

## Brexit and more Brexit

The present debate about leaving the EU, and the one about Trump's visit, have inflamed political passions to a degree not seen since the days of CND and the student riots of 1968; even then we accepted democratic outcomes without demur or rancour.

No one can be sure what the long-term or even short-term outcome of brexit will be any more than we can know what would have transpired had we voted to remain. Certainty on the issue is misplaced on both sides; doubt and caution are the attributes of a thoughtful and considered opinion particularly about matters that lie in the future. Those who predicted that economic disaster would follow a 'Leave' vote have so far been proved wrong and may be again when we reflect on the issue ten years from now.

Matthew Parris contends that those in favour of leaving the EU are fast losing their perspective and are behaving badly. I would like to see some of the comments a pro-leave journalist writing in the Guardian would receive.

'Which is why the insistent, splenetic, neuralgic, angry, obsessive and sometimes almost crazed intensity of so many in the Leave crowd has become a source of concern to the rest of us.'

He may well be right but of course many remainers also can be intemperate, angry and often insulting, even to close friends and family. Intemperate behaviour can be found on both sides.

It is clear that a vocal minority does not accept the outcome of the referendum and is seeking to torpedo the will of the people by almost any means. We shall see how that other unelected body, the House of Lords, votes on the matter soon enough.

Matthew makes the interesting claim that many of those who were pro-Bexit are now, in their hearts if not openly, having second thoughts.

‘..... are secretly, usually unconsciously, terrified that they’ve done the wrong thing’

If such is the case, and I don’t concede it is, it maybe because they are a thoughtful lot and care deeply about making the right decision for the future of our country. Those in the remain camp, with the notable exception of the Prime Minister, show no signs of questioning their fixed position. A fixed belief in a prediction for the future is the sign of a prejudiced mind. We can all guess what an outcome may be - none of us knows for sure - we should respect the other viewpoint. Speculation about changes of mind is a waste of time, the people have already taken the decision and it is too late for anyone to change their mind to any meaningful effect.

Having voted to join the EEC in 1973, I thought long and hard before casting my vote in the referendum and wavered until the last moment. I was persuaded by the economic arguments for remain but these were outweighed by the telling arguments against the unelected bureaucracy in Brussels currently running our lives. Like other entrepreneurs I have first-hand experience of the burden of over-regulation and can only hope that much of it will be repealed after we leave. Once Jean-Claude Juncker opined with his brusque and dismissive shrug of the shoulders, I was decided.

It was a sad decision as I am a committed European living in an EU country; I will soon be on the other side of the fence. I fear that the EU is a different country from the EEC I voted to join.

For many Brexit voters, money was not the deciding issue. On the arguments other than about the economy there can be no doubt, Brexit won hands down. So it is not always 'about the economy stupid'. Some of us care deeply about issues of sovereignty and democratic accountability; we care more for these than we do about our own economic self-interest.

Matthew, I accept your challenge and am happy to admit that I might prove to be wrong about the economic consequences of leaving but will you accept my challenge by admitting that you are wrong about many of the other issues already known to us and not the subject of guess work? We all know that Brussels is an undemocratic and bureaucratic state that has failed to have its accounts audited. I wouldn't invest in any company that couldn't produce audited accounts – would you?

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