

Artikulu honek Erresuma Batuaren eta Europar Batasunaren arteko harremanak jorratzen ditu. Honako hau da abiapuntua: Erresuma Batuak Europar Batasuneko kide izateari uzteko XX. mendearen bigarren erdialdeko lehen urteetan hartutako erabakia. Erresuma Batuak europar gaiak orekatzeko eginkizuna izan du tradizionalki eta europar integrazionistek «gero eta batasun estuagoa» lortzeko duten helburuari kontrajarri zaio. Hein handi batean, helburu hori izan da errealitate bihurtu dena eta bihurtzen ari dena.

Giltza-Hitzak: Brexita. Europar Batasuna. Populismoa. Immigrazioa. UKIP. Boris Johnson.

Este artículo aborda la cuestión de la relación de Gran Bretaña con la UE y se remonta a los orígenes de la decisión del Reino Unido de abandonar su condición de miembro de la UE en los primeros años de la segunda mitad del siglo XX. El papel que se atribuye a Gran Bretaña como equilibrador tradicional de los asuntos europeos se yuxtapone al objetivo de una “Unión cada vez más estrecha”, lo cual ha sido el objetivo de los integracionistas europeos y, en gran medida, se ha convertido y sigue convirtiéndose en una realidad.

Palabras Clave: Brexit. Unión Europea. Populismo. Inmigración. UKIP. Boris Johnson.

Cet article aborde la question des relations entre la Grande-Bretagne et l'UE et remonte aux origines de la décision du Royaume-Uni d'abandonner son adhésion à l'UE, dans les premières années de la seconde moitié du XXe siècle. Le rôle de la Grande-Bretagne, en tant qu'équilibreur traditionnel des affaires européennes, vient se juxtaposer à l'objectif d'une « Union toujours plus étroite », visé par les intégrationnistes européens et qui, en grande mesure, est largement devenu, et devient encore, une réalité.

Mots-clés : Brexit. Union Européenne. Populisme. Immigration. UKIP. Boris Johnson.

“Just good friends?” Britain and the European Union

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Foreword

The United Kingdom has withdrawn from the European Union and has thus become the first member state to do so. The mechanism by which this exit was made possible is stipulated in Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty of 2009, another article of which provides for free movement of people within the Union (Lisbon Treaty: General Provisions. Article 2.2). This proved to be one of the major objections of British Eurosceptics to the reality of 'ever-closer union' contained therein, and was ruthlessly exploited by their more populist elements to successfully bring about the 2016 referendum result in favour of the Leave camp.

The overwhelming election victory of Boris Johnson, a Leave supporter, in December 2019 has finally put paid to notions that the British people were suffering from buyer's remorse and demanding a reversal of the referendum result in a 'people's vote'. Indeed the fortunes of the main political figure on the Remain side, Jo Swinson, show that no such remorse existed: the Liberal Democrat leader had announced during the 2019 campaign that in the event of her party gaining power, Brexit would be reversed *without* a second referendum. Ms Swinson subsequently lost her Westminster seat at the election and as a consequence the leadership of her party.

The increased majority Mr Johnson achieved meant that his Conservative government was no longer obliged by the 'confidence and supply' deal his predecessor Theresa May had made with the Northern Irish Democratic Unionist Party to rule out any separate treatment of Northern Ireland in the Withdrawal Agreement (see Annex 1). This had been necessary to keep Theresa May's minority government in power. Therefore the back-stop, a mechanism by which no hard border would be erected in Ireland under any circumstances, no longer applied to the UK as a whole but only to Northern Ireland.¹ In effect this means the creation of a cus-

1. In the current back-stop arrangement regulatory alignment with EU legislation is applicable to Northern Ireland in terms of trade only.

toms border down the Irish Sea, something the DUP had dreaded in the belief that it would represent an inchoate preliminary to Ulster's unification with the Irish Republic.

The next step will now be to see what type of free-trade deal Mr Johnson can broker with the EU. One concern is that a complete free-trade agreement, as desired by the Brexit Party, which is not represented at Westminster, will turn the UK into 'Singapore on Thames', which could be one 'hard Brexit' scenario. However, the second largest party at Westminster is now the Scottish National Party, whose main objection to Brexit is that the people of Scotland are being taken out of the EU against their will, Scotland having voted to remain in 2016. If a hard Brexit were to materialise with none of the existing legislation being kept to secure workers' rights, for example, the SNP might well be provoked into decamping from Westminster altogether and joining their colleagues in the devolved Scottish parliament in Edinburgh and thence declaring Scottish independence. This is what the Republican Sinn Féin MPs did in 1919 in the case of Ireland, whose quarrel with Britain was caused in the final analysis by events in Europe as well.² This is something the UK government will want to avoid at all costs as they have already ruled out a second referendum on independence in Scotland and will thus need to assuage the Scots and for that matter elements of the English and Welsh opposition by ensuring that the UK is not hurled into a free-trade free for all. It is therefore likely that some measure of regulatory alignment with the EU in terms of trade will be maintained and not just with regard to the Irish back-stop. Whether this massive Scottish opposition will stay Mr Johnson's hand and temper his more *laissez-faire* leanings remains to be seen.

This paper is, however, primarily concerned with the historical origins of Brexit. Just how did we get to where we are today? As will be shown, the genesis of Brexit can be found in the miscalculations of two Tory Prime Ministers, Margaret Thatcher and David Cameron. Both promised a sceptical British electorate that 'ever-closer union' would be better halted by Britain staying in the European bloc than if she left. In both their cases they would be proved spectacularly wrong.

1. Introduction

This paper deals with the issue of Britain's relationship with the EU and traces the origins of the decision to withdraw the UK from EU membership back to the early years of the latter half of the twentieth century. The perceived role of Britain as a traditional balancer in European affairs is juxtaposed with the objective of 'ever-closer union' which has been the goal of European integrationists and which to a large extent has become and continues to become reality.

2. The Irish electorate turned resoundingly in favour of the separatist Sinn Féin Party at the General Election of 1918 as a direct result of the British mishandling of the Easter Rising in 1916. The leaders of the rebellion had all been executed because the British considered the Rising an act of treachery that would assist the enemies of the Realm, which was at that time at war with the European Central Powers.

Britain might well have withdrawn from the EU long ago had it not been allowed to pursue an exceptional path by retaining its currency, opting out of (and then into) the Social Chapter of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 and staying outside the Schengen Agreement. The paper will show how this British exceptional position found some traction as an alternative to the integrationist path of ever-closer union during the premiership of Margaret Thatcher, but soon waned in the decades after her departure, leaving the UK in a more isolated position, especially after German Reunification in 1990.

It will be shown how David Cameron's failure to convince public opinion that he had achieved viable reforms, especially in the area of free movement of people, led to immigration becoming the make-or-break issue of the referendum. This failure forced the Remain side to focus on negative aspects of the proposal that Britain withdraw from the EU, namely the supposed dire economic consequences of decoupling the country from Europe's single market. This emphasis on the negative implications of withdrawal in turn allowed the Leave side to accuse the Government and the Remain media of scaremongering and engaging in 'Project Fear', which was first coined during the Scottish Independence referendum in 2014 as a term of disapprobation used against the Unionist campaign, which was calling for a No to Independence vote.

The paper will also show how the British lack of any historical affinity with the European Idea, with the exception of the historic role of balancer in times of conflict, led to the establishment of a firm anti-integrationist support base in the UK. This base found eager allies in populist media outlets which had the distinct advantage over the Remain side that had been forced to take the negative stance mentioned above, by claiming that a Leave result would 'take back control'. This went a long way to assuage the concerns of a large segment of disaffected voters who blamed their social and economic woes on immigration, which would not be controlled by the British authorities if the country remained in the EU.

2. Project Fear

The term 'Project Fear' was first used in the Scottish Independence Referendum in 2014. It was believed by the Yes to Independence side that those advocating the status quo were exploiting the electorate's unease at the prospect of having to deal with the unprecedented and untested political reality that Scottish independence would bring about.

Michael Higgins well illustrates the emotive value of the term when he references the TV debate between the Scottish nationalist leader Nicola Sturgeon and one of the champions of the Leave campaign, Boris Johnson, where Johnson sets Sturgeon as 'previously opposed to and now engaged in a politics of malign negativity' (Higgins 2016, p. 24).

In the two repeat referendums on ever-closer European Union in Ireland, namely Nice in 2001 and Lisbon in 2009, though the term Project Fear itself was not used, the victorious Yes side emphasized the 'risk' that another rejection of the respective treaties would pose to the Irish economy. They did this by putting a pos-

itive spin on the presumed benefits to the Irish employment and economic situation that ever-closer European union would entail, which by implication meant that another rejection of the treaty would put employment and economic recovery in jeopardy. This did not mean however that the Irish could be said to be whole-hearted European integrationists, as John O'Brennan surmised in 2008: 'Where Irish support [for ever-closer union] has been tested at the ballot box, two popular votes have produced anti-integrationist outcomes' (O'Brennan 2008, p. 20).

