

The aim now is not to Remain. The aim is to Rebuild. An...

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I posted this as a Twitter thread last night:

As those I know best could confirm, I have long feared a No Deal Brexit. I could not see how Gove and Johnson could or would agree to anything else. But now it's apparent that it is going to happen I am still shocked.

I am shocked even though in one way this does not impact me. I have had an Irish passport for decades. I am one of the lucky ones. So are my close family. We can all still enjoy freedom of movement. But I am still bereft. England has been my home.

I am ashamed of England tonight. I am pleased that Scotland and Northern Ireland held out against Brexit. I could never blame the Welsh. Brexit is an English initiative. The exceptionalism that underpins it is England's alone. And that is why it is of a England that I am ashamed.

The shame is multifold. Of the arrogance that we are a nation, better than others. That we can still remember WW2 as if we won it. That we can still blame Europeans for faults that are not theirs. That we are too often racist. That we are pig-headed. That we've forgotten empathy.

And I am so sorry that so many have been conned. Firstly into believing things that are not true. Johnson, Gove and their gang have always lied shamelessly, from £350m to calling No Deal an Australian agreement. Lying is pathological to them.

I am ashamed that such charlatans came to lead this country. And I chose my word with care. In their own interests they have gutted our future. The destruction of the economy, our governance and society that they have and will deliver will make Thatcher look tame.

And I ashamed that in this country so many people will pay the price for the arrogance of those who have created the mess to come. Unforgivably, many will be amongst our most vulnerable. But I am also angry for those who thought themselves secure who will lose their businesses.

I am angry, sad, ashamed, appalled, and yet I have to believe that despite all the pain, grief and loss that will be suffered by so many, people will respond to this challenge. Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales may make that future their own, and who can blame them?

In all four countries the hope has to be the same. It is that when the anger passes there will be people who want to build back better. Of course, sustainably, but more. We need a new politics. New businesses. New confidence. More care. Deeper understanding. Better societies.

On the bleakest night I have known in the history of this country is it reasonable, despite my feeling distressed at what is to come, to have hope? I could say not, but I know that ultimately people see through fraud. And that they are resilient. The evidence of history is clear.

I refuse to be down. I refuse to give in or to succumb to their exploitation. I will not accept their wish to destroy. And I am certain that I am not alone. Tonight the UK looks like it is broken, and as an entity it probably is. But the countries that make it up? They will bounce.

Now is the time for visionaries across all of society. It will be hard. But the alternative is to give up. I do not think people will, whatever in the end their chosen role. The aim is not to Remain. The aim is to Rebuild. That's what we have to do now. And I think we will.