

## **The Convention**

*'Think anew, Act anew'*

The Convention will hold the debate on the real impact of Brexit that is missing from Parliament, and will focus on the dangers posed for democratic and liberal values by the political crash.

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Our new times require new thinking. *The Convention on Brexit and the Political Crash* - to be held in Central Hall, Westminster, London on May 12 and 13 - is the first large scale event to offer organisations and individuals the chance to hear and take part in crucial debates about the United Kingdom's future and the populist insurgencies that are sweeping western democracies.

Too often, over the last year, Parliament and the press have stifled debate about the impact of leaving the EU on such things as our Union of one nation and four countries, the economy, vital services, security, scientific exchange and the environment. The effects of withdrawal on everyone in the United Kingdom will be profound and long lasting, yet the major parties and most of the media behave as though there was nothing more to discuss after the 2016 referendum.

We believe there is still plenty to say which is of acute national interest - and of consequence to the EU itself. The Convention will seek to augment the debate with detailed sessions on the future of Ireland and Scotland, on the causes of populism, on migration and foreign nationals, and on politics and the media in the post truth age.

There will be speeches from well-known cultural figures and leading political figures from the UK, US and across Europe, who will define the character of these new times and look ahead.

These two days will be of vital importance because The Convention will also address the UK government's Hard Brexit strategy and ask whether those who voted to leave were aware of the implications of quitting the Single Market and the Customs Union. We will debate the options - to work for a successful Brexit; to completely oppose leaving the EU; or campaign for another vote when the details of the government's negotiation become clear.

Brexit means much more than finding new trading partners and taking back control of borders and Parliament; hate crime and intolerance have surged; millions of foreign workers feel unwanted and insecure; and, far from bringing about an expansive outward-looking nation, the country's horizons and attitudes seem to have narrowed and hardened since the vote.

To hold the debate that the Government refuses to allow is good in itself, but to come together with one message and to reassert the open, progressive and democratic values in this new era is a higher goal.

We hope you will join us for two days in May.

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*"The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves, and then we shall save our country"*  
Abraham Lincoln, 1862.

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Committee. Henry Porter; Rebecca Ashton (Co-Director); Julien Pante (Producer and Co-curator); Helena Kennedy, Principal of Mansfield College; Will Hutton, Principal of Hertford College; Bess Mayhew, More United; Alice Fermor-Hesketh, Common Ground; Neal Lawson, Compass; Edward McMillan-Scott and Mike Biden, European Movement; Mike Galsworthy, Scientists for Europe; Eloise Todd; Mary Fitzgerald, Rosemary Bechler, Anthony Barnett, Cathy Runciman, all of OpenDemocracy; A.C. Grayling, Master of New College of Humanities; Jo Maugham QC - Tax lawyer; Deborah Hermanns and Joe Todd The World Transformed; Anne Weyman, Britain for Europe; and Clare Algar

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