

# P·E·A·C·A·S

Politics, Economics and Current Affairs Society

## 2022-2023 Journal

### ***Olaf Scholz: the calm, collected leader Germany needs in these turbulent times***

Scarcely had Olaf Scholz settled into the Federal Chancellery, the official home of the German chancellor, than Russia invaded Ukraine. (Putin likely chose February for the invasion because Merkel, who had been criticised for her friendliness towards Moscow, was no longer Chancellor.)

Scholz is a member of the SPD (Social Democratic Party), but due to proportional representation is in coalition with the Greens and the Free Democrats. This in itself is fodder for an entire other piece, so I will take the liberty of passing over it and crudely summarising that this coalition means three viewpoints must be considered instead of one



Olaf Scholz speaking in Prague on the future of Europe in August, Image: Petr David Jisek/AP Photo/picture alliance

(particularly as Scholz won by the barest of margins). Decision making is therefore difficult, to say the least. With Germany being a valuable trade partner for Russia, it is key to understand how they have responded to the crisis and specifically how effective Scholz' actions have been. Despite heavy and not entirely unfounded criticism about the delayed nature of his response, Scholz' actions have ultimately been successful - or rather, as successful as they could have been in the face of such an opposition.

Russia invaded Ukraine on 24 February 2022. Prior to this Scholz hesitated because he saw Putin as a threat but not one significant enough to take action. This included maintaining a ban on sending weapons to Ukraine and offering 5,000 helmets instead.

The reasoning for this can be traced back to the Normandy Format, which was an informal group in which Germany acted as mediator, created after the 2014 Crimea annexation. German politicians in 2022 argued that this mediation role was the reason for the delay in substantial material action; the precarious position would have been jeopardised by supplying weapons to one party. ...full article on page 41

#### ***"Modern conservatism is fundamentally incoherent and nonsensical"***

I am not an advocate of traditional conservatism. It seems to me to be an ideology of stagnation, that sees all of the evil and suffering in the world and decides that it is acceptable. It actively resists any positive change that it believes can be stopped, opposing progress in almost all of its forms. It does, however, rest on a strong foundation of fundamental principles and beliefs, which if accepted lead somewhat logically to its conclusions. Conservatism in the form it most commonly takes today does not possess this. ...full article on page 38

#### ***"Russia's war on Ukraine provides the European Union with a chance to reunite its member states."***

It truly is difficult to maintain optimism in times of war, but Ukraine, a nation suffering from persistent bombardment, has demonstrated that it is certainly not impossible.

As Russian troops stormed the soundless Donbas region, unfeigned support from the European Union and the rest of the world displayed an authentic sense of togetherness. Togetherness for the indomitable Ukrainian soldiers who have endured and are still enduring times of conflict. This came forth in February; now months have passed and Putin's war still ...full article on page 10

### ***Does the future of the Republican Party lie with Ron DeSantimonious?***

There is a cloud that is starting to linger over the Republican Party (GOP) as it nears the time to pick their candidate for President, and that is the presence of Donald Trump. Back in 2020 the businessman, who dubbed himself a 'stable genius', was thought to remain the obvious 2024 candidate choice, even after the Capitol Riots on January 6 2021, as in May of that year still a majority of Republican supporters believed that Trump was the victor of the 2020 election. But the recent midterm elections in November 2022 may have brought light to a political shift within the Republican Party that has seen increasing aversion to the likes of 'The Donald'.

His unsuccessful endorsements of far-right conservative characters such as Kari Lake, for Governor in Arizona, and Mehmet Oz, for Pennsylvania Senator, haunted the GOP with underwhelming results across the country and has left them with a far less comfortable route to the Presidency than they may have previously anticipated. After he announced ...full article on page 36

#### ***Recent events only further the case that the global balance of power remains firmly with the West***

What is power, anyway? Before confronting the question of whether the global balance of power is shifting from the West to the East, we must first examine what power really is. Historically, it has been relatively simple to explain; in a feudal society, it was those at the top that had power over everybody else - that is, they could tell those below them what to do, and they would do it. Refuse, and, to put it bluntly, they would die. It was clear who held power over who, because it was within an enclosed ...full article on page 21

# **Editor's note**

**The following is a selection of essays and opinion pieces written by students of The Judd School about Politics, Economics and Current Affairs.**

**For formatting purposes some footnotes have been omitted. Full references are available on request.**

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# Essays

## **“Russia’s war on Ukraine provides the European Union with a chance to reunite its member states” To what extent do you agree with this claim?**

I agree with the statement as throughout history the aggressive actions of a foreign enemy have helped bring both people and countries closer together in order to face off the foreign threat. However, one can’t forget the actions of some member states, and the heavy reliance of some countries on Russian oil and gas, which may yet shatter the volatile unity seen in the EU against Russia.



The prime minister of Hungary (Viktor Orbán) has presented himself to his people as a ‘strongman’ and under him the Hungarian government has shifted towards ‘illiberal democracy’, promoting countries such as Russia and China as

models of governance, while simultaneously promoting Euroscepticism and opposition to Western democracy. Partnering this with an increasing lack of press freedom and judicial independence, Hungary has become the only EU member state ranked as ‘partly free’ by Freedom House (a US based think tank which publishes annual assessments of over 200 countries and territories). All of the above could spell trouble for the EU as under Orbán, Hungary’s relations with Russia has become increasingly friendly, in large part thanks to Orbán’s “Eastern Opening Policy,” created in opposition to Hungary’s Western coalitions (such as the EU and NATO). The policy heavily prioritised Russia as an ally, helping to tighten the relationship between the countries. One major proof of this ‘friendship’ is the construction of Russian-built nuclear reactors despite the ongoing war in Ukraine and the EU’s efforts to lessen their reliance on Russia for energy. All of this cosying up to Russia can and should be brought under control by the rest of the

EU. One method would be to cut aid to Hungary until it reverses its undemocratic changes, although this runs the risk of further alienating Hungary and pushing it towards Russia. Another possible method would be the reverse of the first method, promising an increase in aid if Hungary first rejoins the folds; this would be far harder to pull off as it could involve either cutting funding in other sectors or requesting larger national contributions (to name but 2 plausible methods) both of which would be unpopular with most member states.

## **“The EU is now faced with its biggest threat since the USSR”**

On the other hand, the EU is now faced with its biggest threat since the USSR. A world in which Russia wins the war in Ukraine would be a very dangerous one for many eastern EU member states (mainly the Baltics and Moldova both of which may become victim to the baseless claims that they belong to Russia due to their shared histories), and this reality has been recognised by most of them. The existence of a shared enemy has throughout history helped unite groups which previously felt antagonised or even threatened by each other. One clear example of this is Hitler uniting the USSR and USA against him in

WW2, leading to his downfall and suicide; another example of this is seen in many authoritarian countries, now and throughout history (Stalin’s purges in the USSR being a good example) which make up fake enemies and spread claims that there are spies among the people, and that



a good citizen will be constantly on the lookout for enemies of the state. The existence of an ‘enemy’ (real or not) helps leaders to rally the people around them and give people a clear scapegoat to blame for any minor misfortune that may happen to them. While most people in Western Europe more or less don’t really care about the threat that Russia poses, many people in Eastern Europe do, and will demand that their governments do something to diminish the threat posed by Russia. This ensures that many previously Soviet countries will look further Westwards for security and trade, instead of relying on their eastern authoritarian neighbour.

A big problem facing the EU regarding Russia is the EU’s heavy reliance on Russian oil and gas for energy, in 2021, Russia was the largest exporter of oil and



natural gas to the EU and 40% of all the gas used in the EU came from Russia, a large majority of EU countries are reliant on Russia to supply their energy in one way or another. This reliance on Russian gas and oil means that any attempts at EU unity on sanctions may fail simply because the countries with a lower GDP may not be able to afford alternative energy sources. As the EU tries to wean itself off of Russian energy, the energy prices will, of course, rise, and rise they have. Gas costs US\$410 BOE in August 2022 which is an over 100% increase since 2020. This sharp increase is being felt by people across Europe, and for many it may mean they have to choose between going hungry or not heating their home. This will, of course, make people frustrated, and it may force politicians to reverse the sanctions in

an attempt to lower the energy price. Any such attempts would only help fracture the EU, as some states will not want a compromise on sanctions and will feel that any countries which do are being 'soft' on Russia

In conclusion, I believe that while the ongoing conflict in Ukraine does provide the EU with a unique chance to reunite its member states and emerge as a united collection of democratic countries, whether or not the EU seizes this chance and joins together against a malign threat is a very different question. The opposite is also very true, and the war in Ukraine may lead to the fracture of the EU.

*Maxim Mueller*

# RES Young Economist of the Year Competition 2022

## **‘Which university degrees do you think will be considered “high value” in 5-10 years’ time, and why?’**

**T**his country is facing a critical skills deficit. Given that two thirds of businesses surveyed in the 2017 CBI/Pearson Education and Skills Survey said that skills gaps are a threat to the UK’s global competitiveness, degree apprenticeships are a pragmatic solution in filling the skills shortage and increasing social mobility and productivity. With this in mind, what role do university degrees play in preparing the workforce for the uncertainty ahead? There will be three categories of degrees which will be most valuable to society in upcoming years: (1) degrees which support the development of automation, (2) degrees which fill the gaps that automation creates and (3) degrees which enhance innovative thought to stimulate cultural evolution and development.

Despite Marx’ belief that capitalism would collapse due to competition and the resultant decline in prices, in profits and in wages, in the UK we have experienced embourgeoisement which has shown that capitalism has, in fact, been a lot more resilient. Capitalism generates automation, and, as suggested by economic theory, automation reduces the numbers of workers required by unit of output and

increases productivity. As automation continues to evolve, skills must also continue to evolve: the half-life of a skill today is 5 years compared to a lifetime in previous centuries. With such fast paced evolution, it will therefore not be slow-moving higher education that provides the skills of the future workforce, but employers.

