

Democracy in the UK is broken. Millions feel disenfranchised, or worse, apathetic. The democratic deficit needs to be tackled. Last year, we experienced the most disproportionate General Election in British history, I was galvanised to act - starting an online petition to change the system of electing MPs. It collected over 240,000 signatures. As the Electoral Reform Society points out in its report, 'A system in crisis', 74% of votes did not contribute to electing an MP. I co-founded Make Votes Matter, a new social movement for Proportional Representation. Whilst employed as spokesperson of MVM in the Summer 2016, I recognised the need for mass mobilisation of supporters to raise awareness of our campaign. As a member of the governing body of the Electoral Reform Society, I also appreciated the importance of lobbying, research and education as campaign tools. I have developed a deep understanding of the categories, methods and functions of pressure groups. In recognition of "innovative and digital political campaigns" I was named as one of '50 New Radicals 2016' by the Observer.

Berlin sparked my interest in history and politics. It has been the centre of a battle of ideologies; between democracy and autocracy, capitalism and communism, socialism and Nazism. Seeing for myself the Reichstag building brought home the scale of political transformation that Germany has undertaken. Housing the ineffectual Diet; the proclamation of the republic from its balconies; the Reichstag fire; ruin during the Cold War and eventual restoration after reunification. The modern Reichstag is a monument to Berlin's turmoil and regeneration into a modern, vibrant society. For me, this typifies why history and politics are deeply connected and fascinating.

I am a member of UK Youth Parliament. Because young people cannot vote, UKYP offers a crucial voice. I have spoken at the dispatch box of the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The opportunity to shadow John Manzoni, Chief Executive of the Civil Service, gave me an insight into the inner workings of

central administration. It impressed upon me the importance of human relationships at the heart of Government. Hearing the opinions of senior civil servants was eye opening, challenging the principle of neutrality and supporting the core executive theory that rather than being monocratic, there are many actors in government each relying on a network of relationships to exercise influence. As Rhodes and Dunleavy argue in 'Prime Minister, Cabinet and Core Executive', the debate about the executive should be broadened beyond the conventional prism of PM and Cabinet.

Recently, Theresa May named Joseph Chamberlain as her 'political hero'. I learnt about Chamberlain in the AS History course, in Ferguson's 'Empire' and Browne's seminar study 'Joseph Chamberlain, Radical and Imperialist'. Studying his legacy allowed me to draw parallels between him and our Prime Minister. Chamberlain's greatest focus was on unionism, echoed in May's first speech as PM. It was, in fact, Chamberlain's Liberal Unionists who gave the Tories their 'Unionist' title when the parties merged in 1912. As May referenced in her speech, this unionism went beyond the nations of the UK, representing the union between the conservative establishment and working people. Chamberlain believed in government intervention in the interests of the working class, an idea revived by May's plans for an industrial strategy. May clearly wants to emulate his reputation as a social reformer but it is unlikely that she will be anywhere near as radical. With a small commons majority, May will be unable to stamp her mark on government, torn between rebellious moderates and an empowered eurosceptic right within her party.

At university, I look forward to broadening my knowledge, developing my skills and challenging myself to the full.