By focussing strongly on the presumed economic disaster that another No vote would supposedly lead to, i.e. loss of jobs and a return to the economic stagnation of the pre-EU era, it could be argued that the Yes side succeeded in intimidating the Irish electorate into erring on the side of caution and reversing the first referendum result.

If such scaremongering tactics had succeeded in maintaining the status quo in Scotland and furthering ever-closer European Union in Ireland, it was assumed that their deployment would have a similar Europhile outcome in Britain. They did not.

So why did this prove to be the case? The Republic of Ireland which, in addition to the obvious economic benefits that EU membership has brought, could claim by ratifying the ever-closer union treaties to be furthering its aspiration of national unity as long as both jurisdictions on the island of Ireland remained in the EU, i.e. by promoting eventual Irish unity via ever-closer union within the EU. For Britain there was no such territorial issue at stake. Moreover the Scottish vote to remain in the UK in 2014 laid any such concerns to rest, as Scotland remains an integral part of the UK. On the economic side the UK had remained outside the single currency and the Schengen deal, meaning that a possible decoupling of the kingdom from the European project could be more feasible than might otherwise be the case were the country to be tied into the bloc as full EU members. Those opposed to the Common Market in 1975 were political mavericks on both the right and the left, whereas all of the Westminster parties were in favour of continued EEC membership, as was the mainstream media. The EEC accession thus put an end to Britain's isolation, splendid or otherwise. The quirky duodecimal currency had been decimalized in 1971 to pave the way for Common Market membership. It also meant that Britain, being in the club, could no longer enjoy the role of balancer in Europe, which it had successfully played since the Congress of Vienna in 1815. Indeed with the benefit of hindsight it was this role of balancer that would eventually prove to be a stumbling block to any agreement between Britain and her European partners on what exactly the Community should become: a Common Market or the United States of Europe. The role of balancer is best described by Henry Kissinger, who had Britain in mind when he outlined his vision for the United States in such a role in the early 1950s.

A balance of power depends ... on the following factors:

- a) A geographically determinate area.
- b) An equilibrium of strength within that area.
- c) An outside balancer with a profound conception of national strategy and unencumbered by ideological considerations.

d) A large measure of agreement on basic values within that 'concert of powers'.

[...] the balance of power is incompatible with the assertion of absolute values.

[...] the United States should play in relation to Eurasia [in 1951] the traditional role of an island power towards a land-mass to prevent the consolidation of that continent under a single rule (Ferguson 2015, p. 317).

As the UK was also a member of NATO it could, perhaps in the early years of its EEC membership, reconcile its international balancer role with commitment to further economic integration in Europe. British troops would after all remain stationed in West Germany up until the early 1990s. Britain has had a permanent seat on the UN Security Council since the inception of that organisation in 1949. Indeed any mention of Europe in the early years of British membership referred exclusively to the economic nature of the bloc, in the British media at least. In Germany and other continental member states, however, the EEC merely represented a preliminary phase of a European Project that would lead to planned, final European unity. Moreover Germany is constitutionally committed to the creation of a United States of Europe. The preamble to Germany's Constitution, or Basic Law, proclaims that 'Germany has a responsibility to protect its national unity and to serve the cause of world peace as an equal member *in a united Europe*.' (My translation; added emphasis).

Seen in this light one could surmise that Britain and the EU have had divergent if not mutually exclusive objectives as to what the purpose of the bloc should be. The EU and Britain have been 'riding twin horses', to speak with Vernon Bogdanor (Bogdanor 2014). Nevertheless Britain could, thanks to the patience and goodwill of its European partners, continue to ride its anti-integrationist horse. This became increasingly evident during the premiership of Margaret Thatcher (1979-1990). It was under her leadership that the UK successfully negotiated a two-thirds rebate on its contribution to the EU budget after convincingly arguing that Britain, being a predominantly industrial country, did not benefit to an equal degree with her European partners from EC agricultural funds. Matters would then come to a head with the signing of the Single European Act, the text of which was finalised by ministers in Luxembourg in 1985. Here the Thatcher government proved willing to sign away any veto on ever-closer union in return for access for British goods and services to European markets. Thatcher is reported as having explained her motives as follows:

I had one overriding positive goal. This was to create a single Common Market ... British businesses would be among those most likely to benefit from the opening-up of other countries' markets. The price which we would have to pay to achieve a single market with all its economic benefits was more majority voting in the Community; there was no escape from that because otherwise particular countries would succumb to domestic pressures and prevent the opening-up of their markets. It also required more power for the European Commission but that power must be used to create and maintain a single market rather than to advance other objectives. (Turner 2000, p. 78).

The spirit of the age in the 1980s saw those Anglo-Saxon values which had been much feared by General de Gaulle come to the fore. The special relationship was at its strongest with both the US and the UK heads of government about to launch a socio-economic revolution on the world by unleashing a neo-liberal agenda that would sound the death knell for Keynesian socialism in the West and would ultimately prove triumphant on a global scale with the demise of the Soviet bloc in the early 1990s. Thatcher, who oversaw a number of neoliberal reforms including tax reduction, reforming exchange rates, deregulation and privatization, all at the expense of massive reductions in government spending, cannot really be blamed for perhaps imagining that the UK, with the enthusiastic backing of the Reagan and later Bush administrations in the US, could, now more than ever, steer the European bloc away from ever-closer political union. Indeed a reorientation of the bloc back towards its mercantile origins must have seemed a distinct possibility with the moribund Soviet Union appearing as a type of counter-ideal to the neo-liberal proposition which sought to maintain the nation-state as an autonomous body in a global market based on free trade which would soon be facilitated by the communications revolution.

In the post-Thatcher era the British relationship with the EU continued on its somewhat bumpy ride. In 1992 John Major, Thatcher's successor, negotiated an opt-out for the UK on the Social Chapter of the Maastricht Treaty, which guaranteed such things as protection for pregnant women and part-time workers. His successor, the Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair, opted in to this chapter when his party won a landslide victory in 1997 as it championed long-cherished policies on the left in Britain, albeit under the now market-friendly mantle of 'New Labour'. Following Sterling's forced withdrawal from the ERM and the currency's remarkable recovery by 1997, the Conservative party was split over Europe, as indeed was the Labour Party on the issue of Britain's joining the euro: Prime Minister Blair was in favour in principle whilst his Chancellor Gordon Brown favoured keeping the Pound. Ever-closer political union still loomed on the horizon and the rejection of the proposed European Constitution by voters in France and the Netherlands encouraged those Eurosceptics in the Conservative party to call for an in/out referendum to stave off a haemorrhaging of Eurosceptic support to the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP).

3. From 'Neverendum' to Brexit

Although Sir James Goldsmith's *Referendum* movement failed at the polls (the British electoral system makes it notoriously difficult for new movements to gain much ground electorally) and faded into insignificance on the death of its founder in 1997, the decision on whether the country would have a future either *in* Europe or *with* Europe and that this vitally important difference would be decided by the British people in a referendum was now a distinct possibility. The demand for closure on the 'Neverendum' (Glencross 2016, p. 7) issue had to be satisfied in large part due to the pressure that UKIP was putting on the British party-political system

The party that Prime Minister Cameron had dismissed as 'a bunch of loonies,

fruitcakes and closet racists' in a BBC radio interview in 2006 came first in the European elections of 2014 with 27.49% of the vote, nudging Labour with 25.4 % into second place. 'Europe' was back on the agenda. UKIP's tremendous success in the European poll brought to the fore a demographic that would become the lynch pin of the Brexit Referendum. Ford and Goodwin identify the UKIP support as coming from a constituency that is 'economically insecure' and 'uncomfortable in the "new" society' (Ford/Goodwin 2014). This will be elaborated on in section 6: The Harbingers of Brexit. David Cameron was forced to enter into a rare coalition government with the Europhile Liberal Democrats in 2010. Aware that his junior partners would not agree to any referendum on Europe, in 2013 he announced that he would let the people have their say on Europe in a referendum in 2016, assuming that his coalition partners would be re-elected and would duly veto the proposed referendum. However, the Conservatives won an overall majority in the 2015 election and the referendum had to go ahead.

4. Media Coverage of Brexit

'I once asked Rupert Murdoch why he was so opposed to the European Union. "That's easy," he replied, "When I go into Downing Street they do what I say; when I go to Brussels they take no notice"' (Hilton 2016).

The media were nearly evenly divided over the Brexit Referendum. The broadcast media and the *Guardian* and *Independent* newspapers backed the Remain side; while the vast majority of the remaining national print media took a clear anti-EU stance and robustly championed the Leave campaign. In the case of the Leave print media, their coverage sought to continuously vilify the EU institutions as being unrepresentative, faceless and out to wrest control of British affairs away from Westminster. On the Remain side, the supporting media dealt with the EU and Britain's future within it as a problem issue. Whereas they strongly advocated a Remain vote, they did not promote the EU enough to counter the Europhobic campaigns of the Leave media. Tellingly, no EU figure appeared to prop up the Remain campaign. The Brexit vote was thus ultimately decided on purely British terms. The Remain side was forced to focus on the negative argument that a decision to leave the EU would mean Britain would lose influence in the world though little evidence could be provided that the EU had a credible track record of pooling sovereignty to produce collective solutions, as its less than impressive, dithering response to the Corona Pandemic would show in 2020. Those seeking to speak on behalf of Europe were obliged to engage in a debate based on the 'performative legitimacy' of the EU, arguing that the EU has the right policies and executes them well rather than justifying claims for the very existence of a supranational political entity. (cf. Glencross, p. 38). It was an argument that failed to convince the British people and this failure was ruthlessly exploited by the Leave media.

