

# It's essential that Brexiteers are held to account - wh...

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I voted Remain last year. That was my democratic right. The fact that 52% voted to Leave does not change my right to hold my opinion. I was and am entitled to disagree with those who, in my opinion, committed a profound error of judgement. Despite what many in the Leave camp claim, that's how democracy works. Differing opinions are not only necessary but have to be encouraged for it to thrive. Which means that those who voted Remain now have not just a right but an absolute duty not to acquiesce in Brexit, but to hold those who both wanted it and now have to deliver it to account for what they're doing.

Saying that it's important to remember how constructive opposition (which is the only sort that effects change) works. There are, in essence, three stages.

The first task is to establish what will change. Once Theresa May triggers Brexit the task is to ask 'what will be different?' Right now we know that we will leave the EU, single market and EEA, plus Euratom and a few other agencies. We also know many EU citizens may have to, or will want to, leave the country. Beyond that in truth we do not know a lot. There is a massive job to do in finding out what is going to happen, which we all need to know.

Second, the job is to ask why these changes will be for the better. We don't have to justify asking: despite many claims made what we had with the EU worked. It was certainly imperfect, as I said, often. But imperfect systems can still work. And if they're changed the onus is on those promoting the alternative to justify them. There's another massive job to do in holding the Brexiteers to account in this way, whether they like it or not (and they won't, because it's not clear they have any answers).

Third, the failure of the Brexiteers has to be anticipated. That's what opposition requires. Of course this may be misplaced activity. It is just possible Marie le Pen will collapse the EU and Brexit will take on a totally different complexion. It's also just possible that I and many others are wrong and Brexit will really work as Boris Johnson imagined. If it does thinking about alternatives will be wasted effort. So be it, but it's always politically reckless not to plan the alternative and when failure is as likely as

seems to be the case with Brexit it would be irresponsible not to think about what comes next. When the official Opposition has already abandoned that task it just so happens it falls to others to do so. And we can't rely on the SNP, whose alternative is not universally available.

My point then is this: Nothing requires a Remainer to now cooperate with Brexit. And as the day when the Brexit reality gets ever nearer the task of opposition becomes ever more important. I intend to be a part of it.