on devolved policy areas. The Canadian government allowed  
representatives from the provinces and territories to be in the room when negotiating their trade agreement with the  
EU. The UK government should accord the devolved administrations similar respect.

What is needed now is much greater transparency. If we could identify the sticking points, we could make our own  
5 judgments as to whether they are serious, or whether some people are playing to the gallery.

Agreement on frameworks is only a start. UK ministers simply cannot impose top-down policies on the other  
administrations. The Welsh government has published imaginative proposals for a UK council of ministers, with the  
possibility of some form of qualified majority voting.

0 Such an approach is probably too bold and too radical for our present government. But let's consider it. Surveying the  
otherwise bleak scene of post-Brexit Britain, I would find it sweetly ironic if, in rejecting an allegedly federal Europe,  
Brexit takes us step further down the road to a more federal UK.

• Jim Wallace, Baron Wallace of Tankerness, is a former leader of the Liberal Democrats in the House of Lords. He  
was formerly leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats, MP for Orkney and Shetland, MSP for Orkney, the first deputy  
5 first minister of Scotland in the Scottish Executive and advocate general for Scotland

## The Press of Atlantic City (Pleasantville, NJ)

Tuesday, May 22, 2018 - 707 words

# It may be time to disband NFL cheerleading squads, says Cynthia M. Allen

Cynthia M. Allen Tribune News Service

1 Maybe pro football cheerleaders could inspire us to move beyond jobs based on female sexuality.  
2 Bear with me while I explain.  
3 Last week, the New York Times reported how a 2013 Washington Redskins Cheerleaders calendar photo  
4 shoot in Costa Rica went horribly awry for some of the women.  
5 According to accounts of those present, the shoot, though held at a secluded resort, became a kind of spectator  
6 sport. As the Times wrote, "a contingent of sponsors and FedExField suite holders - all men - were granted  
7 up-close access to the photo shoots," causing many of the cheerleaders to feel anxious and uncomfortable.  
8 Several cheerleaders said they were required to pose topless, adding to their unease.  
9 The Times cataloged other mandatory trip activities, including how nine of the team's 36 members were  
10 selected by sponsors to be personal escorts to a night club later that evening. Several Redskins officials were  
11 also at the club, where the women were "encouraged (by a staff member) to drink and flirt," creating a sense  
12 that the team's management condoned the event. While none of the cheerleaders interviewed alleged  
13 inappropriate touching by any of the team sponsors, several said the entire incident made them feel unsafe  
14 and devalued. It's not difficult to imagine why.  
15 The paper's reporting, though upsetting, is far from shocking. This is the era of Harvey Weinstein-style  
16 revelations, after all, and these allegations are relatively tame. They're also extremely common in professional  
17 cheerleading circles.  
18 The Redskins cheerleaders may have been spared unwelcome touching in Costa Rica, but  
19 many NFL cheerleaders admit that groping, sexual harassment and uncomfortable situations are all hazards  
20 of the job.  
21 In late April, the Times chronicled the experiences of current and former professional cheerleaders of  
22 multiple teams, the overwhelming majority of whom described their jobs, not as elite dancers, but as sex  
23 objects navigating a world of rowdy, drunk and "handsy" fans.  
24 "When you have on a push-up bra and a fringed skirt, it can sometimes, unfortunately, feel like it comes with  
25 the territory," a former cheerleader for the Tennessee Titans told the Times.  
26 'To be fair, how could it not?  
27 That's not a defense of the inappropriate behavior these women face, merely an acknowledgment that their  
28 profession by its very nature is ripe for this kind of harassment. In fact, it's the embodiment of everything the  
29 #MeToo movement is seeking to repudiate - that notion that women are first and foremost sexual objects.  
30 Thanks to Weinstein, we know how deeply this ethos is ingrained in our popular culture. Sports are no  
31 exception.  
32 Indeed, scantily clad cheerleaders performing titillating dance moves on the sidelines are as baked into  
33 America's Sunday afternoon rituals as tailgating and beer. American families can barely watch a sporting  
34 event without seeing the hyper-sexualized image of a female shaking her backside during half-time.  
35 And it doesn't seem to faze us, either. A recent national poll found that most Americans - 56 percent to 31  
36 percent - do not think cheerleading costumes are too provocative, although there was disagreement between  
37 the sexes. Women were more disapproving of cheerleader uniforms.  
38 The cheerleaders themselves are divided. Many appear to understand that sex sells and don't seem bothered  
39 that it's their sexuality in particular that's being peddled. Others suggest their complacency is from fear of  
40 losing their jobs.  
41 Either way, there's a competitive market for what they do. And with a long line of willing and eager women  
42 waiting to fill any vacancy, there isn't much incentive for team managers to change the way things are done.  
43 So back to my proposition. In the wake of the #MeToo movement, businesses everywhere have been trying  
44 to reduce opportunities for harassment in the workplace. Feminists and commentators have been trying to  
45 dismantle the cultural underpinnings that have made sexism and female sexualization - especially at work -  
46 so prevalent.  
47 What do you do when selling female sexuality is the job?  
48 If the #MeToo movement wants to make a marked difference, disbanding NFL cheerleading teams might be  
49 a good place to start.

Los Angeles Times (CA)

Monday, February 19, 2018 - 888 words

## How massive is 'Black Panther' at the box office? A record-shattering \$235 million

By Deborah Vankin

1 Feb. 19--The King of Wakanda reigned supreme this holiday weekend as Disney's "Black Panther" proved to be  
2 a pop cultural phenomenon, shattering box office records with an estimated \$235 million in U.S. and Canadian  
3 ticket sales for the four-day holiday weekend.

4 The Marvel Entertainment release, the first global superhero blockbuster with an African American director and a  
5 mostly black cast, exceeded expectations and set records for a February opening and for a Presidents Day weekend  
6 debut. The previous record holder was "Deadpool," which made \$152 million domestically over the four-day  
7 holiday in 2016.

8 "Black Panther" is the fifth highest domestic opening weekend of all time, behind only "Star Wars: The Force  
9 Awakens" (2015), "Star Wars: The Last Jedi" (2017), "Jurassic World" (2012) and "Marvel's The Avengers"  
10 (2012).

11 Critics and audiences pointed two thumbs straight up. "Black Panther" landed an A-plus audience rating from  
12 CinemaScore, and a 97% "fresh" rating among critics on Rotten Tomatoes. That makes "Black Panther" -- directed  
13 and co-written by 31-year-old Ryan Coogler ("Creed") with co-writer Joe Robert Cole and starring Chadwick  
14 Boseman -- the most well-received superhero film ever, Marvel or otherwise.

15 "Results like this go beyond anything anyone ever could have hoped for," said Dave Hollis, president of global  
16 distribution at Disney. "The momentum that the film has, has left us unable, even, to keep up with projections. It's  
17 unbelievable."

18 "Black Panther" is set in the mythical kingdom of Wakanda, which is rich with the miracle metal vibranium and  
19 is the most technologically advanced nation on the planet. The Afrocentric movie touches on ideas of colonialism  
20 and the reverberations of slavery.

21 A prevailing belief among some in Hollywood has been that movies with mostly black casts don't do well at the  
22 foreign box office, but Disney reported \$169 million in international ticket sales -- a figure expected to climb  
23 dramatically when "Black Panther" opens in major markets including China, Japan and Russia.

24 With Hollywood criticized for not putting diverse voices behind the camera or enough people of color in starring  
25 roles, the box office numbers for "Black Panther" are telling, Hollis said.

26 "It's a testament to an extraordinarily made film," Hollis said. "But also, a big part of it too says very clearly that  
27 inclusion and representation matter. It's a powerful thing for people to see themselves and know that they're seen  
28 in the films we put up in a movie theater. Audiences deserve to see themselves on screen. Not only because it's the  
29 right thing to do, but it makes for better, richer storytelling."

30 An ethnically diverse audience pool gave "Black Panther" five out of five stars on a comScore/Screen Engine  
31 PostTrak audience survey. The moviegoers were 37% African American, 35% white, 18% Latino, 5% Asian and  
32 5% other.

33 Hollis added that more "Black Panther" ticket buyers were in the 18-24 and 25-39 age brackets than is typical for  
34 a Marvel superhero movie.

35 "Black Panther" had Imax's biggest weekend ever, bringing in \$35 million globally from 676 screens.

36 "The film represents taking a movie and turning it into an event, and that's what Marvel, Imax and Ryan Coogler  
37 have accomplished with these results in our network," said Greg Foster, chief executive of Imax Entertainment.

38 "It absolutely opened up the film for a new audience," Foster said. "There were people who don't go to the movies  
39 as frequently as we'd like, and this was a movie that was top of mind. People had to be there."

40 In the No. 2 spot at the box office was Sony's "Peter Rabbit," in its second weekend, with \$23.1 million for the  
41 holiday weekend.

42 Universal's racy "Fifty Shades Freed," also in its second week, finished third with about \$19.4 million.

43 "Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle" brought in \$10 million, good for fourth place in its ninth weekend and raising  
44 its cumulative domestic total to nearly \$380 million. That makes it the second-highest-grossing movie ever for  
45 Sony, behind only the first "Spider-Man."

46 Warner Bros.' "The 15:17 to Paris" finished fifth with about \$9.1 million.

47 Even with low expectations, two other films opening over the weekend underperformed. Lionsgate's animated  
48 comedy "Early Man," which received a B from CinemaScore and an 81% "fresh" on Rotten Tomatoes, brought in  
49 about \$4.2 million and finished seventh at the box office. Pure Flix's biblical epic "Samson," which was not scored  
50 by CinemaScore and was poorly received by critics, earned about \$2.3 million to finish the weekend at No. 11.

51 Meanwhile, a milestone for "The Greatest Showman": The film, starring Hugh Jackman, finished its ninth week  
52 with \$6.4 million in ticket sales. That pushed the movie past the \$155 million mark, topping "La La Land" and  
53 becoming the highest grossing original live-action musical.

54 "Monster Hunt 2," which earned a modest \$400,000 at the domestic box office, had a record-breaking opening in  
55 China. The film earned \$190 million in its opening weekend there, where the Chinese New Year holiday is being  
56 celebrated. The movie set a record for a single-day gross with \$97 million on opening day.

## Fixing Northern Ireland's abortion regime will be harder than it looks

Patrick Maguire, *New Statesman*, 6 June 2018

For a fleeting period yesterday afternoon, it looked like Theresa May's Northern Ireland Secretary would dispense with their occupational requirement to do and say as little of substance as possible.

Before MPs met for Labour MP Stella Creasy's emergency debate on whether the 1861 Offences Against the Person Act – the legislation which prohibits abortion in Northern Ireland – it was excitedly suggested that Karen Bradley would decisively shift the debate.

Confirmation that the Prime Minister supported efforts to liberalise the province's abortion laws and of Westminster's right to legislate to do so via a free vote would gazump the DUP. Instead, the government reverted to type. As per its default setting on any issue affecting Northern Ireland, Bradley merely acknowledged the existence of the problem and effectively denied she was able to deal with it.

Beyond the unsurprising revelation that both she and the Prime Minister personally supported reform, her statement offered nothing new. Yes, she confirmed that MPs would have a free vote should the issue come before the Commons, but there is no immediate prospect of that happening. A similar confirmation that a vote on extending equal marriage to Northern Ireland would be a conscience issue and thus unwhipped, made in February, has resulted in no change.

Though Creasy and other MPs have suggested amending the Domestic Violence Bill in order to repeal the 1861 legislation, it is still in its consultation phase, has only been published as a draft and is unlikely to appear in the Commons anytime soon.

While the Supreme Court will rule tomorrow on whether the North's near-total ban on abortion violates human rights law and could yet force the government's hand, the path to the point at which MPs would vote to liberalise the regime in Northern Ireland – which they undoubtedly would – is not yet a straightforward one.

Bradley's bottom line was ultimately no different to that of Downing Street: the decision is for Stormont, not Westminster. That stance has more to do with the government's unwillingness to impose direct rule – which, arguably, it will soon need to – than it does about the issue at hand.

(...) What yesterday did make clear, however, is the scale of support for liberalising the abortion regime in Northern Ireland across the Commons. But therein lies another problem: there is little consensus at Westminster on the extent to which it should be liberalised. And as hard as it was to stomach for some in the chamber, the DUP's Jeffrey Donaldson had a point when he highlighted that the political consensus in Northern Ireland is not a pro-choice one: even Sinn Féin are against the extension of the 1967 Abortion Act to Northern Ireland and the SDLP, Labour's sister party, recently affirmed its pro-life stance.

That makes the bit after repealing the relevant bits of the 1861 Act more complicated: the simplicity of the first step obscures the complexity of the second. It won't mean making abortions in Northern Ireland safe, free, and legal overnight, as Labour admitted in a briefing note to its MPs ahead of yesterday's debate. Unlike equal marriage, a much bigger and less divisive political tent that has been backed by a majority of assembly members multiple times, there has been no clear expression of backing for liberalising abortion access from politicians in Northern Ireland. And using a UK-wide piece of legislation turns the debate into a broader one than would be sparked by creating new, Northern Ireland-specific legislation or extending the 1967 act.

It is equally unclear just who would formulate that framework in the event that Creasy's efforts were successful: it's unclear whether the civil servants who are effectively governing Northern Ireland have the power to. And even if the government were to deviate from type and impose it unilaterally, they might have difficulty finding their cue. Is it the proposed 12-week limit in the Republic, the 24-week limit in the UK, or the grounds of fatal foetal abnormality recommended by a Stormont report commissioned after the assembly last rejected proposals to liberalise access?

The government will find it difficult to answer that question and, by its own admission, does not want to. Even if an executive returns, the chances of substantial reform are slim. Resolving the anomaly of Northern Ireland's abortion laws will be much more difficult than it looks, even if the 1861 Act is repealed by a landslide in the Commons. Those involved in formulating Labour's policy privately acknowledge this too, despite their support for Creasy's efforts.

The party has fully resiled itself from the suggestion, briefly floated in the draft of its general election manifesto, that it would legislate from Westminster. Instead it briefed its MPs ahead of yesterday's debate that although devolution was no barrier to imposing legislation, that it was "calling on the government to bring political leaders together to see if they can agree a way forward to ensure women in Northern Ireland are protected and can access safe and legal abortions".

That reflects an uncomfortable truth: that despite the near-universal feeling in Westminster that something must be done about Northern Ireland's draconian abortion regime, there is no sign that anyone really knows how to do it. That will likely be the case as long as Northern Ireland exists in the liminal space between direct rule and devolution the government has created.

## Northern Ireland: A year without devolved government

Paul Moss, *BBC News*, 9 January 2018

5 It is a year since devolved government in Northern Ireland collapsed. But how has the lack of a Northern Ireland Executive and assembly affected life there, and what do people want from the future?

It seemed a little late to be talking about Christmas, but Aiden Flynn remained focused on the celebrations just passed. The managing director of a large construction company based just outside Belfast, he said he kept thinking about the 40 members of staff he had had to lay off last year.

0 "That's 40 families who didn't have a great Christmas," he said. "And it's going to get worse, unless the assembly gets back to doing its work."

The assembly he referred to was set up in Northern Ireland after the Good Friday peace agreement. It took on a host of legislative responsibilities, from economic development, to education and health. But more than anything, the assembly was supposed to bring together republicans and unionists in a project of common purpose.

5 One year ago, however, that sense of common purpose seemed to vanish, as the republican party, Sinn Fein, walked out on the assembly, bringing about its collapse. Since then, there's been no authority to commission the kind of public sector work upon which Mr Flynn's construction company and many others in Northern Ireland depend.

"I would normally get a constant stream of work: refurbishment of schools... of hospital wards. I was hopeful they'd get the assembly up and running again 11 months ago - but 12 months?"

0 The ostensible reason for Stormont's collapse was financial: the ruling Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) was blamed for the failure of a renewable heating scheme. Demands for the DUP leader, Arlene Foster, to resign went unheeded, but that demand has now been dwarfed by a whole list of requirements issued by Sinn Fein to be met before it will return to shared power.

At The Maverick, a gay and lesbian bar in Belfast, I found customers mulling over one of these: that the DUP agrees to allow same-sex marriage, still illegal in Northern Ireland.

5 "It's great that one of the main parties is supporting equal marriage," one drinker told me. He said it might make him more likely to vote for Sinn Fein.

But another was more cynical: "I can't help thinking that Sinn Fein has picked it up because it's something the DUP oppose. They're just using it as a means of contradicting them."

0 Such political opportunism would hardly be unique, indeed it has become almost expected in an era of widespread cynicism.

However, the writer Malachi O'Doherty believes there is particular reason to doubt the face-value demands of Northern Ireland's parties. Put quite simply, he sees more long-term political and sectarian divisions lurking underneath. "Sinn Fein and the DUP have locked horns like old rams familiar with the struggle with each other," he says. "We've been through a period where we had some optimism divisions would be dispelled.

5 "Now, the more contempt you express for the other side, the more votes you will get."

The DUP leader, Arlene Foster, was Northern Ireland's First Minister until the power-sharing agreement collapsed a year ago

Not so, insists Simon Hamilton, a DUP member of the legislative assembly.

0 He says: "We want to see the institutions up and running again immediately, but Sinn Fein have developed a fairly lengthy shopping list of demands." He mentions the call for an Irish language act, which would give Irish heightened official status in Northern Ireland. Mr Hamilton worries this will lead to fluency in Irish becoming a requirement for some official jobs. Moreover, he says, if Sinn Fein wants a language act, equal marriage, or any other measure, it should agree to re-establish the assembly, and then use it as a forum to press its demands.

5 But Mairtin O Muilleoir is not in a mood to go back without guarantees. A Sinn Fein member of the legislative assembly, he dismisses its previous incarnation as being "founded on arrogance and disrespect".

The late Martin McGuinness, then Deputy First Minister, was right to bring the assembly down, Mr O Muilleoir says. And he insists that same-sex marriage and enhanced Irish language status are fundamental to Sinn Fein's politics, adding: "Republicanism was founded on the basis of equality for all."

Northern Ireland has been without devolved government for a year

0 It is exactly the kind of political-historic discussion that leaves Dr John Woods looking weary. Dr Woods chairs the British Medical Association in Northern Ireland, where four of the five health trusts are among the 10 worst emergency department performers in the UK.

Yet plans for local NHS provision are now gathering dust, with no assembly to implement them.

5 "We very definitely want the assembly up and running... to take the necessary decisions," Dr Woods says. "In the absence of that, we will simply carry on with a system that is failing."

This week sees a new Northern Ireland secretary appointed. The previous one, James Brokenshire, had to set a budget for Northern Ireland, in the absence of an elected assembly. But his replacement, Karen Bradley, may yet impose full direct rule from Westminster, if power sharing cannot be restored.

0 And the assembly's headquarters at Stormont will become an over-sized, underused monument to thwarted hopes of the recent past.

## Scepticism about Scottish devolution is growing fast

Stephen Daisley, *The Spectator*, 18 September 2017

5 A report suggesting that the £414m Scottish Parliament building could reach the end of its 'useful life' by 2060 – after just 45 years – provides the perfect metaphor for the state of devolution in 2017: a parliament that has been noticeably reluctant to use its powers in the last decade slapped with a 'use by' date. Irony can be awfully cutesy at times. The Scottish Parliament's problems don't begin and end with its building though. A poll by Panelbase gave voters an opportunity to declare themselves scunnered with the whole enterprise of devolution. Asked if, instead of independence or the status quo, they would rather shutter Holyrood tomorrow, 19 per cent of Scots said they are up for a return to direct rule from Westminster. That is, as far as I can tell, the highest level of support for abolition since the Scottish Parliament was established.

0 Kevin Pringle, former special adviser to Alex Salmond, poses this as a problem for Ruth Davidson, both as the de facto head of Scottish Unionism and because the same poll shows four in ten of her voters want to reverse devolution. Pringle is the best mind the SNP has, and the loss following his move to the private sector has been much in evidence over the last two years. But he is only half right. The Scottish Tories will struggle to convince the voters that they should be in government if they cannot convince themselves that there ought to be a government.

5 Nevertheless, the Tories are not in power and far from it. It is on the SNP's watch that devoscepticism has emerged from single-digit obscurity into a position that one in five Scots is willing to endorse. Nicola Sturgeon and her Nationalists must take much of the blame for this development. The SNP aggressively appropriated the icons of nationhood — flag, history, parliament — and just as some Unionists recoil from the Saltire as a symbol since lost to the SNP, others now see the devolved assembly itself as a creature of nationalism.

0 Devoscepticism is more than partisan reaction or alienation. There is a feeling abroad, extending beyond the 19 per cent of abolitionists, that devolution has been something of a disappointment. The expectations were too high; our idealism too naive (and, dare I say, unBritish). Beware old politicians selling new politics. If Holyrood could be twee and parochial in the early years, it at least did things. It is only in the past few years that the Scottish ennui set in – the aimless drift that gripped non-constitutional politics once the independence referendum was called and which has still to be shaken off. There is a sense that Holyrood can't do anything.

5 There are few original ideas in the building and fewer still who are capable of implementing them. But that is not the source of our troubles. The problem lies in how the constitutional question was answered, or rather how it wasn't. In his concession speech three years ago, Alex Salmond observed that 'Scotland has by a majority decided not, at this stage, to become an independent country'. At the time it seemed like crumb-seeking by a man whose cake had been well and truly gobbled. But there was truth amid the bitterness. Independence had not been rejected by the 60 per cent long predicted inside the Better Together campaign, but by 55 per cent to 45. It wasn't a No so much as a Not Yet.

0 Support for independence has slipped a point here and there in various polls but remains noticeably resilient. Nationalist sentiment has waxed and waned since the 1970s but it was little more than a fantasy. Separatists lacked an infrastructure beyond a single political party and a few celebrities. Even returning a majority of Nationalist MPs to Westminster would have been no guarantee of independence. Devolution changed this by providing nationalists the infrastructure they lacked. Now there was a rival centre of legitimacy, one right on Scots' doorsteps, not in far-off, foreign Westminster.

5 The Scottish Parliament gives the SNP and like-minded parties a power base from which to launch future attempts at secession. The UK Parliament has the final say on such matters, you might venture, and constitutionally you'd be more right than wrong. But while Westminster may frustrate the ambitions of the current regime in Edinburgh, it cannot reasonably stand in the way of the popular will. Scotland has not yet had the coincidence of a separatist majority at Holyrood and a sustained separatist majority in the country. It is optimistic indeed to think such an alignment will never come about.

0 The SNP understands this and so it must remain on the right side of public opinion for as long as possible. The loss of its majority in the Scottish Parliament was a setback and the felling of 21 of its MPs in the General Election a reminder that devolution cuts both ways. Holyrood offers the opportunity to pursue constitutional objectives but carries the responsibility of governing on the day-to-day matters too. That is a delicate balance that the SNP has so far failed to strike. Independence always comes first for them but their mistake was allowing the voters to see this (...).



## Why Britain needs the immigrants it doesn't want

by Ivana Kottasová, *CNN Money*, October 18, 2017

5 The British government is seeking to slash the number of immigrants from the European Union following its departure from the bloc in March 2019. It's planning tougher controls despite warnings that more EU workers are needed to harvest the country's crops, build homes for its citizens and build its next startup.

The risks are especially pronounced in health care. The National Health Service says there are over 11,000 open nursing jobs in England, and another 6,000 vacant positions across Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

0 David Crystal, the British linguist and academic, has calculated that there are three times more people learning English than there are native speakers of the language. Why?

5 The overburdened system, described by the British Red Cross as facing a "humanitarian crisis," already relies on 33,000 nurses from the EU. "We would describe the NHS as being at the tipping point. There are huge staffing problems," said Josie Irwin, head of employment at the Royal College of Nursing. "Brexit makes the situation worse." Jason Filinras, a 29-year old from Greece, was recruited last year to work as a front line nurse at a hospital just north of London.

0 Filinras joined the hospital's acute admissions unit, where he runs tests and determines how to treat patients after they have been stabilized in the emergency room. "If you have a patient who is not able to take care of themselves, you have to do all the basic things for them -- from helping them with washes, helping them with toilet, feeding them," he said. He is just one of 250 nurses recruited from the EU by the West Hertfordshire Hospitals Trust over the past two years to work in its three hospitals. EU citizens now make up 22% of its nursing staff.

The trust didn't have a choice. The unemployment rate is at its lowest level in four decades, and there simply aren't enough British nurses.

5 The shortage of workers cuts across sectors -- from agriculture to education -- and across skill levels. There aren't enough fruit pickers and there aren't enough doctors. The political impetus to reduce immigration from the EU can be traced to 2004, when Britain opened its borders to workers from eight eastern European countries that had joined the bloc. Government officials expected 5,000 to 13,000 people from the countries to come to Britain each year. Instead, 177,000 came in just the first year.

0 Critics say that increased immigration has changed the fabric of local communities, and undercut the wages of British workers. It's an argument that has currency with voters. Immigration was the most important issue for voters ahead of the Brexit referendum in June 2016, according to an Ipsos Mori poll.

Theresa May, who became prime minister in the wake of the EU referendum, has promised to bring annual net migration below 100,000. The figure was 248,000 in 2016. It had been difficult to meet the target because EU rules allow citizens to move freely around the bloc. May says that Brexit will mean an end to free movement.

5 "The government is putting politics above economics, which is quite a dangerous game," said Heather Rolfe, a researcher at the National Institute of Economic and Social Research. Labor economists say that a radical decline in immigration would hurt the British economy.

0 The Office for Budget Responsibility, the government's fiscal watchdog, said that 80,000 fewer immigrants a year would reduce annual economic growth by 0.2 percentage points. "To lose these people would be pretty tough and it would mean that some sectors might find it very difficult to survive," said Christian Dustmann, professor of economics at University College London.

Some EU workers, upset over political rhetoric and a lack of clarity about their legal status, are already leaving Britain. Net migration from the EU fell to 133,000 last year from 184,000 in 2015, according to the Office for National Statistics.

5 The impact is already being felt: The Nursing and Midwifery Council said that roughly 6,400 EU nurses registered to work in the U.K. in the year ended March, a 32% drop from the previous year. Another 3,000 EU nurses stopped working in the U.K.

"It's all this uncertainty that will make us leave," said Filinras. "I can't say that I am 100% sure that I won't think about leaving." If he does move home, he will be hard to replace.

0 Irwin said the British government has made it less attractive for new British nurses to enter the profession by scrapping college scholarship programs and capping salaries. Applications for nursing courses are down 20% as a result.

Nurses make an average of £26,000 (\$34,600), while German supermarket chain Aldi offers college graduates a £44,000 (\$58,500) starting salary and a flashy company car.

5 (...) Business groups and labor unions have repeatedly called on the government to moderate its negotiating position. But May has shown no signs of backing down. "The government is interpreting the vote to leave the EU as a vote against immigration ... and to some extent that is true," said Rolfe.

Boston, a town on the east coast of England, shows why: According to census data, the town's foreign-born population grew by 467% in the decade to 2011. In 2016, the town had the highest proportion of voters choosing to leave the EU.

## Los Angeles Times (CA)

Thursday, March 15, 2018 - 742 words

# Oklahoma is poised to become the first state to use nitrogen gas in executions

By Jaweed Kaleem

1 March 15--Oklahoma plans to start carrying out executions with nitrogen gas, a method that has never been  
2 used in the U.S. but that some states have already approved amid difficulties with lethal injections.  
3 At a news conference Wednesday, Oklahoma Atty. Gen. Mike Hunter and Corrections Director Joe M.  
4 Allbaugh said that over the next few months the state would develop a protocol for using nitrogen.  
5 They did not give a date for finalizing the protocol or for the first execution. There are 49 inmates on death  
6 row in Oklahoma, including 16 who have exhausted the appeals process, Hunter said.  
7 The last U.S. execution in a gas chamber was on March 4, 1999, in Arizona using cyanide. German national  
8 Walter LaGrand was put to death for taking part in the 1982 murder of a bank manager.  
9 In recent years, Oklahoma and other states have struggled to obtain the drugs needed for lethal injections,  
10 the most common execution method but one that has increasingly faced scrutiny.  
11 In 2015, a state court put a moratorium on executions in Oklahoma after a series of botched executions,  
12 including one in which an inmate convulsed for 43 minutes before dying and another in which the wrong  
13 drug was administered.  
14 As inmates and groups opposed to the death penalty have gone to court to challenge lethal injection on the  
15 grounds that it amounts to cruel and unusual punishment, manufacturers of some of the drugs have refused  
16 to do business with states.  
17 In one prominent case, McKesson Corp., a medical supplier that sold the muscle relaxer vecuronium bromide  
18 to Arkansas, said last year that the state had bought the drug under false pretenses. The company said the  
19 drug was intended for medical use only.  
20 In 2015, Oklahoma legislators made a contingency plan in case lethal injection was found to be  
21 unconstitutional or the drugs became unavailable. They passed a law allowing the state to execute people by  
22 nitrogen hypoxia, in which a person is deprived of oxygen as nitrogen is inhaled.  
23 "We can no longer sit on the sidelines and wait on the drugs," Hunter said Wednesday. "Using inert gas will  
24 be effective, simple to administer, easy to obtain and requires no complex medical procedures."  
25 Dale Baich, an attorney representing 20 death row prisoners who have sued the state over its execution  
26 procedures, criticized the state's announcement.  
27 "This method has never been used before and is experimental," he said in a statement. "Oklahoma is once  
28 again asking us to trust it as officials 'learn-on-the-job,' through a new execution procedure and method. How  
29 can we trust Oklahoma to get this right when the state's recent history reveals a culture of carelessness and  
30 mistakes in executions?"  
31 Concerns about executions have helped drive the number to historic lows in recent years and sent several  
32 states looking for alternatives to lethal injection.  
33 Mississippi legalized using nitrogen gas last year but hasn't yet used it. In Alabama, state legislators have  
34 also voted in support of using nitrogen gas. In Nevada and Nebraska, there have been pushes to use fentanyl  
35 in executions. In Utah, the firing squad has been legal since 2015.  
36 Robert Dunham, the executive director of the Death Penalty Information Center, said Oklahoma's role in the  
37 history of the death penalty could inspire more use of nitrogen gas. The state was the first to pass a law  
38 allowing lethal injection in 1977. Texas and dozens of other states followed.  
39 "I expect that if Oklahoma goes forward with this, there will be more states," said Dunham, whose nonprofit  
40 is based in Washington, D.C., and is critical of the death penalty.  
41 Dunham said the state would also need to make a case in court that it could no longer  
42 obtain lethal injection drugs before turning to nitrogen gas.  
43 "If the attorney general doesn't do that, I expect the death row prisoners would seek a judicial review to  
44 determine if lethal injection is not available," he said.  
45 Even if Oklahoma prevailed, Dunham said, it would take at least six months for the first execution because  
46 of current court restrictions on the death penalty.

The Deep State Is Real - But it might not be what you think.

By MICHAEL CROWLEY September/October 2017

<https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/09/05/deep-state-real-cia-fbi-intelligence-215537>

At a conference in mid-July, Barack Obama's CIA director, John Brennan, remarked that executive branch officials have an "obligation ... to refuse to carry out" outrageous or anti-democratic orders from President Donald Trump. The comment quickly caught the attention of Rush Limbaugh, who saw nothing short of a threat to the republic. "He practically called for a coup!" the radio host bellowed on the air a few days later, warning of a plot orchestrated by "embeds in the deep state at the Pentagon, State Department, various intelligence agencies."

Embeds in the *what*? A year ago, the term "deep state" was the province of Edward Snowden acolytes and fans of paperback espionage thrillers. Today, Limbaugh takes it for granted that his millions of listeners know what it meant.

The deep state entered America's national discourse in 2017 with the feeling of an already familiar character, ready to assume a starring role as hero or villain—depending on how you feel about Trump. It's easy to dismiss the idea as the breathless complaint of a frustrated president who hasn't learned to work the system. But it's not that simple: There really is a kind of cabal that operates independently of elected officials in Washington—even if it's not quite what Trump or his conservative allies think it is.

Political scientists and foreign policy experts have used the term deep state for years to describe individuals and institutions who exercise power independent of—and sometimes over—civilian political leaders. They applied it mainly to developing countries like Algeria, Pakistan, Egypt and Turkey, where generals and spies called the real shots in nominally democratic societies and replaced elected leaders when they saw fit. (Turkey and Egypt have recently moved to more overt security-state dictatorships, in which the deep state is the only state.)

For a generation, the people who saw something like an American deep state—even if they rarely called it that—resided on the left, not the right. The 9/11 attacks triggered the rapid growth of an opaque security and intelligence machine often unaccountable to the civilian legal system. In the 2000s, the critique focused on a "war machine" of military and intelligence officials, defense contractors and neoconservative ideologues who, in some versions, took orders directly from Vice President Dick Cheney. In the Obama era, the focus shifted to the eerie precision of "targeted killings" by drones, and then the furor over Snowden, the ex-National Security Agency contractor whose 2013 leaks exposed the astonishing reach of the government's surveillance. "There's definitely a deep state," Snowden told the *Nation* in 2014. "Trust me, I've been there."

Even measured academics began to describe a dual-state system in the United States, the focus of Tufts University international law professor Michael J. Glennon's 2014 book, *National Security and Double Government*. Glennon observed that Obama had campaigned against Bush-era surveillance and security policies in 2008 but acquiesced to many of them as president—suggesting a national-security apparatus that holds sway even over the elected leaders notionally in charge of it.

Enter Donald Trump. After January 2017, the unaccountable string-pulling bureaucracy suddenly came to seem, especially to liberals, less a sinister cabal than a crucial check on a president determined to blow up the system we had come to take for granted. Trump was openly hostile to much of the government he now ran, and its institutions began fighting back, sometimes in public ways. They did so with a combination of the severe (leaks of Trump's conversations with foreign leaders) and the absurd (critical tweets from federal accounts like that of the National Park Service). To Trump and his allies, the new president is now the victim of conspiratorial bureaucrats threatened by a president trying to "drain the swamp." In August, after Environmental Protection Agency employees alerted the *New York Times* to an EPA report on climate change they feared would be quashed, a headline at the conservative Breitbart News website shouted: "Deep State Teams with Fake News."

Even more anxiety swirls around classified information: In July, the Republican-led Senate Homeland Security Committee released a report that found the Trump administration was being hit by national security leaks "on a nearly daily basis" and at a far higher rate than its predecessors encountered. (After the report was picked up in the conservative media, Trump's son Donald Jr. tweeted a link to it. "If there ever was confirmation that the Deep State is real, illegal & endangers national security, it's this," he wrote.)

Thus have the old battle lines flipped. Conservatives who once dismissed concerns about political abuse of NSA surveillance now complain about intelligence leaks linking Trump associates to the Kremlin; liberals who not long ago were denouncing the CIA for its unaccountable power have discovered new affection for the heroes at Langley who might uncover impeachment-worthy dirt.

Beneath the politics of convenience is the reality that a large segment of the U.S. government really does operate without much transparency or public scrutiny, and has abused its awesome powers in myriad ways. And sometimes the government bureaucracy really does exercise power over the commander in chief: Obama felt that the military pressured him into sending more troops to Afghanistan than he had wanted (...)

## A northern English town offers a glimpse of life when migrants leave

*The Economist*, Feb 1st 2018

Since the early 1990s, when the principle of free movement was expanded by a series of European Union directives and court rulings, more European citizens have arrived on British shores each year than have left. But Brexit threatens to reverse this pattern. In the 12 months to June 2017, net migration (immigration minus emigration) from the EU fell to around 100,000, its lowest level in four years. Among the eight central and eastern European countries that joined the union in 2004, of which Poland is the biggest, net arrivals are heading towards zero. This trend has led many to wonder what Britain will be like if it becomes an exporter of European migrants, rather than an importer.

One way to glimpse that future is to consider Harrogate, a spa town in the north of England which is a few years ahead of the trend. The town is home to roughly 75,000 people, with the same number living in the rest of the local authority area. Its good schools, pretty Victorian terraced houses and proximity to the Yorkshire Dales mean that it frequently tops lists of the best places to live. Small wonder, then, that it welcomed throngs of newcomers, many of them Polish, in 2004. Arrivals of Europeans jumped from about 200 to 800 per year. Nowadays a tenth of its population is foreign-born.

But the inflow of migrants has slowed and many have started to leave. Every year since 2012 more foreigners have left Harrogate than have arrived, according to official figures. These estimates are far from perfect, but the town already exhibits the characteristics of a place lacking migrants—and shows what other parts of Britain can expect if the national trend continues.

One is a tighter labour market. On the high street, dozens of shops display help-wanted notices. Care homes, of which the town has several, have seen a jump in vacancies. Waiters are in high demand. Costas, a Greek barman, has had three jobs in the past few months. When a branch of the Ivy, a fancy restaurant, opened in November it sucked in roughly 100 staff from local eateries, says the manager of a pizza joint. Unemployment has fallen to 3.6%, below the national and regional levels, allowing some workers to drive harder bargains. Though real median wages in Harrogate have not changed much since 2014, at the lower end they have risen by 9%.

Two factors heighten the labour shortage. First, the town's big industries, which include retail, hospitality and social care, are ones that typically rely on migrants. Second, there is a dearth of young people. Many go to university at the age of 18 and return to start a family at 35. And Harrogate lacks a university or big college of its own, so casual student workers are thin on the ground. All this means that emigration is harder felt.

No statistics on local migration since the Brexit referendum in 2016 have been published, but many in Harrogate suspect that the pace of departures has increased. The number of online ads for hospitality jobs in the local area rose from 771 in 2016 to 1,119 in 2017. Joanna Slusarczyk, who runs a Polish grocery, says some migrants felt unwelcome after the referendum (in which Harrogate voted narrowly to remain). Teachers report that some British children began teasing eastern Europeans about Brexit in the playground.

The outflow is also felt in the housing market. Demand for low-end rented properties has fallen. In Harrogate, prices in this segment grew at half the regional average between 2014 and 2017. Many Poles seem to be seeking work elsewhere in the EU rather than going home. Their forwarding addresses tend not to be in Poland, but in Germany or France.

Some businesses are adapting to the stretched labour market and one strategy is to lure younger and older workers. Some businesses in Harrogate are paying teenagers well above their minimum wage of £4.05 (\$5.70) per hour, to tempt them into work. As the population continues to age, employers will have to rely on older people to fill jobs.

Locals worry about who will care for the elderly and wait on tables in restaurants if migrants continue to leave. Moia Wood, a primary-school teacher who specialises in working with minority groups, says many people in Harrogate don't realise how much migrants do for them. They are beginning to find out—and soon the rest of Britain will, too.

