

**Britain's Future:
Independence or Extinction**

NO MIDDLE WAY

by
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Preface

Received wisdom is that it is inconceivable that Britain should leave the European Community, despite the fact that the political leaders of the continental countries are determined to create a United States of Europe, which would leave member states with less power to order their affairs than Florida or California. The member states would cease to be sovereign countries in the eyes of the world and would naturally have to give up claims to separate representation in world bodies such as the United Nations.

This is the prospect facing Britain, one which was made quite explicit by the founders of the European Community 35 years ago, however much British politicians try to pretend the contrary. These same politicians frighten the British people by defeatist talk of Britain's being shut out of Europe, leading to a massive loss of jobs. This is total nonsense and the politicians know it. Free trade has applied across all of Western Europe since 1977, not just within the EC. In any case most of Britain's huge trading deficit arises from trade with the EC, so that any tariff war would be enormously to the disadvantage of the EC, and they know that.

It is clear that any further steps by Britain down the road to economic, monetary and political union (the three are quite inseparable) will require the Queen's signature on one or more Acts of Parliament which will effectively abolish that Parliament as a sovereign body. Sovereignty rests ultimately with the British people and it is not Parliament's to disclaim. Every Member of Parliament voting for such Acts would not only dishonour their own Parliamentary Oath, but also be voting to persuade the Queen to breach her Coronation Oaths Act, 1953. Such Acts would also be in contravention of Section 1 of the Bill of Rights 1689 and Clause 39 of Magna Carta itself, the basis of freedom and self-government for the whole English-speaking world.

It need not happen and this paper says why it must not be allowed to happen. Britain *can* withdraw and prosper, letting the EC go its own way to Union. Britain can then trade freely with all of Europe, both East and West, arrange its own trade agreements with other countries again, reduce its own food bills and trade deficit at a stroke, support its farming and countryside as it thinks fit, and exploit its unique links of language and history with that 95% of the world which lies outside the European Community.

You may ask how can you help to achieve this change. Simple: write to your MP making it clear that you will not vote for him if he votes for any further European Treaty obligations placed on Britain. Ask him to sponsor the repeal of Section Two of the European Communities Act 1972, which is the key Section allowing European Community directives to bypass our Parliament. Make him listen to you. Do not let the sacrifice of those one and three quarter millions who died in two World Wars to keep our country free be in vain.

Failure of Leadership

For a people which has through the Public Schools put much store by the concept of a leadership class, for most of this century we have as a nation been extraordinarily reluctant to face squarely the great issues and take appropriate decisions. Vacillation before the First War, appeasement between the wars, allowing immigration to build up to transform whole sections of our cities after the Second War, are perhaps to date only the most striking examples. Each arose from prevarication, a reluctance to make a choice about what we as a nation can do and cannot do – in a word a total *failure* of leadership.

Very shortly Britain will be forced to attend a “European Community (EC) Intergovernmental Conference” similar to that which drew up the misleadingly named Single European Act. The British Government has said repeatedly it does not want this conference – but it has said it will go along nonetheless.

The purpose of this Intergovernmental Conference is to decide the principles of a new Treaty to bind EC countries into a monetary and economic union – a common currency and economic regime, controlled in practice by a united Germany. If we were to acquiesce in this process, the disappearance of the Queen’s head from our currency, the Ecu, would remind us daily of the fact of our disappearance as an independent country. The Queen would still be the supreme symbol of law-making in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, but no longer in her historic realm of England.

The imminent approach of this Conference is the cross-roads at which we must decide if we wish to continue as an independent country or be absorbed into a United States of Europe, governed nominally from Brussels, but in practice from Berlin. This means we would be incorporated without any choice in the matter into a State with a republican form of Government, its own president, its own flag, anthem and laws, in which our Monarch, symbol of our national journey, would rapidly come to mean no more than the King of Bavaria did in the second German Reich formed in 1871.

I want to persuade you, the reader, or reinforce your own view, that as a people we must find the simple courage to say no, we will not go down this road, but instead maintain the thirteen hundred years of marvellously creative independent national existence which we are heirs to.

