

Brexit: UK Caught Between the Past and the Future

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The United Kingdom stands fatally divided between nations, regions, generations, on the edge of a critical fault line which threatens the future of the Union.

Picture a hen-house with three hundred and fifty hens inside, and one rooster. The door opens, and three foxes slink inside licking their lips. Now picture the utter bedlam which ensues. Welcome to the United Kingdom, two and a half years after a politician promised a referendum on a matter of national importance just because he wanted an absolute majority in a domestic election. Welcome to the ridiculous portmanteau, *Brexit*.

Those of us who know the United Kingdom have been trying, since June 2016, to understand the psyche of the British people and this week, the penny finally dropped. What appeared to be nonsensical finally makes (non)sense.

Trying to understand the British Parliament

A Portuguese friend told me this weekend that he thought the Portuguese Parliament was hilarious until he saw the British counterpart.

How could half the population old enough to vote, plus a few, be fooled so easily by a campaign of lies (350 million pounds a week for the NHS, taking back control), how could the political class as a whole not inform people of the terrible consequences of Brexit? How could politicians back a Brexit deal, or even worse, a no-deal Brexit, when they are privy to the horrific information which is now available of the dire consequences of leaving the club? How could anyone in the UK consider operating under WTO rules when these would imply higher tariffs than the ones currently in operation? How could anyone consider going it alone in a world in which all other countries are pulling together into large trading blocks?

The answer is that for these people, Britain still does not have an identity. These people are caught in the Quixotesque dream in cloud cuckoo land that Britannia rules the waves, the British Banger is the best sausage on the planet, Britain gave the world football, Britain is at the center of the Universe and if it pulls out of the EU, everyone will be lining up to do business. The figure Britain today cuts on the world stage is that of an out-dated, ridiculous, arrogant, holier-than-thou partner looking down on the rest of the world which it still considers as its oyster. Being "different" is what turns these people on, instead of joining the club and mucking in like the rest of us.

The only thing which is slightly more encouraging, is that today, such people are in a minority because today, most people old enough to vote understand that Brexit is not the answer, most people old enough to vote, today in 2019, do not want Brexit and as more and

more young people come of voting age, the percentage will grow higher. Today opinion polls indicate that the REMAIN vote would today be 60% in England and Wales, higher in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The Second Referendum would reflect where the population stands today

Therefore the argument that a second referendum would be undemocratic is nonsense, given that a second referendum would allow the majority of people unhappy with Brexit to have their feelings expressed and the young people to have a say in their future, otherwise they are saddled with a badly thought out decision; unless of course a major party makes a return to Europe the mainstay of their manifesto in 2022.

Putting Party First

What we see in Parliament today is not concern for the country but rather, political posturing, putting Party first. Both the main political parties – Labour and Tory – are terrified that backing a second referendum (synonymous with canceling Brexit) might entail losing a substantial part of their voters who voted Leave, and who might refuse ever to vote for that Party again. Therefore they say that a second referendum would not be democratic (how representing the will of the people is not democratic defies logic) and they claim (wrongly) that most people want them “to get on with Brexit”. Most people do not want Brexit at all, and they are right.

The point is that the Brexit vote came amid extremely bad planning, a total and unforgivable absence of information and guidance, on the crest of the wave of the Refugee Crisis as one million Syrians and so on poured into Europe (2015), a campaign of fabrications and barefaced lies, false promises about the NHS and hundreds of millions of pounds, and very little about the negative consequences of leaving the block with which the UK does half its business and risking everything on a casino gamble of winner takes all, including the car, the dog and the wife.

The truth about the challenges

It is inconceivable, for instance, that the UK’s cash-strapped Universities are going to allow the 78,500 EU students currently studying there to enjoy the same conditions that they have now, so it is more likely that fewer students will enrol in British Universities than the contrary. It is also likely that British students will see fees increased to make up the balance.

It is inconceivable, for instance, that British people and companies will not be affected by any form of Brexit, since the UK will either have to pay tariffs on imports and exports, or else have to pay for access, so that means higher taxes, or higher prices, or both. The 40 billion pound Brexit divorce bill will be picked up by whom? The Members of Parliament? Or the working population?

It is inconceivable, for instance, that other countries will fall at Britain’s feet begging to strike unique trade deals when the consequences of doing so would alter their relationship with the EU. Who is going to turn their back on a block with 450 million people to do trade with a country of 66 million?

It is inconceivable, for instance, that Britain’s schools and Universities will produce the material the country needs to fill the job market when today so many doctors and nurses, IT

specialists and so on come from the EU, as pointed out by the excellent article written by Diana Omladič (link below).

In some cases, the UK does not have the courses that students can enjoy in Portugal, for instance, where the quality of University teaching is very high.

The effect of this will mean more under-qualification, a deterioration of services, more expensive goods, fewer exports and the result of that will be endemic unemployment statistics of some 15 to 20 per cent of the working population, and rising by the year.

What has been missed by the Brexiteers and the disgusting self-seeking and lying politicians who have led and misled them (and there is a conspiracy theory that the Brexit vote was “cooked” by the system) is the fact that when you are part of a large trading block, you lose a degree of autonomy but you benefit from being part of the block, as the UK will find out the hard way if it leaves.

What has been missed by the Brexiteers and their puppet masters is the fact that most MPs voted to remain (a House majority of 310) because they know better than the public what the issues are. They know that World Trade Organization rules would mean higher tariffs than remaining in the EU, for example.

In any other country, such a ludicrous Referendum which anyway never had any legally binding tail attached to it (it was merely a consultation), which did not command a two-thirds majority either way, would never force a move to one side or the other over such a divisive and serious issue.

Britain is not placed at the center of the Universe and the Sun does not shine out of its backside. Britain’s place is not with the Empire, it has gone. It went sixty years ago. The Commonwealth countries have formed their own trading blocks. It is time the British people woke up, manned up and recreated themselves inside the geographical region in which their islands are situated – Europe – instead of constantly creating problems, wanting everything all ways for themselves and to Hell with the rest. The Commonwealth is a common cultural reference, it cannot be a trading block because of the distances involved. Distance is cost, cost is money, cost is translated into higher prices and fewer exports, which in turn means job losses, a shrinking economy and fewer resources for public services.

Going it alone goes against every fibre of logic. Since the time of The Venerable Bede, the British have needed the help of Europe (the Romans at the time, who sent one single legion numerous times to help the British fight the invaders from outside the Roman Empire).

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