## As polls narrow before the abortion vote, is rural Ireland setting up a Brexit moment?

Emma Graham-Harrison, *The Guardian*, 20 May 2018

The Irish will decide on Friday whether to repeal an amendment dating back to the 1980s that enshrined in the constitution a near-total ban on abortion. The controls are the strictest in any western democracy, meaning that the battle has been closely watched by anti-abortion activists across the world.

5 The campaign began with a clear lead for the Yes campaigners, who support a repeal. But in a country where tradition and the church still have strong influence, the No camp has gained ground. Now the final result is expected to hinge on the one in five voters still undecided.

10 "Obviously, we look at Brexit and Trump and think the media don't always get it right any more. Or they are projecting one way to advance their own goal," said Emer Tóibín, of the Meath for Life campaign, which opposes a repeal.

She believes the narrowing in polls is due in part to campaigners sidestepping newspapers and television to reach voters more directly. "So much of the country had been fed one side of the story," she says in a cafe near her home in the county town Navan. "Freedom of speech is not alive and kicking."

15 She is stepping up the campaign in the run-up to the poll, determined to reach undecided voters and those "reluctant to discuss their views".

Tóibín's sense of urgency may be the one thing she shares with Sheila Donohue, a Catholic grandmother from a conservative background who admits she doesn't know where she would have stood had the referendum been held a decade ago.

20 Now, though, she is preparing to go out on the doorsteps appealing to voters for a repeal, inspired by a tragedy that thrust her family reluctantly into the heart of the debate.

25 In 2010, her daughter Siobhán found out at a routine scan for her third pregnancy that her son would not survive outside the womb, because his brain had not developed. Devastated by the prospect of carrying her baby to term only so that she could bury him, she travelled to Liverpool for a termination. After her return, she began fighting for other women in her position to receive treatment at home through the group Terminations for Medical Reasons.

The already intense campaign was given an unexpected twist, and greater international attention, earlier this month when the US tech giants Google and Facebook said they would be changing the rules on political advertising in Ireland over concerns about foreign interference.

30 Google banned all adverts linked to the referendum, particularly frustrating No campaigners who say they were relying on social media to bypass conventional outlets they accuse of bias. Facebook has barred foreign groups from paying for ads. It has also rolled out a new transparency tool so that anyone in Ireland can track advertisements online, although it requires laborious page-by-page checks in real time.

35 It is one of the first votes held in a major western democracy since the Cambridge Analytica scandal, and since US authorities began public attempts to untangle the extent of foreign interference in the 2016 presidential campaign.

40 And it is the first time that activists have tried to track political messages reaching voters through their screens in something of a David and Goliath fight. The volunteer campaign group the Transparent Referendum Institute is logging individually captured ads that tech giants keep on private, easily searchable databases. So far, they have found more than 900 online advertisements, many not from groups registered with Irish election authorities.

45 Eamon Ryan, leader of Ireland's Green party and an advocate for greater transparency, welcomes attempts to tackle problems but suspects the tech giants are driven more by concerns for their own reputation than for Ireland's democracy. With inquiries under way on their role in Trump's win and Brexit, they do not want to face accusations that their platforms helped to skew the outcome in Ireland's emotive abortion referendum. "I think the decisions of Google and Facebook were largely driven by American political concerns," he told the Observer. "Their fear was that a certain [result in the] Irish vote would trickle back to American politics."

## Private Prison Companies Are About to Cash In on Trump's Deportation Regime

On the ropes in 2016, CoreCivic, GEO Group, and others see big money in immigration detention.

Samantha Michaels and Madison Pauly Dec. 29, 2017 *Mother Jones*

<https://www.motherjones.com/crime-justice/2017/12/private-prison-companies-are-about-to-cash-in-on-trumps-deportation-regime/>

5 In October, when executives from the country's biggest prison company held their annual leadership conference at a golf resort owned by President Donald Trump, they had much to celebrate: lucrative contracts, strong stock prices, and a good shot at expanding their reach in the year ahead, thanks largely to a broadening crackdown on undocumented immigrants and a need for more space to detain them.

10 It was a glaring reminder of how far the private prison industry has come since the final months of the Obama administration, when—shortly after the publication of *Mother Jones*' award-winning investigation of a Louisiana private prison—the Justice Department pledged to phase out contracts with prison companies and the Department of Homeland Security, which oversees immigrant detention, suggested it might consider doing the same. Those days now seem far behind for America's for-profit prison giants, which heartily backed Trump during the campaign, gave hundreds of thousands of dollars to his inaugural committee after the  
15 election, and are now set to benefit from his newly passed tax plan. "I do think we can do a lot of privatizations and private prisons," Trump said in 2016. "It seems to work a lot better."

When Trump got to Washington, the biggest prison companies were already making more money than ever from immigrant detention, and today their prospects have never looked rosier. Fueled by the administration's deportation dragnet, Immigration and Customs Enforcement has predicted a surge in its daily population of  
20 detainees, from around 34,000 in July to more than 51,000 over the next year—and prison companies are more than happy to accommodate. In April, GEO Group executives won the administration's first private immigration detention contract, for a facility in Conroe, Texas, that's expected to bring in \$44 million annually. This year the company also started operating an ICE detention center in Folkston, Georgia, that could boost its revenue another \$21 million.

25 Another opportunity for growth might be farther north. Under Trump, immigration enforcement has shifted, with fewer migrants apprehended at the border and many more caught in raids throughout the country's interior. That means ICE is hoping to incarcerate more of its detainees in the heartland, near where they're arrested. "It's good business sense to have bed capacity in close proximity to where our operations are," says Philip Miller, deputy executive associate director for ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations.

30 The private prison industry is heeding the call. In October, ICE issued a request for information about potential locations for up to 3,000 new detention beds within 180 miles of Chicago, Detroit, Salt Lake City, and St. Paul, Minnesota. While ICE isn't answering questions about who responded to its October inquiry (the National Immigrant Justice Center has a pending Freedom of Information Act request), it's not hard to guess who's in the running. Soon after ICE's request went out, GEO Group chairman and CEO George Zoley told  
35 investors that his company was "very interested" in building the new detention centers the government was looking for. "GEO has such an appetite for these kinds of facilities," Zoley said, "particularly with the contemplated length of the contracts—which we estimate to be approximately 10 years." And Sheriff Michael Downey of Kankakee County, Illinois, whose department was the only public agency to respond to ICE's Chicago-area request, says an ICE official told him that "all the major players" in the private prison industry  
40 had also expressed interest.

One of those players is CoreCivic—formerly known as the Corrections Corporation of America, or CCA—which in early December proposed a \$100 million detention center in Elkhart, Indiana, across a county road from the local landfill and jail. The site, within 180 miles of Chicago and Detroit, would initially have 1,240 beds but could later be expanded to hold 1,400 people, making it one of the largest immigration detention  
45 centers in the country.

CoreCivic's construction proposal will go before Elkhart County commissioners early next year, and ICE is planning to ask for formal bids around Chicago in 2018. In the meantime, a coalition of local residents and immigrant rights activists are leading a campaign against CoreCivic, arguing that the detention center would drive out immigrant workers and exacerbate an already acute labor shortage in the booming manufacturing  
50 town. "I know people who are thinking about, if this happens, they're packing up and leaving," resident Rafael Correa told a local news crew.

But according to coalition organizer Richard Aguirre, most Elkhart officials and business leaders have so far been reluctant to criticize the proposal publicly, and it still has a solid chance of being approved next year. CoreCivic, Aguirre says, "thought they would get a warm reception here because this is a decisive county for  
55 Donald Trump." (...)

## Brexit brain drain: elite universities say they are losing future research stars

Anna Fazackerley, The Guardian, 6 March 2018

Belgian law professor Geert van Calster is used to approaches from European students who have abandoned plans to do a PhD in Britain with Brexit looming. But a few weeks ago, he got a surprise: a PhD student enrolled at a British university contacted him to say she wanted to jump ship.

5 Calster, a professor in Leuven University's Institute of European Law, explains: "She had already started her PhD but was concerned her qualification might not be recognised in Europe after Brexit." She was also worried because many PhD supervisors were leaving to go abroad, he says. Many top European academics working in Britain arrived as young PhD students. Now universities fear discoveries and research are at risk because of a drop in applications from bright EU PhD candidates.

10 Early figures from the Russell Group universities reveal a 9% fall in non-British EU students starting postgraduate research courses in 2017-18, compared with last year – a big concern in universities that rely on European talent. Overall 16% of Russell Group PhD students are from the EU, but this rises to 27% for maths, 22% for computer science and 19% for the physical sciences.

15 Michael Arthur, president and provost of University College London, says: "If I look at the top research teams at UCL Europeans are over-represented, and many of them first came here as PhDs or post docs."

20 Arthur says he was relieved by the government's December announcements offering "settled status" for Europeans already here, and the acknowledgement that his researchers can leave the country and work elsewhere for up to five years without losing that status. But many European researchers and students still fear for the future. "I try to reassure academics but it takes time to rebuild trust. There was a long period in which European citizens felt they were being used as bargaining chips. That has eroded confidence." Calster can understand why young students are being put off Britain. "Just after the Brexit vote most of us assumed there would be some sort of

25 coordinated, predictable approach. But that impression that things are under control and people will be reasonable is no longer valid."

Other doubts contributing to the potential PhD brain drain include uncertainty over the right to remain after studying, and whether Britain will have access to EU research funds after 2020.

30 Jessica Cole, the Russell Group's director of policy, says academics are still getting used to the idea of settled status.

"People doing a PhD here already now know they can stay. But the government needs to get that message out as forcefully as possible. Not only that you can stay – but that we want you to stay."

35 Guillaume Charras, a French professor in biophysics at UCL, arrived from Paris to do his PhD. He went to Harvard and returned in 2007, becoming a big name in UK nanotechnology. As a research student he was attracted by how welcoming Britain was then.

40 "Part of the reason I decided to return to the UK was this openness. But now there is a very big question mark for people who are not yet in the UK and who haven't already experienced that openness first hand." Charras, whose lab has brought in £2m from the European Research Council in the past 10 years, says the biggest fear among all scientists is that Britain could be shut off from EU research cash.

The government has said Britain will remain part of the €70bn (£62bn) Horizon 2020 programme, which funds cutting-edge science, until its end. But official figures have revealed that Britain is already getting millions less from it – owing to a downturn in UK participation and success in winning grants. And many scientists are anxious about what will happen after 2021.

45 Competitors outside Europe are spotting an opportunity. Andrew Timming, an associate professor at the University of Western Australia's business school, recently advertised on Twitter for PhDs, urging them "jump from the sinking ship" of "Brexit Britain". He says: "Does Brexit represent a recruitment opportunity? Absolutely. Not only do fewer potential PhD students want to study in UK universities, but there are also fewer opportunities for those who do."

## Disney doesn't want to offend anyone. But it's getting caught in the culture wars.

by Steven Zeitchik May 30, 2018 *The Washington Post* [https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/disney-doesnt-want-to-offend-anyone-but-its-getting-caught-in-the-culture-wars/2018/05/30/27e9c99e-6456-11e8-b166-fc8410beded\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.44364b25edb9](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/disney-doesnt-want-to-offend-anyone-but-its-getting-caught-in-the-culture-wars/2018/05/30/27e9c99e-6456-11e8-b166-fc8410beded_story.html?utm_term=.44364b25edb9)

- 5 Almost no entertainment conglomerate aims for as wide a swath of the viewing public as the Walt Disney Company, which seeks to “deliver stories, characters and experiences that are welcomed into the hearts and homes of millions of families around the world,” according to its promotional materials. Those homes have seen a lot of slammed doors lately. ABC’s abrupt cancellation of “Roseanne” after a racist tweet from star Roseanne Barr sent many conservative voices
- 10 on Wednesday into a frenzy about the politics of ABC and parent Disney. It is the latest instance in which the entertainment giant has come under fire from a wing of the American electorate — whether it’s over Jimmy Kimmel, ESPN or an episode of “Black-ish.”
- A company that has sought to position itself as a repository for all-American brands — of “Star Wars” and “Dancing With The Stars,” of basketball legends and Marvel superheroes — finds itself grappling with the realities of being a
- 15 conglomerate this large in a time this divisive. “We hear ‘Disney,’ and we think kids movies and things that everyone just kind of loves,” said Carmenta Higginbotham, a professor at the University of Virginia who is one of the country’s leading Disney scholars. “And the company likes riding the middle, because that’s where the money is,” she said. “But now they’re taking all these public hits — they’re going from the middle to riding the edges — and it’s just startling to watch.”
- 20 Like the NFL, Disney has demonstrated a knack for getting pulled more deeply into controversies, even as it tries to avoid them. The controversy over “Roseanne,” in which Barr on Tuesday used an ugly racial image in reference to former Obama White House adviser Valerie Jarrett, prompted a swift reaction from Disney and its chief executive Robert Iger, who within hours canceled her show and called it the “right thing” to do.
- 25 But what had seemed like a moment of unity in the face of hateful speech morphed on Wednesday into another partisan flash point. Conservative voices accused the company of taking a political position by applying a more lenient standard to liberals. The charge was led by President Trump, who tweeted that Iger apologized to Jarrett but “never called President Donald J. Trump to apologize for the HORRIBLE statements made and said about me on ABC.” The tweet was an
- 30 apparent reference to comments from Kimmel critical of the White House and a joke, which Kimmel would later apologize for, about Melania Trump’s accent. The news made for a perfect storm, as conservative blogs had also been taking Disney to task for ESPN’s rehiring of anchor Keith Olbermann, who has a track record of anti-Trump tweets. Disney executives declined to comment for this story.
- 35 Yet the right is not the only group that has been incensed by Disney actions. In March, ABC declined to air an episode of “Black-ish” in which members of the show’s family debated NFL players kneeling during the national anthem. Some left-wing commentators criticized Disney for playing to a white working-class base that fuels its popular “Monday Night Football” program on ESPN. Shortly after, Hollywood trades reported the show’s creator, Kenya Barris, was interested in vacating his deal with
- 40 the network. A potential Barris exit would be a loss for a company that has sought to hold itself up as a model of inclusion. It is not lost on analysts that the ABC executive at the eye of the “Roseanne” storm, Channing Dungey, is the first African American woman to run a broadcast network’s entertainment division. Disney has run afoul of both sides of the political aisle in the same instance. ESPN’s handling of Jemele Hill, the
- 45 then-“SportsCenter” anchor whose anti-Trump tweets first angered the right because she was not fired, then the left because she was redeployed to a lower-profile job in the print section of the company. The incidents highlight how tripwires are inevitable in a culture of constant content and social media anger. They also point to a problem faced by Disney, which wants to be the main source of content for the 21st century while also avoiding the era’s pitfalls, company analysts say.
- 50 “Disney’s walking a tightrope here,” said Lloyd Greif, a Los Angeles-based investment banker who follows the company closely. “Choosing sides — Democrat or Republican — is a lose-lose since we’re talking about alienating potentially half of the viewership.” Greif and other business analysts say the stakes are high for the company — which, with \$55 billion in revenue in 2017, is the country’s second-largest entertainment company after Comcast. What’s more, government regulators are
- 55 now examining Disney’s proposed purchase of 21st Century Fox, which is owned by conservative mogul Rupert Murdoch. “Bob Iger needs to tread lightly lest he get on Rupert Murdoch’s bad side,” Greif added. “Fox clearly is Trump-leaning, and Rupert is Disney-leaning. Disney’s navigating a veritable minefield here and one false step could prove costly . . . in consummating the Disney-Fox merger. (...)



## Britain's main problem isn't Trump. It is the severing of its links to Europe

Natalie Nougayrède, *The Guardian*, 6 December 2017

Donald Trump's tearing up of the special relationship with Britain, in just one tweet, was unquestionably a watershed. But in the process the United States president may unwittingly have cast the UK's relationship with Europe in an entirely new light.

A few weeks before Trump fired off the tweets spreading neo-Nazi propaganda, and followed up with an insult to Theresa May, I met a former official of the Obama administration in Washington. The US-UK relationship, he said, "has for quite some time revolved a lot around Britain's membership in the EU".

"For years, we Americans have used the British as our main entry point to Europe when we wanted things done by allies," he continued. "The British, in turn, would make the case that their input in Europe was key, which buoyed their importance. Some of this could be make-believe, but the thrust of the relationship had to a large extent come to rest on Britain's links with Europe."

When I asked what he thought the future would look like after Brexit, he threw his arms up in the air: "All that will be gone. In fact, it's gone already as Britain pulls out. We just won't have the same kind of interest in nurturing the link with Britain."

Trump is certainly bad news for Britain. He's bad news for any country that is democratic and wants to uphold the liberal world order rather than let it unravel into the kind of chaos that would cost everyone dear. But if this is now a tipping point, then taking a deeper look at how keeping close to Europe serves Britain's interest surely makes sense.

Britain's relative power in global affairs is not what it used to be. Nor can it possibly return to the era of empire. America's commitment to the old continent is not what it once was either. What can destabilise Europe will just as surely destabilise Britain. History has already shown that to be true, but recent developments have illustrated it further: Russian aggression; China's growing clout and geopolitical appetite; migration; new forms of terrorism; and cyberwarfare, to mention just a few.

How well can Britain deal, alone, with internet giants throwing their weight around in business and in the workings of democracy? How can it, alone, play a role in harnessing globalisation so that it benefits everyone? How can Britain, in isolation, have any sway on climate change? How can it ever, as a solitary actor, further the fight against global inequality and offshore tax evasion, or have its voice heard on human rights violations, from Syria to Myanmar?

Many of the answers to these questions lie in what Britain is now getting ready to squander – belonging to a 500 million-strong bloc: the EU.

Britain has always had a complex relationship with the postwar European project. From the 1970s onwards, its domestic politics have often been jolted by the question of how to define its place within that evolving construct. Britain opted to combine a privileged relationship with the US and the advantages it could draw from being in the European club. Margaret Thatcher's push for a single market, and Tony Blair's European leanings, were all part of that story. So was Labour's choice, in the late 1980s, to adhere to the notion of "social Europe", a combination of a market economy and social protection, in which workers' rights and environmental norms would be protected.

The EU is an imperfect entity. But look at what the rest of the world has to offer – from China's autocratic state capitalism to America's blatant social inequalities and growing isolationism, not to mention the corruption and lack of rule of law found in many "emerging" countries – and surely it is obvious where Britain's best partnership can be found.

Consider also how different Britain's outlook might have been if it had stuck with its large European neighbours, France and Germany, rather than with the US, in the run-up to George W Bush's Iraq war. Obsessing about Trump is understandable, especially in a country so culturally and strategically intertwined with the US. But constantly emphasising that transatlantic dimension, even in "resistance" mode, misses the much more urgent and logical task at hand – which is, even at this late stage, to prevent Brexit from happening.

Can Trump's miserable presidency be that wake-up call? Like many Europeans, I can only watch the UK – confused and seemingly heading towards oblivion – with a deep sense of bafflement and regret; certainly not with schadenfreude. If Trump's America shows anything, it is that the transatlantic gap is likely to widen not just diplomatically but on values too.

The EU may be struggling with the strains of populism within its separate nations, but populism certainly isn't what the collective project is about. In fact, the EU is the antithesis of illiberalism. That's one reason Putin works so hard to undermine it, and why Trump has so often lashed out against it.

These days, Britain spends a massive amount of energy counting points in the divorce talks with the EU. It now needs to discuss the deeper question of where its true friends are. They are not in the White House. They are on the other side of the Channel, across a diverse continent trying to gear itself up to defend its interests in a fast-changing world.

## For God's sake, Republicans! Preaching politics from pulpit is an atrocious idea

BY FABIOLA SANTIAGO November 30, 2017 *Miami Herald*

<http://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/news-columns-blogs/fabiola-santiago/article187424488.html>

5 If President Donald Trump and the House Republican leadership have their way, stand ready for the two most contentious subjects in our society — religion and politics — to mix under one roof in churches, synagogues and mosques.

The same goes for your tax-exempt, shopping center-based, nondenominational house of worship, and of course, for the large-scale evangelical centers that gather thousands of celebrity-preacher followers.

One and all could turn into a political machine, the separation of church and state be damned.

10 Can you imagine the Sunday sermon spiked with political punditry — and a plug for Pepe Croqueta for the Miami City Commission, Jane Doe for the Florida House, Joe Blow for Congress?

Jesus, save us!

Of all the possible amendments to jam into their tax bill, the GOP has chosen the constitutionally questionable issue of allowing churches to become political forums in which preachers, ministers, pastors and imams can endorse

15 political candidates.

Don't roll your eyes at my bringing up mosques, imams and Islam. The incursion of religion into politics may be happening because Trump wants to please his right-wing evangelical voter base, but when you open a door to one religion you open it to all. As I so often feel the need to note these days, though it's being tested this *is* still a democracy, and religious freedom is one of the cornerstones.

20 But arguing that the 1954 Johnson Amendment prohibiting religious organizations from endorsing or opposing political candidates restricts the free speech rights of religious groups, the Republican tax bill seeks to modify it. And the only thing left after the makeover is that religious institutions still cannot make donations to political campaigns.

Opening the door to politicking in church could change religious practice and the religious experience as we know it — except perhaps for Catholics.

25 "The Catholic Church has no dog in that fight and it's got nothing to do with the tax exemption," Miami Archbishop Thomas Wenski told me. "This is not the way Catholics view religion. The church doesn't endorse candidates — whether there's a Johnson Amendment or not."

In fact, Wenski said, Catholics find themselves "politically homeless, because we don't find a home in either party today," with the church at odds with the Democratic Party on abortion and reproductive rights, and with the

30 Republican Party on immigration and capital punishment. During the last two election cycles, parishes have distributed voter guides approved by the Catholic Conference of Bishops that are focused on forming political consciousness through faith, Wenski said, but that's the extent of the church involvement in elections. Although groups may call themselves, say "Catholics for Romney," they have no ties to the church and aren't — and won't be in the future — allowed to engage in any campaigning on church

35 grounds. It's not that way for some black churches that do feature political candidates "and no one bats an eyelash," Wenski said.

Trump's insistence on mixing politics and religion rings un-American, too, as our founding fathers had the wisdom to cement the distance between religious worship and the nation state in the Bill of Rights. Throughout the ages,

40 religion has been one of the deeply rooted causes of war, genocide and persecution. Why would the United States in the 21st century want to open that retrograde, dangerous, and divisive door?

Religious dogma is the way, for example, that the ayatollahs exert ideological and political pressure in embattled Iran, to name one country. Is Trump planning the creation of a Christian theocracy in the United States?

45 Preaching politics from the pulpit is an atrocious idea, a right-wing power grab by Trump and Republicans who heavily courted Christian conservatives and African-American evangelical pastors during the last presidential campaign.

Only four months into his presidency, Trump signed an executive order "promoting free speech and religious liberty" — instructing the IRS not to punish clergy for political speech — during a National Day of Prayer event in the Rose Garden. Sweet-looking nuns from the Little Sisters of the Poor shook Trump's hand as priests, pastors and at least

50 one Muslim leader applauded. The Catholics attended, Wenski said, because they saw this as a pushback on "the Obama overreach" on requiring religious organizations to pay for employees' contraception.

But neither Trump, nor the Republicans nor the religious leaders supporting him are doing organized religion a service. The "pulpit freedom" might prove costly. People have left churches behind for less treacherous reasons than having your sermon spiked with divisive politics.

55 Turning a house of worship into a partisan political forum might be one more reason to go find God elsewhere.

## Progressive 'Federalism' Makes a Mockery of the Founders' Vision

By John York April 13, 2018 *National Review*

<https://www.nationalreview.com/2018/04/democratic-state-lawsuits-against-trump-pervert-federalism/>

Since President Donald Trump took office, Democrats seem to have developed a newfound fondness for federalism. Democratic state attorneys general have challenged the president on everything from the administration's travel ban, to a presidential directive narrowing Obamacare's birth-control coverage requirement, to efforts to identify and deport violent criminals in the United States illegally.

While all this may look familiar — after all, Republican states locked horns with President Obama often — Democrats' efforts are unprecedented in scale and detrimental to constitutional government. By the end of Trump's first year in office, Democratic states had already brought 35 lawsuits against his administration. Over the course of his eight years in office, Republicans brought only 46 lawsuits against Obama's administration.

Democratic attorneys general, pundits, and plaintiff's lawyers claim that the reason for this dramatic uptick in legal obstruction is President Trump's supposed disregard for the Constitution. But this is not the case. Many of the lawsuits emanating from blue-state capitals are not based on any tenable interpretation of the Constitution or any relevant federal statute.

For instance, several blue-state attorneys general claimed that the president lacked authority to bypass environmental regulations to expedite the construction of a border wall, even though a 2005 law gives the Homeland Security secretary authority to do just this. The case was dismissed.

Right now, three Democratic governors are preparing to bring a federal lawsuit challenging a provision in the recently passed tax overhaul that would limit the deductibility of state and local taxes. They claim this deduction limit violates the equal-protection rights of people living in blue states, since no red-state government has imposed taxes that surpass the deductibility cap. This is an absurd reading of the 14th Amendment. According to the Tax Foundation, this shot-in-the-dark case "will almost certainly fail."

These threadbare legal arguments are a thin veil for the actual motives of Democratic lawmakers and lawyers. These state officials apparently see themselves as part of the resistance. Burying the president's agenda under a mountain of paperwork is job No. 1. Defending the Constitution is not only subordinated to this goal, but actually sacrificed in service of it.

### ***Progressive "Federalism"***

Indeed, the unprecedented legal campaign being waged by Democratic state officials against the Trump administration will actually diminish the authority of states to establish their own policies within their own borders. This is because, in regard to domestic policy, Democratic governors, legislators, and attorneys general are often calling for more federal intervention, not less.

For instance, in *New York v. Pruitt et al.*, Democratic attorneys general tried to force the Trump administration to keep in place an Obama-era regulation allowing the Environmental Protection Agency to police wetlands, mudflats, wet meadows, and "prairie potholes" as if they were navigable "waters of the United States." In *Washington v. Trump*, blue-state attorneys general sued the administration over new rules that would allow religious business owners more discretion as to what medical procedures to cover in their employer-funded health-insurance policies. With *Maryland, et al. v. U.S. Department of Education*, Democratic attorneys general are attempting to expedite the enforcement of new regulations on for-profit colleges.

To the extent that Democratic state governments have tried to block — rather than prompt — federal action, it has been in areas where the federal government has clear constitutional authority to act. Democratic attorneys general have sued the president over a temporary travel ban halting citizens of eight countries identified as potent sources of terrorism, despite the fact that national security is a core federal function and the president has clear statutory authority to act.

California's recent immigration laws, now being challenged in court, are perhaps the clearest example of a state attempting to obstruct the federal government's discharge of its enumerated constitutional duties. Although the federal government is given sole authority to establish a "uniform rule of naturalization," California has made it illegal for state officials and private-sector employers to voluntarily aid the federal government's efforts to identify and deport those here illegally.

While the Supreme Court bars the federal government from commandeering state law-enforcement officials to enforce federal law, it does not give states authority to prosecute individuals who voluntarily comply with federal laws. Here too the motivation appears to be resistance. As President Pro Tempore of the California Senate Kevin de León said: "California is building a wall of justice against President Trump's xenophobic, racist, and ignorant immigration policies."

### ***Constitutional Federalism***

By contrast, when Republicans challenged Obama-era statutes and regulations, it was generally to the end of limiting, rather than promoting, federal action in domestic-policy areas that the Founders imagined would be left to the states. Republican state attorneys general and lawmakers sued the Obama administration over the Environmental Protection Agency's over-broad interpretation of the Clean Water Act, the Affordable Care Act's individual mandate, and a directive on transgender bathroom use in public schools, to name a few.

Democratic efforts to craft the nation's defense and immigration policy from the few state capitals they still control does not reflect the Founders' federalism. (...) As Attorney General Jeff Sessions correctly pointed out, "There is no nullification. There is no secession. Federal law is the supreme law of the land. I would invite any doubters to go to Gettysburg or to the tombstones of John C. Calhoun and Abraham Lincoln. This matter has been settled."

John York is a researcher in the Institute for Constitutional Government at the Heritage Foundation.

## Boris Johnson makes an energetic but unconvincing case for Brexit

*The Economist*, 15th February 2018

THE fog of Brexit gets thicker by the day. It is only a year and a bit until Britain leaves the European Union. But the government still hasn't resolved the most important question that will determine its future relationship with the bloc—will Britain shadow EU rules and regulations or strike out on its own?—let alone thousands of smaller puzzles. Business is becoming jittery. Ordinary Britons bury their heads in shame.

5 On Valentine's Day Boris Johnson, the foreign secretary and the most prominent Brexiteer, tried to throw some light on the gloom in a speech at Policy Exchange, Britain's leading right-of-centre think-tank. The speech was billed as the first of six that will detail the government's line on Brexit. Theresa May will speak about security on February 17th and other ministers will address their areas of expertise in turn. Getting in first was undoubtedly a coup for Mr Johnson.

10 Mr Johnson took the opportunity to remind the public of what a political star he is. But in demonstrating his own star power he reminded his audience of two things. The first is the prime minister's own lack of pizzazz. The foreign secretary is everything that she is not: outgoing where she is inward-looking, clever with words where she is dull and gung-ho where she is dithering. Mr Johnson is having to make the case for Brexit only because Mrs May is incapable of doing so. The second is how little progress has been made with Brexit, not just pragmatically but intellectually and emotionally. Britain still seems to be fighting the referendum campaign (with the Remainers putting up a rather better fight than they did in 2016), instead of drawing up an exit plan.

15 Mr Johnson justified his decision to restate the case for Brexit on the grounds that he was trying to reach out to the 48% who voted to remain. Presenting himself as the voice of reconciliation took some cheekiness, given that he arouses more visceral hatred than anybody else on the Leave side. And he also offered the hand of friendship in an odd way. You might have thought that the best way to reconcile the 48% to Brexit would be to offer a "soft" exit, maintaining Britain's most important links with the EU. But Mr Johnson championed the hardest possible option, leaving both the single market and the customs union in order for Britain to strike its own trade deals and set its own standards.

20 At times it looked as if the foreign secretary was more interested in showing a knuckleduster to the prime minister than offering a Valentine to Remainers. The implication of his speech was that if Mrs May tried to compromise by keeping Britain close to the EU then he would resign. Mr Johnson was being sincere. The foreign secretary thinks that he has a magic formula for bringing the country together with something that he calls liberal Brexit. Liberal Brexit will provide both sides with what they want most: sovereignty for the Leavers and liberal values for the Remainers. It will do so by revitalising Britain's long tradition as an independent, free-trading nation. But unfortunately his own arguments do not survive even a gentle anatomisation.

25 The most basic problem is that most Leavers didn't want a liberal Brexit. A few Thatcherites may have voted for Singapore-on-Thames. But most Brexiteers voted for more state and less market. They wanted to reduce immigration, prevent a repeat of the financial crisis that had seen their incomes stagnate, and increase spending on the welfare state. In his pursuit of a liberal Brexit Mr Johnson offers little to Leavers other than a vague promise to control low-skilled immigration and his much-disputed claim that leaving the EU will free up cash for the National Health Service.

30 The second problem is that Mr Johnson is naive to the point of irresponsibility about economics. He refuses to acknowledge that leaving a trade bloc of 500m people will entail significant economic costs. His liberal Brexit is essentially a cake-based one that involves full access to the European market but also more freedom for Britain to go its own way. He insists that the EU is holding back British companies; free Britannia from those pettifogging rules and she will conquer the markets of the east. But EU rules have not prevented German companies from turning themselves into global rather than just regional powerhouses. Indeed, Germany exports more than Britain even to countries with strong British ties, such as India (to which it exports 150% more than Britain) and South Africa (250% more). Nor have EU rules stopped the Swedes from creating global startups such as Spotify.

35 Mr Johnson is right that reuniting Britain after the trauma of the referendum is the most important task facing the country. He is also right that Britain is witnessing "a hardening of the mood" and "deepening of the anger". Much of the establishment is in a state of cold war with the government. People who have been friends for decades don't speak. But alas, Mr Johnson's notion of a liberal Brexit is not so much a unifying vision as a pipe dream.

## Britain now has a four-party system

*The Economist*, 30 September 2017

The election in June saw the return of two-party politics. Labour and the Conservatives increased their share of the vote to 82%, from 65% in 2005. Yet look a little more closely at the two great parties that are currently holding their annual conferences—Labour in Brighton this week and the Conservatives in Manchester next—and you see a more complicated picture. Under Jeremy Corbyn, Labour is divided into two sub-parties: a moderate Social Democratic Party and a socialist Corbynite Party. The Conservatives are an uneasy coalition of Whigs and Tories.

The Corbynite Party was in charge in Brighton. Most of the trade unionists and activists who filled the hall were Corbynites, and Momentum, the molten core of Corbynism, helped to put on a parallel conference, "The World Transformed". Tom Watson, officially Labour's deputy leader and unofficially one of the commanders of the anti-Corbyn resistance movement, even treated the conference to a rendition of "Oh, Jeremy Corbyn", the favourite chant of the faithful, in an abject admission of defeat. But the Social Democrats were nevertheless in evidence. Blairite MPs walked the seafront with rictus smiles. Labour First, a moderate pressure group, complained loudly that the left had stitched up the conference by denying speaking roles to centrists, most notably Sadiq Khan, the mayor of London (the organisers eventually relented). One moderate complained that he felt like a stranger in his own party. The sort of people who used to stand outside the hall handing out leaflets were now inside.

The Corbynites and Social Democrats differ fundamentally on the meaning of the election, in which Labour dramatically increased its vote-share but fell 64 seats short of a majority. Len McCluskey, the leader of the pro-Corbyn Unite union, gave vent to the Corbynite interpretation when he told the conference that he was tired of "whingers and whiners" who point out that Labour didn't win. "I say we did win. We won the hearts and minds of millions of people, especially the young," he insisted. Mr Corbyn told a fringe meeting that Labour would have won outright if the campaign had lasted another week. On this analysis, the task now is to work harder at selling Corbynism to the people.

The Social Democrats, meanwhile, believe that Labour lost a winnable election by backing a candidate and a set of policies that stand far outside the mainstream. The psephological evidence points in both directions. Mr Corbyn pulled off a remarkable feat by getting 40% of the vote. But his party is running neck-and-neck with the Conservatives in the polls, despite the fact that the government is doing its best to tear itself apart. A more centrist politician could be leading by double figures.

The Conservatives' Manchester conference will be no less confusing. It will be shared by the Whigs, a cosmopolitan party that wants Britain to remain as close as possible to Europe, and the Tories, a nationalist party that worries about immigration and cultural change. The Whigs are mostly young and urban—David Cameron's Notting Hill set writ large—while the Tories are older and rural. The Whigs think the Conservative Party must move with the times in order to survive, whereas the Tories think that moving with the times will mean surrendering everything they hold dear. Like the Corbynites, the Tories have numbers on their side. The Conservative Party enjoys impregnable majorities in certain places, but has recently lost metropolitan beachheads in others.

The Conservatives are just as divided over the meaning of the election as Labour. The Tories think that Theresa May's strategy of advancing into culturally conservative working-class areas in the north was a brilliant idea badly executed. The party came close to winning a slew of Brexit-voting seats in north-east England. The Whigs agree that it was badly executed but think it was a foolish idea in the first place. By embracing social conservatism and little-England nationalism, the party alienated metropolitan Britain without breaking the working class's tribal loyalty to Labour.

These divisions are not clear-cut. Some Conservative Brexiteers are radical Whig free-traders who liken the EU to the protectionist Corn Laws of the 1840s. Some of Labour's chief Social Democrats, such as Mr Khan, have made a show of bending the knee to Mr Corbyn. The party conferences underline the fact that political parties are as much social organisms as political ones: an excuse to get drunk, have a good time and hang out with friends.

Yet Brexit is testing party managers' skills to the limit. In government, the Conservatives cannot avoid making divisive decisions over Brexit. The party also contains a core of fanatics who have no intention of allowing the triumph of Brexit to be betrayed. Labour is also split. Mr Corbyn is cool on Europe partly because, as a socialist, he regards the EU as a constraint on policies such as nationalisation and partly because, as a party boss, he realises that many working-class Labour voters supported Brexit. By contrast, Labour's Social Democrats are passionately pro-EU.

In Britain tribal loyalties usually trump ideological divisions. But occasionally ideological divisions prove too wide to manage, particularly when allied with economic interests. Brexit might yet prove to be just such a division. The Conservatives' Whigs and Labour's Social Democrats have far more in common with each other over Brexit (and much else) than they do with their parties' radical wings. One of the big questions of the next year will be whether tribalism will prevail again—or whether the Whigs and Social Democrats can summon the courage to reach across the aisle and start voting as a block on the all-consuming question of Britain's relationship with Europe.

## Donald Trump's Gift to Women

By Gail Collins Dec. 13, 2017 *The New York Times* – *Opinion*

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/13/opinion/donald-trump-women.html>

On the day before the Alabama election, I found myself explaining that I needed to get to work despite the bombing at my subway station because there were women coming in to talk about having been sexually assaulted by the president.

Really, we live in interesting times.

The bombing — in which no one was seriously hurt but the bomber — has already faded from the memory of New York's hardened mass transit riders. But the rest of the story is reverberating. We're in the middle of a women's uprising that really does feel like a new wave, maybe the one that could actually get the country within shouting distance of power equality.

Think about it. This week Roy Moore got skunked in Alabama, thanks in great part to female voters who went for the Democratic candidate instead. Then the U.S. Senate got ready for another woman member — Minnesota Lt. Gov. Tina Smith is going to replace Al Franken, who is resigning in the sexual harassment scandal.

We have a revolt against sexual harassment that's running through the political, entertainment, restaurant and communications worlds. And we're finally trying to focus on the Donald Trump sleaziness sagas that the nation didn't deal with in 2016. Trump is really behind everything — his election jarred and frightened women so much that there was nothing to do but rebel and try to change the world.

"I think it's very much because of President Trump," said Senator Kirsten Gillibrand of New York. "For me the Women's March was still the most extraordinary political moment of my lifetime." Gillibrand is a leader of the antiharassment campaign in Congress. This week, as some of the women who had stories about Trump's own hands-on history were talking to the media, she called on the president to resign.

Trump responded — as only he can — with a Twitter attack, calling Gillibrand a political "lightweight" who used to come to him "begging" for campaign contributions, "and would do anything for them."