Since the demand for new skills is increasing, degree apprenticeships are an heuristic experience. According to the ONS “The G7 countries’ average (excluding the UK) output per worker was 13% above the UK in 2019”. Degree apprenticeships are more practical than the traditional degrees, thus are crucial to filling the skills gap and boosting the country’s



productivity. For example, an engineering degree apprenticeship at the Dyson Institute offers a tuition fee free University of Warwick degree, a competitive salary

and direct entry into employment at Dyson.

A WEF report predicts that by 2025 an estimated 97 million new jobs will emerge that are ‘more adapted to the new division of labour between humans, machines and algorithms’. Critical thinking and problem solving skills are increasingly relevant for employability and students studying subjects demonstrating these techniques such as mathematics and computer science are earning almost twice as much as those studying creative arts after five years. Given that the current national debt is £2.38 trillion and that a graduate only starts repaying undergraduate student loans when they earn £27,295 a year or more, there is a large opportunity cost of students choosing ‘low-value’ subjects such as creative arts and agriculture. In the UK there is one NHS doctor for every 482 citizens compared to in Uganda where there is one doctor for every 5,950 citizens. Therefore, due to the law of diminishing returns, a degree in medicine in Uganda is much more valuable to Ugandan society than a medicine degree in the UK is, thus suggesting that the subject the degree is in, in the UK, is less relevant.

And although degrees often resulting in higher paid jobs are beneficial to our country’s economy, there are risks of defining a ‘high-value degree’ in purely income terms because it doesn’t take into account any positive externalities more widely for society, or any rewarding

impacts on the individual. As Goolsbee, Levitt and Syverson describe, as the level of education increases the external marginal benefits are maximised; an educated workforce makes an efficient society and therefore degrees in any subject are valuable. Higher education enriches society by inspiring expression and innovation, which are important ingredients for the evolution of culture.

## **“The standard of living gained from an arts degree does not match the level of enjoyment”**

In addition, people who pursue a career in the arts industry may benefit from a higher quality of life from greater enjoyment of their job. However, for degrees relating to creative arts the average income is a mere £21,000 for women 5 years after graduation, so their standard of living does not match their level of enjoyment.

Creative industries also hold great significance because they offer goods and services where high value degree holders can spend their disposable income.

Households in the top income decile spend five times as much on recreation and culture than those in the bottom decile and proportionately more of their total spending is in this category, 14% compared with 10%. Nonetheless, the recent



coronavirus lockdowns has shown entertainment to be a fragile industry; A UNESCO report revealed that 10 million creative jobs were lost worldwide because of the pandemic. Despite creative subjects being beneficial for cultural development and personal happiness, the risk they pose for both personal and national income is considerable.

Whilst automation has replaced many jobs previously fulfilled by humans with increased efficiency and productivity, there remain important gaps which modern technology still cannot address. A 2017 McKinsey report estimated that less than 5% of occupations consist of activities that can be fully automated. Reading emotions, managing people, applying expertise and interacting socially remain human strengths in the changing economy. Perhaps degrees such as psychology, sociology and management should be valued as highly as degrees utilised in technological development.

Furthermore, socioeconomic background is revealed by an IFS report to be a significant contributing factor to students' future earnings. Not only are privately educated pupils earning 70% more than the bottom quintile of state educated pupils, but a further report estimates that 18.2% of independent school pupils have a

salary of £70,000 or more in their thirties, compared to 7.6% of their state school contemporaries. There is clearly inequality built into our educational system before we even get to higher education.

Overall, university degrees are rightly under scrutiny. Despite data from the Graduate Labour Market Survey which showed that the average working age graduate earned £10,000 more than the average non-graduate in 2017 recent ONS statistics show that in 2017 49% of recent graduates were working in non-graduate roles across the UK. Given also the incessant evolution of skills required in the workforce, the future of higher education

**“Perhaps unis should offer all subjects but only within the degree apprenticeship model”**

should be more skills-based. Degree apprenticeships increase social mobility, contribute to an increase in productivity and widen participation. Perhaps universities should offer all subjects but only within the degree apprenticeship model.

*Gemma Preston*

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# **“Russia’s war on Ukraine provides the European Union with a chance to reunite its member states.”**

## **To what extent do you agree with this claim?**

**R**ussia’s invasion of Ukraine is one of the most harrowing attacks on European democracy and freedom since World War 2, and the European Union, whose motto is ‘United in Diversity’ should’ve surely been one of the first to respond to this barbaric attack. And they were, as shown by the LSE article published on the 14th March 2022, which describes the rapid attempt by the European Union to bring a swift and decisive end to the conflict. The EU has removed seven Russian banks from SWIFT, imposed sanctions on multiple Oligarchs with close connections to President Putin, made an agreement to reduce Russian gas consumption by 75% by the end of the year, and put many other policies in place in order to stop the war. Initially, this rapid response looked like the catalyst the European Union wanted to help reunite the 27 member states after a fractious few years for the Union, including the UK’s exit and differing opinions over migration, which, according to an article by the European Commission, is believed by 31% of respondents to be a key issue facing the European Union. However, six months later, with the war still raging on in the eastern part of

Ukraine, and comments such as, “We [Hungarians] are not a mixed race ... and we do not want to become a mixed race,” from EU leaders (in this case Hungary’s Viktor Orban), is this war really a chance for the EU to reunite?

The simple reason for the EU states not being united is because of differing cultures and values held by each country and their respective leaders, and the earlier the EU starts to accept this, the greater the political and economic union can be. The



fact is, the needs of Eastern European countries such as Romania and Bulgaria are completely different to the needs of Western European countries such as The Netherlands and Ireland. A country whose, according to the OEC website, main exports are motor parts and electrical wiring, will simply not be able to have lots of common ground with a country whose

main exports are vaccines and packaged medicines. This shows that no matter the political climate, no matter if any wars are happening, unification will never be possible. And whilst it is still possible for the EU to be successful, as it has been over the past 45 years, demonstrated by the fact that it has grown to include 27 individual countries, it needs to ensure that integration is limited. This is especially important considering that one of the main turning points in UK acceptance of the EU was the signing of the Maastricht Treaty, one of the biggest increases of European Integration in the past century, which led to the 'Maastricht Blues' in the late part of the 1990s. This anti-EU sentiment never faded, and eventually led to the 6th largest economy in the world triggering Article 50 and leaving the EU after the shocking referendum result in June 2016. With the rise of far-right sentiments in countries such as France, in which Eurosceptic politician Marine Le Pen won 41% of the vote in the second round of the presidential election. Alongside the



election of Giorgia Meloni in Italy, who, although she says that she is united with

the rest of Europe in the fight against Putin, has Eurosceptic viewpoints which should serve as a stark warning to the EU of possible existential threats. It could be very possible that two major countries could start a domino effect that could cause the unraveling of the entire European Union as we know it. The EU must start to accommodate these leaders if they are to have any chance of reuniting the member states, especially considering that the people who elected these leaders could have the final say on their country's membership, if the UK's example is followed, and referendums are used to decide the matter. Should the EU do anything to further disillusion these leaders, they will have sealed the coffin on their own fate.

Despite this, a quick transition into 'the United States of Europe', a United States style federal nation, could be seen as a way to easily unite all the members into one economy, one army, and one system in which all countries can be represented through a senate system like in the US. This is an idea first put forward by Victor Hugo in 1849, based on the principles of peace and open trade. According to an article by Global Network, the opening of borders has massively increased trade between the nations of Europe, and movement of Capital has increased to levels that are like the States in the USA. Furthermore, the war could provide the

# **“The war could provide the political will needed to create a United States of Europe”**

political will to do this, as by creating a United States of Europe, the central government of the nation would be able to control resources and ensure no region is self-sufficient enough to start a war, a tragedy that certainly no modern-day leader wants. Furthermore, economic inequality, another issue in Europe, has been massively decreased under the EU

and further integration would surely only further level out the playing field for all members, something that could help unite the countries.

Despite the current possibility of a united European Union due to the war in Ukraine, it simply isn't possible because of the political stances of many leaders and people due to their beliefs over the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, in which the EU took a long time to get a vaccine rollout, and therefore they cannot unite after this war, no matter what they attempt.

*Louis Harrison*

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# The global balance of power is shifting from the West to the East

I agree with the statement above because I believe that the East is already powerful in many ways such as trade, production and military, but still has a lot of growing to do. So, by the end of this century, I think power will have shifted away from the West to the far East.

**“If political situations benefit China, it could emerge as the most powerful country in the world”**

Since the USA is the most powerful country in the world and power shifted to it from Europe only a century ago people may disagree with the statement on the basis that it is too soon to see the death of western power. The Collapse of the USSR has left the USA as the sole superpower for the last thirty years. Following historical patterns across the last thousand years, we can see that the lifespan of an unrivalled superpower (such as the British Empire or the Roman Empire) can be between 100-500 years. This suggests that until another country can emerge as the USA's equal, it is unlikely that power will shift away from the west.

However, the unchanging government of China has allowed it to develop into the second most powerful country across 25 years. Using the USA as an example again we can see that its sudden economic boom helped it become the most powerful country (with the help of two world wars). By looking at the past we can predict the future. China already dominates the world trade industry and can potentially ruin countries by applying sanctions on them despite it only recently (around 2010) creating a sanction toolbox. If political situations benefit China, it is well within reason that it could emerge as the most powerful country in the world by the end of the century.

The USA has the world's largest GDP, and Europe contains 4 of the 8 largest economies. With the annual rate of growth in these countries looking like they're soon going to reach pre-covid levels, it is unlikely that the East can compete with them without another crisis that only affects the west. Additionally, the GDP per capita in countries like Germany and the UK is around \$50,000 compared to around \$12,000 in China and a mere \$2,000 in India. So while China's economy is the second largest in the world, its

citizens are much poorer than almost every western country. Furthermore, the cost of living crisis is hurting both East and West, meaning that no one is benefitting from the issue. However, if one side of the globe can recover from it faster than the other, that hemisphere will have an advantage heading into 2023 and beyond. Lastly, most western countries are already trying to become carbon neutral by the first half of this century, as they are all developed nations and can afford to invest in the next stage of civilisation. On the other hand, eastern countries such as China and India are still classed as developing countries, and have only set 'provisional' targets, which come decades after the one decided at COP26, and were chosen by western countries. This shows how behind in infrastructure and development most of the East is compared with its western counterparts.