It was in reaction to David Cameron's renegotiation agreement of February 2016 that the Murdoch press saw an opportunity to strike an early blow for Leave, highlighting what would become the make or-break issue in the referendum: im-

migration. Although David Cameron returned from the Brussels talks vaunting his success in negotiating a 'special status' for the UK in a 'reformed Europe', on the substantive issue of immigration no such reform was discernible. For Angela Merkel, there could be no concessions involving quantitative restrictions on EU migration or loosening UK application of single market regulations (cf. Glencross, p.29). *The Sun* responded by screaming that the Cameron deal was 'bogus'. Although Cameron stressed that future immigrants' access to benefits would be restricted, this did little to allay the fears of large numbers of Britons whose concerns lay not in benefits but in the sheer numbers of immigrants that the UK would be obliged to accommodate if Brexit failed.

Not only did Brexit supporters have a more powerful and emotional message, but they were also more effective in the use of social media. This led to the activation of a greater number of Leave supporters at grassroots level and enabled them to fully dominate platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, influencing swathes of undecided voters who simply didn't know what to think. Using the Internet, the Leave camp was able to create the perception of wide-ranging public support for their cause that acted like a self-fulfilling prophecy, attracting many more voters to back Brexit. Remain lost the battle online long before it lost the political battle on the ground. The overwhelming Leave sentiment across all social networking platforms was consistent and undeniable, yet many Remain supporters chose to ignore the voice of the Internet as something that has no connection with the real political world. They believed that Britain would never vote to leave the EU and discounted social media as a playground for "trolls and teenagers" (Polonski, online source).

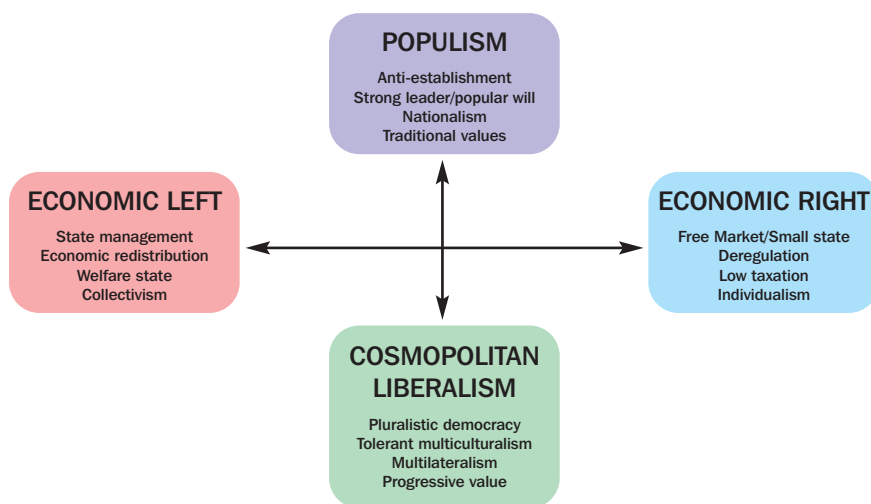
5. The Left Behind

Apart from having the backing of some patrician Eurosceptics on the right of the Conservative Party, such as Jacob Rees-Mogg, the constituency in which the Leave message of 'taking back control' found most resonance was a demographic segment that has come to be known as the *Left Behind*. Much in the same way as this demographic would respond to Donald Trump's promise to 'make America great again' by voting him into office in November, the June 2016 Brexit referendum was won by the Leave campaign in large part by the votes of these Left Behind citizens. John Lancaster provides a useful appraisal of this segment. He writes:

To be born in many places in Britain is to suffer an irreversible lifelong defeat [...]. The academically able kids used to go to grammar school and be educated into the middle class. All that has now gone, the jobs and the grammar schools, and the vista instead is a landscape where there is often work [...] but it's unsatisfying, insecure and low-paid. This new work doesn't do what the old work did: it doesn't offer a sense of identity or community or self-worth. The word 'precarious' has as its underlying sense 'depending on the favour of another person'. Somebody can take away the things you have whenever they feel like it. The precariat, as the new class is called, might not know the etymology, but it doesn't need to: the reality is all too familiar (Lanchester 2016, pp 3-6).

The final referendum result presented what one might call an inversion of traditional class loyalties. Young, urban Conservative supporters voted overwhelmingly to Remain whereas their fellow Tories in the more rural areas voted Leave. The Labour establishment voted to remain whereas working class urban voters particularly in the north of England, i.e. the party's traditional grass roots, voted to leave. This brought about a curious realignment of sympathies that overturned the old left-right divide and can be best illustrated by the following table:

Figure 1: Heuristic model of party competition in Western societies



Inglehart, Robert F. and Norris, Pippa (2016): Trump, Brexit, and the Rise of Populism: Economic have-nots and Cultural backlash. Faculty Research Working Paper Series. Harvard Kennedy School, p. 34. Harvard, Connecticut.

Both the Conservative elite, drawn from the old economic right, and its Labour counterpart, drawn from the traditional economic left, could be said to now belong to the Europhile cosmopolitan liberal class. The Conservative Eurosceptics, also drawn from the traditional economic right are now pitted together with the disaffected working class demographic, drawn from the traditional economic left, to form the anti-EU populist constituency. This represents a paradigm shift in traditional post-war party politics and came to the fore in the Brexit referendum and later in a transatlantic context with the election of Donald Trump in the United States.

6. Harbingers of Brexit

A curious harbinger of the Brexit debacle can be seen in the career of a maverick Tory politician, Enoch Powell (1912–1998), who to some extent could be considered a *pars pro toto* with regard to the evolving British Eurosceptic attitude to the Common Market and/or European Union. While the Labour Party was advocating that Britain remain outside the EEC in 1973 as the then statist-orientated Labour Movement considered the then group of six wealthy, industrialist states too capitalist for its liking, Powell on the other side of the political divide welcomed, as a seasoned champion of free trade, the prospect of Britain joining the Common Market for the same reason. He would soon change his mind however.

Powell is also a good case in point as a forerunner to many in the Conservative party and elsewhere who saw uncontrolled immigration as a crucial reason for Britain to remain an independent country. Of course the immigration debacle he became infamously embroiled in was the issue of whether Britain should curtail the inflow of citizens from the Commonwealth. At that time the EEC had not assumed the political powers it would wield on the matter of free movement in 2016. Nevertheless Powell's stance on immigration *per se* does chime with the opinion of many fifty odd years later and also had the same unsavoury and unwelcome racist support to boot.

It is therefore instructive to revisit Powell's political stance on Europe and on immigration from the then Commonwealth, though not on immigration from what would become the EU as this would be a teleological fallacy. We can thus draw parallels that might lead to some possibility of capturing the essence of Euroscepticism from its inception, as it were. His entry in the Encyclopaedia Britannica reads as follows:

Enoch Powell, in full John Enoch Powell, (born June 16, 1912, Birmingham, England—died February 8, 1998, London), British politician and member of Parliament, noted for his controversial rhetoric concerning Britain's non-white population and for his opposition to the nation's entry into the European Economic Community.

Enoch Powell was the son of schoolteachers of Welsh ancestry. He attended Trinity College, Cambridge, and became a professor of Greek at Australia's University of Sydney at age 25. During World War II he served in the British army, rising from private to brigadier. In 1950 he won a seat in Parliament as a Conservative. He rose through minor posts to minister of health (1960–63) and unsuccessfully challenged Edward Heath for the party's leadership in 1965. On April 20, 1968, in what came to be called his 'Rivers of Blood' speech, Powell evoked the British race question. The nationality acts, he argued, were flooding London and Midlands ghettos with Indian, Pakistani, African, and West Indian immigrants, who could claim British citizenship because of their Commonwealth status. In time the influx, he charged, would cause a bloody race war. He also called for voluntary repatriation of these immigrants. As a result of this speech, he was ejected from the shadow Cabinet. In February 1974 he gave up the Wolverhampton seat he had held for 24 years and, from October 1974 to 1987, was returned to Parliament from Protestant Northern Ireland districts.

Enoch Powell's biographer Simon Heffer writing in 1998, long before the term Brexit had even been coined, though there were rumblings about an in-out referendum, depicts Powell as the perfect Tory free-trader who was initially all for Britain joining what was then known as 'the Six', i.e. the six founding members of the EEC.

