

A pertinent letter

Enoch Powell was a consistent opponent of our membership of the European Union and one of our supporters has drawn our attention to an excellent – indeed, prophetic – letter sent to the Daily Telegraph over a quarter of a century ago, which we felt was worth reproducing

Daily Telegraph, June 20, 1991

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Britain has lived 'lie' since 1972

SIR – I am sorry that Edward Heath appears to have caught the epidemic disease of using the words “lie” and “liar” in political debate (report, June 19). His tussle with Margaret Thatcher came home to me personally because, in a sense, Britain, since 1972 has been “living a lie” – a phrase which I happened to use over the weekend when addressing a meeting of the Stafford Constituency Conservative Association.

It was in 1971 that I took it upon myself to tour the principal member states of the EC to warn anyone who would listen, and in their own languages, that the British could not possibly intend what was involved in legislating themselves into the Common Market. “They don’t mean it.” I said, “because they can’t mean it.”

However, in 1972, albeit by a majority of as little as eight votes, the Commons divested itself of every essential part of its own sovereignty – legislation, taxation, control of expenditure, jurisdiction, the lot. The public was assured, both then and when it came to the referendum in 1975, that the sovereignty of Parliament would be unimpaired.

That is the context for the word “lie”, if one must use it. The facts have turned out otherwise. The laws of the Community now override the law made by Parliament; the courts of the Community overrule the courts of this country. What may have

been on the part of some a sincere expectation in 1972 has turned out to be false, and from this false position, now clear for all to see, the Government has to extricate itself and the United Kingdom.

The issue ought to be placed again, without prejudice, prevarication or pressure, before the electorate at the next general election.

They want to opportunity to vote for a party which promises to give back to them their former right to decide the laws, the taxes and the policies of the country through their own Parliament.

The Act of 1972 must be amended to restrict its operation to these areas which are defined by British courts as indispensable to freedom of trade.

That is what the British people were led to expect 19 years ago. They have a right now to fair, sincere and open dealing, at least from the Tory party.

ENOCH POWELL

London SW1

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