

## **A TIME LIKE NEVER BEFORE .....**

For over forty years, independence campaigners have dreamed and schemed to achieve what has come to be called BREXIT. The possibility has moved from the realm of mere imagination to that of potential political reality – a reality which is far more complex than our plans and schemes over decades could conceive. Whilst we have been viewing things largely through the prism of our own constitutional concerns - “Who governs Britain?”- the outside world has changed enormously - and it is in that complex new world where we have to make our living. In regulating trade, the EU has become a law taker rather than a law maker, contracted by treaty for over twenty years to adopt global standards of quality and safety where they are agreed. So whilst regulations and directives appear to us in the guise of EU rules, the “top table” where they are decided is elsewhere. In or out of the EU, British manufacturers will continue to comply, if they wish their goods to be acceptable in the global market place. Even the rules about the curvature of cucumbers no longer come from Brussels!

Of course, we are impatient. Forty years is a long time. In frustration, some have even suggested that Britain should simply break its word and renege on its contracted treaty obligations. That sort of behaviour has been out of fashion amongst civilised nations since the Nineteen Thirties. Boris Johnson is just not cut out for the role of a latter day von Ribbentrop, even if Mrs. May would allow him!

The government could restore confidence amongst independence campaigners if it quickly introduced a short British Sovereignty Bill as a backstop against any possible attempt- albeit very unlikely - by the EU to spring any new laws between now and BREXIT. This could also include the power to repeal the European Communities Act 1972 on an “appointed day” when the negotiated new settlement is in position and Britain can step seamlessly from servitude to sovereignty without disruption of trade. Since early July we have been in discussions with friends from right and left of the political spectrum to keep pressure on the government to deliver its BREXIT promise. We have to be realistic. In the House of Commons, roughly half the Conservatives, the DUP and the small but gallant band of Labour rebels are for BREXIT. Nearly everybody else is Europhile or at least Euro-acquiescent by inclination – a considerable majority of sentiment to overcome.

The achievement of a prosperous BREXIT will depend not only on the skill of the government's negotiating team, but on the discipline of the Conservative party in keeping its Europhile MPs in check. This Parliament has nearly four years of its fixed term to run – not very much time to get such a massive change in policy up and running – but it can be done. It will be far easier to work for an acceptable interim solution rather than attempting impossible perfection which could easily take us into the next Parliament. All international agreements are essentially interim, as relationships between countries develop over the years. Only the EU is uniquely, irrevocably locked to relentlessly extinguishing its member states' constitutions in supranational “ever closer union”. Once outside that, the possibilities are limitless.