"I think it was intended to be a sexist smear, and it was intended to silence me and every woman who challenges him," Gillibrand said in a phone interview.

The White House retorted that only a person whose mind was "in the gutter" would think the president was talking about anything but the way political fund-raising means "special interests control our government."

What do you think, people? Perhaps we could just do a calculation on how much time Trump has spent in his public life discussing girl-grabbing versus campaign finance reform.

Also, no one in Washington seems to have missed the fact that when the president tweeted, Gillibrand was at a congressional Bible study meeting.

It's for sure that when Donald Trump beat Hillary Clinton it triggered a visceral response in masses of American women, and that trauma may be turning into a political uprising more powerful than the Tea Party. Women voters delivered Alabama for Democrat Doug Jones — 57 percent came down on his side. The critical mass actually came from the African-American community, where women vote more faithfully than men, and virtually all of them went for Jones. (Hard to know what triggered their outpouring — Roy Moore's creepy sexual history or his enthusiasm for the good old days of strong families and slavery.)

"I see black women as the heart of the Democratic Party," said Gillibrand.

Other women aren't exactly standing still. A new Monmouth University poll has Trump's job approval rating down to another new historic low, 32 percent. The decline, Monmouth said, came mostly from Republican and independent women. All in all, women gave the president thumbs-up only 24 percent of the time. He's their political equivalent of overcooked broccoli.

We truly could be seeing a new wave of feminist reform. The United States has had moments when it looked as if women were finally taking their rightful place in the public world. But things had a way of stalling. After suffrage wars, politicians were worried about pleasing their new female constituents. But they then concluded that women were going to pretty much vote like their male relatives, and lost interest. The "Year of the Woman" in 1992 added four more U.S. senators to the pair of women who were already there. But now, in the 21st century, the Senate still has only 21.

There could be a lot more if this revolution continues. And while we have no earthly idea who the Democratic presidential candidate will be in 2020, it's likely that a bunch of women are going to be in the mix — Gillibrand probably among them.

Think about it. The only Democratic woman who's ever been a top-of-the-pack presidential contender was Hillary Clinton, a former first lady. And I can remember being around when it was a big deal that Margaret Chase Smith got her name put into nomination at the Republican convention after a campaign dominated by dissection of her muffin recipe.

It's not necessarily bad when the times get interesting.

## Trump's Petticoat Government

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/06/opinion/sunday/trumps-petticoat-government.html>

By Ross Douthat Jan. 6, 2018 Opinion *The New York Times*

5 Incapacity in the chief executive is not a new thing in American history. James Garfield spent half of his short presidency dying slowly from a gunshot wound. Richard Nixon's condition in his final days was dire enough that his secretary of defense effectively cut him out of the nuclear chain of command. Woodrow Wilson's stroke and his wife's influence thereafter produced the immortal — if, of course, highly #problematic — complaint from one of Wilson's senatorial critics that “we have a petticoat government! ... Mrs. Wilson is president!”

10 What's different about Donald Trump is that his inability to handle the weight and responsibility of his office is not something that crept up gradually, not something imposed by an assassin's bullet or a stroke or a late-in-the-presidency crisis. Instead it's been a defining feature of his administration from Day 1 — and indeed was obvious during the campaign that elected him.

This means that the president's unfitness is not really a Harvey Weinstein-style “open secret,” an awful 15 reality known to insiders but kept from hoi polloi, as *The Atlantic's* James Fallows suggested this week amid the mania over Michael Wolff's gonzo inside-the-White-House book. Indeed, it's not any kind of secret: Even if it's considered politically unwise for prominent Republicans to mention it, anyone who reads the papers (this one especially) knows that some combination of Trump's personality and temperament and advancing age leave him constantly undone by the obligations of the presidency.

20 In a column early in his tempestuous first year, I suggested that this obvious fact potentially justified the invocation of the 25th Amendment, which permits a president's cabinet in consultation with the legislative branch to remove him from the White House.

The material in Wolff's book provides more grist for that argument; the book may be dubious in some 25 particulars but as the consummate insiders Jim VandeHei and Mike Allen wrote on Thursday, the parts about Trump's capabilities and mental state “ring unambiguously true.” (And again, one does not need to be a well-sourced insider to recognize this fact; one need only have access to the president's own Twitter feed.) But op-ed provocations notwithstanding, the 25th Amendment option isn't happening — not without some major presidential deterioration in the midst of a major crisis, and probably not even then. And while I blame Republicans for a thousand things that brought us to this pass, it's too extreme to blame them for not 30 pursuing an option that's never been tried before, against a president who was recently and (yes) legitimately elected, especially when that option requires extraordinary coordination across the legislative and executive branches and could easily fail ... with God-only-knows what kind of consequences.

So unless Robert Mueller has more goods than I expect, we are going to live for the next few years in the 35 way that America lived during the waning days of Nixon, the end of the Wilson administration, and perhaps at other moments known only to presidential inner circles — with our own equivalent of the petticoat government, which in this case includes military uniforms, dress suits and whatever outfits Ivanka and Kellyanne Conway favor (but not, any longer, the layering of collared shirts perfected by Steve Bannon).

Which means the central question of these years is not a normal policy question, or even the abnormal sort that the Resistance and other fascism-fearers expect to face. The idea of a right-populist agenda died with 40 Bannon's exit from the White House, the standard-issue G.O.P. agenda has little left after the tax cuts, and Trump's authoritarian impulses, while genuine, seem unlikely to produce even aggrandizement on the scale of past presidents from F.D.R. to Nixon, because he has no competence to execute on them.

Rather, the big question is organizational, managerial, and psychological: Can the people who surround 45 Donald Trump work around his incapacity successfully enough to keep his unfitness from producing a historic calamity?

They have done so for a year, with some debacles (Puerto Rico) but also some genuine successes (the defeat 50 of the Islamic State). People may laugh at Wolff's assertion that “the men and women of the West Wing, for all that the media was ridiculing them, actually felt they had a responsibility to the country,” and for some figures (perhaps especially in the press office) the laughter will be justified. But for others the work has been necessary and important, and the achievement of relative stability a genuine service to the United States.

Can it continue in the face of some greater crisis than Trump has yet confronted? Can it continue if the Democrats take a share of power or if the president's own family faces legal jeopardy? Is the American system more able to correct for presidential incapacity than some of us have feared?

The last year has given us some reason to think the answer to the last question might be “yes.” May the new 55 year give us more, because our president's chaotic mind isn't going anywhere.

## Can Meghan Markle Save the Monarchy?

By IRENOSEN OKOJIE, *The New York times*, NOV. 28, 2017

5 There were quiet rumblings in the press when they first started dating, a whiff of snobbery: Meghan Markle — half black, American, divorced, actress — was a curiosity. Perhaps it was a phase. There were comparisons to previous girlfriends, all of whom had been waifish blue-blooded blondes. There was a half-sister wheeled out, who declared Ms. Markle's past behavior to be "not fitting for a royal family member" and pitched a tell-all book to publishers. All of it came with the implication that Ms. Markle was an unlikely candidate to be taken seriously. She would never join the House of Windsor.

10 And yet, she will. In an announcement that went out Monday morning, His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales declared that Ms. Markle would marry Prince Harry in the spring. In the era of Brexit and Donald Trump — a time when we've seen an increase in racially motivated crimes, hateful rhetoric and fear mongering — Prince Harry's union with Ms. Markle is not only a bold antidote, it's astonishingly political (even if Ms. Markle, who has previously discussed the complexity of her identity as a mixed-race woman and says she has found the conversation about her race "disheartening," may not view it as such).

15 Admittedly, for the most part, until recently I'd been indifferent to the monarchy. It felt old-fashioned, an archaic and exclusive institution people of color couldn't really connect with nor would feel particularly invested in, given its long historical association with colonial projects.

20 Prince Harry openly and defiantly dating Ms. Markle made me, a black British woman, see the royals slightly differently. Suddenly they — or Harry, at least — seemed more open-minded. And it wasn't just me: Other women of color, too, I found, had begun taking notice and talking about the monarchy. Friends discussed the possibility of an engagement, whether the royals would be forward-thinking enough to give Harry permission. When the announcement finally came, the reaction from people of color on both sides of the pond was explosive; memes were deployed immediately.

25 Something was happening; not since Diana, Princess of Wales, has there been this kind of interest from young people in a member of the royal family.

30 Even before Monday's announcement, Prince Harry had exceeded Britain's expectations of him. Over the last few years, he'd matured from a mischievous, slightly unruly young man (his unclothed escapades on a laddish trip to Vegas in 2012 spring to mind) into the more mature version of himself we see today. There had been contrition, progress, a new level of comfort in his skin, a clearer sense of direction. He'd served in the military, created the Invictus Games, done charity work, all the while retaining a certain cheekiness, warmth and accessibility. He was the prince who took his duties seriously but didn't appear to take himself too seriously.

35 Now, with his engagement, Prince Harry has thrown the royal rule book on who can and can't be a princess out of the window. In his choice of partner, he has shown a certain courage, a propensity to do things on his terms. It is an act of royal rebellion nobody saw coming.

40 Are we being ushered into a new era where the boundaries of race and class will be blown open in Britain, when people will grow more open-minded about who they can consider a possible mate? This is probably optimistic, though in some ways not: Interracial marriages are on the rise in Britain. In this sense, the prince and Ms. Markle are following, not leading. What is more intriguing is the question of whether, as a result of this unlikely pairing, more people of color will come to feel they have a stake in the country's most old-fashioned institution.

45 There have been some racist responses to the announcement, just as there were racist reactions when they first started dating. There will probably be more. It's impressive to see a prince who's not afraid to ruffle a few feathers, who has made a clear statement against those prejudices by refusing to allow them to affect his personal choices. Harry feels millennial, current, like a prince for our times. His impact on modernizing the royal family's image cannot be underestimated. He's made the royals seem more in touch with the public. His union with Ms. Markle has shaken to the core the country's ideas about who is entitled to a seat at the royal table.

50 We live in strange times, with an American president who panders to right-wing hate, in a world that seems to have taken several steps backward. And so in these times, when a British prince goes against both royal and societal norms to propose to his biracial girlfriend, it's worth taking a moment to smile.



## Emmanuel Macron's Bayeux tapestry loan is one in the eye for Brexiters

Martin Kettle, *The Guardian*, 18 January 2018

Although the word occasionally pops up in Tintin adventures, normally in the mouth of Captain Haddock, there are obvious reasons why a columnist shouldn't utter the antique French cry of *Saperlipopette!* very often. It's a bit like using "gadzooks", which is one of its approximate English equivalents. But today is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, so here goes. The news that Emmanuel Macron is proposing to loan the Bayeux tapestry to Britain is *étonnant, extraordinaire and incroyable*. In fact, all one can say is ... *Monsieur le Président, saperlipopette!*

Well, actually, not quite all. "Thank you" follows very close behind. The Bayeux tapestry is an astonishingly direct and vivid depiction of a pivotal event in Anglo-French history. The story of Duke William's successful invasion of England in 1066 is told with a clarity that crosses the centuries. Its historic importance is beyond measure and its survival something close to a miracle. Though Bayeux itself is not far away, too few people in this country have had the chance to see the tapestry close up, all 70 metres of it. Allowing it to travel here is a historic cultural gesture on a par with Egypt's loan of the Tutankhamun treasures a generation ago.

Let's hope that serious thought goes into deciding where in this country it will be put on display, and what kind of reciprocal gesture Britain should make to France. Yet here we enter the world not of cultural exchanges but of soft-power politics. For Macron's gesture is every bit as political as it is generous and neighbourly, coming as it has on the eve of an Anglo-French summit at Sandhurst army college, where Brexit and big defence issues are on the agenda. We must therefore ask ourselves the famous question that the great French diplomat Talleyrand, an Anglophile ambassador to London among much else, is said to have asked on hearing of the death of the Turkish ambassador: "I wonder what he meant by that."

It is tempting to imagine that, behind the goodwill and generosity, Macron means to make a hard political point about Brexit. The Bayeux tapestry, after all, depicts a brutal lesson whose metaphorical significance as a story of power politics is hard to miss. The English prince Harold forms an alliance with William of Normandy, then betrays his promise to allow William to succeed. William invades, Harold is killed, and William rules England in his place.

It would be stretching a point to suppose that Macron sees himself as Emmanuel the Conqueror. In spite of his occasional kingly pretensions and personal sense of the importance of political leadership, Macron lives in the real world. But there are other lessons to be learned from the tapestry. One is that Saxon England was not immune to the rest of the world. Another is, bad things can happen if a nation does not keep its promises to its neighbours. A third is, England does not always win. These apply as much in 2018 as they did in 1066.

Brexit is an unwelcome distraction for Macron. He does not want it to happen, and he has made clear that the door would remain open if Britain had a change of mind. But this is not in his or anyone else's gift. He cannot spend time trying to stop Brexit, and he must proceed on the basis that it will happen. Brexit is both a threat and an opportunity for France. It removes from the EU a country that has often stood out against France's strategic wish to use the EU to enhance its importance in the world, and to bind Germany in. But it also clearly gives embodiment to the once unthinkable possibility that nations can leave the EU and survive.

Macron therefore comes to Sandhurst on Thursday for talks with Theresa May with a strong interest in binding Britain into as much of the continuing European project, and in cooperating with Britain on as many aspects of policy, as possible. Above all, he does not want Britain to head off into the freewheeling economic or international role that hardline Brexiters dream of. That's not because it may succeed - it will not. But such an approach to Brexit might challenge the EU economically or weaken Europe in other ways, principally military ones.

When he was still François Hollande's economic minister in 2016, Macron threatened a tough line against Britain in the event of Brexit. France might abandon its migrant controls in Calais, he said. It might cut trade links rather than negotiate new ones. But Macron now needs to hug Britain close as it leaves the EU. It is in France's interests for Britain to be bound into the single market and customs union as much as possible, so that jobs do not leak across the Channel in a deregulatory Britain. And it is in France's interests for British defence clout to be locked into Europe's needs too.

Britain and France seem fated to be rivals as well as friends. *That Sweet Enemy* is the book title of one major history of the relationship. *Best of Enemies* is the title of another. Macron does not offer a special relationship, but he does offer one that works and makes sense. With a bit of luck, he may help to save us from ourselves over the delusions of hard Brexit and the "global" Britain fantasy. Any other way, as the Bayeux tapestry shows, and it could all end badly.

## Texas Attorney General: Under Trump, Congress can reclaim its legislative authority

Ken Paxton Opinion contributor February 5, 2018 *USA Today*

<https://eu.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2018/02/05/president-trumps-congress-must-reclaim-its-legislative-authority/1086877001/>

- 5 During his presidency, President Obama showed little regard for the rule of law, the constitutional principle of federalism, and the separation of powers. In addition to unconstitutional executive orders he issued, his administration used unelected, unaccountable Washington bureaucrats to issue regulations that micromanaged everything from the economy to education. These regulations imposed enormous costs on the American economy and bypassed the lawmaking authority vested in Congress.
- 10 The result was predictable: An invasive federal Leviathan made ever more incursions into the policy-making domain of states. As federalism gradually eroded, so did the freedom of American citizens. Fortunately, Texas developed a model that helped states weather the storm until relief arrived — in the form of President Donald Trump.
- 15 State legal challenges against the federal government are nothing new, but Texas enjoyed success by constructing the template for multi-state coalitions of attorneys general suing and overturning federal policies that overstepped executive authority violating the rule of law and the principles of federalism and the separation of powers. In 2014, President Obama created the Deferred Action for Parents of Americans, or DAPA, program. It conferred lawful presence and work authorization on millions of illegal immigrants with the stroke of a pen. Texas successfully led an unprecedented coalition of 26 states all the way up to the Supreme Court in challenging his
- 20 action, which was not only brazenly unconstitutional but also quite costly. Likewise, following the threat of legal action from another Texas-led coalition of states, Trump agreed to phase out the legally similar Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, this past September.
- 25 In 2016, the Obama Justice and Education Departments issued “guidance” letters construing the word “sex” in Title IX as “gender identity.” At the risk of losing federal funds, schools would have been expected to, among other things, open showers and locker rooms to students of the opposite sex. Thus, they would be involuntarily drafted into a radical leftist social transformation — one hidden under an unconvincing veneer of legalese. Thankfully, the courts imposed a nationwide stay, again at the behest of a Texas-led coalition.
- 30 Using this model, we successfully challenged numerous other end-runs around Congress as well. The illegal and draconian Environmental Protection Agency’s Clean Power Plan, its Waters of the U.S. regulations, and the Labor Department’s overtime and persuader rules are a few more examples. Our challenges have made it to the Supreme Court six times. In short, the template designed and executed by Texas largely held the line against the Obama administration’s executive power grabs.
- 35 I’m often asked why Texas has sued the Trump administration less than the Obama administration. The reason is legal, not partisan: Trump is following the law, not breaking it; he is executing the laws, not writing them; he is respecting the rule of law and the principles of federalism and the separation of powers, not flouting them. He is honoring the Constitution, not disregarding it.
- 40 He has taken unprecedented steps to roll back the administrative state by repealing burdensome and illegal rules. He is setting about strengthening the checks and balances that protect American liberties. His deference to the rule of law should be a model for future presidents.
- 45 It is useful to think of the legal action conducted by Texas and other states as a kind of rearguard action in the fight against the administrative state. It was a defensive, albeit vital, check on the horizontal power of the executive branch in relation to the legislative branch (aka the separation of powers), as well as on the vertical power of the federal government in relation to the states (aka federalism). Now that Trump is in office, his aggressive rule-cutting represents an offensive maneuver that is steadily regaining much of the territory lost under the Obama administration and prior administrations.
- 50 Taken together, these two components are an excellent start. In just over a year, businesses have gone from reading rules and regulations to posting “Help Wanted” and “Now Hiring” signs. However, if Obama’s tenure taught us anything, we will be reluctant to let this potent weapon — the administrative state — fall unchecked into the wrong hands again. At this point, nothing prevents a future president from wielding it again to blur the lines between the branches of government and make mincemeat of the Constitution.
- 55 The next phase must be congressional action. Excellent bills exist that would restore the constitutional balance that the Framers intended. The Separation of Powers Restoration Act would prohibit courts from deferring to agency interpretations of law — which in practice affords executive agencies virtually unchecked legislative authority. It should also pass the Regulations from the Executive in Need of Scrutiny (REINS) Act, which would require congressional approval of new regulations exceeding an annual economic effect of \$100 million.
- 60 These two bills alone would go a long way towards permanently subjecting the executive branch bureaucracy to the Constitution. Congress must act swiftly to capitalize on its historic opportunity to ensure that the rule of law, federalism and separation of powers can withstand the test of changing administrations.
- 60 *Ken Paxton is the attorney general of Texas.*

## How will British firms replace departing European workers?

*The Economist*, 13 January 2018

More sick days are taken in January than in any other month, as employees shun the chilly weather for a day under the duvet. Yet some firms are finding that their workers are not coming back at all after the Christmas break. A week back in the home country sometimes persuades migrant workers from the European Union to stay there. As well as the British weather, they now face a weak pound—and, of course, the looming prospect of Brexit.

Since the vote in 2016 to leave the EU there has been a sharp rise in the number of European migrants leaving Britain. In the year to June 2017 a total of 123,000 packed their bags, 28,000 more than during the previous year. Overall, net migration of EU citizens fell by 43%; among those from the "A8" countries of central and eastern Europe, it fell by 81%.

The drop threatens to compound the difficulty of recruiting workers in what is already a tight labour market. Unemployment, at 4.3%, is at its lowest since 1975. Firms in some industries are struggling to fill vacancies. Among skilled trades, chefs are particularly in demand. A report commissioned by the construction industry in 2016 warned that within a decade the pool of labourers could shrink by 20-25%.

Some argue that having fewer workers would do Britain good. The abundance of foreign labour in recent years has helped to keep a lid on wages in some low-paid jobs. With fewer migrant workers, firms might be forced to train lumpen locals and invest more in technology, thus improving Britain's poor productivity.

Yet the signs are that firms are being slow to respond to the drying up of the labour pool. Their first course of action might be to pay higher wages, in order to recruit more local workers and retain EU employees. Some employers have done this. Real annual wages in agriculture, which is particularly vulnerable to any decline in migrant workers, increased by over 3% in the three months to October, more than any other industry. Other migrant-heavy businesses, however, have done just the opposite: wages in food manufacturing fell by 1% and those in construction by 0.2% during the same period.

Improving conditions would be another way to fill vacancies. The culture of bullying in kitchens pushes new recruits out of the profession just as much as the low wages. Some restaurants are tackling the 70-hour weeks that chefs often have to work. Several Michelin-starred restaurants have reduced their opening hours to retain staff. Similarly, there is to be a campaign to advertise better working conditions for drivers, of whom there is a national shortage.

If firms cannot hang on to people, they may replace them with machines. Robots tend not to make good chefs, even if they are less prone to tantrums. But in other industries, such as food manufacturing and agriculture, there is considerable scope for further automation. It is estimated that 10-35% of today's jobs could be automated by the early 2030s. Yet Britain is lagging behind in its use of robots. Automation in food manufacturing is low, behind countries such as Germany and Japan.

Construction companies are among those experimenting with processes that reduce the need for human workers. Laing O'Rourke, one of Britain's biggest building firms, has pioneered "off-site" construction methods at a factory in Worksop, where parts of buildings are prefabricated and then assembled on site. But factory-based construction accounts for just 6% of Britain's housebuilding, as against 9% in Germany and 13% in Japan.

Firms may begin to recruit more from among those who have been under-represented in the workforce. The government wants to "transform" the employment of disabled people, 49% of whom are in jobs, compared with 81% of all workers. It has provided money to help people with mental-health conditions into work. Some businesses have recently started courses to attract disabled workers.

The elderly are another potential source of new workers. Between 1995 and 2015 the number of working people in Britain aged over 65 more than doubled, to over 1m. But attracting elderly and disabled workers will require companies to be flexible and to offer more training. Yet workers in Britain get less employer-provided training than in any other EU country except Poland, Greece and Romania.

As Brexit approaches and the economies of the EU grow faster than Britain's, the squeeze on the labour market is likely to tighten. Although some firms are taking action, most industries look unprepared. Many bosses are still taking a wait-and-see approach. They are running out of time.

## The Museum of the Bible Is a Safe Space for Christian Nationalists

By Katherine Stewart Jan. 6, 2018 Opinion *The New York Times*

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/06/opinion/sunday/the-museum-of-the-bible-is-a-safe-space-for-christian-nationalists.html>

LOOKING at it, you'd think that the Museum of the Bible was, in fact, a museum. But the organizers of Revolution 2017, a recent gathering at the museum featuring speakers who intend to "transform nations" by "igniting a holy reformation in every sphere of society," know better.

"We wholeheartedly believe the Museum of the Bible represents an 'Ark of the Covenant' for our nation, bearing witness to his goodness," they proclaimed in their promotional material.

Calling it an "ark" may seem premature. But the business about "transforming nations" is quite serious. The Museum of the Bible, which sits a few blocks southwest of the United States Capitol, is a continuation of politics by other means.

A typical museum might invite visitors to explore the multiple meanings of the Bible and the complex history of its reception in different cultures over time. But this museum is not the place for that kind of inquiry; you're here to celebrate. The exhibits will rock you — literally, when you take a simulated roller-coaster ride through

selected biblical inscriptions on display in the nation's capital — but they won't shake your convictions. If you walk in thinking that the Bible has a single meaning, that the evidence of archaeology and history has served to confirm its truth, that it is the greatest force for good humanity has ever known and that it is the founding text of the American republic — well, then, you will leave with a smile on your face and a song in your heart.

The museum is a safe space for Christian nationalists, and that is the key to understanding its political mission. The aim isn't anything so crude as the immediate conversion of tourists to a particular variety of evangelical Christianity. Its subtler task is to embed a certain set of assumptions in the landscape of the capital.

One individual who definitely gets it is Ralph Drollinger, the founder and president of Capitol Ministries and one of the most politically influential pastors in America. This fall, Mr. Drollinger held a training conference for some 80 international associates at the museum on the topic of "creating and sustaining discipleship ministries to political leaders."

Mr. Drollinger believes that social welfare programs "have no basis in Scripture," that Christians in government have an obligation to hire only Christians and that women should not be allowed to teach grown men. He lays out his thinking in a 2013 book, "Rebuilding America: The Biblical Blueprint."

Mr. Drollinger was an early, passionate supporter of Donald Trump's presidential candidacy. The "institution of the state" is "an avenger of wrath," he explains, and its "God-given responsibility" is "to moralize a fallen world through the use of force." Apparently, President Trump excels in these biblical criteria for leadership.

Mr. Drollinger is dedicated to communicating those views in weekly Bible study groups. The participants in his groups, however, aren't just anybody. They include Mike Pompeo, the director of the C.I.A.; Attorney General Jeff Sessions; Vice President Mike Pence; Betsy DeVos, the secretary of education; and other senior officials in the Trump administration. Mr. Drollinger seeks to institute similar if less-star-studded Bible study groups in all 50 state capitals.

Mr. Drollinger claims to have planted 24 operations overseas and hopes "to create 200 ministries in 200 foreign federal capitals." In 2015, his group was invited to "plant a discipleship Bible study ministry" in Belarus for the benefit of that nation's political leaders. His wife, Danielle Drollinger, attended as a representative of the Museum of the Bible, with a promise that the museum's Bible curriculum would soon be translated into Russian.

This fall, the museum also hosted Revive Us 2, a "national family meeting" organized by Kirk Cameron, a television actor who has become a conservative Christian celebrity. The event was broadcast live from the museum to movie theaters around the country with the message that national unity can be achieved only through a religious "awakening" and allegiance to conservative Christianity.

The intensely politicized religion that appears to be taking up residence at the Museum of the Bible isn't there by accident. When Steve Green, the museum's founder and the president of the Hobby Lobby crafts chain, formed the museum's parent organization in 2010, he informed the I.R.S. that its purpose was "to bring to life the living word of God, to tell its compelling story of preservation, and to inspire confidence in the absolute authority and reliability of the Bible." In 2012, the language was changed to say that the aim was simply "to invite people to engage with the Bible."

Mr. Green rose to fame by getting the conservative majority on the Supreme Court to confer on Hobby Lobby the right to withhold federally mandated reproductive health care coverage from its female employees. The Green family lent artifacts to the Creation Museum in Kentucky and offers support to a "religious literacy" program aimed at public school students detailing the consequences they face if they disobey God. (...)

Katherine Stewart (@kathsstewart) is the author of "The Good News Club: The Christian Right's Stealth Assault on America's Children."

## The GOP Tax Bill and the Crisis of American Democracy

The country is ruled by oligarchs and their enablers.

By Richard Kim Twitter December 20, 2017

<https://www.thenation.com/article/the-gop-tax-bill-and-the-death-of-american-democracy/>

5 It just so happened that during the week that Republicans rammed a \$1.5 trillion tax bill through Congress without a single Democratic vote, Philip Alston, the UN special rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, was finishing up a fact-finding mission to the United States. Alston visited places like Georgia, Alabama, and West Virginia, which voted for Donald Trump, but he also stopped in California, which went for Hillary Clinton, and Puerto Rico, which wasn't allowed to vote for president at all. A veteran diplomat with tours in Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, and Albania, Alston was nonetheless shocked by what he saw here, in the richest country in the world. His devastating report described the conditions facing the one in eight Americans who live in poverty—rotting teeth, crushing debt, homelessness, hunger, drug addiction, untreated illness, and pollution. It also identified the political choices that keep poor Americans poor: neglect, discrimination, the criminalization of poverty, privatization, and the evisceration of the social safety net. "If you want to talk about the American dream, a child born into poverty has almost no chance of getting out of poverty in today's United States, statistically," he concluded.

10 The impact of the GOP tax plan on this already miserable state of affairs was not lost on the special rapporteur. "The proposed tax reform package stakes out America's bid to become the most unequal society in the world," he said. Or, as Thomas Piketty and his colleagues recently put it, the tax plan will "turbocharge inequality in America," making it look "more and more like a rentier society."

15 How the bill does this is relatively straightforward. It locks in permanent and steep tax cuts to corporations, down from 35 percent to 21 percent. It creates new exemptions in the estate tax and for pass-through corporations, which almost exclusively benefit the ultra-rich like the Trump family and Senator Bob Corker, both of whom own pass-through corporations. As a fig leaf, the bill temporarily reduces individual taxes for most, but by 2027 the richest 1 percent of Americans will see over 82 percent of its benefits. All told, this massive upward redistribution of wealth will add \$1.5 trillion to the deficit, greasing the wheels for the cuts to Medicare and Social Security that Speaker Paul Ryan has already threatened.

20 How this monstrosity came to pass is a more complicated matter, one that could use a fact-finding mission or two of its own. By mid-December, less than a quarter of Americans supported the plan, and an overwhelming majority correctly observed that it was designed to help corporations and the rich, not the middle class. Not a single Democrat voted for the bill, including centrists up for reelection like North Dakota's Heidi Heitkamp, West Virginia's Joe Manchin, and Montana's Jon Tester. Virtually every major newspaper in the country, as well as many leading economists, had editorialized against it. To overcome this wall of opposition, Republicans used special rules that evaded a filibuster, and they deep-sixed the town-hall meetings that protesters had earlier used to successfully rally in defense of Obamacare (although some activists managed to break through, like the courageous Ady Barkan, who suffers from ALS and who confronted Arizona's Jeff Flake on a plane).

25 But this gamesmanship is just the tip of the anti-democratic bulwark that allowed the GOP to shove this transparently corrupt scheme through Congress. What the party-line vote revealed is that the Republican caucus is entirely insulated from the normal populist considerations that ought to prevail in a functioning democracy. They are captured by self-interest—whether personal, political, or both. If you were betting on Senator Lisa Murkowski to have a conscience, bet again. As Representative Chris Collins, who voted for the bill, put it, "My donors are basically saying, 'Get it done or don't ever call me again.'"

30 Throwing these enablers of oligarchy out of Congress is an obvious first step, but changing the rules that put them there in the first place is the longer game. That's a frustrating conclusion, because it means a lot of hard and uncertain work in a terrain that is often as mind-numbing as tax law itself—the census, redistricting, voting rights, and campaign-finance reform. But this past week proved that there's no way around it. For among the root causes of poverty in the United States identified by Alston was the withering of democracy itself. "The foundation stone of American society," he wrote, "is being steadily undermined." "The net result is that people living in poverty, minorities, and other disfavored groups are being systematically deprived of their voting rights...[and] some political elites have a strong self-interest in keeping people in poverty."

## Trump, Proxy of Racism

Charles M. Blow Nov. 30, 2017 *The New York Times* – Opinion

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/30/opinion/trump-racism-white-supremacy.html>

Donald Trump is completely unfit to be president of the United States.

- 5 That is not an ideological expression. That is an expression of the shock of mounting evidence that he is intellectually deficient, temperamentally unsound and morally bankrupt. Just this week, he has once again underscored the degree to which he is openly hostile to people of color — I call that racism and bigotry — and demonstrated his lack of impulse control to conceal his contempt even when doing so would be to his benefit.
- 10 On Monday, Trump defiled a White House ceremony to honor Navajo veterans of World War II (a meeting already defiled because it was held before a portrait of Andrew “Trail of Tears” Jackson) by using a racial slur, pejoratively referring to Senator Elizabeth Warren as “Pocahontas.” These men deserved better, and if Trump were thinking more about them and less about himself — as almost any other American president would have been — he wouldn’t have dragged their moment down into his muck. But this
- 15 is what happens when you “let Trump be Trump”: He shows up as the bestial creature that he is. On Tuesday, *The New York Times* reported that unnamed advisers told the paper that Trump has also resurrected the racist lie of his political vivification: the question of Barack Obama’s birthplace, and by implication, his legitimacy as America’s first black president, or put another way, its only nonwhite president. According to *The Times*: “In recent months, they say, Mr. Trump has used closed-door conversations to question the
- 20 authenticity of President Barack Obama’s birth certificate.” This unprecedented “show me your papers, boy” kook campaign of which Trump became grand wizard is deeply rooted in racial hostility. It is a castigation of assertive black masculinity, like Obama’s, which refuses to bend to traditional power or promulgate the fallacy that the legacy of historical racism is all either fantasy or forgiven. Then, on Wednesday, Trump shared on Twitter apparently unverified, anti-Muslim videos from a right-wing
- 25 extremist group in Britain. As CBS News reported, “The videos were tweeted out by the account held by Jayda Fransen, the deputy leader of the far-right U.K. political party ‘Britain First,’ which is known for promoting an anti-Islam, anti-immigration and nationalist agenda.” That’s right: Not satisfied with his implicit (though obvious) endorsement of white supremacy here in America, Trump has now explicitly endorsed white supremacy in another country.
- 30 These are not mistakes. These are not coincidences. This is not mere bungling. These are revelations of the soul. This is who Trump is and who he has always been. This is who he was before he entered politics, and who he remains. The Trump Doctrine is White Supremacy. Yes, he is also diplomatically inept, overwhelmed by avarice, thoroughly corrupt and a pathological liar, but it is to white supremacy and to hostility for everyone not white that he always returns.
- 35 When the political vise tightens on him, he just so happens to find a nonwhite target to attack. Anyone who doesn’t see this is choosing not to. They are clueless as an act of convenience, willfully blind and intentionally ignorant. Or conversely, they not only see it, but cheer it. Either way, the people who elected Trump and those who continue to support him are to blame for what they have inflicted on this country.
- 40 Republicans had a choice of 17 nominees; they chose Donald Trump. The party threw its weight behind him. Many of the candidates who had vigorously opposed Trump, including on moral grounds, endorsed him. Millions of voters who had voted for other candidates also voted for Trump.
- Advertisement
- 45 So never let these people feed you the lie that they voted for Trump only because they didn’t have a choice and they wanted to vote against Hillary Clinton. They had a choice, and they chose the magnification of their darkest demons. They nominated and elected a sexist, bigoted, white-supremacist sympathizer because, to them, those traits were, on the one hand, not disqualifying, and on the other hand, commendable. Some reason that they needed a Republican, even this opportunistic Donny-Come-Lately, for the conservative judges and tax cuts that would outlast whatever bad behavior he brought to bear. Others actually wanted the anointing of
- 50 their own racial animosity. But I see only shades of difference between open racial hostility and the accommodation of racial hostility. It’s all interrelated and interdependent. There is no way to maintain your honor when you have given Trump your blessing. There is no way to claim that your position is about conservative ideology when you support a man who keeps demonstrating that he is obsessed
- 55 with an ideology of color. Trump is your baby, Rosemary. I give no quarter to Trump or to the people who still support his demonstrated hostility to my and every other person of color’s right to live without being, as James Baldwin put it, “menaced and marked” — by the leader of my own country. I believe in diversity and tolerance. But the tolerance of a hateful ideology is not inclusiveness, but appeasement, and
- 60 of that I will have no part. If you support Trump and his racial hostility, you and I have absolutely nothing to discuss. Nothing!

## Yes, the Truth Still Matters

By DAVID M. SHRIBMAN DEC. 11, 2017 *The New York Times* Op-Ed Contributor

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/11/opinion/truth-matters-trump-fake-news.html>

Pittsburgh — Of all the questions that the ascendancy of Donald Trump has raised — on the value of political  
5 experience in governing, on the fitness of business executives as government executives or the profile of the  
Republicans as defenders of the rich and the Democrats as the sentinels of the poor — none is as perplexing as  
perhaps the central question of the age:

Does the truth still matter?

10 It emerged again recently when reports surfaced that the president, who had previously acknowledged his presence on  
the “Access Hollywood” videotape, has suggested that he did not make the comments on the tape. He also resumed  
questioning whether Barack Obama was born in the United States — despite having said he accepted it as true last  
year. In a speech, Mr. Trump, contradicting almost every analysis of the tax bill, said the measure would hurt wealthy  
people, including himself.

15 For nearly a half-century in journalism, from hometown cub reporter to national political correspondent to metro  
daily executive editor, I’ve navigated with the aid of a newspaperman’s North Star: the conviction that there is such a  
thing as objective truth that can be discovered and delivered through dispassionate hard work and passionate good  
faith, and that the product of that effort, if thoroughly documented, would be accepted as the truth.

20 Mr. Trump has turned that accepted truth on its head, sowing doubts about the veracity of news reporting by  
promoting the notion that the mainstream media spews “fake news.” Employing an evocative, sinister phrase dating  
to the French Revolution and embraced by Lenin and his Soviet successors, he has declared that great portions of the  
press are the “enemy of the people.”

Much of the Trump rhetoric on the press, to be sure, is less statecraft than stagecraft, designed to dismiss negative  
stories — as if the media had been never critical of past presidents instead of the equal-opportunity pugilists who  
bedeviled Bill Clinton (in the Monica Lewinsky episode) and George W. Bush (in the aftermath of the Iraq war).

25 Even so, Mr. Trump can be credited with prompting, however inadvertently, the most profound period of press self-  
assessment in decades — and it comes at a period of unusual financial peril for the mainstream media. All around are  
sad affirmations of the diminishing credibility of the press, disheartening reminders that at least a third of the country,  
and perhaps more, regards our work as meaningless, biased or untruthful. In newsrooms, as at newsstands across the  
country, difficult but vital questions about the methods and motives of the press are being raised, forcing  
30 newsmongers and consumers of news to question long-held assumptions.

Earlier this year, Representative Tim Murphy, a Republican whose district includes the southern suburbs of  
Pittsburgh, told a closed-door fund-raiser in the tony Duquesne Club that our newspaper, the Post-Gazette,  
specialized in “fake news.” One of my sources called me while the session was underway, and when it ended, I  
35 telephoned the astonished Mr. Murphy and demanded an apology, which he granted only reluctantly. Eight months  
later our paper reported that the congressman, ardently anti-abortion, had sought to persuade his mistress to undergo  
the procedure. He later resigned under pressure.

This has become routine. The most prominent public-relations officer in Pittsburgh told us that a perfectly benign,  
and completely accurate, report on his institution’s activities was another example of fake news. Our police reporter  
repeatedly gets emails accusing her of producing fake news. Readers have called our high-tech writer charging she  
40 had produced fake news. I speak in the community all the time, and in the past year the question of whether The Post-  
Gazette is a purveyor of fake news never fails to come up. It’s almost always the first question.

My answer: In the 15 years I have been executive editor, we have not knowingly published one story, or one  
paragraph, or one sentence, or one syllable that was not true.

