

Rubbishing Brexit: Post-Referendum Malevolence in Action

By [Dr. Binoy Kampmark](#)

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Twenty-four hour news networks are both terrible and worthy sites to gauge herd-like assumptions. A gaze at CNN over the coverage of the Brexit over the course of Fridaysuggested the dismay, growing into outrage that the infallible market had somehow failed to detect the Leave voters on its all divine radar.

“The markets got it so wrong,” came one CNN pundit reporting on the various erosions of the European stock market. Assumptions of the all wise market deity continued to come out, as if the market has body, soul and form. If the Brexit vote should have taught such figures anything, it is that the market is neither divine nor particular democratic in the way it fiddles with its invisible hand.

The marketeers were thereby marshalled against the Brexiteers. The smug “told you so” gatherings started to assume face with varying degrees of anger and resentment. Democracy had triumphed as an experiment, but...

London’s Mayor Sadiq Khan could only speak about the hope that financiers and companies would still see London as the premier venue, showing his own, rather atrophied version of the British citizen in action. Such a view usually takes the position that the corporation has greater citizenship credentials than the registered voter.

Forget Paris and Berlin, please, pleaded Khan, as the great financial hub of the world could still go about its business irrespective of what voters thought. “We are open for business,” he explained to the CNN viewers. The swill of platitudes did not stop (“We will continue being the best city in the world”), much of it a desperate fight against reality itself.

A cumulative loss of investment, a contraction, a different set of trading relationships with Europe and the rest of the world; that was former Blair minister and Labour Peer Lord Mandelson’s dark prediction in a nutshell. So many buts, so many qualifications to the democratic initiative.

At least Mandelson resisted taking his fist to the leave votes, noting instead an anger in the population against the governing classes. To ITV news, he explained that neither Conservative nor Labour politicians were considered trustworthy, and lacked “the connection they thought they had.”[1]

The leader of the Liberal Democrats, Tim Farron, despite the clear vote for Brexit, decided to ignore the “gut” and “instinct” of the pro-leave voter, feeling, instead, that more brain might have been utilised. He does his own bit of rubbishing of the Brexit voter, suggesting that those on the continent and beyond who praised the vote should be a very good reason to rubbish it.

Instead of stretching out a hand of understanding to those who wished Britain to leave, he sought support from those who voted to remain. “If you are angry and heart-broken over Brexit then join the Lib Dems.”[2]

Within every political class beats the heart of a vengeful authoritarian, and Farron is no different, pitching his own reverse populist line that the Brexit vision, despite having “won this vote”, is not a “vision I and thousands of *Mirror* readers share.”

For Farron, the *Mirror* reader’s demographic is fundamentally materialist, a coda for middle class Britain. “*Mirror* readers are worried about their job, their mortgage and their family.” The UKIP leader, Nigel Farage is, in contrast, ethereally daft, “a tin pot Braveheart” wrapped in the flag.

Sadly, Farron’s own cerebral contribution to the debate has been rather bereft of substance. Judge people, he snorted, by the friends they keep, thereby negating criticism. If Russia’s Vladimir Putin, and the presumptive Republican nominee for US president Donald Trump appreciate the Brexit vote, be wary.

The platoons of condescending commentators and pro-remain agitators continued to emote through the course of the next twenty-four hours following the vote. An article in *The Washington Post* suggested that Britons had gotten busy searching the EU on Google “hours after voting to leave it.”[3]

Fung’s hardly remarkable piece uses the ever unreliable vox pops technique in the hope of identifying the fickle and the feckless. “Even though I voted to leave,” he cites an interview of a Brexit voter with ITV news, “this morning I woke up and I just – the reality did actually hit me. If I’d had the opportunity to vote again, it would be to stay.”

The obvious point to make about the spike in search terms is that the entire British populace, from both the Remain and Leave camps, were wondering about the implications, hence feeding the figures in post-electoral agitation.

But the sting in the tail of the *Post* piece was the condescension. Britons may well have been “mystified” by what would happen in an exit scenario, but “many seemed not even to know what the European Union is.”

Within, and without Britain, Europe is fracturing. Over thirty three million people expressed their views. Within Britain, the votes went along lines of disunion. A silent Britain, one hidden from the political discussion, roared its disapproval. Scotland went to remain; Wales did not. Northern Ireland, in wishing to remain, will be seeking options for closer collaboration with the Republic of Ireland.

All of these consequences may now be seen as disastrous, when they should be viewed as the logical manifestation of a people’s will. Dislike it, but never rubbish it. That is a tyrant’s prerogative, an instinctive response in refusing to reform. Gatekeepers of the European project will do at their peril.

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Notes

[1]

<http://www.itv.com/news/update/2016-06-24/mandelson-brexit-result-shows-disconnect-between-people-and-politicians/>

[2] <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/if-you-angry-heart-broken-8276478>

[3]

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-switch/wp/2016/06/24/the-british-are-frantically-googling-what-the-eu-is-hours-after-voting-to-leave-it/>

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