

Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Liz Truss, writes for The...

The young are freedom-loving capitalists

We need to double down on the values which have made Britain great and Labour wants to crush

LIZ TRUSS

From the coffee bars of Camden to the gan joints of Norfolk – across Britain a revolution is brewing. And no, it's not John McDonnell's latter socialist boosh. It's a generation growing up with an entirely different view of the world – free-thinking, optimistic and hungry for success.

The under-30s are the risk takers, inventors and free thinkers, with unprecedented freedom to start a business, broadcast their views to the world, or travel anywhere they like at the push of a button. Far from the hat-wearing, big-state-loving Marxists often portrayed in the media, they are the most freedom-loving, enterprising generation ever. And they are changing attitudes and industries – in

big and small ways – day in, day out. That's possible because we live in a society that has cherished and encouraged personal freedom, and put the individual before the state while making sure the boat will off always have a safety net. But those ideas are under threat now that they ever have been. Not by some encroaching overseas menace, but by a UK party that wants to be in government.

Jeremy Corbyn and Mr McDonnell have made no secret of their desire to stamp out individualism and enterprise. They call businesses the "real enemy". Their supporters brand dissenters and label them "traitors". And they openly call for government to take more control over the economy and our lives. We can already see their controlling ways in councils across the country: anyone sensible abused until they are booted out or quit, services like Airbnb and Uber banned, new schemes dreamt up for hiking tax.

This assault on freedom wouldn't just damage the economy, it would erode the economic freedoms which give power to the people. The free market is fundamentally humane and democratic, driven by ideas and millions of individual choices about what to do with our money which defy those who benefit from the status quo.

If Labour took away that freedom to innovate and spend our money how we want, they would take away our power over the powerful. If Mr McDonnell nationalised whole industries, they would be quickly taken over by bureaucrats more concerned about their careers than about customers. Except this time, there will be no choice and nowhere to turn when things go wrong.

Imagine what it would be like living in such a country. Where you are frowned upon for making money, or branded a traitor for criticising the politicians who control an increasing share of our lives. I don't think that's a society any of us want, especially those just starting out. They are snipe-hating, pop-up-shopping, online-trading freedom fighters. They don't want go-faced, humourless socialists banning fun and controlling every part of our lives.

We are motivated by making money – and that's a good thing. It's the rich and established who benefit when people from ordinary backgrounds can't make it big. So instead of focusing on success and promising endless handouts, we should give young people the freedom to succeed and channel their go-getting attitude to tackle the big issues we face.

Refresh is a new initiative by young people, for young people, to provide a free-market response to Britain's biggest issues. Find us on Facebook and @Teletelish

In housing, for example, where the answer is more market, not less. More land to build on and more small construction firms competing with established players will push down prices and make ownership a reality for millions. The same goes for energy, where we need a shake-up that delivers more competition. And to turbocharge those changes, we need to unleash the energy, audacity and disruptive thinking of the next generation.

So I welcome the Telegraph's Refresh campaign, which will engage young people and bring energy and urgency to developing radical, free-market solutions to challenges like housing and equality of opportunity.

And on the eve of the local elections, I urge everyone to pick up their flat whites, don their blue and fight for the values of freedom, individual endeavour and opportunity that got us where we are today – a freer and more prosperous society than we have ever been. Because if we can double down on those values as we leave the EU, we can build a richer, more self-confident, lean-in Britain where everyone, regardless of background, has the opportunity to change the world.

Liz Truss is Chief Secretary to the Treasury

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Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Liz Truss, writes for The Telegraph's new Refresh initiative: "The young are born disruptors, but they need freedom, not socialist strictures, to succeed"

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2018/04/25/young-born-disruptors-need-freedom-not-socialist-strictures/>

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