45 It’s not that these questions never emerged before. It was possible to assemble established facts to argue, for example,  
that the 906 bills passed by Congress from 1947 to 1949 — including the Taft-Hartley Act and the major  
reorganization of the armed services and the creation of the Central Intelligence Agency — meant that Congress was  
productive in that period. But it also was possible to arrange the same facts, or to pick some facts and to omit others,  
to argue quite the opposite, as Harry Truman did in the 1948 presidential election when, in politically potent rhetoric,  
he spoke of the “do-nothing 80th Congress.”

50 During Watergate, Vice President Spiro Agnew spoke of “nattering nabobs of negativism” to attack the press that bit  
by bit was uncovering the truth of President Richard Nixon’s lies. This year we had Kellyanne Conway, counselor to  
the president, introducing the notion of “alternative facts.”

Her phrase became an instant flash point, for almost no one seriously believed that provable facts had contradictory  
alternatives. There is no alternative to the fact that the sun is 93 million miles from the earth, nor to the fact that the  
55 earth’s atmosphere is 78 percent nitrogen, nor even to the fact that Mr. Trump’s Inauguration Day crowd was smaller  
than Mr. Obama’s. (...)

*David M. Shribman, the executive editor of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, is writing a book titled “A Short History of  
the Truth.”*

## Racial Resentment Can Motivate Opposition to Welfare

In a series of experiments, researchers show that when whites feel threatened, they oppose government assistance. Olga Khazan June 5, 2018

<https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2018/06/racial-resentment-motivates-opposition-to-welfare/562010/>

5 It's a pretty well-known trope at this point: People who rely on government assistance programs are often the ones who oppose welfare most vociferously. Aside from the infamous "keep your government hands off my Medicare" line, examples abound of poor people who hate government assistance for poor people. A new study explores a surprising psychological motivation that might be underpinning this opposition to welfare, at least among white people: racial resentment.

10 Here's how it works, according to a paper published in the journal *Social Forces*: When whites feel their status in the racial hierarchy is threatened, they become more resentful of minorities. That, in turn, translates to a greater opposition toward welfare, because some people think welfare disproportionately benefits minorities. This dynamic, the authors find, might be why opposition to welfare programs increased after 2008—when the economy was in tatters and the nation had elected a black president.

15 For the study, the authors—Rachel Wetts of UC Berkeley and Robb Willer of Stanford University—first analyzed survey data and found that "whites' racial resentment rose beginning in 2008 and continued rising in 2012." They note that though whites still had higher incomes, wealth, and representation in government than African Americans and Latinos during that time, "much public discourse about race in this period emphasized America's increasing demographic diversity and the declining dominance of white Americans."

20 Some American whites, it seems, felt threatened by this. Starting in 2008, the study authors found, minorities showed more positive attitudes toward welfare, while whites' attitudes held steady—even though recessions tend to increase support for government programs. That racial gap in support for welfare among the races persisted in 2012, even though all Americans began to oppose welfare in greater numbers at that time.

25 Willer and Wetts later did a series of experiments meant to test whether these two trends were related. First, they found that when white participants were told that whites continue to be the "largest single ethnic group in the United States," they proposed cutting \$28 million from federal welfare spending. Those told that whites' population share is "substantially declining" proposed cutting \$51 million. The white participants who were told their population share was declining were also more opposed to welfare and had higher levels of racial resentment—and the latter phenomenon helped explain the former, according to the authors.

30 Then, they found whites were less likely to support programs that benefited minorities if they had been told that the gap between white and minority incomes is closing. What's more, white participants who opposed a welfare program benefiting minorities went on to support a program benefiting whites.

35 There are a few caveats to keep in mind here. Not all the researchers' tests yielded significant links between threats, welfare opposition, and racial resentment, so they would have to be repeated in order to prove the trends hold up more broadly. And priming, an experimental method that reminds people of something (say, whites' share of the population) before testing their attitudes, has been criticized as not very reliable.

40 The priming-style measures used in this study could be important, though, because what Americans see in the news influences their support for different types of candidates and policies. "Because public attitudes partially drive developments in anti-poverty policy, these findings suggest that perceptions of rising minority power, declines in whites' relative socioeconomic status, or other perceived macro-level threats to whites' racial status may provoke adoption of more restrictive welfare regimes," the authors write.

45 And status threat, in general, is a very powerful motivator. Earlier, Willer, the author of this study, found that threats to the status of whites increased support for the Tea Party. Studies of white supremacists have found they feel whites are discriminated against. A study a few months ago found that feeling America's status is threatened motivated support for President Trump.

50 Taken together, the racially driven opposition to welfare could be one reason why Trump has tried to cut various government programs. "The Trump administration has begun allowing states to impose work requirements on Medicaid recipients, and has proposed tripling the rents for the poorest households receiving federal housing assistance," *The Washington Post's* Caitlin Dewey points out. "The House is also scheduled to vote again next month on a plan to cut \$9 billion from food-stamp benefits over 10 years and require most adults to hold a job to receive payments."

55 The takeaway from this study is a depressing one: "This further implies that evidence of increased racial equality could exacerbate overall economic inequality," the authors note. "As whites attempt to undermine racial progress they see as threatening their group's status, they increase opposition to programs intended to benefit poorer members of all racial groups."

A rising tide could lift all boats, in other words. But some people will still want their boats to be just a little higher than the others.



## Socialism Is on a Winning Streak

Four candidates backed by Democratic Socialists of America won Pennsylvania primaries Tuesday, and come November they could all be legislators.

By John Nichols May 18, 2018 *The Nation* <https://www.thenation.com/article/socialism-is-on-a-winning-streak/>

- 5 The long history of American socialism has been built in left-wing strongholds. A century ago, Oklahoma and Wisconsin were Socialist Party bastions, while North Dakota and Montana were hotbeds of radical politics. And there was always Pennsylvania. From the 1910s through the 1940s, Socialist Party members served as state legislators, mayors, city councilors, and school-board members. The Pennsylvania party, with its deep roots in Reading, produced national Socialist leaders, including candidates for president and vice president. And after the party's fortunes faded following World War II, a former Socialist from Reading, George Milton Rhodes, was elected to Congress as a Democrat and went on to serve for two decades as one of the US House's steadiest supporters of organized labor and civil rights. Rhodes finished his last term 50 years ago. So it has been a good long while since even the memory of socialism has been a factor in Pennsylvania politics.
- 15 But the dry spell is over. Socialists have been on an electoral winning streak in some parts of the country for a number of years—Socialist Alternative's Kshama Sawant made her electoral breakthrough in 2013, winning a major race for the Seattle City Council—but the results from western Pennsylvania in the past two years have been particularly striking. And, now, national observers are starting to take note. "Democratic Socialists scores big wins in Pennsylvania," declared CNN this week, while *The New Yorker* announced: "A Democratic-Socialist Landslide in Pennsylvania."
- 20 Tuesday's primary election in Pennsylvania saw young progressive women who were backed by Democratic Socialists of America winning Democratic primaries all over the place—in cities and suburbs, to the west and to the east. "We're turning the state the right shade of red tonight," declared Arielle Cohen, the co-chair of the Pittsburgh chapter of DSA
- 25 A pair of DSA-endorsed candidates for the Pennsylvania House of Representatives seats in the Pittsburgh area, Summer Lee and Sara Innamorato defeated veteran legislators in Democratic primaries. In the Philadelphia area, Philly DSA-backed candidates Elizabeth Fiedler and Kristin Seale also won hard-fought primaries for state House seats.
- The wins by Lee and Innamorato were especially sweet, as the DSA-backed candidates upset members of a Pittsburgh-area political dynasty, cousins Paul and Dom Costa, whose stances on social and economic issues had frustrated progressives. "Last night's victories were a monumental shift in the political landscape of Pennsylvania," explained Cohen. "Our candidates won on popular demands that were deemed impossible. We won on health care for all, we won on free education." WESA, the local NPR affiliate, reported that this spring's southwestern Pennsylvania primaries saw "a wave of progressive Democrats challenging what they call the moderate establishment this election season. It echoes those throughout the country that have seen left-of-center political newcomers secure seats in state and federal government."
- 35 Both Lee and Innamorato are expected to win easily in November, as no Republicans ran for the heavily Democratic seats.
- The likelihood that they are headed for the legislature had Daniel Moraff, a Pittsburgh DSA member who was a campaign organizer for Lee, suggesting that the campaign had provided "a blueprint for how you can run a campaign on a radical platform and reach the demographics it needs to reach."
- "This is about lighting a fire and keeping that fire burning," said Moraff. (...)
- 40 DSA was not the only group backing Lee and Innamorato, both of whom were endorsed by Our Revolution, the national group formed by backers of Senator Bernie Sanders's 2016 campaign for president as a democratic socialist, the proudly militant United Electrical Workers union, and groups such as Planned Parenthood and the Sierra Club.
- 45 But the support they received from the energetic young members of DSA was a major factor in both races. When she was asked about being backed by socialists, Lee answered with a question. "I would ask, 'How did capitalism work for you?'" Lee explained to CNN. "Because I can tell you in my community it's not working. Capitalism works on the back of my community and communities of color and poor communities across this country. It was built that way and it is working exactly the way it is supposed to."
- 50 The "s" word could come up this fall in the Philadelphia suburbs. Seale, a member of the Rose Tree Media School Board who was a Sanders delegate to the 2016 Democratic National Convention, is taking on Republican State Representative Chris Quinn in a competitive suburban district.
- 55 Elizabeth Fiedler, who won a hard-fought primary in an overwhelmingly Democratic South Philadelphia district, is likely to prevail in the fall. Indeed, her website announces: "Our movement is victorious. This is a movement with a groundswell of support from working people—this is what democracy should look like."
- That's how DSA sees it. "A political revolution is coming," says Tascha Van Auken, a co-chair of the group's national election committee, "and establishment politicians can get on board or be swept away."

## I don't like Brexit – I just don't see how it can be stopped

Owen Jones, *The Guardian*, 3 January 2018

5 If only Brexit would go away. It sucks the political oxygen away from the issues we should all be discussing: like low wages, insecure jobs and the housing crisis. It is a rallying cry for a noxious alliance of anti-immigrant demagogues and regulation-stripping free marketeers. The bigotry, xenophobia and racism stirred up by the official leave campaigns injected an ugliness into British politics which never dissipated, and left hate crimes surging. And, frankly, Brexit is just mind-numbingly, painfully, excruciatingly dull. So yes, if there was a big red button to make it all just go away, I'd enthusiastically push it.

10 Yes, as a socialist, I had profound reservations about the current incarnation of the EU, and even considered the case for leave. I dismissed the argument because of persuasive pleas from European leftists to stand together to reform and change the EU, and because it was clear that a hellish anti-immigration crusade beckoned. And so, alongside the Another Europe Is Possible alliance, I passionately campaigned against the Brexit juggernaut. Then the vote happened, and we lost. There seemed to be two conclusions that fateful night. One, challenge the bigotry, authoritarianism and intolerance of the Tory Brexiteers. And two, try to reconcile a bad result with the country's future.

15 Which brings me to the "stop Brexit" campaign. Many decent and honest people are committed to reversing the referendum result. They fear a completely unnecessary national tragedy is befalling Britain, driven by myths and lies, and believe economic turmoil and national isolation await. It is perfectly legitimate to seek to democratically challenge a referendum result. But it is difficult to see how the current strategy, communication and leadership of this cause achieve anything other than doom it to failure.

20 First off, I'm not convinced by the campaign's aim, and here's why. Some stop Brexiteers recite, almost as a mantra, that the referendum was only advisory (despite the government sending a pamphlet to every household in Britain promising them that the government "will implement what you decide"). If the referendum result was simply cancelled, it would be regarded as a coup against democracy not just by leave voters, but by many remainers. Faith in democracy may never be rebuilt – "more people voted for Brexit than for anything else in British history and the establishment thwarted it", the refrain would go. It would surely be the greatest shot in the arm for the radical right in British history – not least because the result was in part due to a sense of resentment against a contemptuous political elite.

25 Alternatively, a second referendum could easily be framed as the establishment holding votes until it got the right result. It would mean an even more bitter campaign than the last, leaving deeper national divisions than ever. Either the last result would be reconfirmed, with rightwing Brexiteers more triumphalist and intolerant than ever; or – if remain scraped a narrow victory – furious Brexiteer demands for yet another referendum would be impossible to resist. Would it be best of three? Furthermore, a focus on overturning the referendum surely risks abandoning the debate over what sort of Brexit deal Britain negotiates to the Tory extremists.

30 Then there's simple political maths. If Labour committed to overturning Brexit, the party would haemorrhage many of the 3 million or so of its voters who backed leave, losing seats as a consequence. The consequence would surely be a decisive Conservative electoral victory, enabling the party to implement the most true blue of Tory Brexit deals, and continue everything from austerity to the failure to build affordable homes.

35 I'm genuinely open to having these arguments rebutted by stop Brexiteers: actually, I'd like to be persuaded. But their campaign seems unable to learn from the failures of the official remain movement in the referendum, which was seen by many as an establishment push for the status quo in an era when millions feel angry and disillusioned.

40 No, I'm not convinced by their case as things stand, and can't see clear answers to the questions I pose. A Labour-managed Brexit that doesn't shred our links with the EU and turn Britain into a low-regulation tax haven still seems preferable. But the case to stop Brexit does deserve to be made, and deserves to be made well.

## How and why Britain might be asked to vote once more on Brexit Andrew Rawnsley, *The Guardian*, 14 January 2018

Can we just call the whole damn thing off? Could Brexit be stopped so that Britain can get on with the rest of its life? Is there a possibility of doing a Breverse? This question has been nagging away, always in the background and sometimes in the foreground, ever since the narrow victory for Leave. One reason this is so is because it is such a massive issue. Another reason is because such a massive issue was decided by such a tight margin in the summer of 2016.

The argument that there should be another vote before Britain heads out of the door has been pressed aggressively by unreconciled Remainers. A hope that Brexit might somehow be averted also flickers in the breasts of some Tory Remainers, including members of the cabinet. They are handcuffed to a withdrawal policy that they still think is madness.

Enter, stage right, Nigel Farage. Remember him? Loves a pint. Loves a ciggie. Loves attention. His recent personal headline drought may be part of the explanation for why he has suddenly ventilated the view: "Maybe, just maybe, I'm reaching the point of thinking we should have a second referendum."

Remainers welcomed this unexpected ally. But they don't, of course, agree on the why. The former Ukip leader thinks a second vote would "kill it off for a generation", the Remain cause being what he wants to bury. For Remainers, another referendum is the only respectable way to cancel the first one. They have a persuasive case that the public ought to be asked whether they approve of the terms of the withdrawal. The country didn't know what those were going to be in June 2016 and a democracy is no longer a democracy if there isn't an opportunity for the voters to change their minds.

But if a second referendum will only occur if key players feel it is to their advantage to put the question back to the country or if they are forced by circumstances to do so.

First of all, parliament will have to legislate for it. Is that likely? Not at the moment. Mrs May has consistently refused a further referendum on the grounds that pledging one would undermine her negotiating position by incentivising the EU to offer Britain a rotten deal. The prime minister would be under more pressure to concede another vote were she getting serious heat from Labour about it. Labour's official position is that it does not favour a second referendum, though some of the frontbench have occasionally emitted noises that sound like approval of the idea.

Jeremy Corbyn never sounds like an enthusiast for another vote, which puts him at significant odds with the vast majority of Labour's members. According to the latest study of the party memberships, 78% of Labour's members think there ought to be a further referendum. So long as neither the prime minister nor the leader of the opposition thinks they have an interest in asking the country for fresh instructions, it isn't going to happen.

What could change that? Public opinion. If the national mood were to shift decisively, this would alter the context in which the politicians make their calculations about the likely appeal of backing a second vote. Remainers take note: Remain supporters just becoming more passionately Remainy is not what matters. What is required to force a rethink among the political decision-makers is clear evidence of second thoughts among a substantial wedge of Leave voters.

There are some identifiable trends in public opinion. Since Mrs May triggered article 50, there has been a downward movement in the proportion of voters who think the government is making a good fist of the Brexit negotiations. This is not surprising when so many of the Leavers' promises, including the fantasy about it being child's play to negotiate and the fib that there would be a massive windfall for the NHS, have been proved false. Levels of public anxiety about where Britain will be left by withdrawal have been rising. The numbers thinking we will be worse off out of the EU have gone up a bit and the numbers thinking we will be better off are down a bit. There are now fewer voters who think Brexit will increase Britain's influence in the world and more voters who think it will diminish our global clout. There has also been a gentle rise in the proportion of voters who say they favour another referendum, though they are still outnumbered by those who don't want one.

There is another way that a second vote might happen. This is if the government smashes into some kind of brick wall during the Brexit endgame. We have now entered what is commonly agreed to be the tougher phase of the negotiations, the talks that cover the future trading relationship and the length and nature of a transition period. The deadline to sign a withdrawal agreement – this autumn – is hugely ambitious given how much has to be dealt with and the combustibility of many of the issues. It will then become more starkly apparent that the UK cannot expect to continue to enjoy all the advantages of EU membership if it is not prepared to go along with all the rules.

## British democracy is failing. Let's finish the suffragettes' job

Phil McDuff, *The Guardian*, 6 February 2018

Our understanding of democracy has changed in a brief century in this country : we have moved from viewing democratic norms and systems not as a goal to which societies should aspire, but the means by which they achieve their aspirations.

5 Democracy can't simply be reduced to holding elections and calling it done. A society is more or less democratic depending on many interacting systems and institutions. Whom we vote for, how they are chosen, how our votes are counted, how we can talk and argue about our choices, all these things form part of the democratic system that can either give people control over their lives and a voice in their society, or take that control and voice away.

10 Despite the achievements of the women who won the right to vote in 1918 in Britain, there are many who would argue that our electoral system still silences more voices than it amplifies. Among those are the campaign group *Make Votes Matter*, the cross-party campaign for proportional representation in the House of Commons. They have picked the centenary of the Representation Act – giving women the vote in the UK – for an event they call *Hungry for Democracy*, where  
15 campaigners will be giving up food for 24 hours in an echo of the strategy of hunger striking used by the Suffragettes, to draw attention to the disproportionality of the current system. In the last election "68% of votes didn't count", thanks to a system that rewards winners with 100% of the power, regardless of how marginal their electoral majority is.

20 According to Stephen Kinnock MP it's "absurd" that the number of MPs doesn't match up with the number of votes a party gets. In his view, the first-past-the-post (FPTP) system heavily favours a thin sliver of the electorate who live in 100 or so swing constituencies at the expense of everyone else. He believes strongly that "there should be no such thing as a safe seat," and that all MPs should have to "fight for every vote". One of the reasons we have such a "deeply imbalanced economic reality" is because the electoral system incentivises governments to behave in this way to secure re-election.

25 There is empirical research showing that the more representative a democratic system is, the more accountable the government, and the better the outcomes get. Among the advantages are more egalitarian societies with greater income equality, better long-term planning and political stability, higher voter turnout and satisfaction, and stronger environmental protections. (...)

30 We also should not overlook the private sector. For most people the authority with the most direct control over their lives is not the government but their employer. Yet we consider it entirely justifiable for a great leader to run major firms entirely as command economies. There is evidence that greater workplace democracy increases both productivity and employee well-being, as well as the copious evidence that dictatorial central control is just as open to abuse and corruption when you're running a business as it is when you're running a state.

35 Yet there is no challenge to the cult of the CEO, no matter how many of them are found to be committing acts of vandalism against their own companies and leaving them as worthless husks that government has to step in to salvage. The push for outsourcing in government can be seen in this respect as an attempt to minimise the level of control that individual workers have over their workplaces, to reduce every employee down to a function rather than a person.

40 A friend of mine once described the UK as "the world leader in legacy problems". We were often either the first or among the first to adopt systems, and as a result can find ourselves trying to implement 21st-century ways of working with institutions built for the 17th century. We hamstring ourselves by resting too much on our history, holding too tightly to things because they're ours rather than because they're good. Change for change's sake is not the answer, but we need to be  
45 testing and examining our democracy. What are the outcomes that we want to see? Do our current democratic institutions achieve or hinder those outcomes? And if they do not do what we want, how can we change them so they do?

50 Kinnock says that campaigners for women's suffrage were "looking for a system that gave a voice to everyone", and that 100 years later we're still not there. It's time to consider whether the best way to honour their legacy is not simply to celebrate their achievements a century ago but to push forward with our own reforms and bring our democratic systems into the 21st century.

## A Devastating, Overdue National Memorial to Lynching Victims

Alexis Okeowo April 26, 2018, *The New Yorker*

<https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/a-devastating-overdue-national-memorial-to-lynching-victims>

5 The list of petty transgressions used to justify the lynching of African-Americans in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was cruelly and exhaustingly long. Caleb Gady was lynched in Bowling Green, Kentucky, in 1894, for walking behind the wife of his white employer. David Walker was accused of using inappropriate language with a white woman in Hickman, Kentucky, in 1908; he, his wife, and their four children were lynched. Ballie Crutchfield, a woman, was lynched in Rome, Tennessee, in 1901, by a mob searching for her brother. Hundreds, sometimes  
10 thousands, of white spectators would show up to watch. They wore their Sunday best, posed for photos with their children, ate snacks, and drank soda and lemonade. Afterward, the body might be dragged through the streets of black neighborhoods. Often, body parts were cut off and collected as souvenirs.

This week, the National Memorial for Peace and Justice opens in Montgomery, Alabama. Designed and built by the legal-advocacy group the Equal Justice Initiative, or E.J.I., it is an outdoor exhibit devoted to victims of lynching. Eight hundred and five rusting steel columns are geometrically arranged on a grassy hill. Each column is inscribed  
15 with the names of lynching victims and the county in which they were murdered. The columns are suspended from the ceiling above them, starting at eye level and then rising as the wooden floor slopes downward, evoking lifeless bodies hanging from trees. The accompanying Legacy Museum describes the history of American racial injustice, from enslavement to mass incarceration, and illustrates lesser-known aspects of that narrative, like the domestic slave trade.

20 Alabama, my home state, is a place obsessed with its history and its founding myths. Whenever I fly into Montgomery and get on I-85 to drive to my parents' home, I pass a highway exit sign advertising the "First White House of the Confederacy," the former residence of Jefferson Davis. On a recent drive to northern Alabama, I saw a Confederate flag flying near an off-ramp, planted there by an organization celebrating the descendants of Confederate veterans.

25 Yet the state, especially its capital, has often overlooked its slave-holding origins. In 1860, two-thirds of the Montgomery county population was enslaved. Downtown Montgomery was once the site of slave warehouses and markets. Enslaved people were unloaded on Commerce Street at one end on the Alabama River and marched to auctions in Court Square. In 2013, E.J.I. installed historical markers at both places, but the scale and ambition of the memorial and museum are much greater. "Despite how dominant and central enslavement is to the history of this  
30 country, we don't address it," Bryan Stevenson, the founder of E.J.I., told me. "The visuals that most people carry around about slavery are very benign, very muted: enslaved people are depicted as happy and well fed and well treated."

E.J.I. has identified more than four thousand four hundred lynching victims, many of them unnamed, from eight hundred and five counties, mostly in the South. All lynchings occurred between 1877 and 1950. The organization  
35 says it is still receiving information about previously unknown murders. During its investigation, the group interviewed members of communities where the crimes took place and talked to relatives and descendants of people who had been killed.

James Johnson, a retired schoolteacher in Abbeville, Alabama, told me that the memorial was "bittersweet" and overdue. His distant cousin, Wes Johnson, an eighteen-year-old tenant farmer, was accused of attacking a white  
40 woman and lynched in 1937. More than a hundred of his fellow-townsmen kidnapped him from jail, shot him, and hanged him. Johnson's mother told him about the murder when he was a child. "She told me I had a cousin who was lynched, and she told me his name. As a little boy, I didn't know what the word 'lynched' meant," he recalled. "But it was a way of her telling me to be very careful. There are just certain things I can say, certain ways I'm supposed to look at people. I'm not supposed to touch certain people. It was for survival purposes." After the lynching, Johnson's  
45 relatives mostly stayed silent and kept to themselves, scared for their lives; some moved away. In the aftermath of a recent "60 Minutes" story on his cousin that featured him, Johnson said that he received several supportive, apologetic messages from white neighbors.

From a distance, the lynching memorial appears serene, an architectural feat on a green knoll. But, as I entered the dense space, the serenity mutated into uneasiness. By the time the ground gave way, so that the monuments hovered  
50 above my head, the experience was devastating. Stevenson said one of the goals with the memorial is to force visitors to face the country's past. "It's so much easier to not be burdened by the history of slavery if you don't see anything that's burdensome or disruptive," he said. (...)

Throughout, the burden of guilt has usually been on black people to bear and to somehow escape. Now, a visitor to Montgomery can take a leisurely walk from the state capitol to a museum on the Confederacy, to another museum on  
55 the Freedom Riders. The memorial to the victims of lynching is a necessary addition to that landscape, if only to remind Alabamians, and other Americans, that the terror it represents will no longer be overlooked.

## Ireland's abortion battle shows we must never let the fundamentalists win

Suzanne Moore, *The Guardian*, 8 March 2018

5 It's a bugger when your flight is cancelled. It's worse, I imagine, if you're having to travel to another country to have an abortion. Time and money matter. When I saw that the recent snow had grounded flights from Ireland I immediately thought of this. Maybe I have never forgotten the time I sat next to an anxious young woman on a flight from Dublin who began to tell me why she was coming to London but couldn't finish her sentences. She was just so alone that I wanted to go to the clinic with her. In the old days I remember seeing such women on the ferries.

Irish women have abortions, you see – they just don't have them in their own country. Currently about nine women a day travel to the UK for terminations. Irish society knows of this export of hypocrisy, yet it continues to export its responsibility for human rights. Women pay the price.

10 But things are changing finally and many men are coming out in support of repealing the abortion ban in the Irish constitution in a forthcoming referendum, the terms of which are to be published on Thursday.

The so-called Repeal the 8th movement, referring to the clause that enshrines the ban, has brought together the generations as well as forging new relationships between young Irish and young British women in ways that gladden my heart. This runs absolutely counter to the ignorance and indifference that many in the UK, barely able to see Ireland as its own country, have shown towards it in the Brexit debate.

15 The gathering momentum among the Irish public and its country's politicians for liberalisation of abortion rights says much about the culture wars. It tells us they are winnable and that minds can be changed. It shows us how to campaign and reminds us that female autonomy is always in jeopardy – that the goal of every fundamentalist in a culture war is to strip the female body of autonomy, be it through virginity tests or restricting access to contraception or safe legal abortion. It is worth noting that Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist party, propping up the government, is also fundamentally anti-choice.

20 But to read the words of the eighth amendment is to see fundamentalism in action. The words strip a pregnant woman of her human rights. It was adopted after a referendum in 1983 and reads: "The state acknowledges the right to life of the unborn and, with due regard to the equal right to life of the mother, guarantees its laws to respect, and, as far as practicable, by its laws to defend and vindicate that right."

25 Once you say an unborn foetus is equal to the life of a woman – or, as it turns out, more so – you create the conditions for a procession of preventable tragedies, many of which have horrified the Irish public. What has happened since 1983 is that the unborn has become sacred. If this means the torture or even death of women, then so be it. When I say torture, I mean the several documented cases where women whose foetuses were severely disabled and not viable have been forced to carry these pregnancies to term.

30 This is utter cruelty. When I say death, I am thinking of the case that sparked the repeal movement: that of Savita Halappanavar in 2012. Halappanavar died because though she was already in hospital miscarrying and asked for a termination, a foetal heartbeat was detected. The foetus was not viable and Halappanavar was told that she could not be induced. Her husband begged doctors to save her but she took her last breath, and Ireland took a deep breath then too. The rights of the dying foetus had prevailed. That is what the eighth amendment meant in practice.

35 Public protest had been somewhat dormant since the landmark case in 1991 when a 14-year-old girl known only as "X" told her mother she was pregnant and suicidal after being raped by a neighbour. The family planned to travel to the UK for an abortion but the attorney general intervened. As the journalist Fintan O'Toole wrote: "The state was going to force a child to bear a child for her rapist."

40 There are so many brutal stories, I don't need to tell them, from women who cannot have cancer treatment because they are pregnant, to the everyday ones of women begging money from friends for the price of a Ryanair flight.

45 Now a diverse young population free of the Catholic church is coming to power. What has been especially significant is that this is a once-taboo issue on which politicians have changed their minds in public. A changing demographic forces change. The popular vote in favour of gay marriage showed that demographic that they could do just that.

50 We are always told that abortion is an issue of hardline morality. The anti-choice lobby has thrown millions of dollars into Ireland. What has happened though is that both the prime minister, Leo Varadkar, and most extraordinarily the leader of the opposition Fianna Fáil party, Micheál Martin, have moved from conservative anti-abortion positions to backing repeal. They have, they said, listened to women in crisis. They have decided to trust them instead of criminalising them.

End these offshore games or our democracy will die

Aditya Chakraborty, *The Guardian*, 7 November 2017

The Paradise Papers are not about tax. They do not focus on palm-tree islands strewn around the Caribbean. Their implications are not technical but political. What they reflect is something far bigger: the rottenness of democracy, both in Brexit Britain and across much of the west. And headline by headline, they upend the stories peddled to us about why we're in the mess we're in.

5 Three myths govern British politics today – and the investigation by the Guardian and others pulps each one. Take first the cliché that the public in the UK, the US and elsewhere are at war with their elites. This week proves that the opposite is true – it is the elites who have been fighting trench warfare against their publics, by denying them the revenues they need for their hospitals and schools. That war is one source of this current anti-elite mood.

10 Tax avoidance is now so systemic that the Queen's own wealth managers apparently see nothing wrong with her receiving £82m a year from taxpayers while shunting £10m into the Caymans and elsewhere. Shuttling between tax havens is so commonplace that economist Gabriel Zucman describes it as an "elite sport" – a sport in which the loser each time is the rest of society, which sees its taxbase shrink. These papers are aptly named: they outline a model that is paradise for the super-rich and purgatory for the rest of us.

15 The second myth of British politics is that austerity was the only correct response to the high-living of the New Labour boom. That was always opposed by some of us – now it is exploded with each new tax investigation. Drawing in part on data from last year's Panama Papers and the HSBC files leaked in 2015, Zucman recently co-published a study that found wealthy Britons have stashed about £300bn – equivalent to 20 15% of our GDP – in offshore tax havens.

Three hundred billion quid would more than cover our entire education budget for the rest of this decade and into the 2020s. Or, if you prefer, it is the equivalent of £350m being paid into the NHS every week for the next 16 years. Instead, it is funnelled offshore and used to buy yachts and mansions and other baubles – tax efficiently, of course.

25 The economics of David Cameron and George Osborne can be summed up simply: punish the poor, but reward the rich for fear they will flee offshore. To that end, they scrapped the 50p tax rate for millionaires, they drove down corporation tax to a record low, and cut sweetheart deals with companies such as Google who couldn't be bothered to pay even that much.

30 The result is that London has more super-rich residents than any other city – yet however soft the kid gloves with which they are treated, our wealthiest 0.01% stick 30-40% of their wealth offshore. In high-tax Sweden, by contrast, the rich do not use havens half as much. The logic that has underpinned our tax system over this entire decade is rubbish.

35 Which brings us to the final myth of today's politics: that the public in Britain, America and elsewhere has been spoiled by a surfeit of democracy. Those with least connection to Britain have the most say over its future. Those not resident here, who don't pay their fair share of taxes here, are the ones who decide what happens to the rest of us. (...)

Perfectly legal this may be, but the upshot is of billionaires moulding policies to which they are not subject. Sadly, that is no anomaly: from newspapers to finance, our democracy is a bidders' market in which the offshore super-rich can determine the lives of us, the little people.

40 Think of *Telegraph* owners Sir David and Sir Frederick Barclay on their 80-acre island hideaway of Brecqhou, complete with custom-built fort. Or consider the 4th Viscount Rothermere, the inheritor of the *Daily Mail* empire and of non-dom status.

45 Cameron scraped into government in 2010 with the help of the shadow-banking sector, which chipped in half the funds for the Conservatives' election campaign. Even while speechifying about the need for tax transparency, Cameron was funded by a sector whose business model relied on tax arbitrage. He rewarded them handsomely, not just by cutting their taxes but by torpedoing EU efforts to reform finance.

50 Most of all, Cameron convened summits to denounce corruption, without tackling the corruption facilitated by Britain. Add the City of London to Britain's crown dependencies such as Jersey and the Isle of Man, and overseas territories such as the Caymans, and Britain's tax havens account for nearly a quarter of the entire offshore financial industry. According to Deutsche Bank, London itself receives about £1bn a month in what it calls "hidden capital flows", much of it Russian. It ends up in Stucco-fronted houses and fine art.

Much of this could be changed, and quickly. Britain has previously ordered the Caymans and other overseas territories to decriminalise homosexuality and abolish the death penalty. It could do the same with tax transparency. We could change the rules so that all offshore holdings would have to be registered.

55 These are the fixes, but a real solution is ultimately political. We must accept that Big Finance and runaway inequality are incompatible with either a functioning democracy or a sustainable economy. Britain either shrinks the City of London, or the City of London will swallow Britain.

## After failing to take over UKIP, the far right is at bay

*The Economist*, 7 October 2017

IT WAS a narrow escape. On September 29th the UK Independence Party (UKIP) elected Henry Bolton, a 54-year-old former Liberal Democrat candidate, and the choice of Nigel Farage, the party's most popular figure, as its new leader. Anne Marie Waters, an anti-sharia campaigner who calls Islam "evil", claimed second place, taking 21% of the vote and besting five other candidates. Most of the attendees at the party's annual conference in Torquay, a seaside resort on the south coast, were relieved. Mr Bolton had said that UKIP risked becoming the "UK Nazi Party" if it went for the wrong candidate (Ms Waters has vigorously denied this sort of claim).

In the general election in June UKIP tried a twin approach, promoting both an uncompromising line on Brexit and a measure of Islamophobia. Its policies included support for a burqa ban and compulsory genital checks for children judged to be at risk of mutilation. The party's vote collapsed to 1.8%, down from 12.6% in 2015, as its more moderate voters flocked to the Conservative Party, which since the Brexit referendum has become in favour of leaving the European Union. Mr Bolton argued that UKIP needed to learn from this failure and focus on Brexit.

On recent form, the party will struggle whatever route it chooses. But Mr Bolton is probably correct to suspect that the party has little to gain by concentrating on its anti-Islam agenda. In the past UKIP has generally done a good job of policing the boundaries between itself and the far right, stopping former members of radical organisations from gaining membership, says Matthew Goodwin, an expert on the party at the University of Kent. Doing so ensures it is not tarred with the same brush, allowing it to attract the votes of disaffected Conservatives, who would be put off by any hint of radicalism. Nevertheless, despite UKIP's distaste for those from the far right, it sweeps up votes from former supporters of the British National Party (BNP) in places like Yorkshire and along England's east coast, notes Mr Goodwin. Ms Waters would have upset what remains of this balancing act.

The BNP's collapse—in part a product of factional disputes and in part because of the growth of UKIP—reflects the difficulties far-right parties face in Britain. Large portions of the population hold views that would appear to indicate a willingness to at least consider voting for such parties. Half of British people, and 60% of Conservatives, believe that Islam poses a serious threat to Western civilisation, according to a poll by YouGov. But they also show a reluctance to vote for any party perceived to be on the far right. Even in 2010, in its best general election result, the BNP won just 1.9% of the vote. Britain's first-past-the-post electoral system stifles minority parties of all colours. Another possible explanation is that a history of opposition to fascism has created strong social norms against far-right parties.

Whatever the reason, the far right is struggling. In December last year the leader of Britain First, an anti-Muslim outfit, was sent to prison for breaching the terms of a court order that banned him from entering a mosque. Meanwhile National Action, a neo-Nazi group, was officially designated a terrorist organisation by Amber Rudd, the home secretary. Hope Not Hate, an organisation that monitors the most unpleasant groups, described 2016 as "a year of further marginalisation, convictions and bans punctuated only by extreme acts of violence."

Yet the previous generation of mostly anti-Semitic organisations has been superseded by a new, anti-Islamic, web-literate one. Ms Waters and Tommy Robinson, a pseudonymous former leader of the English Defence League, an Islamophobic organisation, took over the British branch of Pegida (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the West), a German group. Far-right activists are increasingly prominent online. Britain First has nearly 2m followers on Facebook. (Recent posts include a petition imploring the Home Office to "DEPORT ALL ISLAMISTS!") Taking control of UKIP would have given Ms Waters a political apparatus, albeit a crumbling one, to go alongside the new generation's media presence. Thankfully, the party was resistant to her charms.



## Inside the secret, sinister and very illegal cabal trying to destroy Trump

By Dana Milbank Opinion writer January 24 *The Washington Post*

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/a-secret-society-dedicated-to-making-trump-look-bad/2018/01/24/d0ba9d0e-0156-11e8-9d31-d72cf78dbee\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.56d65b65e3a3](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/a-secret-society-dedicated-to-making-trump-look-bad/2018/01/24/d0ba9d0e-0156-11e8-9d31-d72cf78dbee_story.html?utm_term=.56d65b65e3a3)

It began, as these things generally do, with Rep. Trey Gowdy (R-Benghazi).

The voluble congressman, who speaks as if he is arguing the trial of the century even if he is ordering breakfast, went on Fox News on Tuesday to divulge a secret.

“There’s a text exchange between these two FBI agents” — Peter Strzok and Lisa Page, who had originally been on Robert S. Mueller III’s Russia probe — “saying that perhaps this is the first meeting of the ‘secret society.’”

Gowdy announced. “I’m going to want to know what secret society are you talking about.”

A secret society! The Illuminati? The Carbonari? Or perhaps the dreaded Rigatoni? Or, um, maybe, given that Strzok and Page were lovers, their text was actually a joke or a flirtation.

Gowdy’s sidekick, Rep. John Ratcliffe (R-Tex.), allowed that “there may have been a secret society,” but “I’m not saying that actually happened.”

He did not need to. Sen. Ron Johnson did. “I have heard from somebody who has talked to our committee that there is a group of individuals in the FBI who were holding secret, off-site meetings,” the Wisconsin Republican told Fox News on Wednesday. (Maybe that person was Gowdy?)

Fox had a news alert: “Texts Indicate Secret Society to Resist Trump.” Sean Hannity tweeted: “FBI CONSPIRACY? Text Messages Show Anti-Trump ‘SECRET SOCIETY’ at DOJ.” Breitbart and Daily Caller joined in.