The big issue that immediately confronted the cabinet [of Edward Heath in 1962] was the negotiation to enter the Common Market. [Powell] fully subscribed to the notion of negotiating with a view to securing entry. The discussion at cabinet level is not minuted as having been focused at all on the question that would obsess Powell a decade later – sovereignty. It was all about maintaining prices, and about the effect on trade with the Commonwealth [...] or on the general level of farm prices [...]. 'I didn't raise dissent,' he said later, 'because at that stage it was presented as a free-trade exercise.' (Heffer 1998, p.706).

So when did Enoch Powell change his mind on Europe to make him champion of what would become known as Euroscepticism, going so far as to describe Britain's relations with Europe as 'one long epic of deception'? Enoch Powell, like Margaret Thatcher after him, was a self-confessed Europhile. He spoke German, French and Italian fluently and had a working knowledge of other European languages. He was a Classics scholar and like Margaret Thatcher in her Bruges speech, which will be dealt with in more detail below, looked to Europe as the cradle of British civilisation and he, like the former Prime Minister, was keen to disabuse people of the notion that the Common Market or European Community was coterminous with Europe. Powell was much more of an English patriot than Eurosceptic anyway. Many years before Pro-European Remainers would accuse Brexiteers of reacting in an emotional way to the European question, Powell held forth on his belief that the nation could be considered in no other terms but emotional ones:

Accused of over-emotionalising his arguments against membership [of the EEC] when he should have been more rational, Powell replied that 'a nation is not a rational thing. There is no rational basis for nationhood. What a nation is is what it feels itself to be, instinctively and emotionally.' He denied he was an isolationist: 'One is not an isolationist just because one does not want to be amalgamated with another country or countries ... I am a free trader. I want the maximum intercourse between this nation and other nations. I don't believe it will allow itself to be drowned, anyhow.' He rejected the assertion that he was trying to convert public opinion. 'Politicians rarely alter people's opinions. Politicians articulate, crystallise, dramatise if you like, render intelligible and therefore render capable of being turned into action, legislative or administrative, something which is present already in people's minds.' [...]. (Heffer 1998, p. 585). These words would prove to be prophetic as the plebiscite in 2016 and the 'Brexit' General Election three years later would be fought by both pro- and anti-EU politicians on the lines of seeking and upholding the people's vote to stay in or leave respectively. Powell and, it may be argued, Nigel Farage *mutatis mutandis* come the Brexit plebiscite, articulated what others wanted to say about British independence but couldn't say. Highlighting Powell's notion of English exceptionalism Heffer writes:

[Powell's] belief was that, by nature of her history, 'England was simply not like anywhere else, and, if left to her own devices, that history proved that the country could not but flourish. For the unbroken life of the English nation over a thousand years and more is a phenomenon unique in history, the product of a specific set of circumstances like those which in biology are supposed to start by chance a new line of evolution. Institutions which elsewhere are recent and artificial creations, appear in England almost as works of nature, spontaneous and unquestioned' (Heffer 1998, p. 583).

Nonetheless the Yes side won the Referendum to keep Britain in the EEC in 1975. The No Campaign, of which Powell was a leading figure, could not match the combined financial and political might of the establishment that was arguing for Britain to stay in the EEC. Powell was, however, once more uniquely prescient in expressing his belief that the victory of the Yes to Europe side was not the end of the matter and thus once again 'foresaw' Brexit. He predicted correctly that there would be common territorial waters in which no country had any more right to fish than any of its neighbours, which would prove to be a particularly egregious *bête noire* during the 2016 campaign. He was confident that once membership was confirmed, 'the things that will crawl out from under the carpet and the things that will take place in the months, let alone the years, following will be such that the bulk of the British people will say: "we were deceived, taken for a ride, and we will have none of it."' On the referendum campaign in 1975, Powell said, again with considerable prescience that even if the vote was to stay in (as would prove to be the case), that would be only an interim measure: it could be reversed, and one day would be. Powell was thus claiming to be speaking for a majority of the British people, not those involved in Westminster politics but people who saw their social cohesion at risk if immigration were not curtailed and, as the unifying political intentions of the bloc became ever more clear to them, people likewise saw that their commercial and political affairs would be controlled from beyond their island home. Powell had made the point that political power rested with the British and that no parliament, being the supreme legislative body in the United Kingdom, could bind its successors. As part of a European superstate Britons would no longer be comforted by this fact.

Powell, writes Heffer, 'had shrewdly identified the constituency that would provide him with his support in the years ahead, a group of [...] people whose main aim was to be left alone to get on with their lives, to have their way of life left intact, and who felt that no politician or group of politicians recognised their needs and concerns'.

[A] referendum 'will not decide whether Britain is to be part of the Common Market or not. What it will decide is whether Britain ceases to be part of the Common Market now or somewhat later.' (Heffer 1998, p. 748).

Powell was forced to resign from the Tory cabinet following his infamous 'rivers of blood' speech in Birmingham in 1968, which again dealt with the issue of immigration from the Commonwealth and had nothing to do with the later phenomenon of free movement within the EU, which Powell could not have known about at all. What is of interest is the way in which Powell divided the nation over both immigration and, as a political corollary, his anti-EEC stance.

Powell claimed that he was no 'racialist' going so far as to say if the same number of immigrants due to come in originated in Germany or France, it would be of equal concern to him as this would upset the social cohesion the country had presumably enjoyed up until then. His self-defence does not, however, hold water. In the infamous speech Powell used language that clearly indicates a racist mindset 'the black man will hold the whip hand over the white man' (Heffer, p. 451). He also used a derogatory term for black children. He was quoting constituents who had used this racist language in expressing their concerns to him. But to repeat this language in a public speech was disingenuous in the extreme and a man whose erudition and perspicacity was so well respected and even feared in some quarters should have known better. The fact that he painted a picture of a future social apocalypse literally in black and white terms means that no inference can be made from the speech that his concerns could be extended to any hypothetical immigration from France or Germany. The Birmingham speech was racist and for this reason Edward Heath, the Conservative leader, had no choice but to dismiss Powell from his shadow cabinet.

What followed however was interesting and again adumbrated the events that followed the 2016 plebiscite. Powell became a political pariah and was received by hostile left-wing students and some teachers wherever he went. Militant leftist students sought to prevent him from holding speeches prefiguring the 'No Platform' campaigns of some student unions today. He had to be clandestinely smuggled in through a back door and he had eggs and tomatoes thrown at him. There were suggestions made that he be prosecuted on the ground of incitement to racist actions by some over his speech.

Powell had made his infamous speech, which would become known variously as his 'Birmingham Speech' or 'Rivers of Blood Speech', on 20th April in 1968. By 24th April, Heffer tells us, he had received 20,000 letters, four or five sackfuls arriving at each delivery; the Post Office assigned a van to make a special run several times a day. By that stage Powell had found just a dozen letters against (Heffer 1998, p. 463).

It appears quaint to our modern eyes that the 'snail-mail' post was used to 'like' Powell in such overwhelming numbers and shows that there was a considerable untapped source of Powellist support among the people back in 1968. This groundswell of popular support would *mutatis mutandis* evolve into the 'Populism' that accompanied the Brexit camp in 2016. This would be the case for two reasons.

First, as the European Economic Community continued on its declared path towards the creation of a superstate, more people became aware of the implications of continued British membership, which like Powell they had not been focussed on in the 1960s when Britain's application for membership had been vetoed by France. However, when they voted for Britain to remain in what they, unlike Powell, still saw as an exclusively free-trade arrangement with the bloc in 1975, the stage was already set for a second referendum. This would be a long time coming but when it did come in 2016, the 1975 vote was reversed. Powell himself had once again predicted that the 1975 result 'could be reversed and one day would be' (Heffer 1998, p. 748). The second reason was the fact that ele-

ments in the British media such as Rupert Murdoch would magnify anti-European sentiment among the populace and saw themselves provided with ever easier targets of vilification, the more the European institutions sought to fine tune the legislation required for the creation of their superstate. Merciless derision was thrown on EU directives by the tabloid press, especially when these were in conflict with traditional British norms. The tabloid press jeered the supposed introduction into the bloc of 'bendy bananas' (see appendix 2) and a British hero, lionised in the tabloid press, was discovered in the person of Steven Thoburn who had waged a three-year legal battle after being prosecuted for selling in pounds and ounces on his market stall, not metric units as required by an EU directive. The dispute, which was taken to the House of Lords, stemmed from the sale of a bunch of bananas worth 34p. (www.theguardian.com/uk/2004/mar/15/1)

Curious was the behaviour of Powell's fellow Wolverhampton colleague, the Labour MP Renee Short, who in reaction to Powell's Birmingham speech asked the Attorney General if a prosecution could be brought under the 1965 Race Relations Act. This proved impossible as it was impossible to prove Powell's intent. A mere fortnight after making her inquiry to the Attorney General, however, Short performed a remarkable *volte face* calling on the floor of the Commons for a halt to the issuing of work vouchers for immigrants wishing to go to Wolverhampton (Heffer 1998, p. 500). Lord Wigg, another prominent Labour supporter accused Powell of only dealing with the immigration question now in such inflammatory terms because he sensed that he was electorally 'on to a winner'. (Ibid). One might be prompted here to wager that Boris Johnson's eventual decision to back Leave in 2016 might have been made along similar lines. Powell had clearly tapped into a groundswell of angst among the populace that immigration needed to be restricted in 1968. Assuming this groundswell still existed 48 years later, albeit now in a wider European integrationist context in the guise of free movement of people within the bloc and, as will be shown, along with better organised and better funded Eurosceptic opposition to the European integrationists, the stage would be set for the Brexit showdown.