Continuity of our Nationhood

The continuity of our nationhood is a thing unique in human affairs – a fact recognised by observers outside our country, if forgotten by most inside. Thus André Maurois opens the concluding chapter of his “Histoire de l’Angleterre” by saying:

“The history of England is one of Mankind’s outstanding successes. it is instructive to probe the secret of a destiny as fortunate and impressive as that of ancient Rome”.

The contrast of our nationhood with the situation on the Continent could hardly be greater. There, most states are of recent creation – Germany 1990, Italy 1870, Belgium 1831, Greece 1830 and so on. Whole countries have been chopped up and put back again. Parliamentary government is of even more recent creation and unstable, with Continental countries given to frequent lapses into tyranny and upheaval (France 1789, 1871, 1940, 1946, 1958; Germany 1918, 1933, 1945; Spain 1814, 1833-39, 1872-6, 1923, 1931-36, 1976; Italy 1922, 1946). In the last 200 years in fact every EEC Continental country has been freed from its own or its neighbour’s tyranny at least once, and in the case of France three times, by British soldiers either on their own or with their comrades from the rest of the English-speaking World.

It is not my present purpose to catalogue our achievements as a nation, but to remind ourselves that what is at stake is the future – not just of any old nation – not just of our own nation, but the nation which has shaped the modern world more than any other. We are talking about a nation with the oldest vernacular literature in Europe – by several hundred years – with two works, the epic poem *Beowulf* and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, written at the very outset of our national journey, which stand today as giant works in our poetic and historical literature. We are talking about St Boniface, born in Devon, who in the eighth century converted the Germans to Christianity, whose ministry is commemorated today *every year* at Fulda, the centre of the German Church – possibly the single most profound influence we have ever had on the Continent.

We are talking about the country from whose expansion overseas around one-third of the members of the United Nations Organisation derive their national existence, and of course we are talking of the nation which wrought the single most profound change in human existence since agriculture and towns in the New Stone Age – the Industrial Revolution.

The Industrial Revolution fuelled Britain's advance to supreme power in the world and it was the loss of industrial dominance which – at a lag of some fifty years or so – lost that power. Since the militarily triumphant end of the Second World War, Britain has fallen rapidly from number three to perhaps fifth or sixth in industrial size, but perhaps only tenth in competitiveness.

The Basic Reason for Industrial Weakness

Of course nothing could have prevented a displacement from the number one industrial position as other talented peoples acquired the essential techniques. But it is abundantly clear that our fall has gone further and faster than the purely numerical proportions would have suggested. Thus we have a whole literature of Britain's national decline: e.g. "Whatever Happened to Britain" John Eatwell, "English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit" Michael Wiener, "Britain in Decline" Andrew Gamble and the two most comprehensive and brilliant historical works of analysis: Corelli Barnett's "Collapse of British Power" and "Industry and Empire" by Professor E J Hobsbawm.

From these, and other works, one can perhaps distil two facts: the first is that the nadir of Britain's industrial performance, in farming as in manufacturing, occurred as long ago as just prior to the First World War, and secondly our weak industrial performance over the last 100 years or so depended (and depends) wholly on ourselves.

To take the second fact first, we have not been ravaged by foreign conquest; we have not been denied access to vital raw materials. The basic reason for our industrial weakness is that our leaders, our Establishment as we would now say, have never in that 100 year period given our industry, above all our manufacturing industry, the primacy it must have if we are to survive as a modern nation. We have lost industrial battle after industrial battle – in machine tools, in computers, in consumer goods, cars and so on, because we have not really fought them. With the boards of our major companies staffed chiefly by accountants and lawyers we have been like an army led, not by generals from the infantry or artillery, but by the Pay Corps and the Army Legal Branch, with offstage exhortation by Parliament. Can anyone seriously suggest that more of the same, this time from Europe – in the shape of commissions, parliaments and Mr Michael Heseltine's Euro-senate pantomime, can do anything to help Britain pull itself up into the rank of a fully competitive power? Does anyone seriously suggest that Germany, after the initial help it received from the USA and Britain after the war, owes its position to the EEC – anymore than Japan does? All that politicians and their parliaments can contribute to industrial regeneration is what they know about industry, which is usually very little.