Rush Limbaugh said he was “not surprised there’s a secret society” going after Trump, and he alleged that a secret society also cooked up fake intelligence to goad George W. Bush into a dumb war. “What if the intel on the war in Iraq was another disinformation campaign to damage another Republican president?” Limbaugh asked. Exactly! And what if Ted Cruz’s dad, after killing President Kennedy, forged Barack Obama’s birth certificate?

But we do not have to speculate about this secret society, for I have obtained, at great personal risk, the following leaked minutes from the society’s meeting on Inauguration Day last year:

20th January, anno Domini 2017

Society for Harassing and Impeaching Trump with Hearsay, Outrageous Lies and Extralegal Schemes

Recording Secretary: Maddow, R.

The meeting was called to order at noon. Society officers greeted each other with the secret fist bump, recited the secret Pledge of Allegiance to Saul Alinsky, and then knelt for the national anthem, sung by an illegal immigrant. In attendance: Podesta, J., worshipful master; Comey, J., senior warden; Mueller, R., junior warden; Rosenstein, R., inner guard; McCabe, A., pursuivant; Strzok, P., steward; Page, L., almoner; Clapper, J., grand sword bearer; Yates, S., grand registrar; Brennan, J., chancellor; Soros, G., treasurer. Absent: Clinton, H., grand standard-bearer.

Members voted to accept as submitted the minutes of the November 2016 meeting, titled “How Our Gal Lost,” and of the December 2016 meeting, titled “Witch Hunt: Is Our Phony Dossier Working?”

The steering committee presented its Inauguration Day recommendations in a report titled “Underhanded and Conspiratorial Things We Can Do to Make Trump Look Bad.”

The society would use its contacts to convince Trump that he was the victim of massive voter fraud and that President Barack Obama personally ran a wiretap on him. This would make Trump sound paranoid.

The society would use its influence to convince Trump that Frederick Douglass is still alive and that Andrew Jackson was involved in the Civil War. This would make Trump sound dumb.

The society would hack Trump’s Twitter account so that it appeared he was calling the North Korean leader “fat” and a “Rocket Man” with a small “button.” This would make Trump sound dangerous.

The society would secretly edit video footage and transcripts to show Trump shoving a world leader and insulting leaders of friendly countries such as Australia, Britain and Sweden. This would make Trump sound like a bully.

The society would infiltrate White House policy so Trump would add trillions of dollars to the deficit to give billionaires a huge tax break. This would make Trump sound like a liar.

The society would convince Trump to say kind things about white supremacists, and to use a filthy word to describe African countries. This would make Trump sound like a racist.

The society, finally, would convince Trump to fire an FBI director, hire a guy named “Mooch” and declare himself a “stable genius.” This would make it clear he was neither.

Worshipful Master Podesta called for discussion.

Senior Warden Comey said the proposals sounded “too far-fetched.” Grand sword bearer Clapper said it would be “impossible” to get Trump to say and do such things. Pursuivant McCabe said people would never believe such “outlandish” things, anyway.

The recommendations were defeated en bloc. The society adjourned.

*Dana Milbank writes about political theater in the nation’s capital. He joined the Post as a political reporter in 2000*

## California and Conservatism

Victor Davis Hanson June 3, 2018 *National Review*

<https://www.nationalreview.com/author/victor-davis-hanson/>

I share some of the sentiments of Jay Nordlinger's Corner post expressing confidence that some day in the future there may be hope for California conservatism. That's why I continue to live in the house that I grew up in, despite vast changes in the nature of the rural community I was born into. But I would take sharp issue with Jay's statement that current critics of the direction of the state are somehow either prejudicial or dispirited:

A lot of us conservatives have long written it off. California is too changed: too brown, too illegal, too bloated, too listless. All the good people have left, and all the bad people have stayed. You know the rap. Usually, we don't put it this crudely, but this is what it amounts to.

Actually, I don't believe that conservatives' worry amounts to any of that at all.

Conservatives know that the problem with California is *not* skin color, ethnic affinity, or race, but rather a juxtaposition of historically unprecedented great wealth on the coast and the culture it spawns — especially in high technology, government, finance, entertainment, and academia — with dire poverty in the state's north and interior, some the result of years of open borders and illegal immigration. The result is a state in which the pernicious consequences of elite policymaking are never quite experienced by their insulated architects.

Open borders are fine, but then so are their proponents' gated communities and the growth in coastal private academies and prep schools, as the public schools score near bottom in the nation's test scores. Water transfers are the obsolete projects of a bygone age, but not those such as Hetch Hetchy, vital to Bay Area survival. Expensive gas and electricity are good green policies, but their deleterious consequences fall most heavily on the distant inland poor of the much hotter and colder interior. The nation's highest basket of income, sales, and gas taxes can be either avoided or easily paid by those who are most in favor of them.

And, yes, there are enormous demographic changes in the state going on. One in four residents was not born in the U.S. Somewhere near 4 million Californians have left in recent years. The Democratic party has largely bifurcated into a pyramidal, medieval organization of the few very wealthy and the many very poor, the former pursuing iconic green and identity politics and gender issues, the later increasingly dependent on social services.

California is a state with the nation's most billionaires and some of the highest per capita income communities in the country, while home to one-third of the nation's welfare recipients, with a fifth of the population living below the poverty line. My own rural community is now part of a tri-county region that is more impoverished than Appalachia; most of my former neighbors' farmhouses now have ad hoc trailers and shacks behind them, often resulting in ten or 15 residents per home. Sheriff raids to break up drug production, prostitution rings, and gang violence are not trumped-up conservative angst, but common in our rural neighborhood.

Is there some hope? A recent April poll from the liberal UC Berkeley Haas center proved a shock in reporting that 24 percent of the survey's participants agreed that it's "very important" for the U.S. to increase deportations of undocumented immigrants, while 35 polled said it was "somewhat important" — an aggregate majority result expressing a desire for future legal immigration only. The poll included a majority of Hispanic residents, upon whose schools, communities, and social services open borders and illegal immigration most heavily fall. Currently there are early pushbacks against the new steep gasoline taxes; high-speed rail, whose half-built overpasses are our modern Stonehenge, has lost most public support.

What, then, is the chance of California's recalibrating as a conservative state? It largely hinges on meritocratic, measured, diverse, and legal immigration that studies show most successfully leads to assimilation, intermarriage, and integration, a melting pot that makes residents see their particular tribal affiliations as incidental rather than essential to their characters.

When that happens, millions of Californians of all backgrounds will more likely vote for issues such as reducing taxes, encouraging energy development and middle-class housing construction, and investing in infrastructure such as freeways and reservoirs (rather than building impossible utopian high-speed rail projects), reforming pensions, curbing teacher unions, and allowing more charter schools and school choices. In other words, the present-day Democratic voter will someday question why such high sales, income, and energy taxes result in such poor social services, as the state's highways and schools rank near last in the nation.

(...)

I do not know who the next charismatic California Republican leader might be to lead a Reagan-populist revolt against the welfare state. Most likely, if it is to happen, it will probably be a Hispanic conservative who will sound a lot like the take-no-prisoners Reagan, and who will likely be just as shunned by the state's and nation's Republican establishment.

Victor Davis Hanson — NRO contributor Victor Davis Hanson is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and the author, most recently, of *The Second World Wars: How the First Global Conflict Was Fought and Won*.

## The Paul Ryan Story: From Flimflam to Fascism

By Paul Krugman Opinion Columnist April 12, 2018 *The New York Times*

Why did Paul Ryan choose not to run for re-election? What will be the consequences? Your guess is as good as mine — literally. I can speculate based on what I read in the papers, but so can you.

- 5 On the other hand, I do have some insight into how Ryan — who has always been an obvious con man, to anyone willing to see — came to become speaker of the House. And that's a story that reflects badly not just on Ryan himself, not just on his party, but also on self-proclaimed centrists and the news media, who boosted his career through their malfeasance. Furthermore, the forces that brought Ryan to a position of power are the same forces that have brought America to the edge of a constitutional crisis.
- 10 About Ryan: Incredibly, I'm seeing some news reports about his exit that portray him as a serious policy wonk and fiscal hawk who, sadly, found himself unable to fulfill his mission in the Trump era. Unbelievable. Look, the single animating principle of everything Ryan did and proposed was to comfort the comfortable while afflicting the afflicted. Can anyone name a single instance in which his supposed concern about the deficit made him willing to impose any burden on the wealthy, in which his supposed compassion made him
- 15 willing to improve the lives of the poor? Remember, he voted against the Simpson-Bowles debt commission proposal not because of its real flaws, but because it would raise taxes and fail to repeal Obamacare. And his "deficit reduction" proposals were always frauds. The revenue loss from tax cuts always exceeded any explicit spending cuts, so the pretense of fiscal responsibility came entirely from "magic asterisks": extra revenue from closing unspecified loopholes, reduced spending from cutting unspecified programs. I called
- 20 him a flimflam man back in 2010, and nothing he has done since has called that judgment into question. So how did such an obvious con artist get a reputation for seriousness and fiscal probity? Basically, he was the beneficiary of ideological affirmative action. Even now, in this age of Trump, there are a substantial number of opinion leaders — especially, but not only, in the news media — whose careers, whose professional brands, rest on the notion that they stand above the
- 25 political fray. For such people, asserting that both sides have a point, that there are serious, honest people on both left and right, practically defines their identity. Yet the reality of 21st-century U.S. politics is one of asymmetric polarization in many dimensions. One of these dimensions is intellectual: While there are some serious, honest conservative thinkers, they have no influence on the modern Republican Party. What's a centrist to do?
- 30 The answer, all too often, has involved what we might call motivated gullibility. Centrists who couldn't find real examples of serious, honest conservatives lavished praise on politicians who played that role on TV. Paul Ryan wasn't actually very good at faking it; true fiscal experts ridiculed his "mystery meat" budgets. But never mind: The narrative required that the character Ryan played exist, so everyone pretended that he was the genuine article.
- 35 And let me say that the same bothsidesism that turned Ryan into a fiscal hero played a crucial role in the election of Donald Trump. How did the most corrupt presidential candidate in American history eke out an Electoral College victory? There were many factors, any one of which could have turned the tide in a close election. But it wouldn't have been close if much of the news media hadn't engaged in an orgy of false equivalence.
- 40 Which brings us to the role of the congressional G.O.P. and Ryan in particular in the Trump era. Some commentators seem surprised at the way men who talked nonstop about fiscal probity under Barack Obama cheerfully supported tax cuts that will explode the deficit under Trump. They also seem shocked at the apparent indifference of Ryan and his colleagues to Trump's corruption and contempt for the rule of law. What happened to their principles?
- 45 The answer, of course, is that the principles they claimed to have never had anything to do with their actual goals. In particular, Republicans haven't abandoned their concerns about budget deficits, because they never cared about deficits; they only faked concern as an excuse to cut social programs. And if you ask why Ryan never took a stand against Trumpian corruption, why he never showed any concern about Trump's authoritarian tendencies, what ever made you think he would take such a stand? Again, if you
- 50 look at Ryan's actions, not the character he played to gullible audiences, he has never shown himself willing to sacrifice anything he wants — not one dime — on behalf of his professed principles. Why on earth would you expect him to stick his neck out to defend the rule of law? So now Ryan is leaving. Good riddance. But hold the celebrations: If he was no better than the rest of his party, he was also no worse. It's possible that his successor as speaker will show more backbone than he has
- 55 — but only if that successor is, well, a Democrat.

## People Voted for Trump Because They Were Anxious, Not Poor

A new study finds that Trump voters weren't losing income or jobs. Instead, they were concerned about their place in the world. Olga Khazan Apr 23, 2018 *The Atlantic*  
[https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2018/04/existential-anxiety-not-poverty-motivates-trump-](https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2018/04/existential-anxiety-not-poverty-motivates-trump-support/558674/)

[support/558674/](https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2018/04/existential-anxiety-not-poverty-motivates-trump-support/558674/)

For the past 18 months, many political scientists have been seized by one question: Less-educated whites were President Trump's most enthusiastic supporters. But why, exactly?

Was their vote some sort of *cri de coeur* about a changing economy that had left them behind? Or was the motivating sentiment something more complex and, frankly, something harder for policy makers to address?

10 After analyzing in-depth survey data from 2012 and 2016, the University of Pennsylvania political scientist Diana C. Mutz argues that it's the latter. In a new article in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, she added her conclusion to the growing body of evidence that the 2016 election was not about economic hardship.

15 "Instead," she writes, "it was about dominant groups that felt threatened by change and a candidate who took advantage of that trend."

"For the first time since Europeans arrived in this country," Mutz notes, "white Americans are being told that they will soon be a minority race." When members of a historically dominant group feel threatened, she explains, they go through some interesting psychological twists and turns to make themselves feel okay again. First, they get nostalgic and try to protect the status quo however they can. They defend their own group ("all 20 lives matter"), they start behaving in more traditional ways, and they start to feel more negatively toward other groups.

This could be why in one study, whites who were presented with evidence of racial progress experienced lower self-esteem afterward. In another study, reminding whites who were high in "ethnic identification" that nonwhite groups will soon outnumber them revved up their support for Trump, their desire for anti-immigrant 25 policies, and their opposition to political correctness.

Mutz also found that "half of Americans view trade as something that benefits job availability in other countries at the expense of jobs for Americans."

Granted, most people just voted for the same party in both 2012 and 2016. However, between the two years, people—especially Republicans—developed a much more negative view toward international trade. In 2012, 30 the two parties seemed roughly similar on trade, but in 2016, Hillary Clinton's views on trade and on "China as a threat" were much further away from the views of the average American than were Trump's.

Mutz examined voters whose incomes declined, or didn't increase much, or who lost their jobs, or who were concerned about expenses, or who thought they had been personally hurt by trade. None of those things motivated people to switch from voting for Obama in 2012 to supporting Trump in 2016. Indeed, 35 manufacturing employment in the United States has actually increased somewhat since 2010. And as my colleague Adam Serwer has pointed out, "Clinton defeated Trump handily among Americans making less than \$50,000 a year."

Meanwhile, a few things did correlate with support for Trump: a voter's desire for their group to be dominant, as well as how much they disagreed with Clinton's views on trade and China. Trump supporters were also 40 more likely than Clinton voters to feel that "the American way of life is threatened," and that high-status groups, like men, Christians, and whites, are discriminated against.

This unfounded sense of persecution is far from rare, and it seems to be heightened during moments of societal change. As my colleague Emma Green has written, white evangelicals see more discrimination against Christians than Muslims in the United States, and 79 percent of white working-class voters who had anxieties 45 about the "American way of life" chose Trump over Clinton. As I pointed out in the fall of 2016, several surveys showed many men supported Trump because they felt their status in society was threatened, and that Trump would restore it. Even the education gap in support for Trump disappears, according to one analysis, if you account for the fact that non-college-educated whites are simply more likely to affirm racist views than those with college degrees. (At the most extreme end, white supremacists also use victimhood to further their 50 cause.)

These why-did-people-vote-for-Trump studies are clarifying, but also a little bit unsatisfying, from the point of view of a politician. They dispel the fiction—to use another 2016 meme—that the majority of Trump supporters are disenfranchised victims of capitalism's cruelties. At the same time, deep-seated psychological resentment is harder for policy makers to address than an overly meager disability check. You can teach out- 55 of-work coal miners to code, but you may not be able to convince them to embrace changing racial and gender norms. You can offer universal basic incomes, but that won't ameliorate resentment of demographic changes. In other words, it's now pretty clear that many Trump supporters feel threatened, frustrated, and marginalized—not on an economic, but on an existential level. Now what?

## **Our indecent president calls people seeking refuge 'animals.' It's hate speech.**

<http://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/news-columns-blogs/fabiola-santiago/article211319219.html>

FABIOLA SANTIAGO May 17, 2018 *Miami Herald*

In a calibrated move to stoke anti-immigrant furor in a midterm election year, President Donald Trump allowed journalists to film an hour-long Cabinet meeting this week with state and local leaders from California.

Accustomed now to violating the dignity of the office he holds with little consequence, the president amped up the rhetoric to deliver his customary mix of lies, gross exaggerations, and dehumanizing adjectives to describe immigrants.

"We have people coming into the country, or trying to come in — we're stopping a lot of them," Trump said. "You wouldn't believe how bad these people are. These aren't people, these are animals, and we're taking them out of the country at a level and at a rate that's never happened before."

Yes, the president of the United States of America called people seeking refuge at the border "animals." He's no longer the candidate using anti-immigrant epithets to outdo a crowded Republican slate of hopefuls, but he doesn't act it.

He says these human beings aren't people. And his nastiness is echoed by his chief of staff, John Kelly, who propagates the falsehood that undocumented immigrants "don't have the skills" to assimilate into U.S. society, and his pitbull attorney general, Jeff Sessions, who turns it into enforcement practice.

We're talking about women and children with the broken, suffering faces of people who flee terrible circumstances unimaginable to most Americans. We're talking about men whose crime is struggling to give their families a better life. "Animals," and "not people."

There's no excuse for that language.

In the face of controversy, his defenders are trying to cast what Trump said as condemnation of the Salvadorean MS-13 gang, which we all want off the streets, but the president was clearly talking about the poor souls from troubled Central American countries asking for asylum at the border. Shameful.

What the president unleashed on the American people with his comment isn't a policy debate on immigration policy. It's hate speech.

Trump is no different than the New York City attorney videotaped threatening employees at a café that he's going to call ICE because they're speaking Spanish. "This is America!" he ranted, feeling entitled and no doubt emboldened by the big boss of bigotry, the president, to dictate what other people speak in this beleaguered but still free country.

The president's indecent comments were dutifully chronicled by journalists, but they didn't make the front page of the New York Times or the Washington Post or the Miami Herald. Such are the times.

A year and four months into Trump's scandal-ridden presidency, few are outraged and offended anymore — as we all should be — because he's doing great harm to the country's psyche. His lack of basic human decency isn't a gotcha to Democrat me or a victory for Republican you. It degrades all of us.

Listen to Trump's former secretary of state when he says that democracy is being threatened by a growing "crisis of ethics and integrity."

That's what is at stake, what will do us in, not the immigrants knocking at our door or the undocumented who've made this country their home for decades.

"If our leaders seek to conceal the truth, or we as people become accepting of alternative realities that are no longer grounded in facts, then we as American citizens are on a pathway to relinquishing our freedom," Rex Tillerson, fired by Trump in a tweet, said in a commencement address at the Virginia Military Institute.

This country's leaders have so lost their way that what was scandalous before Trump is now acceptable behavior in the White House.

So much so that a Trump staffer can degrade war hero and veteran Senator John McCain, who is dying from cancer — and not apologize, and still keep her job. So much so that the president, a draft dodger insisting on a military parade for himself, doesn't offer an apology to McCain and his family. So much so that McCain's colleagues, those cowardly Republican senators who have the president's ear, don't demand one from Trump. And so the silence condones saying that it doesn't matter what McCain thinks because "he's dying anyway." Appalling.

From the act of killing needed environmental regulation to downgrading the value of public education, President Trump isn't making America great in any shape or form with his policies or his words. It's almost as if he hated this country and wanted to destroy it.

And what he unleashes every day on the consciousness of this country, built by immigrants and sustained by immigrants, to create a false narrative on immigration policy is pure evil.

Should you give homeless people money? Absolutely

Tamsen Courtenay, *The Guardian*, 17 January 2018

Have the Tory members of Gloucester city council been busy reading George Orwell's 1984 in their book club recently?

5 It seems someone has read the bit at the back where Orwell describes how the political language, Newspeak – with its restricted grammar and limited vocabulary – is designed to distort how people think and control public attitudes. Posters were put up in Gloucester showing someone wearing a hoodie, under the headline of "Are you really helping homeless people?", suggesting that people sleeping rough are not homeless, but "in accommodation, receiving support and benefits". This sinister use of Newspeak tells the upstanding citizenry to stop feeling bad about not helping those in need, under the pretence of educating and informing. It even offered a subtle sense of justification that – weirdly – help isn't really help at all. That's not Newspeak, it's doublespeak. 10 Orwell was writing about a totalitarian state. We should be worried.

So that's the propaganda. What about the fact?

15 No one in their right mind thinks it's a clever scam to sit on a freezing pavement suffering the humiliation of asking people for a few coins. And frankly, there are many people out there who are seriously mentally ill and are chaotically struggling to stay alive. And if there are scammers? So what? They would be such an insanely tiny percentage that they are of no interest or relevance to the big picture.

20 Not once did I meet a single person who likes begging. Most were mortified. Some flat out refused to do it. It is a horrible part of a horrible life, lived out in the open, scrutinised and judged. Hunger, loneliness, physical illness, being beaten up, sometimes raped or set alight are the diet of the homeless. But you can't see all this under the tatty clothes and worn faces, down there somewhere at knee level. You certainly won't see it in the poster with the faceless, hoodied man – he is meant to radiate menace.

25 Homelessness is not a lifestyle choice of the criminal classes, despite efforts to convince you otherwise. It is barely a life at all.

People are homeless for lots of reasons – fleeing domestic violence or sexual abuse, loss of a job and a partner often at the same time, leaving the care system with scant resources and being severely mental ill – to name a few.

Lots of people just can't manage life and when it falls apart, so do they.

30 Without exception, the huge range of people I had the joy of spending time with were in terrible pain. No one was having fun living like this and all were clinging desperately to the idea that it might, just might, stop and life would get better.

35 The poster used a crude caricature of a homeless person feeding the notion that a person who is faceless is a non-person. I can't tell you how many homeless people I met who said the worst thing of all was knowing you were invisible, that you didn't really exist at all.

Now it's no longer enough to blame them for their plight – we must criminalise them too. Antisocial behaviour orders and a panoply of other bits of nasty legislation all conspire to make homelessness appear villainous and dishonest.

Should you give them money? Absolutely.

40 They need it – and assuming you are not the person who will solve homelessness with a click of your fingers – it's the least you can do. Sleeping bags, hot food and painkillers are also welcome. This idea that homeless people "can't be trusted" with the money you give is a wicked get-out. They are not children. They are not morons. They are homeless and they are sad. Many need medical and psychiatric help. If all this was available – as that monstrous poster suggests – then there would not be a homelessness problem in the first place. Your money will be spent on food, 45 newspapers, coffees and toiletries. The majority try to beg enough to get a hostel for the night. Some – but by no means all – will spend it on alcohol or drugs. For people living on the street, booze can help dilute the shame and embarrassment of begging.

50 If our government really gave a damn they would have provided the services to help the vast numbers who need it and – crucially – would be creating a society that produced fewer people in this state of total despair and ruin.

## May can't rely on Trump and Europe against Russia – and Putin knows it Simon Tisdall, *The Guardian*, 14 March 2018

It has taken a long time for western politicians to recognise the extent and depth of the threat represented by Vladimir Putin's Russia. Some in the Labour party still don't. It is also plain, as Theresa May embarks on an open-ended confrontation with Moscow, that the dispute provoked by the Salisbury outrage could take years to resolve.

5 Cold or hot, overt or covert, this is going to be a long war – and Britain will need all its friends and allies if it is to prevail against a ruthless opponent. Whether sincere, sufficient and timely support will be forthcoming is in serious doubt.

10 It is not just about Salisbury, of course. Putin has been crossing red lines, at home and abroad, with growing impunity since he first gained national prominence in 1999. He made his name with a brutal pacification campaign in Chechnya justified by a series of suspicious apartment bombings. Alexander Litvinenko, later murdered in London, blamed the bombings on the FSB and, by implication, Putin.

15 Justified perceptions of western weakness, ambivalence and division have since encouraged Putin in a pattern of escalating, aggressive behaviour. Its main features include wars in Georgia and Ukraine, cyber-attacks against Nato countries, election meddling and destabilisation operations, and the bloody Syrian intervention.

20 Underlying Putin's actions is a sense of Russian exceptionalism – that somehow, Russia is different and not bound by the laws and obligations of the rules-based international order introduced after 1945. His attitude is rooted in the era of the dominant Soviet superpower. But its origins run deeper. Nineteenth-century tsarist Russia both envied and aped Europe. After the 1917 revolution, it defined itself in opposition to the west. Putin has revived that tradition.

25 Until very recently, western leaders have been reluctant to believe the evidence of their own eyes – and their intelligence agencies. There are reasons for this myopia, not all bad. At one end of the spectrum, there is genuine dread that facing off against Putin could lead to some kind of military confrontation with an insecure, paranoid leader who boasted only this month of Russia's fearsome nuclear weapons arsenal.

Then there are the usual strategic and diplomatic considerations: Russia is an influential actor in big international issues such as North Korea and Iran. There are important business and trade interests. And then there is sheer political complacency.

30 Trump's persistent refusal to criticise Putin directly, whether it be over use of chemical weapons in Syria or covert campaigns to subvert US elections, suggests the Russian leader has some kind of hold over him, possibly relating to Trump's past business dealings in Russia. Robert Mueller's federal investigation may shed more light on this.

35 Germany, chronically dependent on Russian energy (almost 40% of its oil imports and 35% of its gas came from Russia in 2016), has obvious vulnerabilities in a hypothetical confrontation. France has commercial interests at stake. Many in Italy want to lift Crimea-related EU sanctions. And so on and so on.

40 So when Trump assures Theresa May of his unstinting support, she should take his words with a large pinch of salt. Trump talks a lot. But what he does, or does not do, matters more. So far he has given Putin a free pass. So far he has refused to enact congressional sanctions over election-meddling. So far, he has acquiesced in Russia's illegal occupation of Crimea. So far, he has dissed and undermined Nato, Britain's last line of defence. So far, not so good.

45 And when Emmanuel Macron, France's president, speaks of "solidarity", Britain beware. That favourite French word can mean anything or nothing. Similar scepticism must apply to expressions of support emanating from Brussels and other EU capitals. Europe's track record on taking unified, uncompromising action in response to big international challenges is unimpressive. Just look at Syria.

50 Rallying these friends and partners into a cohesive alliance capable of facing down Putin, and forcing a step change in his behaviour, is a tall order for May. And now, uniquely, it is all the more problematic because of Brexit. To suggest that bad feeling over Britain's unamicable departure will have no impact on future EU cooperation in such cases is delusional. Actually doing something practical to help out the Brexiting Brits, especially if it harms national interests, is another matter entirely.

## Jeremy Corbyn: Britain's most likely next prime minister

*The Economist*, 23 September 2017

NOT even Jeremy Corbyn could quite picture himself as leader of the Labour Party when he ran for the job in 2015. After he became leader, few could see him surviving a general election. Now, with the Conservatives' majority freshly wiped out and the prime minister struggling to unite her party around a single vision of Brexit, the unthinkable image of a left-wing firebrand in 10 Downing Street is increasingly plausible. Bookmakers have him as favourite to be Britain's next prime minister. Labour need win only seven seats from the Tories to give Mr Corbyn the chance to form a ruling coalition. He will be received at next week's Labour Party conference as a prime minister in waiting.

There are two visions of a future Corbyn government. One, outlined in Labour's election manifesto earlier this year, is a programme that feels dated and left-wing by recent British standards but which would not raise eyebrows in much of western Europe, nor do the country catastrophic harm. The other, which can be pieced together from the recent statements and lifelong beliefs of Mr Corbyn and his inner circle, is a radical agenda that could cause grave and lasting damage to Britain's prosperity and security. The future of the Labour Party—and, quite probably, of the country—depends on which of these visions becomes reality.

The manifesto launched this spring was insipid and backward-looking, dusting off tried and discarded ideas. But it would set Britain back years, not decades. The planned rise in corporation tax—a bad idea at a time when Brexit Britain needs to cling on to what business it can—would take the rate back only to its level in 2011. A proposed minimum wage of £10 (\$13.50) per hour would be among the steepest in Europe, but not drastically higher than that planned by the Tories. Abolishing tuition fees would damage universities and mainly benefit the well-off, while nationalising the railways and some utilities would make them less efficient and starve them of investment. These are bad ideas, but not the policies to turn a country to rubble. If Labour combined them with an approach to Brexit that was less self-harming than that of the Tories—some of whom are still gunning for the kamikaze “no deal” outcome—its prospectus could even be the less batty of the two.

But there is another plan for government, scattered among Mr Corbyn's own statements, which would do serious and lasting harm. Since becoming leader, he has called for a maximum wage as well as a minimum one. He has proposed “people's quantitative easing”, under which the government would order the independent Bank of England to print money to fund public investments. Labour is committed to preserving Britain's nuclear weapons: Mr Corbyn is disarmingly clear about his desire to scrap them. Though the party's policy is to stay in NATO, Mr Corbyn has for decades called for it to disband; last year he refused to say whether, as prime minister, he would defend a NATO ally under attack from Russia.

Labour's manifesto says that another independence referendum in Scotland is “unwanted and unnecessary”; Mr Corbyn has said it would be “fine”—which matters, because his most likely route to Downing Street would be with the support of the Scottish National Party. On Brexit, Labour is as hazy as the Tories. But its notional priority, access to the single market, is at odds with Mr Corbyn's lifelong scepticism of globalisation in general and of the EU in particular.

All leaders must compromise with their parties. But it is rare for a leader's personal views to contrast so strongly with those in his manifesto. Rarer still is the company Mr Corbyn keeps. Andrew Fisher, the main author of the manifesto, has previously argued for the nationalisation of all banks; Andrew Murray, a former Communist Party official who advised Mr Corbyn during the election, has defended the regime in North Korea. You can imagine how, surrounded by such people, Mr Corbyn would instinctively line up against America in a geopolitical emergency, and how he would see a financial crisis as Act One in the collapse of capitalism.



## My guide to Britain for Princess Meghan Terence Blacker, *The Guardian*, 28 November 2017

Dear Meghan,

May I first of all, with the rest of the nation, offer my heartfelt congratulations to you on your engagement to our very own Prince Harry. When the announcement was issued on Monday by Clarence House, spontaneous applause broke out in the newsrooms of our national newspapers. I'm not ashamed to admit that there were tears in the Royal Affairs Department of this one.

Beyond the joy and the laughter, though, there are serious matters to consider. The family that you are about to join cannot be described as entirely normal. Your future father-in-law, for instance, exudes the tense and gloomy dissatisfaction of a man ill at ease with himself and the world. Outside the palace walls, the media gazes in. Already the popular press is gushing about you in a way that old hands will see as oddly menacing – it is waiting for your first wrong move. Elsewhere the dreary old establishment, steeped in snobbery about race, nationality and class, have already found you wanting in all three areas.

Within hours of your engagement being announced, a *Spectator* columnist set the tone, writing: "Obviously, 70 years ago, Meghan Markle would have been the kind of woman the prince would have had for a mistress, not a wife."

You get the picture. It will be a bumpy ride. The British are in a confused state right now, longing to belong to the outside world yet in love with borders; hankering for celebrity and glamour while also disapproving of them. To be honest, we are in a bad place psychologically and, in this sense at least, we have the perfect representatives in the family you are about to join.

I would like to cut through the emotion and the carping to offer some practical advice about royal life. Frankly, if you avert your eyes from the gurning contortions of the press and follow these simple guidelines, you won't go far wrong. On a positive note, you have done very well bringing Guy and Bogart here. This is a nation that likes to believe it is good with animals, and four-legged creatures, canine and equine, are an essential part of the royal image. To avoid confusion, you should probably avoid referring to your dogs as "my boys", the phrase Princess Diana used to describe your future husband and his brother. Let it be known that Guy and Bogart are rescue dogs, recommended by the American television star Ellen DeGeneres. That mixture of the grim and the glitzy – "from refugee camps to red carpets", as you once beautifully put it – always plays very well in Britain.

You will also be required to kill animals, or at least be around when they are killed. In the royal family, shooting and hunting animals are a valid expression of your love for them. Paradoxically, fans of the Windsors not only forgive the killing but see it as something rather special and distinguished about the family. To be squeamish about these things can cause difficulties.

On the subject of families, it would probably be sensible not to talk too much about your own. When it comes to the monarchy, admirers of the royal family are quite traditional: they tend to be suspicious of any new member not belonging to a family of aristocrats who own half of Northamptonshire. And whatever you do, avoid repeating your description of your mother Doria as "free-spirited". The British, who can be surprisingly sensitive to linguistic nuance, will take this to be code for mad, promiscuous or both.

Your new status will involve a change of name, and you will mercifully be able to bid farewell to Markle, which for many Britons sounds uncomfortably close to Merkel. Just as the last royal bride became Princess Kate, a usefully classless name, you should quietly encourage the use of Princess Meg, which has a jaunty lack of pretension without being downright common.

Be careful not to say or do anything that might invite the deployment of the expression "Princess Pushy", a favourite of the press that has not been used for a while. All that may sound rather bland, and so it is. Dullness should be your friend. If you must sparkle, for heaven's sake do it behind closed doors. The last thing the Windsor family needs is another strong, opinionated, charismatic young woman. That always ends in tears.

One final, slightly personal point. Your teeth: they are just a little too white. As a nation that is not dentally blessed, we are sensitive about such things and see excessive oral dazzle (Justin Bieber, Penélope Cruz, Donald Trump) as a sign of vulgarity. Good luck, Princess Meg. We'll be watching you.

## The Supreme Court Affirms: Tolerance Is a Two-Way Street

Michael Farris, June 4, 2018 *National Review*

<https://www.nationalreview.com/author/michael-farris/>

Seven justices rebuked the government for its overt hostility to religion.

5 The U.S. Supreme Court has now clarified for the country what Colorado cake artist Jack Phillips has publicly stated for years: His case is, and has always been, about the First Amendment.

On Monday, June 4, the Court ruled 7–2 in favor of Jack in *Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission*, finding that people like Jack should not be bullied or banished from the marketplace because of their religious beliefs about marriage.

10 For the majority, Justice Kennedy wrote that “the Colorado Civil Rights Commission’s consideration of this case was inconsistent with the State’s obligation of religious neutrality.” The opinion adds that “the reason and motive for the baker’s refusal were based on [Jack Phillips’s] sincere religious beliefs and convictions,” and condemns the “clear and impermissible hostility toward [Phillips’s] sincere religious beliefs.”

15 The Court is exactly right. Unfortunately, it is a certainty that this ruling will be misinterpreted and mischaracterized.

From the beginning, some have tried to muddle the facts surrounding Phillips’s case. So a quick stroll down memory lane can help clarify what the Court’s ruling means and what it does not mean.

20 In 2012, two men visited Phillips’s store and requested that he design a custom wedding cake to celebrate their same-sex marriage. Jack declined the request but added that he would gladly sell them any other items in his shop or create them a custom cake for another occasion. The ACLU and others were quick to cast this as a case of discrimination, but the facts demonstrate otherwise. Jack was happy to serve the couple, just as he serves all customers, but he declined to create a custom cake for a particular event — namely, a same-sex marriage. And Jack’s exercise of his artistic freedom is hardly a new phenomenon.

Over the years, Phillips has declined to design custom cakes that celebrate divorce, disparage LGBT individuals, celebrate Halloween, or contain sexual images or messages. In every instance, his decision was based on the message being requested or the event being celebrated, never on the requesting person. Just as Phillips’s standards are not new, they also are not unique. In an opinion editorial meant to rebuke

30 Phillips, *Charm City Cakes’* Duff Goldman instead provided an excellent summary of Phillips’s own longstanding position: “We can have rules, set standards and decide what we offer, but we don’t pick and choose who[m] we will serve.”

Unfortunately, the Colorado Civil Rights Commission, and later the Colorado courts, did not recognize the distinction. The Commission punished Phillips for declining to create a cake *celebrating* same-sex marriage, while allowing other cake artists to refuse to create cakes *criticizing* same-sex marriage. This viewpoint-based enforcement was, as the Supreme Court noted, “another indication of hostility” toward Phillips and his religious beliefs.

40 By its ruling, the Supreme Court has reaffirmed that the First Amendment exists not just to protect popular opinions but also to protect freedom of belief for all Americans. Phillips’s First Amendment rights are just as strong as, say, those of a Muslim graphic designer who creates materials reading “The One True God” for a Muslim conference but declines to create similar materials for a Jewish event.

45 As Justice Kennedy said during oral arguments in Jack’s case, “tolerance is essential in a free society” and “is most meaningful when it’s mutual.” He further opined that “the state in its position here has been neither tolerant nor respectful of Mr. Phillips’s religious beliefs.” A pluralistic society like ours is made up of individuals with a variety of characteristics, backgrounds, and beliefs. Differences of opinion are a foregone conclusion. We can either celebrate these differences or stamp them out; in the latter case, we would no longer be free.

The Court’s decision gives effect to Kennedy’s words, making clear that Jack Phillips and other people of faith are full members of our diverse society. The Court refused to strip the First Amendment of its enduring promise of freedom, reminding us once again that the government exists to protect our liberty, not to take it away.

*Michael Farris — Michael Farris is the president, chief executive, and general counsel of Alliance Defending Freedom, which represents Jack Phillips and Masterpiece Cakeshop.*

## The beginning of the end of Britain's biggest episode of migration *The Economist*, 14 September 2017

THE windows of the Biedronka Polish supermarket in Peterborough are plastered with posters for local events: a Polish "power disco", a radio festival and a family fun day. On the noticeboard inside hang advertisements for Polish car services, flats for rent and jobs. The city has one of Britain's fastest-growing populations of European migrants. But next to the poster for "Golden Clinic", a Polish beauty salon, is a more ominous message. "Being you is not a crime. Targeting you is," reads a sign from Cambridgeshire Police, encouraging people to report hate crimes.

Before Britain opened its borders and job market to the citizens of eight eastern European countries in 2004, its Office for National Statistics predicted that 5,000-13,000 migrants would come each year. In the end, in the first decade 1.5m arrived, in what by some measures was the single biggest inflow of people in Britain's history. Poles are now the country's largest foreign-born community. And a new generation is blooming: last year Polish-born mothers gave birth to 22,382 babies in England and Wales, more than any other foreign group.

But recently net migration from the EU8 countries has fallen close to zero. In the year to March 2017, some 52,000 EU8 citizens arrived in Britain, 25% fewer than in the previous 12 months. At the same time 46,000 left, 59% more than before. Migrants continue to come from Romania and Bulgaria (known as the EU2), but the pace is slowing. Over the same period 59,000 arrived in Britain, a drop of 14%, while 16,000 left, an increase of 100%.