Yet the British electorate voted two to one to keep Britain in the EEC in 1975. Clearly most people still believed, unlike Powell, that membership only covered matters of trade and there would be no loss of sovereignty. In 2016 people knew better: to remain in the EU would have meant agreeing to ever-closer union, which would have necessitated an unacceptable loss of sovereignty at some stage. Also there had been no organised opposition to the Establishment's powerful pro-EEC election machine and one needs to remember that Powell was supported by tens of thousands based primarily on his stance on Commonwealth immigration; his views on the EEC found less resonance. All this would change in the 41 years between the two referendums. The Eurosceptic camp, egged on by the appearance of ever more British angst, an angst if not created then certainly magnified by the vehemently anti-European Murdoch press, as each European treaty was in turn seen to erode British sovereignty. Ever-closer union as it became a reality and ceased to be a distant aspiration *qua* the succession of European treaties led to a complementary growth in Euroscepticism, exercised now by more focussed and better organised forces in and outside parliament.

Powell's campaign to curtail immigration from the Commonwealth and his anti-EEC stance had considerable support in the country but very little in parliament. However, as if to prove Powell's belief that MPs were merely those who articulated the will of the people, in 2016 this would be different: 'Powellism' had sown the seeds of Euroscepticism and these would be reaped at the plebiscite in June 2016 with the vote to leave the bloc. But why was the Leave victory so close in 2016? John Lanchester mentions the people in the rich part of the country who 'pay the taxes which support the poor parts'. He goes on to add

If I had to pick a single fact which has played no role in political discourse but which sums up the current position of the UK, it would be that most people in the UK receive more from the state, in direct cash transfers and in benefits such as health and education, than they contribute to it. The numbers are eerily similar to the referendum outcome: 48 per cent net contributors, 52 per cent net recipients. It's a system bitterly resented both by the beneficiaries and by the suppliers of the largesse (Lanchester, 2016 podcast).

So it would seem according to Lanchester's estimation that the country is divided almost evenly between the better off and the not so well-off, the segment that would contain his precariat. Lanchester's wealth estimation is reversed in the Brexit vote as most better off voters chose to remain because they came equipped, as it were, with a well-educated, globalised attitude and saw no threat from ever-closer union in this context. Some, possibly older, wealthy voters may have voted leave out of a sense of national pride and fear of losing sovereignty, thus tipping the scales in favour of Leave. This will be further elaborated in section 7: 'The Left Behind, Somewheres and Anywheres'.

7. Margaret Thatcher's Legacy

Another harbinger of the Brexit debacle was of course Margaret Thatcher, whose gamble to steer the European Community back on a free-trade course that would leave members' political sovereignty in tact ultimately failed, as has been shown. She did however lay down a marker as to her vision for Britain's future relationship with her European neighbours that provided a blueprint for those who would eventually follow a soft-Brexit line come 2016. In her Bruges speech held on 29th September 1988, which was remarkably more irenic than many believe, Thatcher went to great lengths to insist that Britain was part of the European community of nations and owed much of her cultural heritage to the continent of which the United Kingdom was a constituent part. She was keen to delimit Britain's geographical and cultural proximity to the Continent from the then left-wing integrationist leanings of the then Commission President Jacques Delors. Thatcher had at this stage defeated Argentina in the Falklands War in 1982, had decimated the Labour Party in the General Election of 1983, and would break the back of one of the most powerful Trades Unions, Arthur Scargill's National Union of Miners, whose ultimate defeat in the long miner's strike of 1984 would end the power of the Labour Movement and in turn force the Labour Party to change its course and reinvent itself, in the guise of 'New Labour', as a European-style Social Democratic

party. She enjoyed wholehearted support from the US President Ronald Reagan, whose 'Reagonomics' mirrored the monetarist course the Tories had been following since 1979. Buoyed by such an impressive national and international record, Thatcher turned to the Tories' Achilles' heel: Europe. Here Thatcher would ultimately be bested by her Continental colleagues as no redirection of the integrationist course towards a common market would materialise. Thatcher would therefore join a long list of Tory prime ministers similarly scuppered by the European Question, from Edward Heath, who ignored massive popular opposition to the EEC to John Major whose woeful crisis management led to the exchange rate mechanism fiasco in 1992, to David Cameron, who lost his job when he lost the 2016 referendum.

Thatcher began her famous speech in September 1988 with a jocular reference to the animosity that was felt between her brand of *laissez-faire* economics and the bloc's continuing dirigiste leanings under M. Delors:

'Mr. Chairman, you have invited me to speak on the subject of Britain and Europe. Perhaps I should congratulate you on your courage.'

'If you believe some of the things said and written about my views on Europe, it must seem rather like inviting Genghis Khan to speak on the virtues of peaceful coexistence!'

She went on to forcefully argue for Britain to continue to play a role in the European Community, albeit as a sovereign independent state.

'I want to start by disposing of some myths about my country, Britain, and its relationship with Europe and to do that, I must say something about the identity of Europe itself. '

Thatcher avowed that Europe is not the creation of the Treaty of Rome. She continued:

'Nor is the European idea the property of any group or institution.'

'We British are as much heirs to the legacy of European culture as any other nation. Our links to the rest of Europe, the continent of Europe, have been the dominant factor in our history. For three hundred years, we were part of the Roman Empire and our maps still trace the straight lines of the roads the Romans built. Our ancestors—Celts, Saxons, Danes—came from the Continent. Our nation was—in that favourite Community word—'restructured' under the Norman and Angevin rule in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. We in Britain are rightly proud of the way in which, since Magna Carta in the year 1215, we have pioneered and developed representative institutions to stand as bastions of freedom. And proud too of the way in which for centuries Britain was a home for people from the rest of Europe who sought sanctuary from tyranny.'

She went on, however, to recognise the crucial 'civilising' role the Continent had played for Britain throughout her history.

'But we know that without the European legacy of political ideas we could not have achieved as much as we did. From classical and mediaeval thought we have borrowed that concept of the rule of law which marks out a civilised society from barbarism. [...] Too often, the history of Europe is described as a series of interminable wars and quarrels. Yet from our perspective today surely what strikes us most is our common experience. For instance, the story of how Europeans explored and colonised—and yes, without apology—civilised much of the world is an extraordinary tale of talent, skill and courage.'

She then makes reference to Britain's contribution to Europe in equally glowing terms:

'But we British have in a very special way contributed to Europe. Over the centuries we have fought to prevent Europe from falling under the dominance of a single power. We have fought and we have died for her freedom.'

And referring to countries that would in less than two decades become EU members and whose young people would flock, unrestricted, in droves to find work in Britain, she said:

'We must never forget that east of the Iron Curtain, people who once enjoyed a full share of European culture, freedom and identity have been cut off from their roots. We shall always look on Warsaw, Prague and Budapest as great European cities.'

And alluding to what became known as 'the special relationship' between the UK and the USA she continued:

'Nor should we forget that European values have helped to make the United States of America into the valiant defender of freedom which she has become.'

She came to the crux of her message by emphasising the practical benefits of a common market, where countries could trade with their fellow European partners as well as with nations elsewhere in the world.

'The European Community is a practical means by which Europe can ensure the future prosperity and security of its people in a world in which there are many other powerful nations and groups of nations.'

And then in a broadside against Commission President Delors' socialist aspirations for the bloc, Thatcher would utter the words that would find enormous resonance amongst Eurosceptics back home in Britain, and beyond:

'We have not successfully rolled back the frontiers of the state in Britain, only to see them re-imposed at a European level with a European super-state exercising a new dominance from Brussels'

www.margaretthatcher.org/document/107332

The speech was a *tour de force* and led to a gathering of Eurosceptic momentum that would see in the Bruges speech nothing less than a manifesto for Britain's future relations with what would become the European Union. A direct consequence of the course that was set by Thatcher in Bruges was the foundation of the Bruges Group. According to their website, the Bruges Group is an independent all-party think tank whose 'independence is our strength allowing us to be free to follow our own policy agenda and put the national interest above party political considerations'.

Set up in February 1989, its aim was to promote the idea of a less centralised European structure than that emerging in Brussels. Its inspiration was Margaret Thatcher's Bruges speech.

