

The 7 per cent club

Janice Turner Why is our public life still dominated by a privately educated elite?

Lynn Barber on stockpiling sardines
Grace Blakeley on the UK's jobs con

Richard Dawkins on Brexit, wild tweets and his terror of eternity

NewStatesman

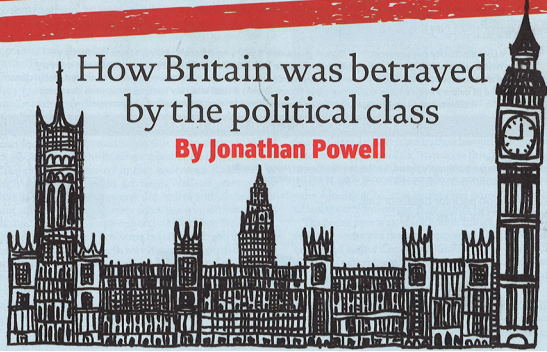
Enlightened thinking in dark times

1-7 February 2019/£4.50

EPIC FAIL

How Britain was betrayed by the political class

By Jonathan Powell



BACK PAGES



THE NS Q&A

"I admire Robert Kennedy because he changed his mind" Nicole Farhi, designer and sculptor

Nicole Farhi was born in Nice, France, in 1946. A former fashion designer, she launched her label Nicole Farhi in 1982. She left the label in 2012 to follow a career in sculpture.

What's your earliest memory?

Being washed in a bassinet somewhere in the hills behind Nice. My whole family was happy and laughing, reunited after the occupation of France.

Who are your heroes?

Hero is not really in my vocabulary. But there are two people I had and have a lot of respect, admiration and love for. In my childhood, Ephraim Farhi, my wonderful father, a wise and good man, who arrived

in France from Turkey in the 1930s, selling carpets. In my adult life, my husband David Hare, for the same qualities and his real integrity both as a writer and a man.

What was the last book that changed your thinking?

I read Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* when I was young. Her idea of women as strong, resilient and equal has stayed with me and appeals to me much more than the victim feminism of today.

Which political figure do you look up to?

I admire Robert Kennedy. Born into a straitjacket of wealth and privilege, he changed his mind when he saw the justice of civil rights and of the anti-

Vietnam War movement. That took guts.

What would be your Mastermind subject?
French cuisine. I always think I know better than most renowned chefs.

In which time and place, other than your own, would you like to live?

The ten years after the Second World War in Paris seem fascinating. I could have met Christian Dior and talked to Giacometti.

What TV show could you not live without?

Surely the whole point of TV is that it changes all the time? It would be very boring to stick with one show. *The Sopranos*, *Life on Earth* and, above all, *Heimat* have been at the centre of my viewing at different times.

Who would paint your portrait?

Paula Rego. She painted David brilliantly, and I would like a twin portrait to hang beside his at the National Portrait Gallery.

What's your theme tune?

I have worked very often to *La Wally* sung by Maria Callas.

What's the best advice you've received?

Eduardo Paolozzi, who helped me as a sculptor, taught me to leave the day's work unfinished so I could pick it up next morning and not have to start completely anew. It works.

What's currently bugging you?

In France, yes, people are talking to the streets, but about things that matter: living standards, jobs, poverty. Here, it's all about Brexit – pure imperial nostalgia and a means of avoiding Britain's real problems.

What would make your life better?

A foundry in my street.

When were you happiest?

Bringing up my daughter Candice. Just the thought of Candice makes me happy.

In another life, what job might you have chosen?

I'd love to have been an opera singer or a heart surgeon. I am still in two minds.

Are we all doomed?

We are all going to be extinguished, but this doesn't frighten me at all. Death holds no fear for me. ☺

A new solo exhibition of Nicole Farhi's sculptures, "Folds", is on at Beaux Arts, London until 2 March

PHOTOGRAPH BY NEW STATESMAN