Economic factors begin to explain the turnaround. Three-quarters of eastern Europeans who have come to Britain since 2004 have come to work, either with the definite offer of a job or seeking employment on arrival. These days British jobs are less attractive than they used to be. Since its recent high in 2015, the pound has depreciated by about 20% against the Polish zloty, reducing the value of migrants' remittances (and increasing the costs of imported Polish delicacies, sighs the checkout assistant at the Biedronka supermarket). Meanwhile, the gap in living standards between Poland and Britain has steadily narrowed: since 2004 real GDP per person in Poland has increased by around half, while in Britain it has barely budged.

Just as important are the feelings of uncertainty and insecurity caused by the Brexit vote, reckons Paulina Trevena, a Polish sociologist at the University of Glasgow. The status of EU citizens in Britain after Brexit is yet to be decided. The Home Office has told them to sign up for e-mail alerts that will inform them if and when their status changes. John Holdich, the leader of Peterborough council, is enthusiastic about the idea of helping European residents but says the uncertainty about their position makes it hard to do so.

Extensive coverage in the British and Polish press of the hostility towards migrants in the aftermath of the referendum has also caused alarm. Some fear their rights have already been affected, as British employers and landlords take the Brexit vote as permission to discriminate. On September 9th the equalities minister, Nick Gibb, said his office would review evidence that EU citizens were being illegally prevented from applying for jobs and renting or buying houses.

As Britain loses its appeal, migrants are heading elsewhere. Germany has been the most popular destination for Poles for the past three years (Britain has come second). Poland itself is trying to tempt back its diaspora, whose children it is cultivating via Saturday schools.

Paradoxically, a stricter post-Brexit immigration regime, of the sort proposed in a recently leaked Home Office document, could initially result in greater numbers settling in Britain, suggests Michal Garapich, a Polish anthropologist who studies migration. Getting citizenship for a family of four costs more than £5,000 (\$6,600). But if Britain were to introduce work permits for skilled Europeans and limit the time that unskilled ones could stay, as suggested in the Home Office proposals, those who commute back and forth might find that stumping up for citizenship was worth it. In the first half of this year 4,171 Poles applied to become British citizens, compared with 1,526 in the first half of 2016.

Stricter immigration rules may also lead to more illegal working. Some industries that many eastern Europeans work in, such as construction, are already quite informal, creating the potential for working off the books. Forecasting how migration flows will change after Brexit is tricky. Predicting whether Britons will be happy with the results is even harder.

## The House of Lords may save us from hard Brexit. But it's still ridiculous

Rafael Behr, *The Guardian*, Fri 18 May 2018

A remedy against affection for the House of Lords is to try explaining it to foreigners. Like a senate, you say, but the members are mostly appointed by party leaders. Except some still inherit seats in lines of aristocratic succession.

How long is a term? A lifetime. But when new members are added, doesn't that mean the chamber just gets bigger and bigger? Yes. Yes, it does.

Today, we learn that Theresa May intends to shovel a few more Tory bodies into the upper house because it isn't doing what she wants it to do over Brexit. And because she can. Try that one on a puzzled outsider: the head of a UK government, facing obstruction in parliament, can rearrange the allocation of seats with a stroke of her pen. (Opposition is bought off by letting Labour appoint a few peers, too. So what would be a wild affront to democracy tilts towards bipartisan stitch-up.)

There are two defences for such preposterous arrangements in the 21st century. One is that it works in spite of the anachronism and the other is that it works because of the anachronism. Peers have a healthy detachment from the partisan frenzy of modern politics, but awareness of their tenuous mandate also provides healthy deference to the Commons. By some mysterious alchemical process of culture and history, elements that should combine to make a sulphurous undemocratic stench make, instead, legislative gold.

The persistent liberal itch to reform or scrap the place subsides when peers perform what look like noble public services. So it has been with the EU withdrawal bill. Remainers cheered as the Lords rewrote statutes so they now instruct the government to seek a much softer Brexit. Hardline Eurosceptics are appalled. A caravan of political ironies troops past: pro-EU Liberal Democrats who tried and failed to reform the Lords now cherish it as civilisation's backstop. Reactionary Tories who thwarted change to the upper house now denounce it as democracy's nemesis.

May's new appointees will be ermine-clad in time for the next Brexit battles – and there are plenty. The withdrawal bill hasn't finished its parliamentary journey. There are customs and trade bills in the pipeline. Last year's Queen's speech promised Brexit-specific laws on fisheries, agriculture and immigration. In the autumn, parliament is supposed to vote on a motion endorsing the withdrawal deal that May negotiates in Brussels (presuming she gets one) coupled with a statement of intent describing the apparatus of future trade with the EU.

The withdrawal agreement then has to be approved. There will be a lot of voting on a lot of law, even before the amendments start flooding in. The safest prediction is that it isn't going to be pretty. Nor will it always be obvious to anyone but the nerdiest aficionado of parliamentary procedure what precisely is going on.

Most of the action will be in the Commons, in the long shadow of May's failure to secure a majority last year. But the Lords will be crucial. I get the impression from talking to peers on all sides that there is very little appetite in the upper chamber for outright wrecking of Brexit. Or, rather, there are many Lords who would gladly stay in the EU, but none who believe their chamber can take that decision on behalf of the nation. There is a feeling that the constitutional duty to scrutinise and improve legislation can be stretched quite far – as with recommending a Brexit very unlike the one May is currently proposing. But to overturn a referendum result would stretch the elasticity of the mandate well beyond its breaking point. The message from most pro-remain peers is that, without an obvious shift in public mood, they've done about as much as they can without sparking a full-blown constitutional crisis.

Ministers know that, too. They do not think the Lords will block Brexit, but they are fed up with parliament – either chamber – meddling in the whole process. And since May can't rewrite the numbers in the Commons, astroturfing the Lords with friendly fans is the best she can do.

The House of Lords is certainly not hysterical. But it is still ridiculous. And that doesn't stop being the case just because it sometimes does the right thing.

## The sun sets on British pensioners' migration to Europe

*The Economist*, 19th December 2017

Ciudad Quesada is a town built for leisure, and little else. At three o'clock on a Friday afternoon, activity can mostly be found on the terraces of pubs along the main drag. Up the hill, at the local bowls club, members decompress after a top-of-the-table clash against a local rival.

5 For decades, the lure of blue skies, cheap living and good food have drawn British pensioners to the continent. Pinning down precise numbers is difficult, but Britain's Department for Work and Pensions says that around 340,000 people living in the European Union draw British pensions (this excludes Ireland, where another 135,000 are based). Many end up in towns-cum-retirement-communities dotted along the Mediterranean coast, like Quesada, which sits on Spain's Costa Blanca. A common architectural style—think Roman columns and whitewashed porticos—was  
10 once described by J.G. Ballard, a British novelist, as “apparently imported from Las Vegas after a hotel clearance sale”. One local recounts the pitch when he moved out in the late 1980s: “Buy a castle in Spain” for just a few thousand pounds.

15 Yet the pitch is no longer so alluring. Despite a greying population, the growth in the number of British retirees in Europe is slowing. In 2005 the number drawing a British pension in the four main continental destinations (France, Italy, Spain and Germany) grew by 8%; by 2010 the growth rate had fallen to 4.8%; last year it was 0.9%. Other measures also point to a recent fall. On present trends, 2018 could be the year that the population of British pensioners on the continent begins to decline.

20 Economic factors are the main reason for the slowdown. In the boom years, from the mid-1990s to 2007, the strong British economy and a growing industry dedicated to helping oldsters move abroad allowed “people to sign up to a lifestyle that had previously been the preserve of Mick Jagger in Mustique”, recalls Andy Bridge, managing director of *A Place in the Sun*, a publishing and events company linked to a daytime television programme of the same name.

25 Then economies across the Mediterranean stalled, destroying local property markets. Since 2008 the average price of a house in Spain has fallen by a third. Concrete skeletons litter the country's southern coast, a memory of projects abandoned during the crash. Many expat Britons fell into negative equity and were unable to escape back home—a poor advertisement for those considering a move. Moreover, weak European economies were hardly an enticing prospect for those who wanted to continue to work part-time. On the Costa Blanca many British pensioners  
30 take up work, some informally, after finding that their savings do not go as far as expected.

Changes to the British economy also had an impact. Rising property prices have stopped youngsters flying the nest: according to the Office for National Statistics, 26% of 20- to 34-year-olds now live at home, up from 21% in 1996. This has cramped the wanderlust of their parents.

35 In the years after the financial crisis, Britons thinking of a move unsurprisingly grew more cautious. “Nowadays you have a better-informed buyer who is clearer on what they want, what they can afford and why they are moving abroad,” says Mr Bridge. Numbers are growing faster in France than Spain, perhaps suggesting that the average new expat is better off than before. In a poll by YouGov for HSBC's expat-banking division, two-thirds of British pensioners in Spain cited the lower cost of living as a reason for their move, compared with only a fifth of those in France, who  
40 were keener on the culture and lifestyle.

45 Brexit has not yet had a dramatic impact on pensioners' migration patterns. On the one hand, some have been put off moving abroad by the depreciation of the pound, which is worth 14% less against the euro than it was the day before the 2016 referendum. On the other, some people have brought forward plans to emigrate so that they can be grandfathered into whatever system emerges after Brexit.

50 The long-term impact could be more pronounced. Much depends on Britain's exit talks with the EU. A deal provisionally agreed on December 15th would guarantee expat British citizens the right to remain. Yet pensioners, who may have seen little reason to maintain up-to-date paperwork, could face problems proving their residential history. A report from the Migration Policy Institute Europe, a think-tank in Brussels, argues that “regardless of what happens with the deal on citizens' rights, there is likely to be a massive increase in UK nationals who find themselves in legal limbo.” It is possible that many will end up undocumented, with reduced access to services, or that they will move back to Britain in droves

*The Chicago Tribune*, Dec. 19, 2017

## **The dangerous belief that white people are under attack**

by Clara Wilkins, Assistant Professor of Psychology, Wesleyan University

In August, the Justice Department decided to investigate instances of bias against whites in university admissions. Since then, campuses have been flyered with "It's okay to be white," and in November, violence erupted at the University of Connecticut during a speech about discrimination against whites. Are white people actually under attack? After all, in the U.S., whites have historically been viewed as perpetrators of bias, and racial minorities as the victims.

But perceptions of this relationship have shifted. According to a recent survey, the majority of whites – 55 percent – now believe that whites experience racial discrimination. What's more, whites believe bias against their group is increasing, while believing bias against blacks is declining. What's behind this dramatic change in attitudes? Research from my lab and others has found that social changes are a big reason. We've also found that these perceptions of bias – despite not being grounded in reality – can have real consequences.

### **The threat of social change**

There's comfort in predictability, and people have a psychological tendency to favor the status quo.

For some, a preference for the status quo also means a preference for a social order in which whites have more status, power and wealth than racial minorities.

This reality – still ingrained in American society – was seemingly interrupted by Barack Obama's historic presidential win in 2008. After his election, many started believing racial progress was taking place. There was the sense that more racial minorities were occupying the high-power, high-status positions historically reserved for whites. For many, this was a good thing. But for the subset of white Americans who think that they rightfully deserve to have a higher status than racial minorities, it was unsettling: Were they falling behind? Was society becoming stacked against them? Had whites become victims?

In a series of studies conducted while Obama was president, psychologist Cheryl Kaiser and I were able to show how this phenomenon played out. We asked participants to either read an article about racial progress or a neutral article. Then we assessed whether they believe whites experience racial discrimination. We also assessed the extent to which they endorsed the racial hierarchy.

Among white participants who endorsed the racial status hierarchy, those that read about racial progress believed whites experience more bias than those who read a neutral article.

It's important to note that this wasn't the case for all whites: If participants rejected the racial hierarchy, they didn't increase the belief that whites are discriminated against after reading about racial progress.

Essentially, this study indicates that some whites don't welcome social progress – they actually respond by seeing themselves as victims of discrimination. The country's growing racial diversity is also likely fueling perceptions of anti-white bias. While whites currently comprise the majority of the U.S. population, recent census projections suggest that within the next several decades, whites will become a numerical minority. According to recent research, if whites are alerted to this trend, they are more likely to fear being discriminated against.

In sum, social change – whether it's racial progress or increasing demographic diversity – has caused some white Americans to see themselves as victims of racism.

### **The slippery slope of whites feeling victimized**

My other research with psychologist Joseph Wellman suggests that this phenomenon isn't benign. It leads some to adopt perspectives that could, ultimately, exacerbate social inequity.

For whites who are particularly eager to maintain the racial social order, the idea of anti-white bias is particularly alarming. It implies that the entire social system is unstable, and they are eager to restore it.

These people might attempt to "reestablish" the group's position because they believe it has been damaged.

This could play out in a number of ways.

One way is through support for other white people who claim to be victims of racial discrimination. There's a tendency to respond negatively to black people who claim to be victims of discrimination: People see them as complainers who use racism as an excuse for their shortcomings.

White people who support a racial hierarchy, on the other hand, respond relatively favorably to other white people who claim to be victims of anti-white bias – and say they'd be more willing to help those whites out.

They also might respond by trying to minimize opportunities for other racial groups. For example, when white people think they're being discriminated against, my collaborators and I found they're less inclined to support affirmative action policies. They say they're also more willing to support policies that help white people, like efforts to address discrimination against whites.

It goes without saying that in a country where racial educational, employment and wealth disparities persist, greater attention to bias against whites (and less to bias against racial minorities) would only exacerbate social inequality.

*The New York Times*, Oct. 5, 2017

OPINION - "Repeal the Second Amendment," by Bret Stephens

I have never understood the conservative fetish for the Second Amendment.

From a law-and-order standpoint, more guns means more murder. "States with higher rates of gun ownership had disproportionately large numbers of deaths from firearm-related homicides," noted one exhaustive 2013 study in the *American Journal of Public Health*.

5 From a personal-safety standpoint, more guns means less safety. The F.B.I. counted a total of 268 "justifiable homicides" by private citizens involving firearms in 2015; that is, felons killed in the course of committing a felony. Yet that same year, there were 489 "unintentional firearms deaths" in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control. Between 77 and 141 of those killed were children.

10 From a national-security standpoint, the Amendment's suggestion that a "well-regulated militia" is "necessary to the security of a free State," is quaint. The Minutemen that will deter Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong-un are based in missile silos in Minot, N.D., not farmhouses in Lexington, Mass.

15 From a personal liberty standpoint, the idea that an armed citizenry is the ultimate check on the ambitions and encroachments of government power is curious. The Whiskey Rebellion of the 1790s, the New York draft riots of 1863, the coal miners' rebellion of 1921, the Brink's robbery of 1981 — does any serious conservative think of these as great moments in Second Amendment activism?

20 And now we have the relatively new and now ubiquitous "active shooter" phenomenon, something that remains extremely rare in the rest of the world. Conservatives often say that the right response to these horrors is to do more on the mental-health front. Yet by all accounts Stephen Paddock would not have raised an eyebrow with a mental-health professional before he murdered 58 people in Las Vegas last week. What might have raised a red flag? I'm not the first pundit to point out that if a "Mohammad Paddock" had purchased dozens of firearms and thousands of rounds of ammunition and then checked himself into a suite at the Mandalay Bay with direct views to a nearby music festival, somebody at the local F.B.I. field office would have noticed.

25 Given all of this, why do liberals keep losing the gun control debate? Maybe it's because they argue their case badly and — let's face it — in bad faith. Democratic politicians routinely profess their fidelity to the Second Amendment — or rather, "a nuanced reading" of it — with all the conviction of Barack Obama's support for traditional marriage, circa 2008. People recognize lip service for what it is.

30 Then there are the endless liberal errors of fact. There is no "gun-show loophole" per se; it's a private-sale loophole, in other words the right to sell your own stuff. The civilian AR-15 is not a true "assault rifle," and banning such rifles would have little effect on the overall murder rate, since most homicides are committed with handguns. It's not true that 40 percent of gun owners buy without a background check; the real number is closer to one-fifth. The National Rifle Association does not have Republican "balls in a money clip," as Jimmy Kimmel put it the other night. The N.R.A. has donated a paltry \$3,533,294 to all current members of Congress since 1998, according to *The Washington Post*, equivalent to about three months of Kimmel's salary. The N.R.A. doesn't need to buy influence: It's powerful because it's popular.

35 [...] Americans who claim to be outraged by gun crimes should want to do something more than tinker at the margins of a legal regime that most of the developed world rightly considers nuts. They should want to change it fundamentally and permanently.

There is only one way to do this: Repeal the Second Amendment.

40 Repealing the Amendment may seem like political Mission Impossible today, but in the era of same-sex marriage it's worth recalling that most great causes begin as improbable ones. Gun ownership should never be outlawed, just as it isn't outlawed in Britain or Australia. But it doesn't need a blanket Constitutional protection, either. The 46,445 murder victims killed by gunfire in the United States between 2012 and 2016 didn't need to perish so that gun enthusiasts can go on fantasizing that "Red Dawn" is the fate that soon awaits us.

45 Donald Trump will likely get one more Supreme Court nomination, or two or three, before he leaves office, guaranteeing a pro-gun court for another generation. Expansive interpretations of the right to bear arms will be the law of the land — until the "right" itself ceases to be.

50 Some conservatives will insist that the Second Amendment is fundamental to the structure of American liberty. They will cite James Madison, who noted in the *Federalist Papers* that in Europe "the governments are afraid to trust the people with arms." America was supposed to be different, and better. I wonder what Madison would have to say about that today, when more than twice as many Americans perished last year at the hands of their fellows as died in battle during the entire Revolutionary War. My guess: Take the guns—or at least the presumptive right to them—away. The true foundation of American exceptionalism should be our capacity for moral and constitutional renewal, not our instinct for self-destruction.

55

## RENATIONALISATION WON'T IMPROVE OUR RAILWAYS

Jonathan Cowie, *The Independent*, January, 2, 2018

It is 70 years since the era of public rail ownership began in Great Britain. The British Railways Board formally took control of the operation and planning of the whole network, having been brought into existence by Clement Attlee's Labour government under the Transport Act 1947 (the name British Rail didn't appear until 1965). At the time, the network was in dire need of investment. The Railways Act 1921 had consolidated over 100 operators into "the big four" – Great Western; London, Midland & Scottish; London & North Eastern; and Southern Railways. They had been financially squeezed by rules that forced them to carry freight at rates that were often unprofitable, and competition from an emerging road sector that had been prioritised for public investment. The rail network had then been worn to the bone in supporting the war effort and considerably damaged by German Luftwaffe bombing. Rail safety had become a serious concern: Two major accidents in the south and north of England within two days in October 1947 resulted in 60 fatalities and contributed to that year being the second deadliest in British railway history. The level of outlay to restore the network and rolling stock to its heyday was well beyond the financial resources of the big four. In keeping with a public mood that also saw the nationalisation of coal, iron, steel, electricity and telecoms, not to mention the creation of the National Health Service, there seemed only one way forward. Many are similarly keen on rail nationalisation today, following privatisation in the 1990s. The majority of the public are in favour, and Jeremy Corbyn's Labour party plan to act accordingly if they win the next election. What can we learn from what happened first time around? The 1948 nationalisation was followed by the "modernisation plan" of 1955, which committed £1.2bn – around £30bn in today's money. It included electrifying the main lines, replacing steam locomotives with diesel models, renewing the track and closing certain smaller lines. With hindsight, it failed badly. It essentially replaced what already existed rather than looking at current and future needs, missing a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to revitalise the system. Long-term decline continued, resulting in losses by the late 1950s and the Beeching cuts of the mid-to-late 1960s in the name of a profitable railway by 1980. That never materialised, and the consequences of decline and under-investment rumbled on into the current era of private franchise operators and state-owned track and stations company Network Rail. Surging passenger numbers have made today's problems even more acute, creating a network that in parts is under severe strain. Infrastructure investment since privatisation has been considerable. Network Rail is over halfway through a five-year £38bn investment plan, and is partly funded by the franchise operators. Yet Network Rail's balance sheet demonstrates the limits of these contributions. The company had a debt level of £34bn in 2014, and it's set to rise to £52bn by 2019. This level of debt would crush any private sector company. As regards the dilapidated trains inherited by the franchise operators at privatisation, much have been replaced. [...] As for the rail franchises, if you ignore the state's contribution to infrastructure costs, a number are profitable and some considerably so – these include South West Trains, Greater Anglia and Thameslink. Operators have benefited from both the passenger increases and reduced charges for track access. The Government imposes premiums on different franchises based on how profitable they are expected to be over their seven-year lifetime. This is designed to prevent excessive monopoly profits and reduce the overall subsidy requirement. Yet it represents a very serious business risk for operators, since they have to accurately forecast revenue streams seven years into the future. This was no better highlighted than by Virgin Trains' early planned withdrawal from the East Coast franchise on the back of missed projections. Some might accuse Virgin of having tendered too ambitiously, or even recklessly, but I'd argue the system takes the idea of business risk to breaking point, underpinned by a competitive tendering system that almost encourages excessive optimism. And because premiums can easily end up too low or too high, there's a constant prospect of early withdrawals or public anger. Nationalisation was no panacea in the 1940s. It was driven more by circumstances and political ideology rather than any great strategic vision for a modern railway. The investment errors of the 1950s look like a classic example of the ills of public sector management: Poorly defined objectives, loss of focus, little sense of realities at senior management level and wasteful extravagance. The current model, on the other hand, exposes the private sector to excessive business risk and builds instability into the system. It also still depends heavily on state infrastructure investment or guarantees. The best way forward is probably to optimise what we have: Re-evaluate the rail franchising process and look at different ways to share business risk between the public and private sectors. That might include directly awarding some franchises without a tendering process, whether to a private or public operator, for example. It would be a step towards full nationalisation without throwing out the baby with the bathwater.



## CARIBBEAN NATIONS DEMAND SOLUTION TO 'ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS' ANOMALY

Amelia Gentleman, *The Guardian*, April, 15, 2018

Caribbean diplomats have condemned the Home Office's treatment of many long-term Commonwealth-born UK residents as "illegal immigrants". They have called on the UK government to resolve an immigration anomaly that has left many people being denied health services, prevented from working, and facing destitution, detention and possible deportation despite having lived in the country for decades. At an unprecedented meeting of high commissioners from all the Caribbean Commonwealth nations, diplomats called on the UK government to adopt a more compassionate approach to individuals who arrived from Caribbean countries as children in the 1950s and 1960s and were never formally naturalised. Thousands are encountering serious immigration problems because they have no documents. Guy Hewitt, the high commissioner for Barbados to the UK, said: "I am dismayed that people who gave their all to Britain could be seemingly discarded so matter-of-factly." As preparations are made to mark the 70th anniversary of the Windrush generation of people who moved from Caribbean countries at the invitation of the British government, he said: "It is regrettable to find people who came in that era facing a struggle to remain in this country, which should be their right. It's an awful predicament. "Seventy years after Windrush, we are again facing a new wave of hostility. This is about people saying, as they said 70 years ago, 'Go back home.' It is not good enough for people who gave their lives to this country to be treated like this." At next week's Commonwealth heads of government meeting in London, the Caribbean nations are expected to call on the UK government to act with "urgency and compassion" to secure a permanent solution to the situation of pre-1971 undocumented Caribbean-born UK residents, who are being treated as "illegal immigrants". The Jamaican high commissioner, Seth George Ramocan, said since these cases began to attract media attention last year, a number of people had contacted the high commission to ask how they could get their situation regularised. He said most were afraid of contacting the Home Office directly. "They are afraid of taking it to the authorities to get it sorted out because they worry they won't get help but will be told they are illegal," he said. He said he had dealt with cases of people who had lived all their adult lives in the UK, who visited Jamaica for a parent's funeral and then found they were refused entry back into the UK. The vast majority of people in this situation still had no idea they were likely to experience difficulties under the newly tightened immigration regime, he said. "That's the tragedy of it. These are people who have been here since childhood and have no sense that they are not British. These are law-abiding people." The problem has its roots in a decision 70 years ago to invite "British subjects" of former colonies to come to help address acute labour shortages in the wake of the second world war. Between 1948 and 1973, about 550,000 West Indians (nearly 15% of the population) migrated to the UK. According to the Migration Observatory at Oxford University, 50,000 Commonwealth-born persons currently in the UK, who arrived before 1971, may not yet have regularised their residency status. Many left the Caribbean when their islands were still British colonies and considered themselves to be British. Diplomats and immigration lawyers suggested that the UK government could resolve the issue by announcing a window during which people in this situation could be fast-tracked to getting their papers. Given that naturalisation fees can cost more than £1,000, prohibitively high for people who have been told they cannot work or claim benefits, they proposed that this process should be offered for free. They also suggested that the burden of proof on individuals in this situation should be reduced; currently people are advised to provide several documents as evidence for every year they have lived in the UK, which can be very hard to gather. Satbir Singh, the chief executive of the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, said there was a "significant discriminatory element" to the problem. "These people are the most high-profile victims of the hostile environment and the extension of immigration checks into everyday life," he said. "Landlords, nurses, hospital administrators are being asked to carry out the functions of an entry clearance officer as well as their own duties, without the expertise. "It's a horrible situation to put them in; they have to use some sort of proxy. Typically those proxies will be your name, your skin colour, your accent. So we find people of Caribbean origin who have lived here perfectly legally for 50 years are asked to demonstrate that they have the right to be here, and they simply don't have the paperwork." Singh said it was not enough to tell people with concerns about their status to contact the Home Office because many were afraid of what the consequences might be.

## AFTER BREXIT, ENGLAND WILL HAVE TO RETHINK ITS IDENTITY

Robert Winder, *The Guardian*, January, 8, 2018

1 The negotiations over Britain's relations with Europe, the controversy surrounding the border in Ireland and the continuing power of Scottish national sentiment are obliging the English to think harder than usual about who they are and what they want. For the past three centuries (since the Acts of Union in 1707) their national identity has been so folded into their role as the senior power in the British federation that they are  
5 unaccustomed to self-examination. At times condescending, at times complacent, they have rarely needed to question their place in the world. Thanks to Brexit this is changing, and quickly. National identities are not usually fluid. As the accumulated residue of long histories, they evolve at a stately pace, like coral: they can hardly be cast aside on a mere whim of fashion. But the past 18 months have cast sharp doubt on such assumptions. England's national identity is undergoing a fast and furious overhaul. A country that was once  
10 a byword for steady, imperturbable (sometimes maddening) stodginess has suddenly revealed itself to be fractious, impulsive and jittery. A land of fair play and cautious pragmatism (don't rock the boat, no need to frighten the horses, steady as she goes) has become moody and quarrelsome. Thanks to Theresa May, the idea that we are in any way "strong and stable" has lost all credibility. There has long been an ambiguous quality to Englishness. The Spanish-American philosopher George Santayana described the English as "the  
15 most disliked of men ... except where people need someone they could trust", and many have echoed his words. But today's England feels like a country that has fallen out of love with itself – mistrusting its elites, scornful of its media, and famously impatient with experts. It is willing even to denounce its own judges as bootlegging "enemies of the people". "Think" less, runs the slouching new sign of the times. "Feel" more. Self-deprecation is one thing: this is something stronger. Deprived of its reputation for reliability, England  
20 can only be a shadow of its former self. [...] Pakistan described the British lion as possessing "more of a moan than a roar", while an Austrian cartoon showed a deluded Brit leaping from a plane clutching not a parachute but a union flag. The *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, a serious paper, has driven the point home by calling Britain "the laughing stock of the world". When Dean Acheson characterised Britain in 1962 as a country that had lost an empire and not yet found a role, he cannot have imagined that this new role was to be ... a  
25 joke. Nor can the English pretend that such barbs are aimed at Britain as a whole. To the foreign onlooker the distinction is blurred – as it often is to the English themselves. We have the BBC but speak English; we fly British Airways but expect a full English breakfast; we cherish English literature ... in the British Library. We know, however, that Brexit was primarily an English emotion, fuelled by English votes. In all honesty we should not speak of Brexit. What happened in the referendum was "Exit". It would be wrong to  
30 conclude from this that England is by nature more pull-up-the-drawbridge than the other British nations. It is by some distance Britain's most cosmopolitan region. According to a 2017 survey by the Migration Observatory, London alone has almost five times the foreign-born population of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland put together. There are more foreign-born in Manchester than in Scotland. It is often asserted that Englishness, like Britishness, must be a matter of ideas and values – liberty, democracy,  
35 equality, tolerance and so on. But it is hard to see these as distinctively native: they are standard-issue social ideals shared or claimed by almost everyone from Australia to Zimbabwe. The only unique things about England, the qualities that are irrevocably its own, concern its landscape and history. These are the fields we should explore in order to find what we have been fighting for. In 1941 George Orwell argued, in *The Lion and the Unicorn*, that even if England were to be conquered and overrun it would somehow remain England,  
40 an expression of its green hills and valleys, fields and hedgerows, squalls and rainbows. "The Stock Exchange will be pulled down, the horse plough will give way to the tractor, the country houses will be turned into children's holiday camps, the Eton and Harrow match will be forgotten, but England will still be England, an everlasting animal." No one knows whether this is true – not everything lasts. It is possible that England will remain the driving force of a new golden age for a new global Britain, but it is equally possible  
45 (to put the bleaker case) that England will awake from the Brexit fever, gape in amazement, and wonder how such folly came to pass. In the meantime we should note that England is by no means one thing. Ullswater is not at all like Brixton; Widnes would look out of place in Dorset; there are easy-to-spot differences between Constable country and Wolverhampton. The chasm that divides a Canary Wharf money trader from a zero-hours road haulier in Sunderland is deep indeed.

## WE WERE KIDDING OURSELVES IF WE THOUGHT A FEMALE PRIME MINISTER WAS GOING TO CHANGE WESTMINSTER'S SEXIST CULTURE.

Grace Dent, *The Independent*, October, 30, 2017

1 Theresa May is certainly making all the correct noises today over Westminster's handsy, bad-in-taxis, sexual harassment problem. In a letter to John Bercow, May talks of a need for new systems, and this time "with teeth". May's suggestions to Bercow come after demands from Labour MPs John Mann and Sarah Champion that staff be able to report abuse or harassment to an independent authority. MPs have warned

5 that young staff are being made vulnerable by late working hours and the fact that many politicians lead a double life – with one home in London and another in their constituency. Sadly, by "with teeth" May is not literally doing out day passes to angry mothers of parliamentary interns in order for them to bite the sex pests firmly on their fat necks then shake them about like wronged lionesses. More's the pity, I say, as forgive me, I'm weary of tweaked systems and earnest recommendations. These mooted plans for stricter

10 procedures to quash lechery and boys-being-boys sound fine, but I've heard it all before. And for many of these grubby, entitled blots on masculinity a more visceral warning is needed. I'd respect May more if she gave the green light to a no questions asked bollock-kicking policy and then extended it out to all media organisations, record companies, hospitality venues and sporting bodies. Because Westminster is not a

15 unique hot bed of sinister sex pests – it is merely a microcosm of how life is for women in traditionally male-dominant workplaces. To me, May's suggestion of a new mediation service and grievance procedure sounds like the usual placating flim-flam women hear whenever entrenched misogyny is laid bare. Has the

20 local football team been gang-banging drunken teenage girls and filming it? What we all need is an enquiry. And definitely more systems. Not firing anyone, god forbid. What? There's a culture of men targeting female employees and swapping revenge porn in your workplace? Well what we need is an independent

25 body to report grievances. He should get a small slap on the wrist and a week-long company sponsored sex addiction course. I have heard all this toothless chat before. If May had any teeth herself, she'd fire some people. We learned over the weekend that May is given a regular briefing by Tory Chief Whip Gavin Williamson on the misdemeanours of all of her MPs. It's said this is called "the ins and outs" chat. I feel confident that the headlines of this weekly briefing will mirror the themes and recurring characters in the

30 now legendary Westminster women's WhatsApp group. Consternation over this WhatsApp group and the sleepless nights it must be causing several parliamentary figures is rather delicious. Men like these, who see fifty per cent of the world as a one-off conquest, a part-time mistress or a self-soothing device, well, they absolutely despise women talking to each other. Men who spend their entire lives in bad faith with their wives, lying to cover lies, dogs with two d\*\*\*s chasing their own tails, nothing terrifies them more than

35 women sharing their truths, overriding their shame and uniting. But whatever is in that WhatsApp group it is certainly the sort of gossip May has sat through many times before. It has been reported that whips go through a weekly run down of who has been using prostitutes, who has a sex addiction, who is having affairs and who is predatory towards females. The list lacks any differentiation in the levels of graveness. It's all just day to day miscellaneous bantz of British parliament. One aide told a journalist, "Theresa just sits there

40 and doesn't say much". On one occasion she apparently said, "Why can't they just do their job?" Well, quite, Theresa. But as I'm sure she knows, the women in Parliament are working four times harder to be taken a quarter as seriously, which leaves more than a little downtime for the men to have fun. What is certain, is that Theresa May has a unique opportunity as a modern female Prime Minister to make some somewhat Draconian changes in order to quash sexism. Diane Abbot claims to have seen little progress in

45 the past three decades. "There was harassment, there were jokes which weren't that funny – it was partly to do with the fact it was a very male environment – 650 MPs, when I went there just 20-odd women", Abbot says, explaining her first years at Westminster. "It was partly to do with the idea of all these men away from home, it was partly to do with the fact there were eight bars and the very long hours and the bars were open for as long as we're sitting, and partly with the notion that what happens in Westminster stays in

Westminster. It was worse – it's a little bit better now – but there's a long way to go." From where I'm standing, the road doesn't feel any shorter.

## LONDON'S GREEN BELT IS FAR FROM A RURAL IDYLL - SO WE MUST BUILD ON IT TO SOLVE THE HOUSING CRISIS

Siobhain Mcdonagh, *The Telegraph*, May, 8, 2018

1 When we sing "Jerusalem" we get emotional about England's green and pleasant land. And we find it easy to visualise pleasant pastures. So, can you forgive me if I say it's time to stop the music? I think we need to rethink the Green Belt, and earmark some of it for new homes.

2 The problem with the Green Belt is that it isn't entirely green. Some of this protected land is scraps of land  
3 and dumping sites, not places to sing about at all. We have to ask ourselves why would we would want to  
4 save these eyesores when the country is desperately in need of more homes. The way some people live is  
5 shocking. In the heart of one of South-London's busiest working industrial estates live 86 homeless families  
6 and hundreds of children. Lorries and litter, skips and smoke provide the most dangerous neighbours  
7 imaginable for those living inside. The location is so remote that the emergency services have struggled to  
8 find the building on more than one occasion, and there have been a terrifying 79 police incidents in the last  
9 year alone. At a cost of more than £1 million to the British taxpayer per year, this building is a multi-million  
10 pound death trap and an accident waiting to happen. But this building is not an anomaly. Across the country,  
11 the day to day reality for 128,000 children is an unsuitable, undesirable and unacceptable temporary home.  
12 In more than two decades as a Member of Parliament, I have never seen a housing crisis as bad as this. The  
13 only solution is to build the houses and flats we need and that's why I'm launching a campaign for more  
14 than 1 million new homes in our capital. But where? Like most people, I always thought the Green Belt was  
15 a good thing. I imagined it as rolling fields of green and open land until I took a closer look

16 Over the Bank Holiday weekend, I decided to find out for myself just how green London's 'Green Belt'  
17 really is. My first stop was a large waste plant in west London, surrounded by 20 feet of rubble. Hardly  
18 rolling fields... I then headed north to Ealing, where there are 2,309 families currently trapped in temporary  
19 accommodation. I could barely believe my eyes when I found inaccessible scrubland surrounded by chain-  
20 link fencing. In whose interest is this designated as 'Green Belt' land? My frustration grew. Finally, I headed  
21 east to a Green Belt site in Tottenham Hale. Just a stone's throw from the station was a garage and car wash,  
22 with not a single blade of grass to be seen. It's hard to believe but a Housing Association had previously had  
23 an application for new homes denied on this site due to its Green Belt designation. It's time to burst the  
24 myth that all Green Belt is green, and start using these sites for the homes that our children so desperately  
25 need. This wouldn't completely solve the housing crisis, but it would be a huge step in the right direction. Of  
26 course, truly green sites should be protected. My frustration is not with the parks and hills or areas of  
27 environmental protection. It is with the scrappy plots of land in our towns and cities, surrounding railway  
28 stations, that nobody in their right mind would see as attractive. This Government has set an ambitious target  
29 of 300,000 new homes per year, but this hasn't been reached since 1969 - back when Councils and Housing  
30 Associations were building new homes. We simply can't carry on willing more homes without finding the  
31 means to provide them. And so here are the means: within 45 minute travel time of London Zone 1, there is  
32 enough supposed 'Green Belt' land, all within a 10 minute walk of a train station, for more than 1 million  
33 new homes. These figures are thanks to the inspiring work of LSE academic Paul Cheshire. This week, I  
34 have the perfect opportunity to make this case, with the deadline for the Ministry of Housing, Communities  
35 and Local Government's consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework. Along with academics  
36 and economists, charities and Housing Associations, I will be submitting a group response to the  
37 consultation. If you agree with me and would like to sign, please view the submission on the homepage of  
38 my website [www.siobhainmcdonagh.org.uk](http://www.siobhainmcdonagh.org.uk) and write to me at [mcdonaghs@parliament.uk](mailto:mcdonaghs@parliament.uk) before  
39 Thursday's deadline. It's time to grasp the nettle and to stop promising new homes without the means of  
40 providing them. Would we rather have homes that our young people can afford to buy or are we happy for  
41 scrappy plots of ungreen land to remain wrongly designated as Green Belt just because of the potential  
42 furore that de-designation may cause? If we make this change we will all be able to cry "Jerusalem".

*The New York Times*, May 24, 2018

Opinion – “**Conservatives Fail the N.F.L.’s Free Speech Test**,” by David French

The United States is in the grips of a free-speech paradox. At the same time that the law provides more protection to personal expression than at any time in the nation’s history, large numbers of Americans feel less free to speak. The culprit isn’t government censorship but instead corporate, community and peer intimidation.

5 Conservatives can recite the names of the publicly shamed from memory. There was Brendan Eich, hounded out of Mozilla for donating to a California ballot initiative that defined marriage as the union of a man and woman. There was James Damore, abruptly terminated from Google after he wrote an essay attributing the company’s difficulty in attracting female software engineers more to biology and free choice than to systemic discrimination. On campus, the list is as long and grows longer every semester.

10 It is right to decry this culture of intolerance and advocate for civility and engagement instead of boycotts and reprisals. The cure for bad speech is better speech — not censorship. Take that message to the heartland, and conservatives cheer.

Until, that is, Colin Kaepernick chose to kneel. Until, that is, the president demanded that the N.F.L. fire the other players who picked up on his protest after he was essentially banished from the league.