It claims on its website:

The Bruges Group has had a major effect on public opinion, and forged links with Members of Parliament as well as with similarly minded groups in other countries. [...] The Bruges Group has spearheaded the intellectual battle against the notion of ever-closer union in Europe and will continue its fight against further integration and, above all, against British involvement in a single European state.

www.brugesgroup.com/about/the-bruges-group

With the end of the Thatcher era at the beginning of the 1990s and the growth in influence of the Bruges Group, Euroscepticism would find new champions. Ford and Goodwin provide a useful history of the rise of the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), which 'established the first new movement with national reach since the emergence of the Labour Party at the turn of the nineteenth century'. They quote David Aaronovich: 'What the BNP and UKIP have in common is the psychological suggestion that 'ordinary' people are being betrayed by the political class. They are paying too much fuel tax, too much council tax, they are being pushed around by foreigners and outsiders, they are having stuff done to them and have become victims in their own countries'. They further outline the number of times UKIP was mentioned in British newspaper articles. In 2004 [...] they were mentioned over 4,000 times. Five years later interest in the party had boomed: 5,300 mentions in 2009, 6,200 in 2010, 10,200 in 2012 and then almost 25,000 during all of 2013. (Ford and Goodwin 2014, pp. 8–9).

Surveying the political landscape in 2014 they wrote: 'Labour and the Conservatives now regard winning support from middle-class swing voters as more important than appealing to [the] struggling left-behind voters' (Ibid). In the British electoral system each constituency returns the candidate with the largest absolute vote. There is no proportional representation and only one seat exists per constituency. This means that, in the case of a change of seat, the percentage change in the vote away from an incumbent MP can be seen in terms of the vote 'swinging' away from him towards the new candidate. This can also be calculated on a national scale. In 1997 for example the national swing away from the Conservatives to Tony Blair's New Labour was an unprecedented 15%, representing the worst defeat in the Tories' history. In 2019 the swing towards Boris Johnson's Conservatives was 4.6% nationally. However in some traditional 'Red', i.e. Labour, constituencies the swing away from Labour to the Tories was higher. As Hull Live reported on election night: 'The first big upset came as the Tories won Blyth Valley with a 10% swing from Labour - a seat they [the Labour Party] had held since 1950.'

<https://www.hulldailymail.co.uk/news/uk-world-news/who-won-general-election-2019-3639923>

Johnson's victory in the Labour heartland meant that voters were ditching their traditional allegiance to Labour en masse in support of Johnson's 'Get Brexit Done' strategy. However Johnson reaped the benefit in these areas of a colossal Eurosceptic electorate that had at first reacted positively to UKIP. As many in the Labour heartlands could be said to be on the losing side in the post-Thatcher, globalised and denationalised economy, they became known as the Left Behind, a phenomenon which is dealt with in more detail below. Ford and Goodwin wrote of the UKIP phenomenon back in 2014.

The emergence of UKIP changed the game – the left behind now have a potent voice articulating their concerns, and mainstream parties face a real and effective competitor who have mobilised sections of British society they neglected for years.

UKIP's voters are not single-issue Europhobes or political protesters; they share a clear and distinct agenda, mixing deep Euroscepticism with clear ideas about immigration, national identity and the way British society is changing. Those who lead and staff the three main parties are all from the highly educated, socially liberal middle classes, who are comfortable in an ethnically and culturally diverse outward-looking society and celebrate a cosmopolitan and globally integrated Britain. (Ford and Goodwin 2014, p. 11).

The chasm that has developed along the lines of a privileged educated elite and 'Left Behind' disadvantaged precariat is dealt with in section 7 with specific reference to David Goodhart's 'Somewheres' versus 'Anywheres'.

The United Kingdom Independence Party was founded on 3rd September 1993 in the office of Professor Alan Sked at the London School of Economics. From the outset there was a need to distance the movement from the toxic BNP. Sked told Ford and Goodwin in 2014: 'We didn't want British [in the party name] as that was supposed to be too racist and associated with the British National Party so we called it UK Independence Party. It was all done very quickly. It was obvious to all of us that if we rule out British then it had to be UK. What we stood for basically was independence (Ford and Goodwin 2014, p. 24).

What was UKIP's overriding goal? Were they setting out to convert their Conservative rivals to hard Euroscepticism? By extension, were they simply a single-issue pressure group, focussed on poaching disaffected Tories, who would fold once their goal was accomplished? Or were UKIP destined for greater things, to lead a broader revolt against the established political class and realign British party politics, by appealing to voters across the spectrum – Boris Johnson would accomplish this with the connivance of the Brexit party in 2019. For some Ukipers the centre-right encompassed a faction of vocal Eurosceptics who were their natural allies. Aware that their efforts might draw support away from Eurosceptics who were already elected to Westminster, and in seats UKIP were unlikely to win, some thought Eurosceptic Tories who had revolted over issues like Maastricht should be given a free run. This was a portent of Nigel Farage's strategy as Brexit party leader in 2019 where he agreed to stand down his candidates in favour of Pro-Johnson Tories in 2019 in the belief, correct as it turned out, that this would 'get Brexit done' (Ibid, p.25).

The idea of a referendum, sometimes styled by Eurosceptics as 'an in-out referendum' was however first mooted by Sir James Goldsmith, who on 27th November 1994 announced his intention to launch a new political party dedicated to securing a referendum on Britain's relationship with Europe. 'Let me make just one promise, just one vow [...] we the rabble army, we in the Referendum Party we will strive with all our strength to obtain for the people of these islands the right to decide whether or not Britain should remain a nation (Ford and Goodwin 2014 p. 26). This stark emotional message, tugging on the heartstrings of the British

electorate as it were, echoed Enoch Powell's 'emotional' obsession with English independence.

When the anti-Federalists had campaigned in 1992 few voters told pollsters that Europe was a pressing concern. Only 14% of the electorate placed Europe among the three most important issues facing Britain. This left the issue in a distant sixth place on the list of priorities for voters who were preoccupied by other concerns. But by 1997 and after the Maastricht Treaty and the prospect of a single currency had turned up the political heat over Europe, the climate had changed. The share of voters ranking Europe among the three most important issues had tripled, to 43 per cent, making it the third most important behind the National Health Service and education. British public opinion had shifted in a more Eurosceptic direction across the board. Support for European integration and a single currency had fallen while survey evidence suggested that two thirds of the electorate either wanted to leave the EU or reduce its powers and less than one in five thought Britain should replace the pound (Ibid p. 28).

The Referendum party's performance [...] was impressive for a single-issue party competing in its first election [...] averaging 3.1 per cent in seats they contested. [...]. It was the strongest performance by a minor party in recent British history, suggesting Euroscepticism could be a potent force in British politics when mobilised by a well-resourced organisation and, it may well be added, there would be no better resourced organisation than the Tories under Boris Johnson in December 2019. While the Conservative Party at the time of UKIP's inchoate success was still dominated by Europhiles such as Ken Clarke and Theresa May, the Eurosceptic mantle had been donned by one man in particular, the UKIP leader Nigel Farage.

Farage began his career in 1982 as a commodities trader at the London Metal Exchange and ran his own metals brokerage firm. He left a successful career behind to go into politics after the Conservative party signed the Maastricht Treaty, which advocated 'ever-closer union' between European nations. He became a founder member of UKIP in 1993 and set about campaigning for Britain's EU withdrawal.

In 2014, under Farage's leadership, UKIP came first in the United Kingdom with 4.5 million votes cast in the European elections of that year and in doing so, became the first political party since 1906 to win a national election that was not the Labour or Conservative parties. This result eventually forced the Conservative party to hold a referendum on European Union membership.

In June 2016, Farage was a leading figure in the campaign to leave. This gained him the name 'Mr Brexit' by Republican Presidential candidate Donald J Trump, whom he supported at a rally on the campaign trail. Nigel Farage was one of the very few that predicted that Donald Trump would win the presidential elections and was the first foreign politician to meet the newly elected President in Trump Tower just days after his historic win. With it seeming he had won the day, Farage stepped back from frontline politics, providing political analysis for Fox News in America and hosting The Nigel Farage show on British radio station LBC.

In early 2019, he was forced back into Westminster politics in order to stop what he called the Brexit betrayal, founding his new 'Brexit Party' to win the May

elections in just six weeks of campaigning. This made Farage the only man in British political history to win two national elections with two different parties.

With Brexit secured under the new Conservative government that Farage helped to power, it finally looked as though 27 years of intense 'Eurobaiting' has paid off.

<https://www.nfarage.com/biography/>

Farage's singlemost claim to fame was to return his Brexit Party as the largest single party in the European Parliament in 2019. Farage had founded the Brexit Party after quitting UKIP after they accepted Tommy Robinson, a racist agitator, into their ranks. Interestingly, largely due to the majority voting system at Westminster, the Brexit Party did not manage to win a single seat in the national parliament. In these circumstances it would now be up to Boris Johnson to deliver Brexit, warts and all.

UKIP in general and Farage in particular (not least as a result of his popular Youtube diatribes in the unloved European Parliament) found support among a constituency that placed enormous emphasis on maintaining British independence even at the expense of losing the economic benefits the bloc had to offer. Ford and Goodwin describe this constituency thus:

Those who lead and staff UKIP, and those who vote for them, are older, less educated, disadvantaged and economically insecure, who are profoundly uncomfortable in this 'new' society, which they regard as alien and threatening.