As of 2022, 3 of the top 5 largest economies in the world are Asian. China is second only to the USA and Japan is third, with India overtaking the United Kingdom in the first half of this year to become the



fifth largest economy. South Korea rounds out the top ten. While it is clear that the lesser Eastern countries still have a lot of improving to do (the next Asian economy excluding Russia is Indonesia at 16th), recent decades have seen unprecedented



growth in the Eastern hemisphere and graphs showing annual GDP growth show that it is unlikely for this to slow anytime soon. Therefore it would be naive to believe these countries won't be stable and developed by the end of the century. Japan and South Korea are good examples of developed eastern countries. However, they're much smaller and less populated than India and China. If we use Japan as an example, we can presume that as long as the governments of the Asian global powers keep investing into their countries, then eventually power will shift firmly to the East.

The West might not let the East take the power away. Currently, western countries are united in their position against Russia's military operation in Ukraine, while examples such as NATO show the

West remaining united in peacetime, despite political differences. It is likely that the West will protect itself from eastern threats should any arise. The same cannot be said for Asia. India and China have tried to act 'indifferent' when it comes to matters relating to the Ukraine crisis but far eastern countries (namely Japan and South Korea) have thrown their full support behind Ukraine, and a poll run in Kyrgyzstan shows us that 36% of the voters believe Ukraine is to blame for the war while only 14% blame Russia. Data such as this helps us see that while the West is united in their view, the East is much less coordinated.

**“The East will have the ball in their court relatively soon”**

Finally, this idea of a unified West is still a new concept. This time a century ago the world looked very different. And hindsight can allow us to see how divided the West was eighty years ago. The point is that while at the moment the East is divided, we cannot predict how diplomatic relations will change across the course of this century, and so we cannot guarantee that they will remain as they are now. With both hemispheres capable of destroying the other with nuclear weapons, either side could have world power within my lifetime. So to conclude, barring no catastrophic country crippling event, I believe that the East will have the ball in their court relatively soon.

*Alexander Blackmore*

# The cost-of-living crisis

**T**he cost-of-living crisis has become a very important issue that we, as a society are facing and this has become increasingly prevalent especially seen through the recent significant increases in gas and energy prices. There is no doubt that as the prices of essential items increase, a significant number of the population will struggle financially as the crisis

continues. Whilst there is not just one cause of this crisis, a major factor is the increasing inflation rate which is denting the purchasing power of money; further, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a shock to the economy worldwide, causing delays in supply chains and labour shortages.



Inflation is defined as the sustained rise in the average price in goods and services over a period of time and has been at its highest rate in 40 years at 9.1% in May 2022. It is measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) which is calculated by tracking price changes of around 700 goods and services typically bought by the

average UK household, with different items having proportionate weightings depending on the proportion of income spent on them. These baskets of goods and services are reviewed and changed every year so that they are more representative



of consumer spending patterns. The CPI is a barometer to help determine wages as it is used as a starting point for wage negotiations and the government also uses it to determine increases on state benefits and benefits.

However, using the CPI to measure inflation has its limitations including its time lag because the basket of goods is reviewed once a year so short-term changes and new buying short trends will not be considered; consumers also have different spending patterns, so it is not fully representative of society.

There are three different types of inflation which are caused by different things: demand-pull, supply-push and wage-price spiral inflation. Demand-pull inflation is

caused when there is excess aggregate demand and the supply of goods cannot meet the demand. Aggregate demand is defined as the total demand or spending in an economy over a given period of time. This allows sellers to increase their prices and this type of inflation is caused by high consumption that could be a result of high confidence following low interest rates encourages cheap borrowing and more spending. High demand for exports can be caused by rapid economic growth in other countries; excess money supply causes rising inflation because if the amount of money in the economy does not match the output, the price of goods and services would be increased. As the world recovers from a recession after the pandemic, the demand for goods and services has increased causing an increase to the rate of inflation.

Cost-push inflation is caused by the rising costs of inputs in production, causing an increase in the price of goods and an inward shift of the aggregate supply curve. A rise in wages can lead to an increase in prices as wages can make a large part of a firm's costs; a rise in the price of imported raw materials will cause an increase to the costs of production resulting in increased prices.

Increases in world commodity markets has led to higher inflation rates, for example

recently, wheat prices have increased as a result of the war in Ukraine and Russia as well as other raw materials such as iron and steel. Domestic gas prices have increased by 95% from May 2021 to May 2022, whilst electricity prices have increased by 54% in that same time period because demand increased greatly after recovering from the recession, after the pandemic; and because supplies are threatened from Russia as a result of the conflict.



Wage price spiral inflation is caused when firms raise prices which in turn increases the inflation rate as the price level of the economy increases, increasing inflation expectations and resulting in higher wage demands. This causes a constant cycle of increasing prices, inflation and wage demands.

Those with fixed or near-fixed incomes' cost of living tends to impact them the most, as prices rise but wages remain the same and wages don't increase proportionally with the increase in



inflation. Those on low incomes are also greatly affected by rising prices and the effect of inflation tends to weigh more on them because of the lack of savings to help smooth out consumption when prices rise. Workers with low incomes tend to have low bargaining power over their wages so real wages decrease if inflation outpaces wage rises.

There is also a difference in behavioural changes between low- and high-income households in response to rising prices and the relative importance of rising prices is different with households with different incomes. It is important to understand how differently people are impacted by changes in inflation for measures to be set by governments to help support people.

Monetary policy is one way that the government can intervene to try and reduce the rate of inflation. It is a demand side policy that helps to control the money supply to reduce inflationary pressures. This includes an increase in the bank rate which in turn increases interest rates. An

increase in interest rates discourages consumption and consumers to borrow money to invest because consumers expect prices to decrease in the future, so delay their consumption lowering aggregate demand and in turn, lowering the inflation rate.

However, the effect of changing interest rates is not seen immediately and typically has a lag of 18 months, so the Monetary Policy Committee needs to be able to predict changes to the economy months into the future. Another form of monetary policy is quantitative tightening which involves the central bank selling bonds to reduce the money supply, helping to reduce aggregate demand.

This cost-of-living crisis has had major impacts on the population therefore, it is vital to understand the foundation and consequences in order to recognise how the government can help reduce the impact.

*Vanshika Uppal*

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# **“Russia's war on Ukraine provides the European Union with a chance to reunite its member states.”**

## **To what extent do you agree with this claim?**

**I**t truly is difficult to maintain optimism in times of war, but Ukraine, a nation suffering from persistent bombardment, has demonstrated that it is certainly not impossible. As Russian troops stormed the soundless Donbas region, unfeigned support from the European Union and the rest of the world displayed an authentic sense of togetherness. Togetherness for the indomitable Ukrainian soldiers who have endured and are still enduring times of conflict. This came forth in February; now months have passed and Putin's war still rages, and that once warm feeling of wholeness is slowly dimming. The EU must take this dispute in its stride and, in the process, reunite its member states.



While this war does force pressing matters onto the European Union, it equally supplies it with the rare opportunity to reunite its member states. For one, twenty-

seven of the twenty-seven nations within the EU have been united in sending aid, in some form, to Ukraine. The organisation has been plain in its approach to condemning this conflict, with the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, commenting that “a whole continent has risen in solidarity”. This judgement aligns perfectly with the actions of the European Union's individual members in response to Russia's “unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine”, as EU leaders put it in a joint press statement. So why shouldn't this solidarity allow for a momentous reunification of the countries within the Union, especially now that a common enemy has been identified?

Well, before the war, the EU had become dependent on Russian resources, like gas, to elevate its members' economies. As a matter of fact, prior to the sanctions hurled at Russia back in February, 40% of the European Union's natural gas imports came from the country. Ukrainian oil supplies have also plummeted ever since the dispute began. This unmitigated reliance on Russian reserves has now had repercussions on the EU; repercussions

that have impeded European aspirations to reunify; repercussions that have plunged Europe into deep recession; repercussions that have forced masses out of their jobs and homes in a cost of living crisis like we've never seen before. Our boycotts have sourced a flood of financial woes. When the war is interpreted in this manner, and the wider impacts of it are regarded, it is no wonder the EU has struggled to focus its attention on anything but it. Should we really expect great unity in a period of great unrest that has shaken this continent like no event since the Second World War? Yet, even as the European Union handles harrowing situations across the continent, its states still have the opportunity to come together in defence against the ever-threatening outside world. Throughout the nations within the EU, support for the organisation that strings them together is high. This is despite the fact that the majority of citizens in the EU believe that the organisation could realistically collapse

in the next two decades, according to a 2019 poll by the European Council on

**“The majority of EU citizens think the organisation might collapse, but support remains high”**

Foreign Relations. So, the union should reinforce the support they receive by reaffirming their condemnation of Russia in the strife they so unfairly started. It is certainly possible that there can be a European reunification in this chilling era.

This is of course not the easiest task by any means, especially in war, but the EU must persist before “history repeats itself in such cunning disguise that we don't detect the resemblance until the damage is done”.

*Leo Rodney*

# Recent events only further the case that the global balance of power remains firmly with the West

What is power, anyway? Before confronting the question of whether the global balance of power is shifting from the West to the East, we must first examine what power really is.

Historically, it has been relatively simple to explain; in a feudal society, it was those at the top that had power over everybody else - that is, they could tell those below them what to do, and they would do it. Refuse, and, to put it bluntly, they would die. It was clear who held power over who, because it was within an enclosed internal structure, in which instances of outside influences complicating matters were few and far between, if indeed they existed at all.