15 That was when the conservative mob called for heads to roll. Conform or face the consequences.

On Wednesday, the mob won. The N.F.L. announced its anthem rules for 2018, and the message was clear: Respect the flag by standing for the national anthem or stay in the locker room. If you break the rules and kneel, your team can be fined for your behavior.

20 This isn’t a “middle ground,” as the N.F.L. claims. It’s not a compromise. It’s corporate censorship backed up with a promise of corporate punishment. It’s every bit as oppressive as the campus or corporate attacks on expression that conservatives rightly decry.

But this is different, they say. This isn’t about politics. It’s about the *flag*. I agree. It is different. Because it’s about the flag, the censorship is even worse.

25 One of the most compelling expressions of America’s constitutional values is contained in Justice Robert Jackson’s 1943 majority opinion in *West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette*. At the height of World War II, two sisters, both Jehovah’s Witnesses, challenged the state’s mandate that they salute the flag in school. America was locked in a struggle for its very existence. The outcome was in doubt. National unity was essential.

30 But even in the darkest days of war, the court wrote liberating words that echo in legal history: “If there is any fixed star in our constitutional constellation, it is that no official, high or petty, can prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion, or other matters of opinion or force citizens to confess by word or act their faith therein.”

35 Make no mistake, I want football players to stand for the anthem. I want them to respect the flag. As a veteran of the war in Iraq, I’ve saluted that flag in foreign lands and deployed with it proudly on my uniform. But as much as I love the flag, I love liberty even more.

The N.F.L. isn’t the government. It has the ability to craft the speech rules its owners want. So does Google. So does Mozilla. So does Yale. American citizens can shame whomever they want to shame.

But what should they do? Should they use their liberty to punish dissent? Or should a free people protect a culture of freedom?

40 In our polarized times, I’ve adopted a simple standard, a civil liberties corollary to the golden rule: Fight for the rights of others that you would like to exercise yourself. Do you want corporations obliterating speech the state can’t touch? Do you want the price of participation in public debate to include the fear of lost livelihoods? Then, by all means, support the N.F.L. Cheer Silicon Valley’s terminations. Join the boycotts and shame campaigns. Watch this country’s culture of liberty wither in front of your eyes.

45 The vice president tweeted news of the N.F.L.’s new policy and called it “#Winning.” He’s dead wrong. It diminishes the marketplace of ideas. It mocks the convictions of his fellow citizens. And it divides in the name of a false, coerced uniformity. Writing in the *Barnette* decision, Justice Jackson wisely observed, “As governmental pressure toward unity becomes greater, so strife becomes more bitter as to whose unity it shall be.”

50 The N.F.L. should let players kneel. If it lets them kneel, it increases immeasurably the chances that when they do rise, they will rise with respect and joy, not fear and resentment. That’s the “winning” America needs.

*David French is a senior writer at National Review.*

The National Review, May 16, 2018

**"How #MeToo Has Undermined the #Resistance,"** by David French

*The steady drumbeat of sexual scandal is eroding the Left's moral authority.*

In 2016, the Democrats made a significant mistake in opposing Donald Trump: They framed their opposition to Trump in moral terms, but failed to provide a better alternative. In 2017 and 2018, they're making the same mistake again, adopting an attitude of moral superiority in spite of obvious evidence to the contrary.

5 The Left's failure in the presidential election was glaringly obvious. You claim Trump is dishonest? So is Hillary Clinton. You claim that Trump's financial dealings are shady? Let's walk through Whitewater, cattle futures, and the Clinton Foundation. Trump is a predator? Voters who lived through the 1990s remember "bimbo eruptions," Monica Lewinsky, a rape allegation, and a wife who consistently covered for her husband's horrible behavior. The Clintons were a package deal, and that deal included a legacy of fawdry, shocking sexual scandal.

10 Hillary centered her entire campaign on the notion that Trump was a bad person. She was the worst candidate to make that argument. But when 2016 entered history, so did she. Her book tours and headline-grabbing gaffes notwithstanding, she's largely yesterday's news. The #Resistance, on the other hand, is fresh. And it has the moral authority that Hillary lacked. It can speak clearly about "norms" and "values." It can condemn Trump's multiple moral failings in the strongest possible terms, unencumbered by all that Clinton baggage.

15 At least until #MeToo.

I truly don't think the Left understands how the relentless drumbeat of sexual scandal looks to Americans outside the progressive bubble. Left-dominated quarters of American life — Hollywood, the media, progressive politics — have been revealed to be havens for the worst sort of ghouls, and each scandal seems to be accompanied by two words that deepen American cynicism and make legions of conservative Americans roll their eyes at the Left's moral arguments: "Everyone knew."

20 Let's put this in the clearest possible terms: For years, as Hollywood positioned itself as America's conscience and as the media lauded its commitment to "social justice," it was harboring, protecting, and indeed *promoting* truly dreadful human beings as leaders and taste-makers. Progressive politicians who proclaimed support for women's rights on Twitter were groping women on airplanes or punching them in the bedroom.

25 All this was happening at the precise time that the dominant argument — particularly against social conservatism — was that "you people are haters and bigots." It's difficult to overstate the extent to which conservative Americans have felt scolded and hectored. So how do you expect us to react when it's revealed that all too many of the self-appointed moralists weren't just the kind of preachers who'd run off with the secretary, they were the kind of monsters who'd press a button in their office, lock the secretary in the room, and assault her?

30 And again, *people knew*.

Progressives might immediately respond, "Well, at least we're cleaning house." And it's true that the number of politicians and celebrities who've resigned or been fired is growing long indeed. But conservatives have their own retort: "We are too." Bill O'Reilly is off Fox. Roger Ailes was forced out before he passed away. Roy Moore lost an unlosable Senate seat. Missouri's governor may well face impeachment.

35 That leaves, of course, the presidency, which puts us right back where we started, with the terrible dilemma of 2016. Do Democrats honestly believe that they can put forth a corrupt candidate and then, when that candidate loses, adopt a morally scolding position that Republicans should demand the discipline or resignation of their victor? If they do, they're in for a rude awakening: Most living voters remember all too well how they circled the wagons in 1998 around a man who was credibly accused of rape — not just defending him, but trying to reorder American sexual morality and destroy his accusers and investigators in the process.

40 There are very good reasons why there is collapsing trust in American public institutions, and #MeToo has only hastened that collapse. Make no mistake, it's a welcome reckoning. But it's also dismantling progressive moral credibility. It's revealing a deep rot and entrenched corruption. And it's leaving Americans with a profound, unanswered question: You say the Trump GOP is morally bad, but where is your morally superior alternative?

45 Moral arguments are always perilous to make. They invariably put a spotlight on the person and the movement making them. They carry with them an implicit requirement to *be better*. Hillary Clinton could never manage that burden. Now the #Resistance is saddled with the collapsing credibility of major progressive cultural institutions.

50 The housecleaning is welcome and long overdue. Victims have been crying out for justice for far too long. But justice has a way of revealing truth, and for the Left that truth is hard to face: In the battle for American hearts, it has lost the standing to make its moral case.

*The Washington Post*, Mar. 16, 2018

**"Supreme Court refuses to stop new congressional maps in Pennsylvania,"** by Robert Barnes

The Supreme Court on Monday turned down a request from Republican legislative leaders in Pennsylvania to block a redrawn congressional map that creates more parity between the political parties in the state.

The practical impact is the 2018 elections are likely to be held under a map much more favorable to Democrats, who scored an apparent victory last week in a special election in a strongly Republican congressional district. The 2011 map that has been used this decade has resulted in Republicans consistently winning 13 of the state's 18 congressional seats.

Monday's action was the second time that the court declined to get involved in the partisan battle that has roiled Pennsylvania politics. The commonwealth's highest court earlier this year ruled that a map drawn by Republican leaders in 2011 "clearly, plainly and palpably" violated the free-and-equal-elections clause of the Pennsylvania Constitution.

The U.S. Supreme Court deliberated nearly two weeks before turning down the request to stop the map from being used in this fall's elections. Generally the justices stay out of the way when a state's highest court is interpreting its own state constitution. The action came shortly after a three-judge federal panel also turned down a separate attempt by Republican legislators and members of Congress to stop implementation of the map. The Supreme Court gave no reasoning in its one-sentence order, only that it was considered by all nine justices. There were no noted dissents.

Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf (D) praised the courts. "I applaud these decisions that will allow the upcoming election to move forward with the new and fair congressional maps," Wolf said in a statement. "The people of Pennsylvania are tired of gerrymandering and the new map corrects past mistakes that created unfair congressional districts and attempted to diminish the impact of citizens' votes."

Under the map drawn by a nonpartisan expert and adopted by Democratic justices of Pennsylvania's elected Supreme Court, analysts say Republicans start with an edge in 10 of the 18 districts. Pennsylvania, traditionally a purple state, has a legislature controlled by Republicans, a Democratic governor and a U.S. senator from each party.

Candidates face a Tuesday deadline to qualify to run for the redrawn seats. The redrawing is extensive. For instance, the 18th Congressional District was in the national spotlight last week, when Democrat Conor Lamb appeared to come out ahead against Republican Rick Saccone. But the district is split four ways under the new plan.

Political analysts say the changes in Pennsylvania might aid national Democrats in their attempt to flip the House from Republican control. Democrats need to take about two dozen seats to win the majority, and Pennsylvania could provide some of that total. Six incumbents, five of them Republicans, have said they will not be on the fall ballot. Pennsylvania's top Republicans have fought the imposition of a new plan since the state Supreme Court ruled. They have received encouragement from President Trump, who tweeted last month that they should challenge the new map "all the way to the Supreme Court, if necessary." "Your Original was correct!" Trump tweeted. "Don't let the Dems take elections away from you so that they can raise taxes & waste money!" Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr. turned down the state's first request Feb. 5, after the state Supreme Court ordered a new map.

After the map was adopted, the legislative leaders were back, renewing their plea that the Pennsylvania justices were taking away the power that rightfully belongs to the state legislature to draw congressional lines. "The Pennsylvania Supreme Court conspicuously seized the redistricting process and prevented any meaningful ability for the legislature to enact a remedial map to ensure a court-drawn map," said state House Speaker Michael C. Turzai (R) and Senate President Pro Tempore Joseph B. Scarnati III (R).

But those who challenged the 2011 map as an improper partisan gerrymander said the GOP lawmakers were making arguments the U.S. Supreme Court already has rejected. "Their latest stay application is just another ploy to preserve congressional districts that violate Pennsylvania's Constitution for one more election cycle," said a brief for the League of Women Voters, adding, "It would be unprecedented for this Court to interfere with the state court's determination about its own state's law." [...]

"Today's Supreme Court ruling was a victory for Pennsylvania voters who will now be able to cast ballots for congressional candidates in districts not unconstitutionally manipulated to make them uncompetitive," said Micah Sims, Common Cause Pennsylvania's executive director. The victory in Pennsylvania for opponents of partisan gerrymandering suggests a new mode of attack, by challenging redistricting in state courts under state constitutions. The U.S. Supreme Court has never thrown out a state's redistricting plan by finding it so infected with partisan bias that it violates voters' constitutional rights.

But the court has on its current docket two cases — one from Wisconsin and one from Maryland — that raise the question.

*The Washington Post*, March 16, 2018

**“National Geographic acknowledges its racist past, then steps on its message with a cover photo,” by Victor Ray**

National Geographic has long offered a kind of pop-cultural imperialist anthropology that centers the white gaze and exoticizes people of color. The current issue of the magazine makes a brave attempt to deal with that messy history around race and racism. To get an outsider’s view of its coverage of race, National Geographic hired the University of Virginia history professor John Edwin Mason, who studies the history of photography and African history. Mason found that the magazine was often on the wrong side of racial history. For instance, it glossed over the historical significance of the brutal 1960 Sharpeville Massacre, in which white South African police killed 69 unarmed peaceful protesters.

National Geographic’s editors rarely questioned the colonial legacy and power relations that allowed its photographers and writers to shape a global conversation on race and difference that was too accommodating to white supremacy. I was happy to see the magazine take up the laudable goal of addressing its racial history. Many mainstream publications, were they to examine their own history surrounding coverage of race and the protection of white supremacy, would probably not fare much better than National Geographic.

Unfortunately, the cover story for this issue traffics in the very racial clichés the magazine’s editor says National Geographic was guilty of in the past. The cover photo depicts 11-year-old mixed-race twin girls, with the tabloid-esque framing that one is black, the other white. And the headline makes the grand claim that the girls’ story will “make us rethink everything we know about race.” The “we” here is implicitly white people, and the story of these children doesn’t break new ground so much as reinforces dangerous racial views. The girls in the photo, with their differing skin tones, are depicted as rare specimens and objects of fascination.

Admittedly, my problems with this article are both personal and professional. I’m a light-skinned black man who grew up with my darker-skinned younger brother. We were likely candidates for this type of story. When we were children, white people often questioned whether we were related, insisted we must have had different fathers, or simply regarded me as a kind of unfortunate eugenic quirk. As an adult, white folks typically think I’m white, and when I tell them otherwise, they often respond with shock. Having my racial identity constantly questioned was tiring enough without an international magazine putting us on its cover and claiming our experience would help rewrite racial history. And my personal experience leads me to suspect that much of the “curiosity and surprise” that greet these young women come from white people. Black people are aware that we come in all shades.

Professionally, the article gets the social science wrong, in that it frames racism as a matter of individual attitudes and behavior and overstates the racial progress we’ve made.

I’m a sociologist who studies race and ethnicity, and there is a consensus among social scientists that racism is bigger than individual actions. Racism is likely to influence the lives of these girls in ways that can’t be reduced to individual, mean-spirited prejudice. For instance, whites in the United States have, on average, 10 times as much wealth as black people. This wealth gap has multiple causes, including institutional racism in lending and housing discrimination. Similarly, because of current and historical patterns of segregation, black Americans are more likely to live in polluted neighborhoods with adverse implications for their long-term health.

Although I can pass as white, and this has undoubtedly made my life easier in many spaces, my life has still been shaped by a lack of intergenerational wealth and by asthma, both of which were shaped by being born in a segregated black neighborhood. When journalists reduce racism to the actions of nasty individuals, they miss how racism shapes life chances beyond interpersonal meanness. My experience as a mixed-race person who could pass for white has always been marked by white supremacy.

The cover story also overstates the amount of racial progress we have made when it claims that “50 years after the assassination of Dr. King, racial identity has reemerged as a fundamental dividing line in our world.” While this narrative of progress and reemergence may be comforting to some, the scholarly record is clear — race and racism never went anywhere.

[...] Hiring discrimination against black men has remained constant since the late 1980s, schools are more segregated than they have been at any point since *Brown v. Board of Education*, and data on differential rates of incarceration, health and many other measures are similarly stark. Claims that we’ve made considerable racial progress may be politically compelling, but the data provide a more complicated and pessimistic picture.

The stakes for getting race right in reporting are high and well beyond the personal. Although media coverage has faded, black people are still being disproportionately killed by police.

Our president equivocates when faced with white supremacist violence, regularly traffics in racial slurs and supports retrograde racial policies like a reignited drug war that will disproportionately hurt people of color. And white supremacist movements are ascendant in Europe, as far-right parties have been increasingly winning electoral representation.

If National Geographic really wants to atone for its racist past, it should drop narratives that overstate the racial progress we have made and stop misrepresenting racism as a personal sin.



CNN.com, December 6, 2017

**"Why Trump is still winning,"** by Mark Bauerlein

This is the real battle going on in DC today: not Democrats vs. Republicans but President Donald Trump vs. establishment Republicans. Trump is trampling upon every taboo and sensitivity that liberalism has erected in the last 50 years, and Republican leaders have learned to get by in that uptight habitat.

[...] The anti- and never-Trump forces are in a worse state of incredulity than before. How can this guy *still* be chief executive -- and even winning?

At first their surprise might seem sensible: A few weeks ago, things looked bad for Trump. Health care reform was stalled, Roy Moore was behind, and the Virginia results foreshadowed a Democratic Senate to come. The time has been out of joint for long enough, Trump's critics believed, and the correction was finally happening. Indeed, we saw another setback on Friday, with Michael Flynn pleading guilty to lying to the FBI, and fingers now pointing at Jared Kushner. But after all the other controversies that have happened and haven't much damaged Trump himself, people can't help but see this one as another sign of corruption that just won't stick. Just hours later, the Senate passed the tax bill.

And now, the needle seems to tilt Trump's way. This correction is not that hard to understand. You see, Trump has an invincible ally at the far end of the ideological spectrum. I don't mean the extreme right, the nationalists, paleoconservatives, and fringe groups that the media relentlessly tie to the President. He has better friends at the other pole, people on the far left who see the world only through the lens of race, gender, sexuality, and victimhood. In the Chronicle of Higher Education last week, Brittney Cooper, a professor at Rutgers had this critique about the legacy of Galileo, Newton, Pasteur, and Einstein: "The history of Western thought and science is predicated on the argument that African and indigenous peoples are inferior races." That's right -- all those inventions and discoveries that we honor and the geniuses we remember had a racist underside, by her lights. Elsewhere in the article she wrote, "No questions have ever been off-limits for white scholars," a statement that would surprise every white scholar I've ever known.

People who still can't assimilate the ascent of Trump need to pay closer attention to these accusations. They're not uncommon. Sensible liberals shrug them off as, well, kind of true but not really significant to health care, the environment, reproductive rights, and other progressive planks.

But people who voted for Trump have become especially attuned to such charges, and it only takes a quick playback by Rush Limbaugh or Tucker Carlson of the day's denunciation of America, white males, or the West by Professor X, Opinionator Y, or Celebrity Z to stoke their sense that the intellectuals loathe them. The more the accusers talk, the more rock hard Trump's base becomes.

The remarkable thing is how many Republican leaders still haven't figured this out. After Trump dropped his Pocahontas remark at the meeting with Navajo veterans, Sen. John McCain berated him for "politicizing these genuine heroes." Never mind that leftists have relentlessly politicized every demographic group in the country. Trump voters feel that by invoking her make-believe American Indian heritage, Sen. Elizabeth Warren played on those very identity politics to advance her career and mark her as more worthy of an elite job than any old white man.

Last week, when Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell acknowledged a pending ethics probe of Roy Moore should he win the election and take his seat, Laura Ingraham had to remind him of what that would say to Alabama voters. He came off as believing that the will of the people is one thing, but the will of the Senate is another.

The culture wars and Twitter spats that Trump has fought have delighted his fans but cornered senators, who may be realizing that the opinion of the Great Unwashed is more important than the opinion of, say, The New York Times -- more important, that is, to their job security.

When you sit at the top with an office in the Capitol and people lining up to tell you how wonderful you are, an academic on MSNBC going on about white privilege, toxic masculinity, and cisgender bias doesn't bother you.

Nor does a school board that approves opposite-sex bathroom privileges for transgender students and casts concerned parents as "phobic."

But if you're a small businessman or blue-collar worker worried about cost of living and with children to feed and educate, and who thinks little about identity issues, those charges grate on your nerves. Trump is your champion, not the lords in Congress. If Republicans don't follow his lead, more of them will share the fate of Sen. Jeff Flake, whose political career the President has called "toast."

*Mark Bauerlein is a professor of English at Emory University, senior editor of the journal First Things and author of "The Dumbest Generation: How the Digital Age Stupefies Young Americans and Jeopardizes Our Future; Or, Don't Trust Anyone Under 30." The opinions expressed in this commentary are his own.*

*The American Prospect*, May 7, 2018

**"Why the 2020 Census Citizenship Question Matters in the 2018 Elections,"** by Robert Shapiro

*Red states will suffer if that question is asked—but Republican state attorneys general haven't even murmured a protest.*

The decennial census is a vital instrument in how Americans live their lives. Right now, the 2020 census is at risk and, with it, much that matters to all of us.

5 The Trump administration, led here by Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and Attorney General Jeff Sessions, is seeking to use the census to send a message to President Trump's base and to disadvantage their political opponents. Dismissing the advice and warnings of the statisticians and social scientists who oversee the Census Bureau, they have decided to include a question about every person's citizenship status in the 2020 census. The result could well be a census that misses tens of millions of people, with consequences that will reverberate across the country.

10 Although most pundits believe that the adverse impact will be concentrated in a few blue states, closer analysis shows it could cost blue, purple, and red states seats in Congress, and cost mainly red states billions of dollars in federal funding. Yet so far, among those with the legal standing to push back against this proposal—our state attorneys general—only those in Democratic states have stepped up.

15 When I oversaw the 2000 Census as under secretary of commerce, I, along with the rest of the Clinton administration, took pride in our efforts to gather the most accurate information possible about everyone who lives in the United States. We knew that some \$400 billion in federal funds would be disbursed annually based in part on census data—the number is \$800 billion today—and that the fair allocation of seats in the House of Representatives depended on the accuracy and completeness of the census.

20 Even worse, perhaps, than Ross's decision to include a citizenship question is his stated rationale, which is to help Sessions and the Department of Justice enforce the Voting Rights Act (an improbable concern for Sessions, who long has favored weakening the act). Ross's statement raises the specter that the census will share individual personal information with law enforcement and other agencies. Such sharing would violate federal law as well as norms in place since the first census in 1790.

25 This proposed "reform" will discourage not only undocumented immigrants and their families from filling out their census forms—people who have always been included without distinction, because the laws passed by Congress and the funds distributed by Congress affect everyone. There are also millions of *legal* residents who won't pass the Ross-Sessions citizenship test. In addition, anyone with any reason to avoid giving the government their name and address might also opt out of the census—including millions of young people in arrears on their student loans and millions of parents behind on their child support.

30 I estimate, conservatively, that this policy could discourage nearly 25 million people from answering the 2020 census. If millions of people decide to sit on the sidelines for this census, the inaccurate data could be a risk for all of us. [...] Most of the states that stand to lose the most in federal funding tied to the census are solid Republican states. That's because most of \$800 billion per year in funding involve programs for low-income Americans; such as Medicaid, school lunches, and the S-CHIP program. Since  
35 those funds are distributed based on a state's share of poor households, the states with the most at stake are those with above-average shares of low-income people. The bottom line is that everyone in those states—whatever their citizenship status—will pay a price for the Ross-Sessions policy.

40 Yet, the attorneys general in these red states are failing to defend their constituents and challenge the inclusion of a citizenship question, choosing instead to toe the misguided party line, lest it appear they're not supporting the president.

45 Although this certainly shouldn't be a partisan issue, only Democratic attorneys general are pushing back. California Attorney General Xavier Becerra filed a federal lawsuit immediately after Ross announced the question would be added. New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman is leading a coalition of 18 Democratic attorneys general, six cities, and the bipartisan U.S. Conference of Mayors in filing a second federal lawsuit. They contend, as they should, that the citizenship question will deter participation and unlawfully violate the Constitution's requirement for an "actual enumeration" of residents.

The Census should be apolitical in both its execution and its application. Forcing a partisan citizenship question onto the Census will be a dangerous mistake and a violation of the framers' intent.

50 There are 35 state attorney general seats on the ballot this November. At a minimum, the voters in those states should take heed of what their attorneys general are doing—or not doing—to ensure an accurate 2020 census. Candidates running against the do-nothing AGs should make clear the dire consequences for their states should the Ross-Sessions proposal take effect.

*The Nation*, May 25, 2018

**"What if School Lunch Programs Promoted Public Health, Good Jobs, and the Environment?"** by Anna Lappé and Jose Oliva

Eleven billion dollars. That's the total tally of the national school-food program in the United States and just a small fraction of what public institutions in this country spend every year in taxpayer dollars on food—including food for county jails, hospitals, city parks, and more. Public food procurement is clearly big business. But we also believe it can also be a force for good. On May 16, Cook County—home to Chicago and one of the largest counties in the country—joined a growing movement of public institutions when it adopted a procurement program that does just that: promotes public health, community well-being, animal welfare, social justice, and environmental protection.

It may seem like common sense that public institutions should promote the public good, but when it comes to food purchasing that's not usually the case. All around the country, in local governments and public-school districts, officials pore over the minutiae of contracts for bread rolls and chicken patties, pizzas and salad greens. The dominant decision-making criteria? The cheapest bid.

In 2011, community leaders in Los Angeles started asking what it would take to transform that decision making so that city leadership could make food purchases based on shared principles, not just price tags. The result is the Good Food Purchasing Program, passed first in Los Angeles in 2012 and now in four cities nationwide. The Good Food Purchasing Program views purchases through five values: public health, local economic development, animal welfare, worker wellbeing, and the environment. The program can also be used, as it will in Cook County, to incentivize public institutions to support under-capitalized businesses—that is, those that have been historically shut out of tax incentives and access to technical and financial support. The idea is to help to correct long-standing inequities in the food system.

In the cities where it has passed, we've seen real impact. [...] In Cook County, enthusiasm for the program came in large part from those businesses, workers, consumers, and farmers that have long been marginalized in the food system. Under the program, the County will incentivize contracts with minority- and women-owned businesses, help to preserve urban farmland with community ownership, and transition publicly owned vacant lots to minority-owned social enterprises and public land trusts. Says the Chicago Food Policy Action Council's Rodger Cooley, "The Good Food Purchasing Program has the power to transform the food system in every region where it is implemented as it will in Cook County where we are creating a model for food procurement that supports frontline communities most impacted by existing inequities."

This all sounds good, you might be thinking, but these are tax dollars at work; shouldn't public institutions entrusted to use money wisely make the most economical choice? Well, here's the rub. Cheap food isn't always so cheap. Consider the costs in the United States of the illnesses and deaths linked to unhealthy food (blights that fall mostly on low-income communities and communities of color, where millions live either without access to good food or in food environments with too much unhealthy food). Health-care costs from diagnosed Type 2 diabetes total a staggering \$327 billion a year—a cost we all share.

Or consider the price to taxpayers when private-sector employers fail to pay living wages. Around the country, food-sector workers are among the most underpaid and exploited and are twice as likely as workers in any other sector to rely on government assistance to put food on their table. With the Good Food Purchasing Program, good food means good jobs.

But let's also be clear: While the program incurs a range of community benefits, it doesn't always cost more. Analysis of the Good Food Purchasing Program has found that food costs don't necessarily go up after implementation. In Oakland, for instance, the school district's choice to buy better and, yes, more expensive meat—increasing the amount of 100 percent grass-fed beef and antibiotic-free chicken purchases, for instance—was coupled with a reduction in meat purchases. The result? The more expensive choice was actually cost neutral and the customers—those finicky kids—reported high rates of satisfaction.

Cook County's groundbreaking decision to adopt the program is just the latest sign of the momentum nationwide for tapping the enormous buying power of public institutions for the public good. Another 13 cities across the country—including Austin and New York, Cincinnati and Washington, DC—are actively pursuing the program. If all pass it, the program will reshape a whopping \$880 million worth of food purchases annually. Cook County's adoption of the Good Food Purchasing Program is a huge leap forward in the quest of good food for all. Who's next?

Anna Lappé is the founder of Real Food Media, and co-founder of the Small Planet Institute. She is also a bestselling author, most recently of *Diet for a Hot Planet: The Climate Crisis at the End of Your Fork and What You Can Do About It*.

Jose Oliva is the co-director of the Food Chain Workers Alliance and Board member of the Chicago Food Policy Action Council.

## VOTERS THINK THE HOUSE OF LORDS IS OUTDATED, OUT OF TOUCH AND WRONG TO THWART BREXIT, POLL REVEALS

Jason Groves, *The Daily Mail*, May, 23, 2018

1 Confidence in the Upper House has plummeted as 76 per cent of voters feel peers are 'out of tune with the will of the British people'. Even more said the Lords is an 'outdated throwback'.

2 A Daily Mail poll, carried out by ComRes in May revealed some 58 per cent of voters believe peers would be wrong to try to thwart Brexit, with 24 per cent thinking they should do so. Peers have inflicted 15

3 separate defeats on the Government's flagship EU withdrawal bill in recent weeks, including changes designed to keep the UK in the single market – or even prevent the UK leaving. They have also defied longstanding conventions that the Lords should reflect the manifesto commitments of the governing party. There is strong support for reform, with only 17 per cent saying the institution should be left untouched. The

4 poll of more than 2,000 adults also found that: Seven in ten voters believe there should be fewer peers than the current 780; Eight in ten said too many in the Upper House were cronies or failed politicians. Older voters were more hostile toward the House of Lords than the young; The £305 daily allowance for peers also proved highly unpopular in the poll by ComRes and campaign group We, The People. The poll also shows that 34 per cent of Leave voters think the House of Lords should be abolished and not replaced. Reacting to

5 the survey, Iain Duncan Smith said voters were outraged by peers repeatedly amending key Brexit legislation. 'The Lords have behaved appallingly in the last few weeks,' said the former Tory leader. 'They have completely defied the views of the elected Commons, ignored the manifesto of the governing party and set out to oppose the referendum vote expressing the will of the British people. 'They have done this brazenly and in doing so they have been arrogant and rude. The Lords should see these findings as a warning to them, although I think it may be too late. I am appalled by their behaviour and I would like to see the

6 promise of action in our manifesto.' Jacob Rees-Mogg, a leading Eurosceptic Tory MP, said: 'These findings shows the British electorate understand the constitutional conventions better than some in Parliament, and know they have been broken by the House of Lords. The Lords thought they could frustrate Brexit in the twilight, but they have been busted by the electorate, who can see exactly what they are up to. They have weakened the Lords – the Lords are quite vulnerable now. There has been tolerance of the Lords

7 because it was there and because it worked. But it is there under sufferance and there is no large advocacy body campaigning for it. 'If it breaks conventions and ceases to work, as it has done recently, then it becomes very difficult to defend and makes it easier for the House of Commons to reform.' Boris Johnson last night urged the Lords to back down over Brexit. 'The House of Commons has the final legislative say and the Lords know that and must accept that,' said the Foreign Secretary. Asked earlier this week whether

8 the Lords had overstepped the mark, Theresa May said: 'Parliament as a whole gave the British people the choice of whether to stay in the EU or to leave it. The people voted and I think it's incumbent on all of us to recognise that we have a duty to put into place the result of that vote and to ensure that the UK leaves the European Union.' In a series of votes on Brexit and Press regulation, peers ignored Tory manifesto commitments and opted to frustrate the Government, which has no Lords majority. Patrick Barrow of We, The People said: 'The polling results are very clear. The British people took back sovereignty for the UK

9 Parliament, the House of Lords seems determined to make sure it's sent back to Europe. The Other Place needs to understand, and quickly, that if they are to be a relevant part of a modern, representative democracy, it's past time they began to represent – not their own preoccupations, but the ballot box view of the people of Britain.' Ministers believe the Lords have overstepped the mark by voting through

10 amendments that would tie Mrs May's hands in her negotiations with Brussels over Brexit. Some pro-Remain peers have also faced accusations of arrogance after vowing to block the referendum result and mocking the decision to leave. Liberal Democrat peer Lord Roberts of Llandudno sparked fury by likening the legislation to the Nazi enabling act which handed supreme power to Adolf Hitler. Crossbench peer Lord Bilimoria vowed to 'stop the train wreck' of Brexit. Viscount Hailsham, who as Douglas Hogg was the

11 poster boy of the expenses scandal for trying to claim taxpayers' money to clear his moat, described the referendum result as an interim decision. And former Labour cabinet minister Lord Adonis has vowed to sabotage Brexit.

## A NEW FACE WON'T CHANGE THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S RACIST HEART

By Maya Goodfellow, *The New York Times*, May 2, 2018

1 LONDON – When a government is in crisis, a frequent tactic to limit damage is rebranding. New logo, new  
policy name — or new faces. Sometimes it works. It *looks* like a meaningful response. But more often than  
not, rebrands don't mean substantive change. This is what Prime Minister Theresa May is hoping the British  
public won't notice with her appointment this week of Sajid Javid as the new home secretary. Drafted to  
5 replace Amber Rudd, who “inadvertently misled” members of Parliament over targets for deporting  
undocumented immigrants, Mr. Javid has been given the job of sorting out the so-called Windrush scandal,  
10 revelations that the Home Office, which oversees immigration enforcement, had been deporting people who  
moved to Britain from Caribbean colonies in the 1940s at the invitation of the government. Some 70 years  
later, the Home Office has said these people no longer have the right paperwork to stay in the country. The  
15 revelations have laid bare the government's incompetence and cruelty. Within hours of Mr. Javid's  
appointment, the BBC declared that “one advantage” he should have is his background. His parents came to  
this country from Pakistan. As he told one newspaper, they have something in common with the Windrush  
families: “It could have been me, my mum or my dad,” he said, “obviously a different part of the world,  
20 from South Asia, not the Caribbean, but other than that, similar in almost every way.” It's possible that Mr.  
Javid's background will grant him more empathy than his predecessors had. But his family history alone  
doesn't equal the change that Britain desperately needs when it comes to immigration policy. The reaction to  
Mr. Javid's appointment reveals a serious problem with how many people seem to understand politics. He is  
the first person of color to lead the Home Office; some cheered him for breaking that barrier. Of course,  
25 representation isn't entirely inconsequential. But for too many, there is a desire to reduce anti-racism and  
anti-sexism to issues of representation: If we get more women or people of color into positions of power,  
society will become more equal. You could call this trickle-down equality — and like its economic  
counterpart, it doesn't work. There are two lessons to learn from Mr. Javid's appointment: The fight against  
an unjust immigration system does not change with a new home secretary, and if we remain satisfied with  
30 representation as the sole means of progress, diversity becomes a shield for a government's institutionally  
racist policies. Hostility to immigration is at the heart of Mrs. May's government. Before she became prime  
minister, Mrs. May was the home secretary. In that role, she pledged to get net migration down to the “tens  
of thousands.” Told it was unworkable, she stubbornly stuck with it. It was and continues to be her mission,  
in the words of the 2017 Conservative Party manifesto, to “bear down on immigration.” It's with this in  
35 mind that the government has fulfilled the pledge Mrs. May made in 2012 to create a “really hostile  
environment for illegal immigrants.” The state has denied people health care, jobs, housing and even a bank  
account if they don't have the right papers. The Home Office has even denied visas to doctors from  
India recruited by the National Health Service to fill empty posts. Mr. Javid was there when all of this was  
happening, supporting Mrs. May. His parliamentary record reads as unencumbered support for his  
government's punitive immigration policies: He voted for the very changes that make up the “hostile  
40 environment.” So is there any reason to assume he would do anything other than continue to carry out cruel  
Conservative immigration policy? It was the policies Mr. Javid voted for that removed protection for long-  
term residents from deportation and meant that without four pieces of evidence for every year they've been  
in the country, people of the Windrush generation were deported, denied potentially lifesaving medical  
treatment, lost their jobs and their homes, and were stripped of their dignity. But rebranding is all the rage  
45 this week. With a new home secretary came a new policy title: Mr. Javid will ditch the term “hostile  
environment” in favor of the more pleasant-sounding “compliant environment.” The Windrush generation  
will be helped; the Conservatives will try to soften their image. But the policies that led to this appalling  
affair will stay in place. People the government classifies as “illegal” will still be treated with contempt, and  
someone could still easily end up deported just because of a misplaced paper or a change in the rules —  
50 exactly what happened to the Windrush generation. This will deter people from speaking out if they fall into  
trouble, it will make people less likely to seek help for diseases, and it will continue to catch all manner of  
people in its net regardless of the specifics of their situation. Changing the title of Home Office policy is not  
the same as changing how it works; neither is changing the minister. Without an end to the hostile  
environment and the government's inhumane approach to immigration, which treats every person thought to  
be a migrant with suspicion, Mr. Javid's appointment doesn't alter a thing.

## OXFORD LIFTS THE VEIL ON RACE, WEALTH AND PRIVILEGE

By Alan Cowell, *The New York Times*, May 23, 2018

1 LONDON — The 19th-century poet Matthew Arnold spoke of its “dreaming spires.” The honeyed stonework of its  
colleges has drawn the global elite of learning to its quadrangles and tranquillity, as have Ivy League universities. Yet  
the University of Oxford has long been roiled by questions of race, inequality and privilege swirling through British  
society, from the mean city streets and neglected social housing projects to the glittery, obsessively chronicled  
5 romances and rigmarole of the royal family. Some of the conundrums about who gets to be an Oxford undergraduate  
surfaced anew on Wednesday when, for the first time, the 850-year-old university published data intended to  
challenge assertions that it endured as a place of white, wealth-driven privilege. For some, the figures showed only  
halting progress: About 3 percent of the British population is black, according to the most recent census, but only 1.9  
10 percent of the roughly 3,200 students admitted to Oxford in 2017 identified as black Britons. That was an increase of  
less than a percentage point from 2013, when 1.1 percent of British undergraduates at Oxford identified as black, a  
subset of what the university called “black and minority ethnic” students, including those of Asian and mixed heritage,  
whose share of admissions rose to 17.9 percent last year, from 13.9 percent in 2013. David Lammy, a Labour  
lawmaker and former education minister who has campaigned against what he has called “social apartheid” at Oxford,  
15 said the latest figures showed that the university was “an institution defined by entrenched privilege that is the  
preserve of wealthy white students from London and the Southeast.” The statistics do offer some startling insights: In  
a breakdown of undergraduate admissions to the 29 individual colleges that form the backbone of Oxford’s academic  
structure, eight — including some of the most prestigious — failed to admit a single black Briton in one or more of  
the years from 2015 to 2017. Cherwell, a student newspaper at Oxford, reported on Wednesday that the university had  
20 admitted more students in 2017 from a single London private school, 49, than it had admitted black undergraduates  
from the rest of Britain, 48. That appeared to compound other inequalities, such as the preponderance of students from  
fee-paying private schools — known in Britain as public schools — in the south of England among the annual intake  
of more than 3,200 undergraduates. And among the slowly increasing number of successful applicants from state  
schools, the statistics were skewed because they did not show how many undergraduates had been educated at state-  
25 financed grammar schools, which have selective entrance criteria. Oxford’s intake displayed a geographic imbalance  
between the north of Britain and the more affluent south, where the bulk of national wealth is concentrated. “Oxford  
reflects the inequalities — socio-economic, ethnic and regional — that exist in British society,” Louise Richardson,  
the university’s vice chancellor, said in a foreword to the report. “The picture that emerges,” she said, “is of a  
university which is changing: evolving fast for an institution of its age and standing, but perhaps too slowly to meet  
30 public expectations. It is a picture of progress on a great many fronts, but with work remaining to be done.” In a  
section titled Key Points, the report focused on progress in admissions, including “more women admitted than men in  
2017” and higher proportions of undergraduate admissions among groups that were traditionally disadvantaged. Yet,  
according to the Cherwell article, “17 of the top 20 schools for Oxford admissions in 2017 are fee-paying, while the  
other three are prestigious grammar schools.” Additionally, the newspaper said, state-educated students tended to  
35 apply to the most oversubscribed subjects, lowering their prospects, while applicants from private schools tended to  
apply to less sought-after courses, such as classics or modern languages. At the heart of the debate is a perceived  
contest between demographics and academic excellence. Critics such as Mr. Lammy, the Labour lawmaker, argue that  
a student from a low-income area who gets good grades on the national A-level exams at the end of high school “is  
more talented than their contemporary with the same grades” at a top fee-paying school such as Eton or Harrow. “And  
40 all the academic evidence shows that they far outshine their peers at university, too,” he said. “If you’re on the 20th  
floor of a tower block estate and you’re getting straight As,” Mr. Lammy told the BBC, “you apply, go for a difficult  
interview,” and then, he added, if the application is unsuccessful, “none of the other kids apply the following year.”  
The reference to public housing seemed to signal Britain’s broader disparities at a time when its news agenda has been  
dominated by poles of privilege and perceived neglect. On Saturday, the nation — and much of the TV-viewing world  
— paused to watch the spectacular wedding at Windsor of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle. On Monday, the focus  
45 shifted to the opening of a public inquiry into the Grenfell Tower disaster, when a 24-story building in West London  
was consumed by fire, leaving 72 dead. In an effort to help disadvantaged applicants, Oxford announced on  
Wednesday that it would increase to 1,350, from 850, the number of would-be undergraduates it admits to one-week  
summer courses to help them apply. “To state the obvious,” Alan Rusbridger, the principal of Lady Margaret Hall  
college and a former editor of *The Guardian* newspaper, wrote on Wednesday, “it’s hard to win a place at Oxford.”  
50 Last year, for instance, almost 20,000 applicants chased 3,270 places. “A great many academically able students will  
not be offered a place.” [...]