As hard Eurosceptics, UKIP was opposed to the very principle of European political integration and demanded that Britain withdraw from the 'Europe project'. This stood them apart from 'soft' Eurosceptics who do not oppose the EU *tout court*: they want EU institutions and policy reformed, rather than junked; and European integration slowed or reversed, rather than ended altogether (Ford and Goodwin 2014, p. 11). This was very much the strategy, ultimately doomed to fail, that David Cameron would take in his Pro-Remain campaign. He even roped President Obama in to warn the British electorate that the UK would end up 'at the end of the queue' should a majority of them vote to leave the bloc. This line would prove insufficient to change the minds of enough Eurosceptics, a large number of whom made up the underprivileged class in certain parts of post-industrial England as it emphasised only the economic perils of a Leave vote while many people who would vote to leave were not convinced by project fear and had other concerns on their mind, such as immigration, as has already been noted.

8. The Left Behind, Somewheres and Anywheres

A very good account of the travails of the economically insecure Britons is given by John Lanchester, who wrote in the London Review of Books.

To be born in many places in Britain is to suffer an irreversible lifelong defeat – a truncation of opportunity, of education, of access to power, of life expectancy. The people who grow up in these places come from a cultural background which equipped them for reasonably well-paid manual labour, un- and semi- and skilled. Children left school as soon as they could and went to work in

the same industries that had employed their parents. The academically able kids used to go to grammar school and be educated into the middle class. All that has now gone, the jobs and the grammar schools, and the vista instead is a landscape where there is often work – there are pockets of unemployment, but in general there's no shortage of jobs and the labour force participation rate is the highest it has ever been, a full 15 points higher than in the US – but it's unsatisfying, insecure and low-paid. This new work doesn't do what the old work did: it doesn't offer a sense of identity or community or self-worth. The word 'precarious' has as its underlying sense 'depending on the favour of another person'. Somebody can take away the things you have whenever they feel like it. The precariat, as the new class is called, might not know the etymology, but it doesn't need to: the reality is all too familiar. <https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v38/n15/john-lanchester/brexit-blues>.

The 2016 referendum result threw Britain into a maelstrom of chaos. The vote had been close, the reason for this will be elaborated below. David Cameron resigned and was succeeded by his Pro-Remain colleague Theresa May whose herculean task it became to try to honour the referendum result whilst maintaining as much regulatory alignment with the bloc as possible. The events leading up to Boris Johnson's victory in 2019 are outlined by euronews (see appendix 1). Paragraphs in italics indicate amendments and changes that Boris Johnson would make in his negotiations after his 2019 General Election victory.

Over the decades from Enoch Powell's Birmingham speech to the 2016 plebiscite, Britain evolved into a very different post-industrialist society to the one that Enoch Powell had been hoping to exclude newcomers from. Two strands emerged whose members would find themselves on opposite sides come 2016. The first strand comprised mostly middle-class, well-educated and highly skilled graduates, who would make up the future management in public services like the BBC whence they preached the gospel of multi-culturalism, globalisation, identity politics, and in 2016 used their considerable might to advocate a Remain vote. The second strand was made up mostly of those who did not have a university education and came from the working class that had once performed the heavy industrial jobs that were now a thing of the past. Many would join John Lanchester's precariat. Members of the second strand did not welcome the social changes that the other group was both benefitting from and promoting. David Goodhart refers to the first group as 'Anywheres', people equipped with qualifications and a global outlook with which they could take up employment anywhere. If an anywhere moved to London, he cared little if his neighbour came from another region or even another country; the metropolitan melting pot was where he belonged. Goodhart names the second group 'Somewheres', many of whom felt left behind by the social and economic changes they were witnessing. There was a tendency among Somewheres to cling to older values of community solidarity and national pride. Like Enoch Powell's supporters in the late 1960s, these people felt that their communities' social cohesion was being threatened by newcomers speaking a different language and behaving in a way that did not chime with the perceived 'native' values of those communities. This time, however, the situation was exacerbated as the newcomers were often more qualified to take up the better paid jobs causing the Somewheres to panic as staying in the EU would mean that the British parlia-

ment would have no power to reduce the intake from EU countries of such seemingly threatening aliens. It is tempting to draw the conclusion that many of these people saw a Leave vote in 2016 as their last hope. Goodhart further points out that the Anywhere message of increased multiculturalism and further British integration into the European Union, though expressive, was not in the end persuasive enough to convince enough people, that is to say enough Somewheres, to vote Remain, though it did reach just under half of the electorate who voted that way in 2016 (Goodhart 2017, p. 35).

9. Conclusion

The close but clear 52% majority that achieved Brexit was a reflection of four factors:

First, Britain never understood itself as part of an integrating political union. Many in public life, such as the maverick Enoch Powell, either by accident or design chose to overlook the integrationist objective of the bloc and supported Britain entering what to them seemed to be a common market. Others, like Margaret Thatcher, owing to considerable political, economic and military success elsewhere were aware of the integrationist objective of the bloc but deemed Britain influential enough to redirect the bloc back towards its humbler mercantile origins thus leaving members' individual national sovereignty intact.

Second, the Second World War bankrupted Britain, making it impossible for her to maintain her world empire in the post-war years. The economic success of the Common Market was something that the British were keen to tap into.

Third, Thatcher's acceptance of majority voting under the terms of the Single European Act in return for her country's gaining direct access to the single market proved to be a gamble that would ultimately lead to the Brexit showdown in 2016.

Fourth, with the close of the Thatcher era in 1990, the EEC would over the course of the next decade and a half evolve first into the European Community and then into its current form, the European Union. With the memory of the glory days of Thatcherism fading, the British were satisfied to continue their membership of the EU, which by 2002 had achieved a major goal of the integrationists, namely monetary union. The British had after all been permitted to opt out of the Maastricht Social Chapter, the Schengen Agreement and the Euro. This situation however did not continue to show British membership as a plausible alternative to integration. Rather it worked to marginalize the country, especially after German reunification in 1990, so instead of seeing any viable alternative British European model, Europeans became increasingly aware of British exceptionalism. Something had to give.

The blame for the decision made by popular referendum that Britain should leave the EU, which went against nearly all the conventional economic wisdom in Britain and in Europe, can be laid at the feet of two of her prime ministers: Margaret Thatcher and David Cameron. Thatcher's gamble that signing up to the Single European Act might still give her some room to manoeuvre the bloc back

towards its common-market origins did not ultimately come off as the issue of free movement proved itself to be an irreconcilable stumbling block to any possible compromise between UK free-marketeters and EU integrationists. David Cameron failed to convince public opinion in the UK that he had attained any effective reforms before the Brexit Referendum in June 2016. A major failure, and one which would cost him the referendum and ultimately his premiership, was not securing any compromise on the EU's redline: free movement of people. This would become the main issue of the referendum and would be ruthlessly exploited by the Leave media. The Remain broadcast media had to fight mostly a negative campaign, highlighting the great risks to the economy that a Leave victory would present. Very little attention was devoted by the Remain broadcast media to the value of continuing British membership in any regard other than the economy. Such Euphile arguments failed to gain traction and were dismissed as scaremongering and 'Project Fear' in the Leave media. The resulting Eurosceptic victory was nothing less than a coup of historic proportions.

Appendix 1

Three times in early 2019 the UK parliament voted down the Brexit deal negotiated by London and Brussels, and approved by the other 27 EU governments. Deadlock over the path ahead brought down Prime Minister Theresa May, and twice forced a delay to the UK's scheduled departure date from the EU.

British parliamentary approval for the exit deal was one of the conditions necessary for its terms to take effect. Without it, the default legal position was that the United Kingdom would leave the European Union without an agreement.

The deal consists of two parts: a Withdrawal Agreement covering the terms of the UK's exit – on the divorce bill, citizens' rights and arrangements for the Irish border – and a Political Declaration setting out a framework for future relations.

Amid deadlock in parliament over any alternative proposal to the previously negotiated deal, MPs voted to force May's government to seek to delay Brexit rather than allow the country to leave the EU without a deal.

Boris Johnson later succeeded in renegotiating the divorce deal with the EU in the autumn, after making significant concessions over Northern Ireland. Although another Brexit deadline was missed on October 31, the Conservatives' subsequent general election victory paved the way for Britain's eventual departure from the EU on January 31, 2020.

What were the main arguments over May's deal?

Theresa May insisted the deal negotiated with the EU was in the UK national interest and delivered on the result of the June 2016 referendum. Its supporters argued it was a sensible compromise, while the EU and many in business said it was vital to avoid a chaotic exit.

The controversial Irish 'backstop' – the mechanism designed to guarantee an open border on the island of Ireland – was one of the main reasons MPs rejected the agreement. Many 'leavers' also argue that the deal leaves the UK too closely entangled with the EU and some say they would prefer no deal at all.

Many 'remainers', meanwhile, say the agreement is far worse than current membership terms and fails to deal properly with future relations. Some would like to offer the pub-

lic the chance to overturn the result of the 2016 referendum. The main Labour opposition says the deal does not meet its six Brexit tests, which include a customs union with the EU.