As globalisation began to take place though, the question of who held power over who started to become more complicated. What if, say, you were living in a country with a clear ruler, but that ruler knew that if they acted outside the wishes of the ruler of another country, they themselves would be punished? Of course, it may be tempting to simply point straight to the top, but would that overarching leader really be involved in policing petty crimes within your country? That would

surely be a matter for a national level authority, arguably making them the superior body to obey for you.

It is through this increasingly interconnected society, whereby international relations have muddled the previously clear waters of authority, that we have arrived at the point where even defining what power is, let alone where it is held, has proved close to impossible.

But, for the sake of this argument, let us lay some ground rules. We are assuming that we are referring to that very basic sort of power: having the authority to tell others what to do, and knowing they will do it. We are also assuming that revolution *en masse* is out of the question, due to the severe consequences for such action.

Finally, we are assuming that we live in the current world that we do - that may sound arbitrary, but in terms of looking at alliances and geopolitical relations, it will prove integral.

In reality, the labels 'West' and 'East' are almost as equally unhelpful as the very word 'power'. Admittedly, some countries do fit into such boxes quite effectively: the USA, Canada, UK, France and Germany

would all be considered 'Western' nations. On the contrary, China, Russia and North Korea can be safely put in the 'Eastern' section. But what about, for example, African countries? Where do they lie? Or Australia and New Zealand - they are clearly 'Eastern' (assuming we use the Mercator projection), but are some of the closest allies of the 'Western' countries mentioned above.

This difficulty in categorising mere geographical descriptions adds another layer of complexity to an already tricky question. So, once more we have to simplify our example further, and take 'Western' not as a locational-based term, but as one depicting the alliances involving the USA, and 'Eastern' instead as those nations that would consider themselves to be in opposition to the first group.

It is not a perfect fix: after all, there are plenty of examples of countries floating in between the two groups, but considering such examples tend to not be major players in the international relations game,

**“Russia’s actions are the military equivalent of saying, ‘We are concerned about the power of the West’ ”**

it is safe to assume that their absence should not distort the overall conclusion.

And so, with those numerous caveats outlined, we can finally begin to examine the current 'state of play', as it were. At the time of writing, the most obvious enactment of a war between the West and the East is with the situation in Ukraine, where Russia has been conducting an invasion of the country since late February, to varying degrees of success in different areas of the Eastern European nation.

Most analysts agree that the primary reason for Vladimir Putin's actions in the region stem from Ukraine's progressively closer relationship with those countries we early categorised as being part of 'the West'. More specifically, there had been suggestions in recent years that Ukraine might consider joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, otherwise known as NATO. Putin, along with other senior officials in Russia, do not like what they perceive to be NATO making an extension eastwards.

Yet, to return to the initial question at hand - where the balance of power lies - this represents a key aspect, as Russia's concern about 'the West' has been exemplified to such an extent that they feel it necessary to prematurely defend themselves, before even any direct military



action from their adversaries has taken place.

As such, it is clear that, far from Russia demonstrating their military might in recent months, in an attempt to formally convey their assertion that the balance of power has shifted to the East, in actual fact their actions amount to the very opposite. It is the military equivalent of Russia saying: “We are concerned about the power of the West,” and such an admission is one that ought not to be taken lightly.

Of course, that is not to say that the East’s power has not grown in recent years - China has certainly demonstrated their willingness to side with countries diametrically opposed to Western nations, such as by continuing to provide North Korea with resources despite UN

sanctions, and even directly contradicting the USA on the issue of Taiwan’s independence. But their outwardly ‘neutral’ position on the war in Ukraine represents the fact that even they, with all their military might, remain cautious about provoking the West too aggressively.

It is for all of these reasons that, while there is certainly an argument to be made that power in ‘the East’ has amplified significantly in recent decades, and will most likely continue to do so, especially with the growing economic might of China, the global balance of power remains with the West, primarily shown not in their own displays of strength, but instead the caution and fear that Russia’s reactionary invasion represents among ‘the East’.

*Noah Robson*

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# The global balance of power is shifting from the West to the East

**The objective of this article is to share facts and data to reflect how the global balance of power is shifting from the West to the East**

## Historical Facts

First, I would like to rephrase the headline statement because global power is re-shifting back to the East given the fact that until the 18th century, both India and China represented over 50% of the global GDP. From the beginning of the 1st century CE to the start of the colonisation of India in the 17th century, the Indian GDP was 35% of the world's total GDP. It is the Western colonisation and restriction of Asian countries from getting onboard with the Industrial Revolution that allowed the power to shift from the East to the West. The Asian countries were deprived of the latest technology and made less industrialised. It was at that time that power shifted from the East to the West. Since decolonisation occurred, we have started to see the East catch up to their past.

## Industrial Revolution

Industrialisation allowed European countries to accelerate their manufacturing processes, therefore paving the way for many new and existing sectors. This also led to the development of road and railway



transportation, thereby allowing more goods that could be more efficiently transported between two points, thus expanding the growth of markets. The effects of this are amplified when it is observed that the UK real GDP per person value had almost doubled in the 90 years between 1780 and 1870 when it reached \$3263 per capita.

The invention of the steam engine was one of the most important technologies of the Industrial Revolution, but most colonised countries did not have the access to such technologies, putting them at a significant disadvantage. As a result, most Asian countries' production remained labour-intensive and limited to only domestic consumption. For example, the British colonies in North America would produce cotton originally by labour but once they attached steam engines to machines that

turned cotton into cloth, they could easily outcompete and outproduce India, which up until then was the world's leading producer of cotton. Indian cotton farming had an abundance of skilled labour in cotton manufacturing by hand, of which the North American colonies had none. However, the Indian workers could not provide a challenge to the advancements of industrialisation.

### **The beginning of re-shift**

The beginning of re-shift of power to Asia started in the early 90s when the Western markets reached a saturation level in their domestic market and the term 'Globalisation' was coined to allow the countries and markets to open for international trade. The western countries were looking to shift their manufacturing to countries with low cost of production and easy availability of skilled labour. But the invention of the internet and related technology allowed Asia and most other countries to take advantage of the technology and getting onboard for the next revolution.

### **Re-Awakening of Asia as an economic power**

China has an immensely high population of 1.41 billion people, allowing China to take advantage of low-cost labour and also produce low-cost goods. This large pool of labour would accommodate any sudden

rise in demand for goods. As a result, China and ASEAN countries received a rapidly increasing amount of direct foreign investment and further used the support to transform themselves into a manufacturing hub. China's GDP as a global share grew from under 5% to 18.4%. On the other hand, in the West, very high labour costs, labour shortages due to smaller populations, and high production costs encouraged companies to look for alternatives for manufacturing like China and the ASEAN countries.

### **Information and Technology Revolution**

Similarly, India excelled in the service sector by offering low-cost business process outsourcing services and became the backbone of the global IT/software and technology industry. Both India and China have a huge STEM-educated population. So, the availability of a young highly-



skilled workforce in software, IT-enabled services and English speaking allowed India to create a global footprint in exporting IT services. Over the years, the

service industry in India has increased approximately to 55% of India's total GDP.

### **Pharma Sector**

Both India and China are major players in the pharma sector. During the recent pandemic, India and China supplied hundreds of millions of vaccines to over 100 countries, whereas western nations could not scale up production to provide vaccines to other countries and had to import such medical equipment from India, China, and Vietnam, portraying how the West now relies on the East for medicines.

### **Infrastructural Development in Asia**

Both India and China have taken a massive leap when it comes to the road, airport, seaport, railway and city transportation. China has built extensive bullet train infrastructures all around the country as well as road infrastructure. China is conducting its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which would consist of a belt of overland thoroughfares and a sea road of shipping lanes across 71 countries connecting Europe, Africa, and Asia.



China has currently invested \$210 billion in this project. This effort has resulted in

their firms being granted opportunities to work all over the world, with over \$340 billion in construction contracts awarded to them.

In addition to this, in India, over 15 cities now have metro infrastructure and are building world-class road infrastructure. Over 81% of the Indian railways are electrified, in comparison to the entire European rail network being approximately 60% electrified. Therefore, goods can be transported across India more efficiently while spending less on fuel, in comparison to Europe, where transportation of goods is slower and costlier.

### **Positioning for the next Revolution**

It is widely speculated that the next revolutionary products to be introduced are AI, robotics, 5G, Quantum computing, and IoT. Due to the availability of a vast quantity of highly skilled professionals and technologies, Asian countries have become thriving powerhouses within this sector. They have taken a massive lead when it comes to applying these innovations, which clearly indicates that the next century will be within the palms of Asia.

*Satvik Kansal*

## Switzerland - A Direct Democracy



To many, Switzerland is famous for its beautiful snowy landscapes and its delicious chocolate, however, its unique political system also differentiates this country from almost all others in the world. All Swiss citizens over the age of 18 are able to have a say on how the country is run through a system known as “direct democracy”. The main component of this type of democracy is the involvement of the voters in major decisions whilst simultaneously having respect for minorities in this process. By holding regular referendums on a whole range of topics, ranging from TV licence fees to immigration intake, Swiss citizens have a direct input in the present and future of their country. To many, the political system employed here is seen as the ideal model of democracy that should be put in place all over the world, however

some are more hesitant, seeing that in recent years controversial political decisions have been reached using this system.

It has been estimated that over half of all referendums across the globe take place in Switzerland, a landlocked country with 26 cantons and 8 million residents. For any change in the constitution a referendum is needed, and for any change in law, a referendum can be requested. This system has been in place since the 1848 constitution. For a citizen to challenge a law that has already been approved by parliament they must collect at least 50,000 signatures against the law within the space of 100 days. If this is achieved, a national vote will be put in place whereby the voters decide whether to accept or reject the law according to the majority verdict on the vote. Furthermore, if citizens want a decision on a change they want to make to the constitution, they must collect at least 100,000 signatures within the space of 18 months. Often these votes can almost evenly divide the country, a recent example being in 2002 regarding a popular initiative referendum where less than 50.1% of the population rejected



proposals to curb the number of asylum seekers entering the country - just 3,000 more than those who were in favour of the initiative.' Although more recently in 2014, Europe was shocked at the decision of a referendum that decided to restrict the number of EU immigrants to Switzerland. More positive outcomes recently include the 2020 referendum on 'retaining anti-discrimination legislation' where a clear majority of 63.08% of voters voted in favour of the initiative.