*The American Spectator*, May 30, 2018

**"Hard Truths About School Shootings and Gun Violence,"** by Chris Talgo and Justin Haskins

*The Obama administration's education secretary might want to face them.*

In response to the tragic shooting at a Santa Fe, Texas high school earlier in May, former Secretary of Education Arne Duncan tweeted, "What if no children went to school until gun laws changed to keep them safe? My family is all in if we can do this at scale. Parents, will you please join us?"

5 Duncan's shoot-from-the-hip reaction embodies the "action for the sake of action" mentality that so often follows in the wake of heartbreaking school violence. Duncan, the former CEO of Chicago Public Schools, served as secretary of education under President Barack Obama. Apparently, Duncan is taking advice from Chicago's mayor and former Obama chief-of-staff, Rahm Emanuel, who infamously quipped, "Never let a good crisis go to waste."

10 By no means is Duncan's "call to action" extraordinary in the aftermath of heinous crimes. This tactic has become commonplace among those on the Left. Just tune in to any Hollywood awards show and you'll most likely be inundated with celebrities espousing the pressing need to enact gun control at the drop of a hat. Gone are the days of respecting the grieving process for victims and families. Now, everything is said and done for political gain, and it happens almost immediately after a tragedy — especially when guns are

15 involved.  
"Student-led" protests and Duncan's call for a nationwide school boycott this fall to spur legislators to pass gun control laws are disingenuous and put the cart before the horse. The student-led protests are little more than AstroTurf shenanigans\* perpetuated by the anti-gun lobby, which uses students as pawns to garner attention and sympathy. Like Emanuel's crisis aphorism, anti-gun groups will use whatever tactics

20 necessary to "win."  
Putting emotions and political tactics aside, the real focus should be on properly diagnosing why these shootings are happening in the first place and then working to enact realistic solutions. Demanding the nation's 270 million guns magically disappear isn't going to happen anytime soon, regardless of how badly gun-control activists wish it would.

25 A problem as complex as the scourge of school violence is multifaceted and requires an all-encompassing set of solutions, one that addresses the cultural, economic, and social origins of our problems with violence. It's understandable that humans would want to immediately stop these horrific murders, but it's naive to believe that a set of laws will eliminate or even substantially decrease such atrocities.

30 If simply passing gun-control legislation worked, then those cities and states with the strictest gun laws would be the safest, and the evidence shows they clearly aren't. Don't believe us? Go ask the people of Chicago's South Side whether they think gun control has worked in their community. Or take a few minutes to examine the crime statistics in states such as Idaho or New Hampshire, where guns are readily accessible and gun-related homicides are relatively rare.

35 In fact, the Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, a group that advocates for gun control, gives in its current gun-control report card "F" grades to three out of the four states with the lowest homicide rates (Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont). It also gives "A" or "B" grades to some states with high homicide rates, like Maryland, which received an A grade for its gun laws but is one of the five worst states for homicide, according to FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting data.

40 What America desperately needs is a deep self-examination of its important institutions, including the breakdown of the family, and what the meaning of morality is in our postmodern world. That's not something most politicians or left-wing media pundits want to discuss, however, because the harsh truths that would likely emanate from a frank inspection would undermine some liberals' longstanding attack on traditional America. It's much easier to blame gun owners, which is a minority group in the United States, and call for gun bans.

45 There are policy solutions that lawmakers can pursue that would likely help to make schools safer. More resources could be invested in increasing trained, armed security at schools, for instance. Access points could be limited to a single, well-guarded part of the school, making it difficult for someone to enter with weapons without facing resistance.

50 However, these are merely Band-Aids on the much-larger societal problems facing the United States. Until Americans realize that's where these issues really need the most attention, not in Washington, D.C., violence can only be contained to a limited degree.

*Chris Talgo is an editorial assistant at The Heartland Institute and writer for Heartland's American Exceptionalism website. Justin Haskins is executive editor of The Heartland Institute.*

*[\*Astroturf shenanigans: practice of masking the sponsors of a message or organization (e.g., political, advertising, religious or public relations) to make it appear as though it originates from and is supported by grassroots participants]*

## IS MEGHAN'S WEDDING OUR 'OBAMA MOMENT'? LET'S HOPE NOT

Rod Liddle, *The Spectator*, May, 26, 2018

1 Here's something to bear in mind over the next few years. Be wary of taking advice on social justice from  
someone whose wedding dress cost 200,000 quid. Marks & Spencer does one for £69, off the peg. Meghan  
could have donated the remaining £199,931 to Generating Genius, the charity set up by the brilliant  
5 educationalist Tony Sewell which tries, with huge success, to get inner-city black kids into our top  
universities by instilling in them a respect for academic excellence, hard work and discipline. Instead of  
encouraging them to languish in a state of victimhood, which is the white liberal approach. For sure,  
Meghan looked lovely and the wedding undoubtedly made a lot of people very happy, and one wishes her  
and Prince Harry nothing but the best for the future. But I'm not sure it was quite, in the words of our newly  
1 enrolled village idiot David Lammy, Britain's 'Obama moment'. Our Obama moments, if you must, came  
with Clyde Best scampering down the wing for West Ham in the late 1960s, or Trevor McDonald reading  
46 the news. I have yet to meet anyone, anywhere, who gave a monkey's that Meghan Markle was of mixed  
race, or black. (You choose. And be careful about it, or they'll get you.) The only people obsessed with  
Meghan's race were the BBC and the Guardian, the usual self-flagellating, middle-class white liberals  
shackled to a weird obsession and forever rattling their chains. If it was an Obama moment, mind, I assume  
15 we are now in for eight years of incompetence, ineffectuality and national decline, after which Harry will  
dump Meghan and marry someone very right-wing, with strange blonde hair and  
a penchant for injudicious tweets. 'Do you, Ginger Harry, take this woman, Katie Hopkins, to be your lawful  
wedded wife?' etc. That will be the anti-Obama moment, then. In many ways the wedding was the perfect  
1 expression of the very well-heeled liberal elite, given that its entire text seemed to be taken from a  
particularly stupid and vacuous John Lennon song, not to mention the inevitable presence of the bloody  
20 Clooneys and Elton'n' David. Establishments change hands once every 40 or 50 years and the capture of the  
young royals may be the very last hurrah of our liberal elite, given that it already has the judiciary, the  
education system, the broadcast media, two-thirds of the Tory party, and the Church of England within its  
grasp. Both Harry and Meghan seem personable young people but the role of a royal is not, as they and  
25 many commentators seem to believe, to 'change the world'. It is to carry out duties with fortitude and  
discretion, much as Liz and Phil have done for 70 years, and keep your own fatuous opinions to yourself.  
But there's not much chance of that, I fear. We are in for a tsunami of vapid emoting from two people who,  
however pleasant they might be — and they do seem to be pleasant — are not necessarily the best equipped  
1 to pontificate about the many real or imagined injustices in the world and what to do about them. It's  
probably just a fantasy of mine but I could swear that, during the service, Princess Anne was thinking much  
30 the same thing. Whenever the camera panned across to her she had a look on her face that suggested a corgi  
was attached to her lower leg and vigorously expressing itself. Except that there are no more corgis, of  
course. The paucity of the philosophy behind this liberal love-in was exemplified by the guest speaker — a  
man who was, once again, very charming and likeable. Bishop Michael Curry, from North Carolina, was  
35 presumably plucked from the ether by Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury, for I suspect Hazza and  
Megs hitherto didn't have a clue that he existed. If Justin were determined to have a black American speak  
at the wedding, I'd much preferred it to have been Candace Owens, but never mind — Curry had chutzpah  
and power, and he was the hit of the service. And yet what he actually said was banal to the point of  
1 imbecility. OK, he may have mentioned 'the balm of Gilead' a couple of times, which always cheers me up  
because it reminds me of Monty Python. But the rest of his address was the usual mindless pap about love  
40 being the only thing that matters. The whole world can be reformed simply by love! And wouldn't that be  
lovely! It was like listening to an address by a whacked-out Yoko Ono: 'Love is thing, hate isn't,' as Private  
Eye once paraphrased her. And it is a very au courant thesis, if you can call it a thesis. 'All you need is love,  
dooby, dooby doo.' What kind of love? The love of a suicide bomber for his explosive belt? The love of an  
45 oligarch for his money and power? The love of a third-world despot for his death squads? The love of Harry,  
somewhere down the line, for someone who isn't Meghan? Are all these loves OK?



FoxNews.com, December 4th, 2017

**"National Park lovers should applaud Trump's monument decision,"** by Jason Chaffetz

President Trump's decision to reduce the size of the Bears Ears and Staircase-Escalante National Monuments in Utah, announced Monday on his visit to the state, is a good one and an example of his policies that will benefit every American who enjoys national parks and monuments.

5 We should all thank the president for his administration's efforts to look at the facts, listen to the people, and act to roll back restrictive and unnecessary national monument designations that provide few advantages to the American people.

While such designations may sound good on the surface, in reality they have strained land management budgets and limited public access to beautiful places.

10 The Trump administration has been on the ground listening to those who bear the burden of these decisions – unlike the Clinton and Obama administrations, which showed little interest in talking to local people before locking up millions of acres of land around them.

The Trump administration has seen firsthand what I saw when I represented some of these areas in Congress – that the consequences of locking down the West have been severe.

15 I applaud the president for having the courtesy to do what his predecessors never did – visiting Utah personally to deliver the news that will positively impact those who love and care for these lands. His attention is a far cry from President Clinton making his Grand Staircase-Escalante Monument announcement from another state and President Obama issuing a press release with the wrong photo of Bears Ears.

20 The notion that our only option for managing public land is a restrictive monument designation is false. In truth, we can build bathrooms and fire pits, and accommodate hunting, fishing, grazing, and permit accessibility without destroying the land. In places where restrictive conservation rules are less justified, we can even authorize responsible resource extraction.

Each time the federal government levies new land designations, that new designation and management plan competes with existing parks and monuments for funding.

25 The National Park Service suffers from a \$12 billion maintenance backlog – meaning crumbling buildings, roads, and bridges cannot be repaired or replaced. Overly expansive monument designations – like the two multimillion-acre monuments in Utah – could have been spent on existing park treasures.

30 In the case of Bears Ears National Monument, all of that land was already federal land mostly managed for conservation use. With President Obama's monument designation, the maintenance fell to the already-strapped National Park Service. Many of these lands were once managed successfully by other agencies – like the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service – and can be again.

But freeing up more money for national parks isn't the only advantage of Monday's decision. Access to these places will be expanded, not restricted, as required in large-scale national monuments.

35 By lifting restrictions on motorized access, President Trump makes these lands available to more than just the able-bodied. With expanded access, the elderly, disabled and even wounded veterans can utilize bikes or off-highway vehicles to access spectacular places.

Furthermore, those who wish to use the land for other purposes – such as hunting, fishing, camping, and outdoor recreation – will now also have access.

40 For Utah Native Americans, this improved access is important. For centuries, they have used the land around the Bears Ears National Monument to hunt, gather, and worship. Many would come on foot while others would utilize off-highway vehicles to collect firewood, gather medicinal herbs or meet in specific locations for religious ceremonies.

The federal government could preclude these uses under a restrictive monument designation – as it has in Arizona's Canyon de Chelly, Wupatki and even Utah's Natural Bridges.

45 Monument designations – particularly the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument – have been routinely abused in an effort to lock down resource-rich areas that do not meet objective criteria for preservation. By unlocking these otherwise unremarkable areas, President Trump enables high-paying resource extraction jobs to return to rural communities – a process that not only helps local economic development, but reduces U.S. dependence on foreign imports.

50 Protecting our most beautiful places is important. But we don't have to lock people out to do it. We don't have to put further strain on federal land management budgets. We certainly don't need to decimate rural economies. President Trump has done the right thing. All of us will be the beneficiaries of this decision.

*The National Review*, Apr. 30, 2018

**"Americans Complain about Washington but Won't Inform Themselves about It,"** by Jay Cost

The Fox News poll released last week is one of the latest to suggest that public opinion has settled in with respect to President Donald Trump. His job approval rating continues to bounce around in the low to mid 40s, while his disapproval rating is in the low to mid 50s. This stability is based on overwhelming support from self-identified Republicans. Unless some unforeseen event occurs, that makes a primary challenge in 2020 extremely difficult.

Fox News also found the people still to be in a populist mood. Fifty-five percent of respondents said that "political leaders in Washington look down" on people like them, while just 11 percent said they felt "like political leaders in Washington are in touch" with people like them. [...]

It is well and good for Americans to be suspicious of their rulers. That is how the officials they elect are kept on track. But I frankly don't have a lot of sympathy for this frustration anymore.

Do not get me wrong. I agree with the general sentiment that the "elites" think little of the average American. But the fact of the matter is that populist movements over the course of the centuries have opened up our political process such that, with the exception of appellate judges and Supreme Court justices, elites *inevitably* have to come back either to the people or their direct representatives.

That is, of course, the great revolution of the Constitution, which anchors government not on some hereditary nobility but on the people themselves. And think of all the changes that were made since the Constitution was finalized in September 1787. The Bill of Rights enshrined an elaborate jury system to check federal judges and prosecutors. The presidency has been opened up to popular vote. The 14th Amendment prohibited states from inhibiting political participation, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 put teeth on this protection. The Senate is now popularly elected. Primaries have democratized the political parties, essentially destroying machine politics for good.

There are very few corners of our government that cannot be changed if the people do not wish to change it. The "elites" of today's "establishment" continue to thrive because of the *forbearance* of the voters. Forbearance is not the same as consent. The former is a passive sentiment, while the latter is active.

Passivity is a good way to define the citizenship of the United States in 2018. The evidence of civic disengagement is manifest throughout the same Fox News poll, in big ways and small.

The biggest story of the day continues to be the investigation, into Trump and Russia, being conducted by Robert Mueller, who has been a top figure in American politics for well over a decade. Yet, according to Fox News, 27 percent of Americans have no opinion of him.

That is the same percentage that has no opinion of Mitch McConnell, who as Senate majority leader is perhaps the most powerful person in Congress. Shockingly, 43 percent of Republicans have an unfavorable opinion of McConnell — despite the fact that it was his efforts, more than anybody else's, that kept Justice Antonin Scalia's seat open until Trump could name a replacement last year. On the whole, nobody in the last generation has done more than McConnell to prevent a full-blown takeover of the judiciary by the American Left. Perhaps Republicans don't care about that, but I'd say it is much more likely they don't know about it.

A whopping 61 percent of Americans have no opinion of Kevin McCarthy, who, as the Republican majority leader, is the second-most important person in the House and quite possibly its next speaker.

A wide majority of Americans, 61 percent, say that they approved of the United States' "using military airstrikes to punish Syria for using chemical weapons." But 60 percent *also* said that the president should have received "the consent of Congress" first. Obviously, it is possible to support the strikes *despite* their not having received congressional approval, but it is much more likely that people just are not putting much thought into the details of the country's Syria's policy.

So I would say that the respondents to the Fox News poll have it exactly backwards. It is wrong to say that the elites in Washington are not in touch with them. Rather, they are not in touch with the elites in Washington.

None of this is to excuse the problems of representation and even corruption that emanate from our government — a subject I have written about extensively. Rather, it is to suggest that a cause of the problem (among many) is a disengaged, disinterested, and poorly informed American public.

Our system of government gives the people vast discretion to change the government as they like. But to use this power effectively, *they first have to know a thing or two about the government.*

If they do not, then how can they properly police public officials? And if they can't properly police public officials, should we really be all that surprised that our leaders act with hubris toward and disregard for the public interest?

## WE CAN SOLVE THE UK'S HOUSING CRISIS – WITH A LITTLE IMAGINATION

John Harris, *The Guardian*, January, 22, 2018

1 Housebuilding, housebuilding, housebuilding. Last year, Theresa May pledged to make “the British dream a  
reality by reigniting home ownership in Britain once again”, and insisted she was taking “personal charge”  
of the effort to solve the country’s housing problems. Not long after, the chancellor, Philip  
Hammond, promised to eventually ensure the construction of 300,000 new homes a year. And fair play to  
5 the government, perhaps: in 2016- 2017, 184,000 new homes were built in England – the highest figure  
since the crash of 2007-8, and possible proof that the prime minister’s dream of a country building “more  
homes, more quickly” was starting to be realised. Unfortunately, there are a lot of holes in this vision – not  
least the Tories’ underlying belief that the only homes worth talking about should be privately bought and  
sold, reflected in the paltry amount of supposedly social housing added to England’s stock in the same  
10 period: 5,380 dwellings for “social rent”, 24,350 for “affordable rent” and 11,810 classed as “intermediate  
affordable”. The very idea of “affordable”, moreover, has been twisted out of shape: it now denotes rent  
levels of up to 80% of the local market rate, which in many cases – London is the best example – is clearly  
not affordable at all. A sense of mad economics now runs deep in all parts of the housing economy: 2017  
was the year that the construction giant Bovis admitted to moving thousands of people into homes that were  
15 unfinished, and offered homebuyers millions of pounds in compensation. Last March Shelter reported that  
more than half of buyers of new-build homes in England have had major problems with construction,  
fixtures and fittings. By way of a grim punchline, in December the chairman of the huge housebuilder  
Persimmon – a company given a substantial helping hand by George Osborne’s help-to-buy scheme, and  
the focus of plenty of complaints about basic building standards – resigned after news broke that its chief  
20 executive was in line to be paid a bonus of £110m. Six months before, the mess of institutional snobbery and  
racism tangled up in housing policy had been brought to the surface by the Grenfell Tower disaster; last  
week’s Guardian reports about residents of a block in Croydon built using the same infamous cladding being  
charged vast sums to replace it have given the whole saga an awful new twist. On and on the stories go,  
underlining an inescapable truth: that if any aspect of our national life embodies Britain’s failure to either  
25 deal with the present or intelligently plan for the future, it is the homes we live in. Travel around the  
country, look at the housing developments that increasingly ring our towns and cities, and one big question  
ought to spring to mind: do any of them reflect the best design, the changing way we live, or how  
environmental thinking ought to be transforming architecture? Most new houses are seemingly built  
according to the same templates, are frequently sold at stupidly high prices, and are too often full of snags  
30 and faults. Ordinarily, they will be exercises in faux-Georgian kitsch, built according to the architectural  
prejudices introduced to the culture by that dilettantish ignoramus Prince Charles, and clustered in  
developments named to evoke some lost, misty England of solid cottages and children playing hopscotch on  
the cobbles: Knights’ Rise, Saxon Fields, Monarchs Keep. The rooms in their houses are likely to be  
cramped: Britain is reckoned to have the smallest new-build homes in Europe, partly because there are no  
35 mandatory national space standards. And too many of these places lack the shared spaces and amenities that  
might give them some small sense of community: meeting halls, sizeable play areas, any space for  
businesses beyond a single small supermarket. What is going on here? Since 1995, the total value of UK  
land has increased more than fivefold. According to the Valuation Office, whereas the average price of  
agricultural land in England is £21,000 per hectare, the equivalent with planning permission for housing  
40 now comes in at a cool £6m. Impossible land prices cut out developers beyond the tiny handful of giants  
who dominate the market. The sums they have paid for their plots have consequences not just for house  
prices, but basic standards: developers too often try to make their profits by building houses as cheaply as  
possible, and squeezing the share given over to “affordable” homes. Meanwhile, from ecological standards,  
through planning policy, to regulations governing housing associations, the government has done what Tory  
45 governments always do, and pursued a deregulation drive. The planning departments of local authorities  
have been blitzed by austerity, leaving councils without the expertise to meaningfully oversee new  
housebuilding proposals. The results are plain to see. You could begin to rebalance the financial context for  
housebuilding via the kind of land value tax mentioned in the last Labour manifesto, which would bring  
down the prices of plots by discouraging the hoarding of potential housing sites. But that should only be the  
50 start. [...]

*The Nation*, Feb. 8, 2018

**"Trump Is Making Life Even Harder for Working-Class Women,"** by Katha Pollitt

*His administration has already made workers, especially women, poorer, less secure, and less safe.*

5 Twitter has been merciless to Renee Elliott, the laid-off Indiana Carrier worker whose speech at a labor-group press conference in mid-January made her the face of the Trump-voting white working class. In a voice vibrating with emotion, Elliott said she'd been excited to vote for Trump, who had visited the plant and promised to keep Carrier jobs from going to Mexico: "He's walking through and we're in awe, like, 'Savior!'" But now, as pink slips\* were being handed out to 215 workers, including herself, Elliott felt "angry and forgotten." [...]

10 I completely agree that "economic anxiety" is not a full explanation of why white working-class people chose the creepy tweeter. As Brittney Cooper said recently at a panel at the New York Institute for the Humanities, black and brown people are also facing hard times, but they didn't vote for Trump. (On the other hand, Trump didn't promise them anything; he just called their communities ghettos, hells, and war zones and quipped that they should vote for him because what did they have to lose?—ha, ha.) Sure, Elliott was foolish, even in terms of her own immediate self-interest, ignoring the warnings of her then-union leader, Chuck Jones, who, for his troubles, was called out by Trump on Twitter.

15 But Elliott was hardly alone in focusing on her own personal situation at the expense of the larger picture, in hearing what she wanted to hear, or in being overly impressed by a candidate's personal attention. Nor is she alone in naively placing her trust in someone notorious for being untrustworthy. In any case, what's done is done. 2018 is coming up, and then 2020, and we don't want her to make the same mistake. So let's ask: What does she face going forward, thanks to Trump and the Republicans?

20 Trump not only broke his promise to preserve Elliott's job; he and his fellow Republicans are working overtime to make life harder—much harder—for her in her likely future. For instance, let's say Elliott, who will receive a one-time payment, severance pay, and six months of health insurance from Carrier, goes on unemployment, something she is proud to say she's never done. Uh-oh. The Labor Department has indicated it wants to give states greater leeway to drug-test unemployment recipients, which is pretty humiliating.

25 After her Carrier-paid health insurance runs out, she may find herself applying for Medicaid. Uh-oh. Under new guidance issued by the Trump administration, Indiana has become the second state to implement a work requirement for Medicaid recipients. Under Trump, you see, we no longer believe low-income people are entitled to at least some basic health care. Funding for community health centers, which was previously a bipartisan and noncontroversial issue, is currently up in the air.

30 Since good jobs are in short supply in Indianapolis—Elliott was making \$18 an hour at Carrier—let's say she gets a job waitressing, like thousands of other working-class women. Uh-oh. Last December, the administration proposed allowing restaurant owners to take workers' tips and distribute them as they see fit (even to management and themselves) as long as they pay those workers the minimum wage—in Indiana, that's \$7.25 an hour. Since Elliott has a hair-dresser license, she might try that instead, but unless she is self-employed, she might run up against the same problem and find herself working for minimum wage. Fortunately, there are food stamps, right? Maybe not: Here, too, the Trump administration is pushing to expand work requirements and also make deep cuts to the program.

35 Let's hope things won't be quite so dire for Elliott. Perhaps she'll get a salaried white-collar job—working in hospital administration, perhaps. But what if she suspects that she's being paid less than men in the same slot? She'll have a harder time suing, because the Trump administration no longer requires the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to collect the relevant data on race and gender from employers. Overtime pay could really help Elliott with the bills, and the Obama administration made millions of salaried employees eligible who were previously paid too much to qualify. But uh-oh. The Trump administration isn't contesting a judge's ruling against that expansion. And if Elliott ends up at a workplace where employees are trying to unionize, she'll find that Trump's National Labor Relations Board has made it harder.

45 But wait—if she gets a job, won't Elliott benefit from Trump's great triumph, the tax bill? People complain that the Koch brothers and other one-percenters are getting billions in lowered taxes that will explode the deficit and require massive cuts in social spending, but the little people get something too. In a quickly deleted tweet, House Speaker Paul Ryan wrote: "A secretary at a public high school in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, said she was pleasantly surprised her pay went up \$1.50 a week.... she said [that] will more than cover her Costco membership for the year."

50 At least Elliott won't have to worry about Trump's move to endanger transparent financial advice for retirement, because she isn't likely to accumulate much of a nest egg. But she'll have Social Security, right? Trump promised he would never cut that. By now, let's hope Elliott has learned the hard way what Trump's promises are worth.

\*pink slip: document notifying a worker of his or her termination of employment.

## IS 'WOMAN' NOW AN OFFENSIVE WORD?

Matthew Parris, *The Spectator*, 26 May 2018

I do not know whether the Speaker of the House of Commons called the present Leader of the House a 'stupid woman'. It certainly wouldn't have been a nice thing to say, but I've found it hard to decide whether MPs should boot him out. Many Tory friends seethe with dislike for the man; there are plenty of allegations of partiality or vindictiveness towards individuals, and one does get the impression he doesn't much care for the present government. Yet few Speakers in recent decades have stood up to ministers more resolutely, or done as much as Bercow in opening up the building and its institutions to a wider public. I can add little, then, beyond remarking that it would be sad if a Speaker with a good deal to be proud of were to be dragged unwillingly from the Chair, so hopefully he will recognise when it would be best to quit of his own volition. He should be remembered as a bold and innovative, if opinionated, Speaker whose time in the Chair was a lively one in the history of the Speakership. It may be rather up to him whether that legacy is to be overshadowed by forcible ejection. My interest in this latest fuss is not political but concerns a deeper problem that has exercised me for years. It relates not to the word 'stupid' but (in this example) the word 'woman'. In 'stupid woman', what is insulting about the second term in the alleged insult? A word may be used neutrally as a description: 'American', 'cyclist' or 'engineer', for instance. Desiring to insult someone who happened to answer any of those three descriptions by calling them (say) 'stupid', you would add nothing to the offensiveness of your remark by coupling 'stupid' with 'engineer'/'cyclist'/'American'. Some words, though, are considered inherently insulting. 'Idiot', 'bastard', 'slob' or 'coward', for example. Coupling an insulting adjective like 'stupid' to these will compound the insult. I should like to be called a stupid slob even less than to be called just a stupid individual. There is, however, a third category, and it is these words that concern me. They are chameleon terms, taking their colour from the presumed intention of those who utter them. These are words that should carry no baggage and should be straightforward and useful descriptors, but refer to a group against which there is, or was, prejudice or belittlement. Such terms can therefore be used both in the capacity of being true, and also the capacity of insulting those they describe. 'Woman' is an example. 'Man' is not. Andrea Leadsom's five immediate predecessors in office were all men, the most recent being David Lidington. If, in a row between the two, Bercow had called Mr Lidington a 'stupid man', would this cause the fuss that his calling Leadsom a 'stupid woman' (if he did) has proved? Indeed if Leadsom had called Bercow a stupid man, would that have been a matter for press headlines? So why does 'woman' cause a stir? It can only be because some quite wrongly think this a demeaning term. But here's my question: do we, by being indignant at its use, unwittingly validate its derogatory meaning? I'm genuinely unsure of the answer. There are many other examples. Here are a few. 'Welsh', 'homosexual', 'Jew', 'dwarf', 'Tory', 'Pakistani', 'Boer' (in South Africa) and (in South America) 'indio' (meaning 'Indian') are descriptors that can usefully be used neutrally but which in some contexts will indicate a derogatory intention on the part of the speaker. Thus you may have noticed that politicians have almost stopped talking about 'the Welsh' and use the expression 'the people of Wales' — although 'the Scots' and 'Scotsman' remain in general currency and one rarely hears 'the people of Scotland'. When Neil Kinnock was so damagingly dubbed 'the Welsh windbag' I'm afraid it was not just the alliteration but both the words in that duo that carried the insult. 'English windbag' not only fails to alliterate, but would puzzle its audience as to what the adjective 'English' added to the mockery. I am, equally, afraid that (in the circumstances in which the insult might be hurled) the offensiveness of 'stupid Pakistani' does not derive from 'stupid' alone. Yet Pakistanis who notice people skirting round the noun in search of substitutes like 'Asian' must feel sad that to name their country of origin is now taken as an insult. I baulk a little (though really we shouldn't) at saying someone is a Jew and catch myself recasting the sentence so that 'Jewish' can be used. There is a gain: no unintended discourtesy is risked. But there is a loss: one has implicitly accepted that it could be insulting to call someone a Jew. [...] What's the answer? I can only propose hanging on to your pride in the word for what you are. Called a stupid woman, Mrs Leadsom should dispute the adjective and, as to the noun, congratulate Mr Bercow on his powers of observation.

## THE UK OVERESTIMATES ITS DIPLOMATIC CLOUT – POST-BREXIT, IT WILL BE A SMALL PLAYER ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE

Mary Dejevsky, *The Independent*, March, 28, 2018

1 “A triumph for UK diplomacy”, is how the expulsion of more than 100 Russians from more than 20 countries is being presented by the Prime Minister and her Foreign Secretary. And, in a way, it is. Those who have given marching orders to Russian diplomats – commonly referred to in official statements as “undeclared spies” (note: declared spies – good; undeclared spies – bad) include a majority of our European Union partners, the US, Canada and Australia, as well as Nato headquarters. Let me observe only as an aside that things have come to a pretty pass when the tally for expelled diplomats – a number that is likely to be doubled when Moscow gets round to retaliating – is regarded as a benchmark of diplomatic success. It might rather be seen as the reverse: an actual failure of diplomacy. But there we are. It rather depends who is the target of your diplomacy, and in this case it was obviously not Russia, which is charged in the court of politics with the Salisbury poisonings, but our EU partners, other friends (Ukraine) and Nato allies. And one reason – perhaps *the* reason – why this is being touted in London as such a triumph is that it allows Brexiteers to counter one of the most insistent charges of the Remainers: that this country’s international clout will be severely diminished by our departure from the European Union. Some of the most bullish in the Leave camp are even arguing that it will be enhanced. At a time when both Theresa May (suspected of being “soft” on Brexit) and Boris Johnson (accused of bumbling incompetence) were politically under the weather, you can understand why the Western chorus of Russia-bashing comes as music to their ears. How close, though, are appearance and reality? For a start, uniting a quorum of Western countries around vilification of Russia is not the hardest of sells, especially now Vladimir Putin has just won another six years in power. On the same day that Theresa May was announcing the expulsions and a few less obvious measures, the Russian energy behemoth Gazprom was raising a €750m (£656m) Eurobond in the City. And no sooner had Germany told four Russians to go, than it gave the go-ahead to the contentious second Nordstream gas pipeline that will allow Russian gas exports to bypass Ukraine. One conclusion that could be drawn is that anyone, Brexit-Britain included, can exert influence on others, so long the message chimes with their interests and there is little or nothing to pay. But another is that UK diplomacy will probably have to work much harder in the time of Brexit. Support was hardly spontaneous or fulsome, and we don’t know what inducements the UK may have offered. And, of course, it’s easier if the target is generally unpopular. Those who felt that it was not in their interests to join the protest did not come on board. So how would it be trying to drum up some concerted action against China? Or against the EU, or an EU member, once we have left? And was there perhaps an element, this time, of the EU trying to drive home the message that such support is conditional on membership? It is probably true that the UK will retain some clout in the area of security and intelligence, though that could be more problematical if transatlantic relations are cool. But what of trade – vis-a-vis a tariff-happy United States – or a China that imposes terms only a fraction short of dumping? Today’s members have made clear that there is no rebuilding the Commonwealth, old or new. Australia and others had to restructure their trade after the UK joined the EU; there is no prospect of their reversing track now. Not only will the UK have to work harder, but size and perceived allegiances will matter. Russia can cope with expulsions, especially if it gets its way on Gazprom and Nordstream. Is there not a danger the UK could get “picked on”, and not just by Russia, if its commercial alliances are all ad hoc? As for an international diplomatic role, the UK has taken no part in any of the major mediation opportunities of recent years. A nuclear North Korea may not be an immediate threat to the UK, but we have been absent, or perceived as partial, both in the war in Syria and the conflict in Ukraine. First calls are made not to London, but increasingly to Paris and Berlin. A new role as peace-broker seems not to be on the cards. The UK looks set to be straddled awkwardly as a country too big to be a plausible intermediary, but too small to be a great power. It is worth asking, though, whether all Brexiteers will regret this. Not everyone who voted Leave did so in the hope of making Britain – or England – great again. For some, “taking back control” meant the UK being its own master, not only in who it lets in, but in what it does outside its borders. And the appetite here was for drawing in our horns, ditching imperial nostalgia and ending ill-advised interventions. So while it is unlikely that the UK will resemble, say, Norway – either in its future relations with the EU or in any independent path it may choose – at least for this group of Leave voters the lessons for UK diplomacy from the past month may not be too disheartening. A country that feels smaller in its reach; a country that has lowered its international ambitions; a country that has to work hard to build coalitions, might be one where a good number of Brexiteers and Remainers could actually converge.

## MEGHAN MARKLE INTRODUCES THE BRITISH MONARCHY TO THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

By Sarah Lyall, *The New York Times*, May 19, 2018

1 LONDON — It was an electrifying and unexpected moment in the midst of what had been a (mostly) by-  
the-book British wedding service. And as it went on, you could practically feel centuries of tradition begin  
to peel away. Here was a relaxed, charismatic African-American bishop — Michael Bruce Curry, the head  
of the Episcopal Church — speaking to British aristocrats and members of the royal family in the cadence of  
5 the black American church. But what was striking was not just his message, of love and inclusion; or his  
tone, which was soaring and magisterial; or his obvious delight in the matter at hand. It was the sheer fact of  
his prominence in a service that featured a fair number of ecclesiastical heavyweights, including the  
archbishop of Canterbury (who tweeted his admiration of the bishop). The service, carefully put together by  
Meghan Markle and Prince Harry, included all the usual traditional elements, like a reading from the Bible  
10 by Harry's aunt, the sister of Diana, the Princess of Wales. It also featured a gorgeous rendition of Ben E.  
King's "Stand by Me," performed by the Kingdom Choir — a Christian group made up of black Britons that  
is based in southeast London and specializes in gospel music — and its leader, the renowned gospel  
singer Karen Gibson. And it included prayers led by His Eminence Archbishop Angelaos, the Coptic  
Orthodox archbishop of London; and Rose Hudson-Wilkin, a black Church of England priest who serves as  
15 chaplain to the queen and is the speaker's chaplain in the House of Commons. And there was a 19-year-old  
cello soloist, Sheku Kanneh-Mason, the first black musician to win the BBC's Young Musician Award in its  
38-year history. Ms. Markle's mother is African-American and her father is white, and it is clear the bride  
wanted to make a point of her racial identity, to put her heritage front and center in full view of a vast built-  
in audience, at home and abroad. And it is equally clear that Prince Harry knew exactly what this would  
20 mean to the tradition-bound royal family. In a place that is so white, in an institution that is so white, in a  
country with serious race problems, it was a gesture of profound significance. And it was a hugely symbolic  
moment on a global stage, with the potential to change the world's view of the royal family, and perhaps  
even Britain's view of itself. It seems fair to say that never have so many minorities, among the  
congregation as well as the clergy and musicians, been in St. George's Chapel at one time before. It was  
25 hard to tell, looking out over the church crowd, what the general reaction was to Bishop Curry's address.  
Some people looked a little bemused; a couple of royals looked as if they were on the verge of giggling, at  
least according to the *The Daily Mail*, which likes to stir up trouble, in this case with mild insinuation. The  
bishop himself seemed to sense he was speaking longer than perhaps some in the crowd were accustomed to,  
although he was not particularly fussed about it. At one point, he appeared to hurry himself along, telling the  
30 couple teasingly: "We gotta get y'all married." (Not everyone knew how to cope with that American  
expression; the BBC rendered it "you all" in its transcript.) But outside the ancient walls of the chapel and  
across the country, the response was jubilant. It was as if Bishop Curry had opened the windows and let a  
breath of air into a room that had felt a little stifling. People in Britain do not usually speak of love in the  
way he did in church. People here do not usually express themselves so forthrightly. "The preacher is doing  
35 50 in a 30 zone and it's brilliant," the BBC presenter Jeremy Vine wrote on Twitter. Also on Twitter, a  
woman named Andrea L. Pino wrote: "Rev. Michael Curry is talking about slaves finding love in the South  
in the face of the Queen of England. This moment is hundreds of years in the making." In another Twitter  
post, from North Carolina, Chris Burris said: "Bishop Michael Curry is quoting Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.  
at Windsor Castle. It's truly a day of wonders." It was indeed an amazing thing to hear Dr. King's words  
40 spoken on an occasion like this. They felt appropriate to the moment — this was, after all, a wedding — but  
had a larger significance, about the world in general and how we should conduct ourselves. "We must  
discover the power of love, the redemptive power of love," Bishop Curry said, quoting Dr. King. "And when  
we do that, we will make of this old world, a new world."