Establishment Fear and Defeatism

The fundamental reason why, unbelievably perhaps to our generation, the very existence of Britain is at stake is that the political Establishment – which does not as we know include Mrs Thatcher – have simply given up on Britain. They are like a lawyer or accountant with an expensive motor car which no longer goes very well – they lift the bonnet, gaze uncomprehendingly at its engine – kick impatiently at its tyres, and then try to hitch a lift to the next international conference in someone else’s vehicle. After Suez it was the purchase of American weaponry via the Special Relationship which was the vehicle. And since the 1960’s we have been pushed into the EEC for fear of losing this American favour. For in all the gravest errors of policy in the last seventy years, fear has been the predominant emotion of the British Establishment. As Burke said:

“No passion so effectively robs the mind of all its power of acting and reasoning as fear”.

It was fear, fear of being left out, and in particular John F Kennedy’s oft repeated view to Harold MacMillan that Washington would view Brussels not London as its chief partner on this side of the Atlantic, which impelled us to try to join the EEC with its agriculture rigged against us and its federal objectives clearly written into the Rome Treaty – as even the Times recognised in 1961 when negotiations first began.

Thus the new Prime Minister in 1979 inherited a timorous Establishment. When the crisis with Argentina came out of the blue:

“The whole of the City, the senior Civil Service, the Banks, not to mention the membership of Whites, Brooks and the Garrick, were united in mocking the will to fight. There was barely a member of the Establishment who did not recommend a deal with Argentina just as they invariably used to recommend a deal with the unions”

as a letter to the Sunday Telegraph from Alan Clark MP expressed it. It is precisely this same Establishment, with its soft-centre parliamentary allies, who are pushing Britain along the road into a United States of Europe, just as they pushed us into Appeasement and refused until it was too late to halt or rather slow down Immigration from countries they feared to offend.

But we have in our long history been here before:

“If our leaders are timid, how shall our soldiers regard them?”

spake Archbishop Alcuin of York 1200 years ago as England was ravaged by the Danes as surely as our industry today is ravaged by Continental, chiefly German, competitors.

But the Falklands war in 1982 was in fact a start on the journey back to national self-respect:

“It was worth it, for all the pain, for Britain’s pride”

were the words of one Falklands widow on Yorkshire TV on 1st April 1987.

The Way Back to Industrial Strength

To continue the journey we must look at the other fact I quoted about our industrial decline – because it is industry which is the battleground for survival – the progress made since 1910. For, a modern country depends absolutely on the technology and techniques deployed by its citizens – in all the wide range from consumer durables to animal husbandry⁶, from aircraft to man-made fibres. It

is the steady fall in the real price of manufactured goods and agricultural products, which has given the dramatic rise in standard of living of the last one hundred years.

Two simple examples will illustrate: for that absolutely central product of the chemical industry – synthetic ammonia – the key step in the fixation of nitrogen and as such the basis of all the colossal increases in agricultural yield – we see in Figures 1(a) and 1(b) how advances in technology have driven down the critical costs – the real cost of capital per ton per annum by a factor of 100 and the use of energy per ton by a factor of three over the years from 1920 to 1980. In Figures 2(a) and 2(b) we see how since 1946 the real price of the basic element of the information technology (IT) revolution – the bit – has been driven down at a phenomenal rate – a factor of 10,000 in forty years.

