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Brexit MPs Revive Parliament as Guardian of Britain's Freedoms, says Politeia's Director. New publication shows that Britain's political identity and freedom cannot be accommodated under EU rule.

Publication: Monday 20th June

[PDF: *Ruling the Ruler: Parliament, the People and Britain's Political Identity*](#)

For many people, the EU referendum matters because it is about 'Who should rule Britain'.

In Politeia's next publication, *Ruling Passion: Parliament, the People and Britain's Political Identity*, its Director explains that:

Britain's distinctive political identity is based on the freedom – the right of people to elect and remove their government – which took root early and developed over many centuries.

That freedom was reinforced by the constitutional separation of powers and by the role of parliament, which held the executive (king or government) to account.

- Nowhere else was there, by the 19th century, such a knowledge and lively interest in the politics, policies and the politicians of the day. People and their leaders often made common cause on the great matters of state. We see in the 19th century people shaping the mass movement for free trade; throwing themselves behind the demand to extend the vote; and congregating at the hustings.
- In the 20th century, the parliamentary system of government, which checked the power of the executive, was seen to protect the country from the chaos and autocratic rule which scarred continental countries, and it allowed for ordered progress, protection of property rights and the dramatic change of course of political course.

Many people in Britain have recently despaired that such tradition in which parliament is the symbol and guardian of freedom has been eroded; that the accountability of government to parliament, and both to the people have been snuffed out; that parliament has been emasculated by the manner in which recent governments use power and patronage to dupe the people and over ride the will of parliament.

But, as the author points out

- The Brexit debate has revived this parliamentary tradition as many MPs defy their party leaders and the government, risking their political careers to make common cause with the British people to back Brexit.

As Dr Lawlor puts it:

The Brexit debate has rekindled this spirit and struck a blow against overweening government power. In standing up, once again to executive power, MPs have re kindled the role of parliament as the focus for Britain's liberties and peoples' freedom. Just as in the past, there are politicians who are willing to defy their leaders and the executive of the day, to risk their careers for an ideal in which they and the people they represent believe.

In his foreword, the distinguished Cambridge historian and chairman of *Historians for Britain*, Professor David Abulafia says:

In this beautifully clear and accessible account of how the political culture of the United Kingdom has developed over time, particularly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Dr Sheila Lawlor leads us to reflect on the distinctive political culture of a country (or rather collection of countries) that stands apart from the rest of Europe and can surely find a route to success outside the European Union if the British public so decides.

Ruling Passion: Parliament, the People and Britain's Political Identity will be published by Politeia (date tbc), www.politeia.co.uk, 14a Eccleston St, London, SW1W 9LT.

The author, **Sheila Lawlor** is Director of Politeia. She is a 20th century British political historian, and the author of *Churchill and the Politics of War*. Her next book will be on *Churchill and the Politics of Peace* (working title). She is a member of the Board of *Historians for Britain*.

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