The Swiss democratic system has many positives that can be drawn, including enhancing the ability of regular citizens to have a direct input in key decisions in policy making, potentially also leading to wider political engagement in the future. A practical benefit is also the fact that the elected representatives are forced to perform their duties to the best of their ability and in the fairest and most efficient way, knowing that their actions are closely scrutinised by the general public. Many have credited this system with encouraging political involvement and enabling the

people to have a real impactful voice, with many who advocate more democratic participation in the UK looking to Switzerland's direct democracy model as inspiration. If this system was to be adopted in the UK it could mean that politicians would be more effectively held to account when they decide to try and put in place policies that differ from what was said in their manifesto or is not looked upon favourably by their constituents. Considering the current increasing levels of distrust in politicians and voter apathy amongst UK citizens, the adoption of Switzerland's system of direct democracy could start to rebuild people's trust in their politicians, with the government forced to follow the wishes of the people.

## **“Large numbers of foreign nationals are unable to vote”**

Around 65% of the Swiss public are satisfied with their government according to Cheryl A. Fain's book 'Modern Direct Democracy in Switzerland and the American West' meaning 35% still don't feel satisfied. Furthermore in the 2015, voter turnout amounted to just 48.4% and more recently in 2019, turnout was only at 45.12% of the eligible electorate - less than half of the electorate, yet decisions were still reached despite over half of the electorate not voting making the decisions

politically illegitimate in the eyes of many. Major examples of this include the 'Ban on animal and human experiments' initiative that was rejected however the turnout was only 44.2%. Another problem is the large number of foreign nationals in Switzerland who are unable to vote. In cities such as Geneva and Basel, around 40% of the tax-paying population are ineligible to vote as a direct result of lack of citizenship. This leads to a lack of representation and ownership and this means that a considerable proportion of inhabitants have no say in the political system despite paying tax towards their governments leading to 'taxation without representation'. More general criticisms of referendums include the fact that they hand over highly complex issues over to voters who will often lack the expertise and time that politicians do to consider and voter effectively on these issues. Putting aside early Athens, Switzerland is currently and historically the only country in which a comprehensive direct democracy has been employed effectively. Under Switzerland's system of direct democracy, people have the right to both put forward policy proposals and to challenge legislation approved by parliament. The problem with this system in the UK would resort back to the underlying fact that the UK parliament is sovereign. Even if it was to pass a law allowing more referendums to be triggered in a similar style, this could be repealed by

the next parliament. The only realistic way this could be employed would involve a redrafting of the constitution, putting an end to UK parliamentary sovereignty to ensure this system would be ingrained in society. Although this seems unrealistic in current circumstances, it may be an option



that has to be resorted to in the near future in order to restore the UK's faith and trust in the political process.

*Lucinda White*

# Mini-Budget: A needed boost!

**E**conomic growth is the principal mechanism through which the standard of living for everyone in society will increase. Far from being a cliché, it is essential for current and future generations to prosper.

Nobody said that the route to achieving this would be easy and plain-sailing. In reality, the UK's economy has been characterised by low growth for far too long, particularly following the 2008 Financial Crash. Inadequate productivity growth and low investment rates are perhaps the most important factors contributing to this poor economic performance. It is clear that this cannot go on; the UK's economy needs a form of impetus to get it moving.

The Government's free-market fiscal announcement was a step in the right direction, and a needed catalyst. Tax cuts for individuals and firms as well as the creation of investment zones across the country are designed to enhance the supply side economy. This should promote higher productivity rates, which is the key to an increase in real GDP. In the long run, the only solution to achieve lower inflation rates, an improved current account position and an expansion of

national income is through supply-side reforms, particularly market-based ones.

This unconventional approach to economics might be unpopular but is ultimately needed to lift the UK economy out of the ruins of the last financial crisis. Rather than sticking a plaster on the economic wound, Liz Truss and Kwasi Kwarteng are reinforcing the long run durability of the economy.



However, the reaction of the markets following the announcement cannot be ignored or downplayed. Simultaneous tax cuts and borrowing is a recipe for uncertainty and low confidence in the UK economy. Despite this, I would argue that the government acted pragmatically, which was needed to soften the blow of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The effects of this war does not mean the government should abandon its ideological stance to achieve growth. Events beyond the control of the government should not hinder their plans

for the future. Consequently, it was right to effectively freeze energy bills at the same time of announcing their mini-budget.

Political reality ultimately decided the dramatic u-turn of the 40p income tax cut. The economic rationale behind this is logical because by slashing the top rate of tax government revenue would actually increase. This is achieved through encouraging investment and with there being less of an incentive to manipulate the accounting. A low tax economy, as the Government is proposing, is the desirable destination for the UK. Regardless of this view, it is right that the Prime Minister reversed this particular policy to prevent the internal split of the Conservative party.

Nevertheless, it is simply too early to judge the effectiveness of the mini-budget.

Growth does not happen overnight, meaning that it is a long run plan. The fruits of the Government's boldness will not be felt immediately and thus it is extremely premature to come to any conclusions as of yet. In my view, this plan for growth will be significantly undermined if the Conservatives are not reelected in two years time. This economic plan must continue if we seek to make Britain the economic powerhouse of Europe.

*Owen Goddard*

# The Case for Monarchy

As of the time of writing this, it has only been a couple of weeks since the death of Queen Elizabeth II. Now that the period of national mourning has passed, some people have started to look to the future, rather than continuing to look at the past. With the death of what for many was integral to the institution of monarchy -



Elizabeth II herself - it has been called into question whether we should abolish the monarchy. Now is as good a time as any, if not the perfect time. However, I wholeheartedly believe that doing so would be a mistake. In this article, I will briefly outline the advantage of monarchy, before tackling the main criticisms people have of the institution.

Some say that tradition has no value. I could not disagree more. Of course, not every tradition is good (FGM is most definitely not a 'good' tradition) - it is not something that has intrinsic value.

However, provided a tradition does not clash with modern principles and aims, it

does more good than harm. This is because tradition shapes our societies and us as people. Our upbringings are ultimately critical in moulding who we are, and the traditions of our societies play a role here. Without the traditions of the UK, the UK would not be the distinct place that it is and, most likely, you would not be you had you been born somewhere else.

As well as this, tradition provides stability and a sense of continuity. The England of Æthelstan is very different from the modern UK. However, gradual transition over that time has ensured that there were very few instances of complete upheaval (an exception being the establishment of the, albeit ephemeral, English republic). Tradition is ultimately a necessary condition of gradually reforming society. To change everything at once would be revolutionary. The monarchy is perhaps the greatest example of continuity in England's thousand year history (ignoring the aforementioned eleven years of republic). It is thanks to the monarchy that the modern UK is what it is. Of course, the UK isn't the only country with a monarchy, but there is nonetheless something special and iconic about the *British* monarchy.

You may well reject my favourable view of tradition. But, provided you don't, the one



potential barrier in preventing your support for the monarchy is if the monarchy is actively detrimental to modern society. To demonstrate why this isn't the case, I shall now address three common critiques of the monarchy.

An obvious critique of the monarchy is that it lacks legitimacy. In the past, monarchs

## **“The monarchy has more legitimacy than the government”**

have claimed to be God's representative on Earth - giving their reigns some legitimacy. However, considering how most people in the UK don't believe in God, and that few of those who do would support the doctrine of the 'Divine Right of Kings', the monarchy is going to need some alternative form of legitimacy. However, it already has one - the same one as the government. The modern monarchy derives its legitimacy from the people. Provided a majority of the population supports the monarchy, it has the right to stay. In a recent YouGov poll, 67% of the public support the monarchy - levels of support most politicians can only dream of. In fact, considering the First Past the Post electoral system that the UK employs, it could be argued that the monarchy has *more* legitimacy than the government. What this means, of course, is that if the

day comes where 50% + 1 of the population support the abolition of the monarchy, then it would have to go.

However, until that day, the monarchy is no less legitimate than any other British institution.

The next critique of monarchy is that of cost. This argument is almost always secondary because few republicans dislike the monarchy purely because of cost (there is usually a more fundamental reason than that). As well as this, the debate over cost almost always then boils down into a debate over tourism. Usually unsubstantiated claims are made by both sides as to whether the monarchy does or does not bring in extra tourist revenue. As this debate is, in my opinion, a waste of time, I shall stay away from it. However, there is still a lot to talk about when it comes to cost. Note: I cannot claim to be an expert on the finances of the Royal Family, so I cannot claim that every figure I give is 100% correct. There may be some errors, but I think my point still stands.

According to royal sources, the monarchy cost the taxpayer £102.4 million in the financial year of 2021-22. This number was an increase of 17% on the previous year, possibly because of the funeral of the Duke of Edinburgh. Roughly speaking, that amount is £3.18 per taxpayer. The pressure group, Republic, however quotes a different figure: £345 million, which is

roughly £10.71 per taxpayer. In contrast, the President of Ireland costs the Irish taxpayer roughly £1.42 (1.66 euros) per taxpayer. What this means is that, taking these figures at face value, the British monarchy costs the taxpayer £1.76 - £9.29 more than it could each year. However, abolishing the monarchy would not suddenly make everyone £9.29 richer - here's why.

Let's start with the official figure. Of the £102.4 million that was spent on the Royals, £34.5 million was spent renovating



Buckingham Palace. And, I do not think it is entirely fair to attribute those costs to the Royals as those are costs that would be paid anyway. The Palace of Versailles, which itself costs rather a lot, is owned by the French state. This means that if the UK were to become a republic, Buckingham Palace would still have to be renovated by the taxpayer anyway. It is possible that it could be sold into the private sector, but it could easily be unprofitable to maintain the grandeur of Buckingham Palace. If you take the £34.5 million away from the

original figure of £102.4 million, you are left with £67.9 million. This figure costs the taxpayer roughly £2.11 per year (69p more than the Irish taxpayer).

