

# Brexit is not enough

Being a realistic leaver is a difficult line to walk. Some think Brexit is a matter of crisis management. Others think it's an opportunity to be grasped. I think it is both. In this I really don't think it helpful to pretend Brexit is a walk in the park but it certainly isn't a catastrophe either. As much as I have to keep making the case for an orderly withdrawal, I have to keep making the case for leaving.

This week I have seen a number of well-argued pieces that Brexit should be called off merely because it's too expensive for the marginal gains we might make. Again I find myself pointing out that Brexit is not an economic proposition. This is really a matter of individual conscience as to whether you want Britain to be part of a country called Europe. I really don't for a whole host of reasons.

It is these issues we need to be more vocal about. Remainers tend to view Brexit as an entirely transactional issue with a price tag and that is the only measure of it. We are still not seeing any principled cases presented for full economic and political union. This week presents an ideal opportunity to restate why we don't want that.

Presently, negotiations are centred around the matter of citizens' rights. In all the online debates I've had this is reduced to just the perks and entitlements dressed up as rights when in fact the very concept of EU citizenship is an extension of EU imperialism and an intolerable incursion on our democracy.

In purely economic terms, free movement of goods, services and people can be achieved by means other than political union. There is every reason to argue for a status that closely matches single market membership, but to extend the concept of EU citizenship is to grant supreme authority to the EU to

legislate on matters that pertain to our identity, values and our somewhat unique cultural constitution. These are not irrelevant superstitions of little Englanders. These are major constitutional issues.

While we are told that the EU does not legislate directly in many of these matters, that is not true. Moreover it can “recommend” that we adopt international conventions on things like labour rights – and it can issue directives which form the parameters our policies must follow. These are the invisible goalposts that constrain democracy. As bad as that is, we are finding that ever more regulation pertaining to social issues is touched on by modern trade agreements – and that spells less control in the future.

In this the modern left has an aversion to democracy and sees no real problem with democracy being constrained as the EU is largely a benign technocracy which, in their eyes, curbs the excesses of Tories. What we eurosceptics know, of course, is that the road to hell is paved with good intentions and all too often the law of unintended consequences will inevitably make manageable problems worse.

What makes this difficult to argue is the overall lack of domestic competence and presently a lack of will to diverge significantly from the rights and entitlements we have already established – thus rendering our new-found abilities somewhat inert. Many of the stated advantages of Brexit are only theoretical or conceptual – so they ask why go to all the bother now?

That is a question I often find difficult to argue because most Brits tend to be quite utilitarian about such things. Most people will ask how it directly affects them – and in most instances, the effects of EU policy are insidious, difficult to prove and Brexit is not necessarily a remedy.

The point, however, is that the EU depends on this slovenly

utilitarianism to advance its own agenda. A gradual salami slicing of powers may not make much immediate impact but now we are leaving we can see the enormity of precisely what has been handed over while we were sleeping. The point of Brexit is to get out before we reach that point of no return.

Some argue that we are long past that point of no return which is why we shouldn't bother. Arguably they are half right. What is done is not easily undone – but not actually impossible. We would have saved ourselves a lot of hassle and expense by getting out sooner but the fact is we didn't because our establishment colluded to deny us having a say in the matter. If there is now a cost then the blame lies squarely with those who did this to us in the first place – not the Brexiteers. This is the price we pay for correcting their mistake.

Ultimately the power that MPs exercise is power held in trust on our behalf. That is the basis of representative democracy. The power is not theirs to give away thus it becomes a matter of necessity that representative democracy is suspended in favour of plebiscite to return those powers. That is why we fought for a referendum. Our trust has been abused and power has been given away by deception.

That though, is not enough for us. Even now we see that die-hard remainers are chomping at the bit for parliament to reassert its supremacy and override the mandate of the referendum. This is why Brexit alone is insufficient. The last four decades have proven that representative democracy as a concept is insufficient democracy – if we can even call it democracy at all. It is clear that we need a revised constitution to ensure they never do this to us again.

A year ago we achieved what many of us have worked tirelessly toward for a very long time. The temptation now is to shut up shop thinking we have achieved our goal. We would point out that we are nowhere close to having completed the task. Leaving the EU is largely an administrative chore. We now face

a decades-long campaign to reshape and revitalise our democracy and put the people in control rather than the wastrels and frauds in Westminster. If the power we have fought so hard to return remains in the hands on Westminster then we cannot say that we have taken back control. London has proved time and again that it cannot be trusted with the power that belongs to us.