What did May's Brexit deal contain?

The long **Withdrawal Agreement** (on the terms of the UK's exit) and shorter **Political Declaration** (on the future relationship) were the result of nearly two years of negotiations between London and Brussels. The deal was approved by the British government and the other 27 EU countries in November.

Withdrawal Agreement

A transition period

The legally-binding Withdrawal Agreement would establish a '**transition or implementation period**' to run after Brexit until the end of 2020, during which many existing arrangements would stay in place.

Although no longer an EU member, the UK would still have to conform to EU rules during this period. The transition can be extended 'for up to one or two years', with a decision taken by mutual consent before July 1, 2020.

- Critics of the deal argue that far from taking back control — a key pro-Brexit referendum slogan — the UK would be surrendering it to the EU. It would be outside the EU's institutions with no formal say over rules it would have to follow.
- The advantage, however, is that this avoids a 'cliff-edge' Brexit, giving people and businesses time to adapt to the UK outside the EU. It also allows more time to reach a final deal.

Money and rights

The accord settles the 'divorce' issues to untangle the UK's 46-year membership of the EU, largely confirming terms agreed earlier on two priority areas: money and citizens' rights.

It establishes a mechanism for calculating the **financial settlement** — money the UK owes the EU to settle its obligations. No figure is mentioned but estimates have put it above €40 billion. It includes contributions to be paid during the planned transition period — to run until the end of 2020. If the period is extended, more payments will be due.

- Many Brexiteers hate the financial settlement because it still involves large sums being paid to Brussels and brings no guarantees regarding the future relationship.
- However, the EU made it clear from the outset that it's about settling the bill for commitments undertaken — and it's been argued that to renege on these would seriously damage the UK's international reputation.

On **citizens' rights**, under the deal, EU nationals in the UK and Britons in the EU — plus family members — would retain residency and social security rights after Brexit. Freedom to move and live within the EU and UK would continue during the transition period. People would be allowed to stay when it ends and apply for permanent residence after five years.

However, the right for British citizens settled in an EU country to move freely after Brexit within the bloc — as they currently can — remains up in the air and subject to a possible future agreement. This concerns those who want to retain as many of the UK's existing EU benefits as possible.

The controversial backstop

This part of the withdrawal agreement in particular brought about its defeat in January, thanks to hostility among Conservative Eurosceptics and Northern Irish unionists.

The original Withdrawal Agreement envisaged a 'backstop' mechanism to guarantee an open frontier between Northern Ireland in the UK, and EU member the Republic of Ireland. This was seen as necessary given the different tariffs and regulatory standards likely to result from the UK's decision to leave the EU's single market and customs union.

The backstop was described as a kind of insurance policy, should future talks fail to produce a free trade agreement. It would ensure no physical border infrastructure, allaying the risk of a return to the divisions that existed prior to a 1998 peace accord which put an end to decades of political violence.

Under the deal, the whole of the UK would remain in a 'single customs territory' – seen as a temporary customs union – with the EU until at least July 1, 2020. This could be extended or terminated, but only by mutual agreement. Tariff arrangements would be the same as now.

- This infuriated many Brexiteers as it would prevent the UK from applying trade deals with other countries if tariffs are removed.
- The UK government argued that neither the UK nor the EU wanted the backstop and so it was unlikely to last.

Northern Ireland would also stay aligned to some EU rules, including in some areas of the single market. This would avoid checks at the Irish border — but would mean some controls between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK.

- Tory Brexiteers and Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) – which propped up the government — hate anything which sets Northern Ireland apart from the rest of the United Kingdom. They were not placated by attempts to minimise differences and cited May's own insistence on 'no border down the Irish Sea'.

The UK, including Northern Ireland, and the EU also committed themselves to a 'level playing field' over tax, the environment, social policy, state aid and competition. The UK would have to align with future EU changes. (*Under the revised deal later secured by Boris Johnson, this issue was removed from the Withdrawal Agreement and included in the Political Declaration.*)

Although independent bodies are given a role, the European Commission and the European Court of Justice retain major powers of oversight concerning Northern Ireland — and to some extent for the UK as a whole.

To exit the backstop, the deal stipulated that either side could propose such a move to a Joint Committee — which had the power to consult joint UK-Ireland institutions. The UK could not unilaterally leave — although the government argued that changes agreed with the EU meant the UK could not be trapped in the backstop indefinitely.

- The lack of ability to leave the backstop unilaterally particularly enraged the pro-Brexit camp. They argued that UK independence would be seriously compromised if customs union membership was indefinite.
- Theresa May said that this would be highly unlikely as neither side would want it. The EU was anxious to stop the UK exploiting backstop arrangements to engage in unfair competition via 'back-door' customs union membership.

Legal disputes and other matters

Although a joint UK-EU committee and an arbitration panel would try to resolve disputes, the UK would remain under the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice (ECJ) during the transition. Afterwards, its rulings would no longer have direct effect in the UK but it would retain influence.

One contentious issue — that of fishing rights — is left to be dealt with on another day. The agreement says the EU and UK should do their best to strike a separate deal on access to UK waters for EU fishing boats.

A protocol on Gibraltar — the British territory on the southern tip of Spain — seeks to ensure in particular that citizens' rights are respected. Another, on Cyprus, aims to preserve the current situation — keeping the British military base in the EU's customs territory.

Political Declaration

The 26-page Political Declaration accompanies the Withdrawal Agreement and sets out the basis for future relations, including trade. Euronews has previously examined it in more detail here.

This document is not legally binding but defends the core principles dear to each side: the integrity of the single market and customs union for the EU, and sovereignty for the UK. At the same time, it says future ties should be as close as possible.

Unlike Conservative Eurosceptics and Northern Irish unionists who have focused their hostility on the backstop arrangements in the Withdrawal Agreement, the UK's Labour Party has emphasised its opposition to the Political Declaration. Leader Jeremy Corbyn has argued that the document is too vague and would lead the UK into a 'blindfold Brexit'.

Theresa May belatedly tried — and failed — to seek a compromise deal with Corbyn, putting the focus on Labour's demands for a customs union with the EU. The EU's chief Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier confirmed that this could be addressed by adapting the Political Declaration.

UK government fails repeatedly to get deal passed

All three votes in the House of Commons, on January 15, March 12, and March 29, saw an unlikely alliance of Brexit supporters and opponents come together to reject the deal by emphatic margins.

The EU refused to renegotiate the withdrawal agreement itself following the first parliamentary vote — even though the House of Commons voted to send the government back to Brussels to seek 'alternative arrangements' to the backstop.

The night before the March 12 vote, Theresa May and European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker announced revisions to try to reassure sceptics:

- A 'joint interpretative instrument' allowing the UK to seek arbitration and an exit from the backstop, if the EU deliberately tries to keep the UK permanently inside it by failing to negotiate a new trade deal in good faith.
- A 'joint UK-EU statement' added to the Political Declaration which deals with future relations. This commits both sides to seeking alternative arrangements for the Irish border to replace the backstop by December 2020.
- A 'unilateral declaration' by the UK, with EU approval, saying nothing would stop Britain from taking steps to leave the backstop if relations broke down.

On the morning of the second vote the government's chief legal adviser, the Attorney General Geoffrey Cox — whose advice is influential with Brexiters — issued a new legal

opinion. He said the legal changes reduced the risk that the UK could be held indefinitely in the backstop against its will.

However, crucially he also wrote that the revised divorce deal did not give the UK the legal means to exit the backstop unilaterally if 'intractable differences' arose. It wasn't enough to change the minds of Northern Ireland's DUP and leading members of the Conservatives' anti-EU European Research Group (ERG). Most again rejected the revised deal, which consequently suffered a second defeat. The government decided the third vote in the House of Commons would be only on the withdrawal deal, not on the declaration on future relations. This was partly to conform to a ruling by the Speaker who insisted on substantial changes from the previous vote. However, it still ended in defeat by 58 votes.

<https://www.euronews.com/2018/12/07/what-is-in-theresa-may-s-brex-it-d>

Appendix 2 Bendy bananas

Bendy bananas: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html> The tabloid press took huge advantage of the subject matter as the term 'to go bananas' is a colloquialism that means to go insane and helped to impress on their readership the notion that EU regulations were 'barmy' or insane.

III. SIZING

Sizing is determined by :

- the length of the edible pulp of the fruit, expressed in centimetres and measured along the convex face from the blossom end to the base of the peduncle,
- the grade, i.e. the measurement, in millimetres, of the thickness of a transverse section of the fruit between the lateral faces and the middle, perpendicularly to the longitudinal axis.

The reference fruit for measurement of the length and grade is :

- the median finger on the outer row of the hand,
- the finger next to the cut sectioning the hand, on the outer row of the cluster.

The minimum length permitted is 14 cm and the minimum grade permitted is 27 mm.

As an exception to the last paragraph, bananas produced in Madeira, the Azores, the Algarve, Crete and Lakonia which are less than 14 cm in length may be marketed in the Community but must be classified in Class II.

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