Now this additional cost for the Royal family doesn't particularly worry me. This is because we effectively have the Royal Family instead of the festivals other countries have. The UK doesn't have an official bank holiday, instead we get the odd one such as when the Queen had her Diamond Jubilee. Bastille Day alone in France costs 8p per taxpayer per year. I admit here that the Royal Family probably costs a bit more than other institutions, but I don't think it is enough to worry about in particular.

As I said before, Republic claims the monarchy costs £345 million per year. Now, perhaps my bias is showing but I am quite sceptical about this number, not least because only Republic seems to espouse it. £94 million of that is 'lost profits' from the Duchies of Lancaster and Cornwall, private properties of the Crown which, assuming they would not be illegally seized, would remain the property of the Royal Family if the UK became a Republic. Also within that figure is £103 million for security. A lot of that would be there regardless of the monarchy as the various palaces of the Royal Family would still require protection, even without people living inside them. I could continue, but the

point is that Republic's figure is most likely intentionally bloated for political reasons.

One last note on cost is that the monarchy could always be reformed to be cheaper. It most likely does cost the British taxpayer more than the President of Ireland costs the Irish taxpayer, but it doesn't *have* to be that way. The monarchy could always be slimmed down and cheapened.

Finally, there is the issue of fairness. This is the most damning critique of monarchy. Why should someone be born into privilege whilst others are born into poverty? There isn't a clear defence here, so I would forgive a republican for using this argument. However, this argument still doesn't persuade me. A lot of our society is based on inheritance. For example, many businessmen pass their companies down to their children. The monarchy is not the *only* unfair element of our society (provided you see inheritance as unfair). So, you have two choices. Either you can abolish the practice of inheritance, in which case you have bigger fish to fry than the monarchy my friend, or we can agree to accept the monarchy as a legitimate form of inheritance. Some people would add that it is unfair that ordinary people cannot aspire to become the elected president of their country, reducing how meritocratic our society is. I can't say I lose too much sleep over this fact as being a professional ribbon cutter

doesn't seem like that great of a job to me anyway.

In conclusion, there is a place for the monarchy in modern society. It is flawed, based on archaic principles and probably costs you a few extra pennies than otherwise. However, a pragmatic acceptance of the institution seems most sensible to me. It certainly enriches the country culturally and it would definitely be a pain to get rid of. Most importantly, the monarchy seems to transcend most of our values. The liberal ideas of fairness and equality directly clash against the idea of monarchy - there is no reconciling those two beliefs. However, in practice, the effect of the monarchy on our society's fairness and equality is minimal to non-existent. There is a lot wrong with monarchy in

**“There is a lot wrong with monarchy in theory, but in practice, it just works”**

theory, but in practice, it just works. This is not the most persuasive argument for monarchy, but it is ultimately the reason why most of the country subconsciously supports that ancient institution.

*William Gough*

# Does the future of the Republican Party lie with Ron DeSanctimonious?

**T**here is a cloud that is starting to linger over the Republican Party (GOP) as it nears the time to pick their candidate for President, and that is the presence of Donald Trump. Back in 2020 the businessman, who dubbed himself a 'stable genius', was thought to remain the obvious 2024 candidate choice, even after the Capitol Riots on January 6 2021, as in May of that year still a majority of Republican supporters believed that Trump was the victor of the 2020 election.

But the recent midterm elections in November 2022 may have brought light to a political shift within the Republican Party that has seen increasing aversion to the likes of 'The Donald'.

His unsuccessful endorsements of far-right conservative characters such as Kari Lake, for Governor in Arizona, and Mehmet Oz, for Pennsylvania Senator, haunted the GOP with underwhelming results across the country and has left them with a far less comfortable route to the Presidency than they may have previously anticipated.

After he announced his bid for Presidency on November 15, Trump is progressively being seen by his fellow Republicans as a

liability to the Party; not only did the majority of his endorsements prove futile, but it appears that he may soon face various criminal investigations in regards to his actions on January 6 and various financial and national security matters as well as the controversy surrounding his recent dinner guests, Ye, a virulent anti-semite, and Nick Fuentes, a potent figure among white nationalists.

While his electoral supporters may not have ditched him quite yet, it seems that the Republican Party is itching to find an alternative candidate that will preserve Trump's voter base while allowing them to deposit him in the detritus of political history.

A potential solution to the GOP's dilemma lies in the Sunshine state of Florida.

Recently re-elected Governor Ron DeSantis secured a sturdy 19.4% lead over his challenger, Dem. Charlie Crist, without the endorsement of Trump, a momentous leap from the mere 0.4% in the 2018 gubernatorial election where Trump had been a vociferous champion of the DeSantis campaign.

Much of his recent campaign focussed on the aforementioned national issues that

voters want to see addressed, as well as conservative points such as restricting LGBTQ+ education in schools and identity politics, while he has neatly avoided commenting on whether he believes the 2020 presidential elections were rigged or not. But he continues to show support for candidates like Kari Lake who do; his visit to Arizona for the rally in Phoenix in August this year reflects his view to increasing his presence on the national stage without entering into direct conflict with Donald Trump.



Ron DeSantis and Kari Lake at the Phoenix rally in August

Although DeSantis has not openly declared an interest to running as a Presidential candidate, Trump has already dubbed his former protegee as ‘Ron DeSanctimonious’ at a rally, which are usually intended to bolster

Republican candidates, in Pennsylvania in November, which suggests that he is now perceived as a rival by the former President. However, DeSantis has continued to remain silent amidst Trump’s outbursts, perhaps in view of hoping for one of them to push the Republican grandees to collectively denounce him, while also allowing him to present himself as the politically elegant stabilising candidate who can unite the Party against ‘chaos’, political, social and economic .

Ultimately, it appears that DeSantis is attempting to form a culturally neoconservative campaign that embodies the sentiments of the disparate Republican right-wing factions as well as the more centrist bands of the Party while also gathering support from Trumpian strongholds and alt-right groups. By using identity politics as a starting point, DeSantis is aiming to portray a sense of chaos within people’s lives, tapping into the white middle-class nostalgia for the individualism of the 1980s like a modern-day Ronald Reagan and fostering a moral panic for the so-called ‘wokeism’ of the Democratic Party.

By spreading this mentality into

**“DeSantis wants to portray Trump as incapable of leading America out of the tofu-eating wokerati-filled free-love dystopia”**

mainstream Republican rhetoric throughout the next two years, he could portray Trump as a figure of instability, incapable of leading America out of the tofu-eating wokerati-filled free-love dystopia, and place himself as the sole heir of the Republican crown.

*Millie Thomas*



# Why Modern Conservatism Fails

I am not an advocate of traditional conservatism. It seems to me to be an ideology of stagnation, that sees all of the evil and suffering in the world and decides that it is acceptable. It actively resists any positive change that it believes can be stopped, opposing progress in almost all of its forms. It does, however, rest on a strong foundation of fundamental principles and beliefs, which if accepted lead somewhat logically to its conclusions. Conservatism in the form it most commonly takes today does not possess this. It is a corruption of the original ideology, and is fundamentally incoherent and nonsensical. It has nothing to say, and nothing to contribute.



In the book, *Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes describes his idea of life in the 'state of nature' in which humanity existed before the formation of the first governments. In his view, such a life was, 'solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short' - or in other words, not very nice. He was influenced by his experience of the English civil war,

which he found to be a horrifying one. In another of his books, 'Behemoth', he refers to the war as 'those awful times' and characterises civil war in general as 'the

**“Modern conservatism is fundamentally incoherent and nonsensical”**

process of a society losing its soul'. It was his view that war and conflict were to

be avoided at all costs, and advocated for absolute obedience to government (except where it threatened one's life) for the purpose of maintaining order and security, and to avoid a regression to the state of nature.

Early conservative thinkers drew much inspiration from the work of Hobbes. Rather than having a vision of an ideal society to work towards, as many thinkers do, they believed that the goal of the government was solely to avoid societal collapse. From this point of view, an opposition to change makes sense, as that which already exists is proven to be successful in maintaining stability, whereas a failed change has the possibility of bringing down the state entirely. This

justifies the respect that conservatives have for tradition, because the longer a practice has been around, the more evidence there is for its value in achieving this aim.

Traditional conservatives were not inflexible in their opposition to change however. Sometimes stagnation can be more dangerous than change, and traditional conservatives recognise this. Edmund Burke accepted the rise of democracy despite his personal opposition to it because he recognised that it was too popular to be denied. Benjamin Disraeli pioneered one-nation conservatism, which accepted the need for economic support for the poor, recognising the risk of revolution if such steps were not taken. Winston Churchill accepted Attlee's welfare state during his second premiership, again recognising that the change was so popular that to remove it was actively harmful to the conservative goal of protecting civilised society.

Modern forms of conservatism are largely disconnected from the Hobbesian reasoning behind traditional conservative thought, and yet they continue to hold the views that this reasoning leads to. They value traditions, but not in order to preserve stability. Depending on the conservative, and depending on the tradition at hand, they might cite a variety of different reasons for the tradition's importance. Their respect for traditional

sexual morality might stem from their religious beliefs, while they might value free market capitalism for encouraging personal responsibility and technological innovation. In truth, however, these views are almost all inherited from the opinions of traditional conservatives, and most of the reasons given were thought of to justify an already existing belief. In this way, the reasons are less true explanations and more excuses, created so that the modern conservative has at least some way to defend their political views.

