

Britain's Defence Secretary Fallon resigns in anti-democratic "sex pest" scandal

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Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon is the first high-profile scalp in a sex scandal sweeping British politics, which has taken on ever more contrived dimensions.

Fallon resigned after being made to apologise for placing his hand on the knee of a female journalist 15 years ago. This is despite the fact that the woman involved, Julia Hartley-Brewer, had not complained and has publicly disassociated herself from what she described as a "political witch-hunt."

Fallon is among 40 Tory MPs in a so-called "dirty dossier" leaked to Rupert Murdoch's *Sun* newspaper. While most names are redacted, it reportedly includes six serving cabinet ministers. Some 15 names relate to consensual relationships, while one Tory MP is accused of "sexting" a young female who had applied for work, and another is under investigation for getting his personal assistant to buy a sex-toy for his wife.

The sex-scandal, if such a designation can be applied, sprang to life following that surrounding American film producer Harvey Weinstein, which has now engulfed Kevin Spacey and Dustin Hoffman. It is asserted that Westminster is the UK's equivalent of Hollywood—a place where sexual harassment and misogyny are so rife and engrained that they can only be dealt with by "outing" those involved, without the wearisome encumbrance of due process.

No evidence has been provided to back up many of the claims and, as yet, no one has been charged with any offence.

To make this observation is not to imply that Westminster is a bastion of morality, or that the allegations are entirely without foundation. This is an institution that has systematically stripped workers of any rights, leaving them prey to all manner of abuses, under the mantra of survival of the fittest and there is "no such thing as society."

Fallon himself is a leading warmonger, whose bellicose

threats of military aggression against Russia and North Korea include his statement last month that Britain should be prepared to use nuclear weapons against Pyongyang. Yet he has left office over an action so inconsequential that the woman involved thought nothing of it, and even with a degree of public sympathy behind him. Meanwhile, the war preparations continue regardless.

Secretary of State Damien Green also stands accused of inappropriate behaviour. Tory political activist, journalist and feminist, Kate Maltby, has detailed how she sought out Green—a close friend of her mother—when starting her career. At a meeting in 2015 where he promised to help her advance, she "felt a fleeting hand against my knee—so brief it was almost deniable."

This was apparently the cause of such distress for Maltby—"You probably have no idea of how awkward, embarrassed and professionally compromised you made me feel," she wrote of Green in the *Times*—that they had no contact until after she had posed in a corset for a national newspaper and Green sent an appreciative text suggesting they meet up.

Maltby only decided to respond when Green was suddenly promoted to Deputy Prime Minister earlier this year, on the occasion of which she sent him a message stating, "I look forward to seeing what you achieve in government."

For this, Green is fighting for his political survival.

Writing in the *Guardian*, Polly Toynbee opined: "What an irony it would be if another good old British parliamentary sex scandal brought down this government—and not the Brexit abomination or the extreme suffering caused by austerity or any of the myriad acts of atrocious governance they have been guilty of since 2010."

More than irony is involved. Can it be mere coincidence that Green and Fallon are Prime Minister Theresa May's key political allies—charged with managing the bitter

infighting between the pro and anti-Brexit wings of the Conservative Party, which has become even more charged since June's general election?

May has already been threatened with a leadership challenge. The British government has just six weeks left to convince its European Union partners to begin negotiations on the terms of its exit from the single market, but there is no sign of movement. Meanwhile, bogus allegations of Russian interference in last year's Brexit referendum have taken a qualitative turn with the UK Electoral Commission investigating Arron Banks, the entrepreneur who funded anti-Brexit campaigns.

At any rate, the scatter-gun nature of what has been described as Britain's "cultural revolution," or the "new Puritanism"—conflating sexual interaction with criminal actions—lends itself to the settling of scores for political ends.

Sheffield Labour MP Jared O'Mara is suspended from the party for online comments he wrote more than a decade ago about women and homosexuals. The offending remarks were brought to light by right-wing blogger, Guido Fawkes (O'Mara is a supporter of party leader Jeremy Corbyn).

This week, Bex Bailey said she was raped at a Labour Party event six years ago by a senior member, but was discouraged from reporting it by a "fellow activist."

Bailey is a former aide to Liz Kendall, the Blairite challenger to Corbyn in 2015, and was the youth representative on Labour's National Executive Committee until last year. Although she had not taken the alleged attack to the police, Bailey did report it to BBC Politics Editor Laura Kuenssberg, whose anti-Corbyn bias is a matter of record.

The internal investigations set up by Labour into such charges are now being used to tar anyone supporting Corbyn—and more specifically, left-wing or socialist politics—as rape apologists.

Suzanne Moore in the *Guardian* declared that "many Jeremy Corbyn loyalists are nasty misogynists," while at the *Telegraph*, Zoe Strimpel asserted that "Corbyn's rise has given those on the Left with thuggish instincts an open field. And a party that embraces thuggish impulses will behave thuggishly."

Whatever the exact fallout from these events, nothing good will result. There is a profoundly sinister undercurrent, as befits a campaign predicated on jettisoning the presumption of innocence.

Andrea Leadsom, Leader of the House of Commons, has been put in charge of acting on allegations of sexual

misconduct. Leadsom, who boasts of her admiration for Margaret Thatcher and the centrality of her Christian faith (she prays "all the time") has announced she will be "setting the bar significantly below criminal activity" in dealing with "inappropriate behaviour."

Right-wing journalist Melanie Phillips writes that the parliamentary sex scandal has got "seriously out of hand." But she blames it on the "sexual revolution and lifestyle free-for-all, which turned sex from a private, sacramental activity within marriage into little more than a recreational sport."

As women "threw themselves into lifestyles of immodesty, promiscuity and casual sex," this led to "an exponential increase in male sexual misbehaviour" as men sought to assert their masculinity, she states.

The answer presumably is that women should get back in the kitchen. Phillips is notorious for her anti-Muslim screeds, usually disguised as a defence of women's rights. Yet her comments would be perfectly acceptable to the Taliban.

This speaks to more fundamental impulses. So wide is the designation of abuse that names on the "sex-pest" list are said to include Home Secretary Amber Rudd for having a relationship with a fellow MP following her divorce, and Tory MP Jake Berry for having a son with his partner, a party aide. A striking number involve homosexual relations, including one male MP accused of liking "intercourse with men who are wearing women's perfume." One can only surmise that it is not the perfume but the act that is considered morally reprehensible.

A warning must be made. The campaign launched in the name of protecting women and gays, with the support of the identity-politics crowd, will invariably be used to overturn democratic and social rights and legitimise the most backward and reactionary ideologies.



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