

# My hope is that only England will pay the price of Brex...

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I confess Mark Francois was unknown by me until recently. His recent displays as a Tory MP and member of the hard-Brexit brigade have left me wishing that was still the case. His racist, little Englander, deeply offensive, [rant about the CEO of Eurobus](#) on the BBC revealed a ghastly perspective on British history only matched by [John Humphrys staggering invitation to Ireland](#) to leave the EU and realign with the UK made in recent days.

I will leave aside all comment about the BBC.

I will not suggest either man was stupid.

I will instead muse upon what both might mean by making these statements. And on that there can be little disagreement. What both referred to through distorted, rose-tinted glasses was the English age of empire. That was the time when England could rule Ireland and not realise it did not have the right to do so (a comment capable of replication many times over). And a time when it could pretend to beat fascism alone, ignoring the fact that so many other nations played a part. And it was a time when our arrogance knew no bounds. As for some, apparently, it still does not.

That era existed. So did that arrogance. I acknowledge it. But to pretend that it was appropriate is wrong. To pretend that we should now live in accordance with that ethos is a decided mistake. And to suggest that this is our national identity to the point that we will separate from Europe to try to recreate it is simply and utterly misguided at every possible level. Not least because it is bound to alienate all potential partners (and I mean, all potential partners) just when we will need them very badly.

But what is most difficult about it is the lack of comprehension as to the sentiment of others inherent in it. Let me be clear that in what follows I acknowledge that all nations are capable of hubris and self-deception as to their importance. I am aware that nationalism exists, and even that it has a role. But that said, there is something at least as important to the foundations of the stability of every state that those making such comments and who embrace such attitudes seem to have forgotten, and that is the

need to respect the 'other'.

Who is the 'other'? Anyone. Of any nation. Anywhere.

What does 'respect' mean? Letting them go about their peaceful business in a spirit of tolerance, which can reasonably be expected to be reciprocated.

Those are the simple basic tests for stability. No more are required.

So Britain was right to fight fascism in 1939. Fascists did not and do not let others go about their peaceful business.

But by and large, Germans do. And so do those of most nations in Europe. In fact, if they have a desire in common this might be it. Because they know what it is for such tolerance to fail. And, it appears, some in England do not.

This the English problem. It seems we have never been able to leave alone. Even now. So we have to pretend to still have the right to be different. To alienate. To control.

No nation that has ever left English control has ever asked to come back to it.

I seriously doubt any ever will.

Which is why the collapse of the Union is inevitable.

And right now England's separation from Europe is a cause of such pain to so many in England the UK who would wish that those English who hold this view might see the viewpoint of the other.

But I am beginning to doubt that they will.

And I fear this will exact a terrible price. I only hope that only England pays it.