A consequence of this shift away from valuing traditions for their ability to preserve order and stability, and towards valuing them for their own sake, is that the modern conservative is far less able to accept pragmatic change where necessary. This has led to conservatives frequently

## **“The modern conservative is far less able to accept pragmatic change”**

advocating for quite radical changes, in order to facilitate a return to more traditional values. The republican party in the US is particularly guilty of this. The example I would point to as the most glaring example of this is the recent overturning of the Roe vs Wade case (which, while done by theoretically neutral judges, is clearly a political decision by a

conservative leaning Supreme Court). This is a wildly controversial move opposed by the majority of Americans in various polls such as those by CNN, Pew Research Center and Gallup. This is not intended to protect the current order, but a decision made on ideological grounds, and rooted in religious beliefs. More generally, modern conservatives tend to focus on 'culture war' issues surrounding race, gender and sexuality. These are highly divisive issues, and by bringing them to the forefront of political discourse, societal



cohesion is diminished. Conservatives also usually oppose policies which would reduce these divisions, such as legalising same-sex marriage or affirmative action to help those from disadvantaged backgrounds - a far cry from Benjamin Disraeli's efforts to unify the two nations of the rich and the poor.

Modern conservatism is a shadow of its former self. As it has lost its connection to the beliefs and ideals it was founded on, it has also lost the ability to conserve anything at all, instead clinging to outdated beliefs that any traditional conservative would have cast aside decades

## **“Modern conservatism is a shadow of its former self”**

ago, judging them counterproductive to their aims. Today's conservatives value tradition for its own sake, not to serve the greater purpose of conservation, and it is for this reason that I believe that modern conservatism is misnamed. It would be better referred to as traditionalism, its dogmatic allegiance to tradition fails to conserve, instead frequently worsening divisions and tensions within society, working at cross-purposes with the aims of traditional conservatism. They are two fundamentally irreconcilable ideologies, and it is clear to me that one of them is far superior to the other.

*Jonny Mountford*

# Olaf Scholz: the calm, collected leader Germany needs in these turbulent times

*Correct as of 29/09/22*

**S**carcely had Olaf Scholz settled into the Federal Chancellery, the official home of the German chancellor, than Russia invaded Ukraine. (Putin likely chose February for the invasion because



Merkel, who had been criticised for her friendliness towards Moscow, was no longer Chancellor.)

Scholz is a member of the SPD (Social Democratic Party), but due to proportional representation is in coalition with the Greens and the Free Democrats. This in itself is fodder for an entire other piece, so I will take the liberty of passing over it and crudely summarising that this coalition means three viewpoints must be considered instead of one (particularly as Scholz won by the barest of margins). Decision making is therefore difficult, to say the least.

With Germany being a valuable trade partner for Russia, it is key to understand how they have responded to the crisis and

specifically how effective Scholz' actions have been. Despite heavy and not entirely unfounded criticism about the delayed nature of his response, Scholz' actions have ultimately been successful - or rather, as successful as they could have been in the face of such an opposition.

Russia invaded Ukraine on 24 February 2022. Prior to this Scholz hesitated because he saw Putin as a threat but not one significant enough to take action. This included maintaining a ban on sending weapons to Ukraine and offering 5,000 helmets instead.

The reasoning for this can be traced back



to the Normandy Format, which was an informal group in which Germany acted as mediator, created after the 2014 Crimea annexation. German politicians in 2022 argued that this mediation role was the reason for the delay in substantial material action; the precarious position would have



been jeopardised by supplying weapons to one party. Furthermore, they said, Germany did voice its support for Ukraine, just not through material action. Some have been quick to complain that this was a paltry excuse from the Germans as the Russians had already invalidated the Normandy Format through their unprovoked aggression, but Scholz should be let off the hook. Many German parties, including his Green coalition partners, were united on this matter, and the public were sceptical too, with a slight majority even against economic sanctions. Post-invasion and with with Normandy fully overridden, Germany had little excuse but to act, and Scholz did so with force in his *Zeitenwende* (change of era) speech, where he lambasted the previous foreign policy of Germany as naïve as they had previously avoided partaking in war due to a fear of extremism. Other key points included a pledge to increase funding for the underfunded German army, a commitment to spending more than 2% of the annual budget on defence and a confirmation of his earlier decisions to reverse the weapons ban and halt the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline from Russia. Was this enough? Certainly it was no easy decision for Scholz. Cutting off German access to Nord Stream 2 was a political decision calculated to damage Russia, but also one that would damage the German economy. Macron does seem to be leading the charge within

the EU against Putin and the Franco-German axis at the heart of Europe could certainly do with some strengthening, but Scholz could have done little more than join in wholeheartedly in the economic sanctions and Germany is really not that far behind.

Then Scholz decided to retreat once more. There have been few headlines on Germany's response to the crisis since spring this year, and it is easy to blame the Chancellor for this; why hasn't he done anything? But this question is flawed. There was only so much he could do, short of going to war, as Putin seemed rather unperturbed by the economic sanctions. Additionally, as is war's age-old pattern,



the media was very engaged at its outbreak and quickly became disinterested as more topics came to the fore and the world, however harsh it may seem, kept turning.

As a country's leader, that country is always your primary concern, and the sanctions did not only affect Russia. The decision not to use Nord Stream 2 was a



bold statement but it caused a shortage of energy within Germany. To add to this Russia decided to send less and less gas to Europe anyway as they see it as an important resource in this power struggle. And Putin has also recently halted the supply of gas through Nord Stream 1 due to maintenance work, with no timeline for reprisal.

A culmination of all of these factors means that German companies are struggling to keep production up, and energy prices are rising - fast.

Long-term, Scholz has committed to weaning Germany off Russian gas by 2024. But that just won't do for the present. On 29th September he announced a €200bn gas price cap, meaning that the state will pay the difference between this cap and the international market price. Some think that this concerted effort to keep prices low will only backfire on future generations. But it is clear that serious government intervention is exactly what is needed. Scholz also recently visited the UAE to sign a gas deal. Concerns have been raised about the human rights records of the state, but the same question applies here; what choice does he have? A leader must put their country first, particularly when that country is heading towards winter with alarmingly low gas reserves.

A short time must be devoted to Scholz' vision for Europe. As leader of one of the most important countries in the EU, it is

only right that he has ideas about what it will look like in future. Having been busy with other matters (that do heavily influence this decision) he finally gave a keynote speech in Prague earlier this month. Little was expected of him. He has not exactly been the bastion of prescience and source of wisdom that some saw

**“He has not exactly been the bastion of prescience and source of wisdom that Merkel was”**

Merkel as, but he pulled no punches here. He supports Macron's idea to bring together EU and non-EU states in a European political community and wants to expand the EU with more candidates from the Balkans. He also, rather radically, spoke of abolishing the EU principle of unanimity as the assembly enlarges. But perhaps the key takeaway from this speech was that he believes Europe is moving eastward, and that policy must be adapted as such. Only praise can be had for such an attitude and such a speech. Finally, Scholz was displaying the characteristics needed in a true politician. He was not merely reacting and was instead being pragmatic and taking the lead in decisions.

Not everyone agrees. A particularly critical piece in *Der Spiegel* accused him of being a 'political hermit crab' and making no effort

to reach out to the people because he doesn't see such gestures as important. This brings us to the final point; how popular is Scholz amongst the German public?

A primary concern for the SPD should be that they are in a tripartisan coalition. Scholz' more understated wisdom is consistently outshone by that of others such as Annalena Baerbock, the Foreign Affairs Minister. Scholz needs to realise that practical solutions aren't the only option; sometimes symbolism and support for suffering nations is also important. The SPD's polling has been steadily worsening. They were elected in December 2021 with 25.7% of the vote. Now only 18% say that they would vote for the SPD, with 28% going with the CDU/CSU, Merkel's party. In terms of Scholz' own polling, an August 2022 poll by Insa showed that 62% of Germans have been dissatisfied with his chancellorship so far. Surprise surprise, the 'hermit' persona is not overly popular with voters. However, after 16 years of a globally respected Merkel, anyone would struggle to satisfy the public - and no government is ever popular one year on from taking office.

Scholz ought to be more individual. Countries that need a stable, quiet and self-assured leader with little personality are those that have just gone through a period without one, or a period of serious upheaval. Germany is neither of these things. Unlike in Britain, where Keir

Starmer is branding himself as the safe and stable option after a volatile period under Johnson, Scholz has no need for this. Merkel is no Boris. He can afford to be more provocative.

But it doesn't look like he is going to be, and frankly, isn't it refreshing to have an anchored country in our current political

## **“With a little more media training, Scholz could yet provide an anchor”**

climate? Scholz has steered Germany through the fray of failed negotiation talks with Putin, international pressure to act sooner than he did and has now even come up with an innovative recovery plan to tackle the energy crisis.

It's not his fault that politics requires big personalities. Scholz, with a little more media training, could provide an anchor - the German people, and the world, might yet be won over to his dry sense of humour. As he recently said without further explanation when asked if he could expand on a particular foreign policy matter, 'yes, I could'. Whatever works for you, Mr Scholz.

*Catriona Robertson*

# Mini Budget 2022

The 'mini-budget' of September 23rd 2022 is one of the most destructive policy decisions ever made by a UK government. In less than three weeks, Liz Truss, in collaboration with her chancellor, Kwasi Kwarteng, has eclipsed Boris Johnson's record of rule-breaking, lying and immorality to secure her spot as (at least so far) the worst prime minister this century.



The bulk of the changes are focused around tax policy, and take the form of tax cuts. Taxes such as income and corporation tax, national insurance and stamp duty have either been cut, or had planned increases cancelled. The choice of which taxes to cut deserves criticism - and will receive it in due course - but the most confusing choice of all is the decision to cut taxes in the first place.

The UK is suffering from a cost of living crisis - it is this that the mini-budget is supposed to address. However, this crisis

is caused by inflation, which as of July 2022 was in excess of 10%. Tax cuts are expansionary; they increase people's

**“The most confusing decision is the choice to cut taxes in the first place”**

disposable income, allowing them to spend more. This will cause an outward shift of aggregate demand, and will cause demand-push inflationary pressure, further worsening the extremely high inflation already felt in the UK economy.

