

Joan Edwards' legacy and the Cowardly State

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As the FT (and, I suspect, all other UK papers) [have noted this morning](#):

On Wednesday the UK's Liberal Democrats and Conservatives said they would hand back the money the parties received from Joan Edwards, who died in Bristol in September last year aged 90, leaving £520,000 to "whichever government is in office at the date of my death".

It was a quite extraordinary decision on the part of both parties to accept the funding in the first place, [as many have commented](#) and yet what their actions really tell us about what they think is, in many ways, the most interesting dimension to the story.

First, they could not believe that anyone could so believe in democratic government and the good it can deliver that they might willingly leave their money to the state to use as it saw fit.

Second, they confused government with the political parties in power.

Third, without the pressure of transparency they thought they could get away with this.

So we have people who have no faith in democracy or the process of government, who confuse their personal position with the requirements of office and who will do murky deals behind dark doors in power in this country.

Perhaps we already knew that we had such people running what I have called our Cowardly State, but it's depressing none the less.

Oh for [The Courageous State](#).