In addition, a tax cut will reduce government revenue. This mini-budget comes just weeks after Truss's announcement that the average household energy bill will be capped at £2500 a year, much lower than the equilibrium price, with the difference being made up by government spending. This essentially subsidises an industry currently making supernormal profits at the expense of the millions of Britons who will struggle to afford to heat their homes this winter. And because Truss's government, rather than extending the windfall tax on the excessive profits being made by energy suppliers, has chosen to cut taxes during this period

of exceptional spending, this will also significantly increase the UK's budget deficit, when national debt is at a level not seen since the 1960s.

As already mentioned, the specific taxes being lowered are also extremely questionable. The cuts to income tax, in particular the removal of the highest rate of tax, are significantly more beneficial to the rich than the poor. For example, those on a salary of £20,000 a year will receive a tax cut of £167, less than 1% of their pre-tax income. By contrast, those on a salary of £200,000 a year will receive a tax cut of £5220 - over 2.5% of their pre-tax income. The removal of the cuts to corporation tax, while not obviously harmful like the income tax changes are, do nothing to alleviate the challenges of the cost of living crisis, while contributing to inherent issues with tax cuts of inflationary pressure and reduced government revenue. Cuts to stamp duty similarly fail to help those worst affected by the crisis, who will not be thinking about buying a house in the near future.

Truss's intention is for all this money targeted mostly at the wealthy to 'trickle down' to the poor through consumption

and investment by the rich. This ignores the fact that wealthier people have a low marginal propensity to consume, and so much of that money will actually be saved, not spent, and will never reach the poor. It will do little to reduce the difficulties that many will face come winter, while being fiscally irresponsible; it ratchets up national debt. Her dangerous mismanagement of the UK economy has led to the value of the pound plummeting, dropping down to 1.03 dollars at its lowest point. You would expect a prime minister with a mandate as flimsy as Liz Truss's to do everything in their power to get favourable approval ratings, in order to give themselves at least a shred of

**“That she has the audacity to be this incompetent reflects poorly on her as a leader”**

legitimacy. That she has the audacity to be this incompetent in her first month is a credit to her courage, but reflects poorly on her ability as a politician, and as a leader.

*Jonny Mountford*

# Events

## Tonbridge School Economics Trip

On Thursday the 10th of November, Year 13 Economists attended a series of lectures at Tonbridge School given by three prominent economists.



Sebastian Burnside, the Chief Economist at Natwest, started the day off with a talk on how the UK can look to grow its economy. After a brief look-in on the historic factors of economic growth in the UK, particularly those since the Global Financial Crisis, we were given a gloomy statement on the impending recession in the UK. Rather strikingly, as we sat in one of the most expensive schools in the country, we also were told how disproportionately damaging recessions can be and the effects this can have on inequality. The first talk ended on the positive note that the UK's changing labour market structures are showing increases in the ability of people of a working age to join the labour market;

a glimmer of hope in an otherwise bleak evaluation of the UK's economy.

After a break for complimentary coffee, Julian Jessop, an IEA fellow and former economic advisor to Liz Truss, stepped up for the second talk of the day. We were given another diagnosis of the UK's economic troubles, this time with the spotlight on the 'productivity puzzle', with Julian offering potential solutions to this from his free-market perspective. He then moved on to the inflationary pressures in the UK, addressing the causes and evaluating policies to solve them. He ended with the resounding quote that there is 'no inflation in a graveyard' - suggesting that contracting the economy for the sake of



reducing inflation can reach a point where it is no longer worth the sacrifice.



The third and final talk of the day came from Ann Pettifor, director of Prime Economics, with a focus on the worldwide and macroeconomy. She also directed statements towards inequality, with a focus on the climate and the disproportionate emissions of the top 1%. As one of the few economists who predicted the Global Financial Crisis, she highlighted the

analysis of asset price inflation in determining bubbles (which lead to crashes).

Our morning was then complete, having listened to three varied and equally fascinating talks.

*Ed Hall*

## Nigel Nelson and Claire Pearsall

On the 22nd of November, Nigel Nelson and Claire Pearsall delivered a talk to the Politics, Economics and Current Affairs Society.

Nigel Nelson is currently Fleet Street's longest serving political editor and now heads the political team at the Sunday Mirror and Sunday People.

Claire Pearsall is currently a special advisor to Caroline Noakes Conservative MP, Chair of the Women and Equalities Select Committee. Claire is also a political pundit. Both are regular guests on TV and radio panels. She is also a Conservative Councillor, sitting on Sevenoaks Council.

Despite coming from opposite ends of the political spectrum, with Nigel being a Labour-voting Remainer and Claire being a Conservative Brexiteer, they are happily married - agreeing to disagree! During the session, Nigel and Claire introduced themselves and gave a brief



overview of their respective careers. After this, the two took questions to allow for students to mould the debate to their interests. We discussed a variety of topics, including opinion polls, electoral reform, the House of Lords and immigration. We found that, despite the different angles that Nigel and Claire came from, the two actually agreed on quite a bit. One that perhaps surprised many was the consensus between them on keeping the House of Lords as it is. Nonetheless it was fascinating to hear these different perspectives on a variety of issues.

*William Gough*

# Roger Gough

This week, for the third week in a row, PEACAS hosted an external speaker. The speaker was Roger Gough, a Conservative Councillor who has served as the Leader of Kent County Council since 2019. As opposed to the more personal approaches of some of the other speakers, Cllr Gough gave his talk on the topic of local government in a broad sense, including the challenges it faces.

Some of the main topics that Cllr Gough discussed included the centralisation of England, the strained council budget, the COVID-19 Pandemic and immigration. One of the key messages of the talk was that, despite its lack of media coverage, the world of local government can be just as interesting as, if not more interesting than, national government.

At the end of the talk, Cllr Gough answered some questions asked by the audience. Although most of the questions were focused on local government, including some rather challenging ones, one student did ask Cllr Gough his opinion on a more national issue. It was another fascinating talk from an external speaker, highlighting an often-forgotten area of politics.

*William Gough*



# Parliament and Supreme Court trip

## Summary of the day

On Thursday 21 July, Y12 Politics students went on a trip to London to visit the Houses of Parliament and the UK Supreme Court in wake of the resignation of the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson. We travelled from London Bridge to Parliament by boat, thankfully a couple of days after the record temperatures during the heatwave, which was enjoyed by all.



The first of two tours came at the Supreme Court, where students were able to explore multiple courtrooms, sit in on a live

proceeding and even debate previous cases before passing judgments themselves. It was then a short trip across the road to the Houses of Parliament, where another tour was waiting - this time of the inner workings of Westminster, including viewing debates from the public gallery in both the Commons and the Lords. A mock debate between students then followed, which produced some inspired oratory showings from many, before the final event of the day. It was a visit from Tonbridge MP Tom Tugendhat, who had of course been a leadership contender for the Conservative Party until just a few days before. Our eager students were keen to quiz him on both recent events and a certain recent leader. Overall, it was an enlightening day for all those involved, with big thanks owed to Ms Galvin and Mr Davies for organising the trip.

*Noah Robson*

## Our workshop on Political debate - parliament style

The Judd School's parliamentary experience was heightened after being seated within an aesthetically designed 4D replica of The House of Lords. A

fascinating talk followed, entailing a breakdown of one of the most important institutions in the UK. Political charades occurred next, and as if bearing a striking

resemblance to British politics actions were replaced by words. With that, the race began to see which team could accumulate the most amount of points over the course of the next forty-five minutes. A debate followed. And in a quite amusing fashion a great deal of time was consumed ‘debating’ the actual topic to debate. Eventually, however, it was decided: should the UK government abolish grammar schools? Needless to say the topic espoused powerful opinions from both sides of the room with even the

makeshift speaker having to intervene at one point to restore order. Alas, the debate concluded with an anti-climatic draw. Consequently, the speaker intervened to deliver the deciding verdict. Put simply, whoever made the most noise would win the debate. Fortunately, for The Judd School the speaker proclaimed that, “I think the Noes have it,” guaranteeing the future of grammar schools.

*Owen Goddard*

## **Our meeting with Tom Tugendhat**

We concluded our time at the education centre and the day as a whole by meeting with Tom Tugendhat, the school’s local MP. We were quite fortunate with our timing seeing as Mr Tugendhat had only been knocked out of the Conservative Party leadership contest earlier that week,



although he was rather tight-lipped about giving further thoughts on the remaining candidates in the leadership race. Related to the leadership contest, we spent most of our time with Mr Tugendhat

discussing the nature of the UK’s Parliamentary system; i.e., should a general election be called once the new Prime Minister is in place? Mr Tugendhat was ardent in his view that, as the UK is a parliamentary democracy, rather than a presidential one, a change in Prime Minister is not a sufficient enough reason for an election to occur, provided the party manifesto is stuck to. However, many politics students took the opposing view, citing a lack of trust in the government in general as a sufficient justification for an election to occur. This discussion linked many ideas and themes from the A-Level politics course, such as legitimacy and parliamentary democracy, to a real world application.



Although this particular issue dominated the discussion, we were also able to ask questions on other issues such as Scottish independence and party loyalty. Overall, the meeting with Tom Tugendhat was a fascinating insight into the views of a

## The Supreme Court

The first item on the agenda was a trip to the Supreme Court, the final court of appeal for civil cases in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. During our tour we were shown different courtrooms, which gave students an opportunity to sit in the place of the chief justices. We debated previous cases and the 'justices' passed judgement, finding themselves constantly adhering to the actual decisions made (perhaps in that very room). Of particular interest was the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, which serves as the final court of appeal for many countries, including Jamaica and the Isle of Man, and is housed in an impressive room adorned with the flags of all the countries it has jurisdiction over.

All students were very excited for the main event; the witnessing of an actual trial, which involved a Commonwealth country. Unfortunately spirits were somewhat dampened when the case had to be adjourned due to a technical fault which meant that the lawyer joining by video link could not hear the justices trying to interject. It made for a rather amusing

Conservative MP and it was great to debate with him on key areas in which we disagreed.

*William Gough*

spectacle - albeit a frustrating one for those who were not merely observers like ourselves.



In summary, it was fascinating to get the inside track on one of the newest, but also most important, institutions in our democracy.

*Catriona Robertson*