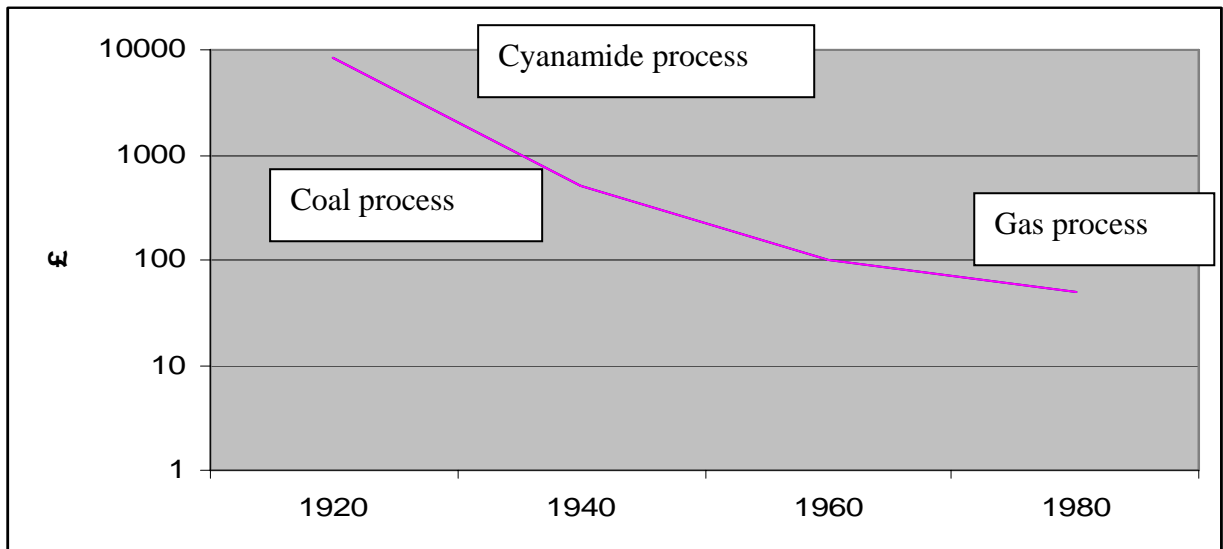


Figure 1(a): Capital Cost per ton per year of Ammonia

Resources used in Ammonia Production	Coal Process (1940)	Gas Process (1970)
Land	46 acres	17 acres
Labour	2,300	240
Energy per ton made	750 therms	400 therms
Annual production	225,000 tons	800,000 tons

Figure 1(b): Resources used in the production of Ammonia

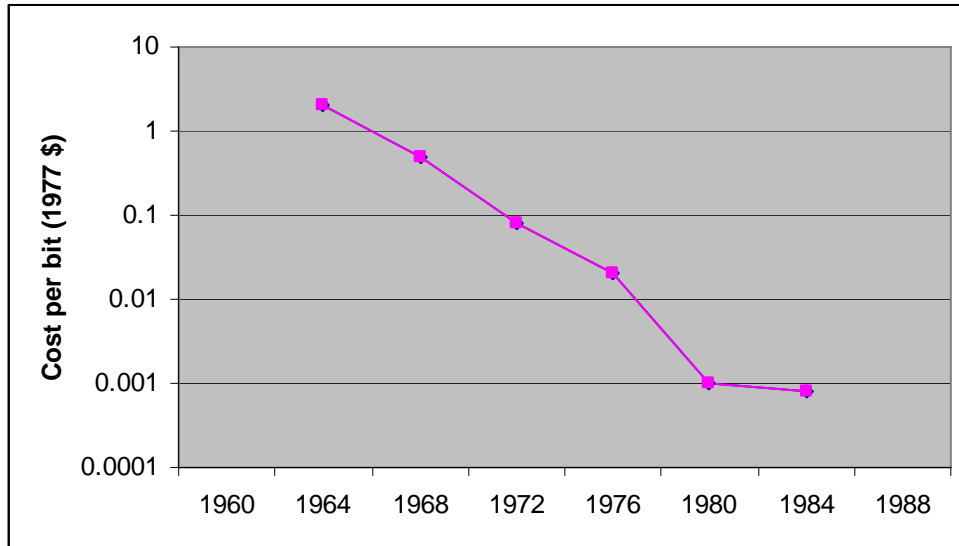


Figure 2(a): Cost of Information Technology

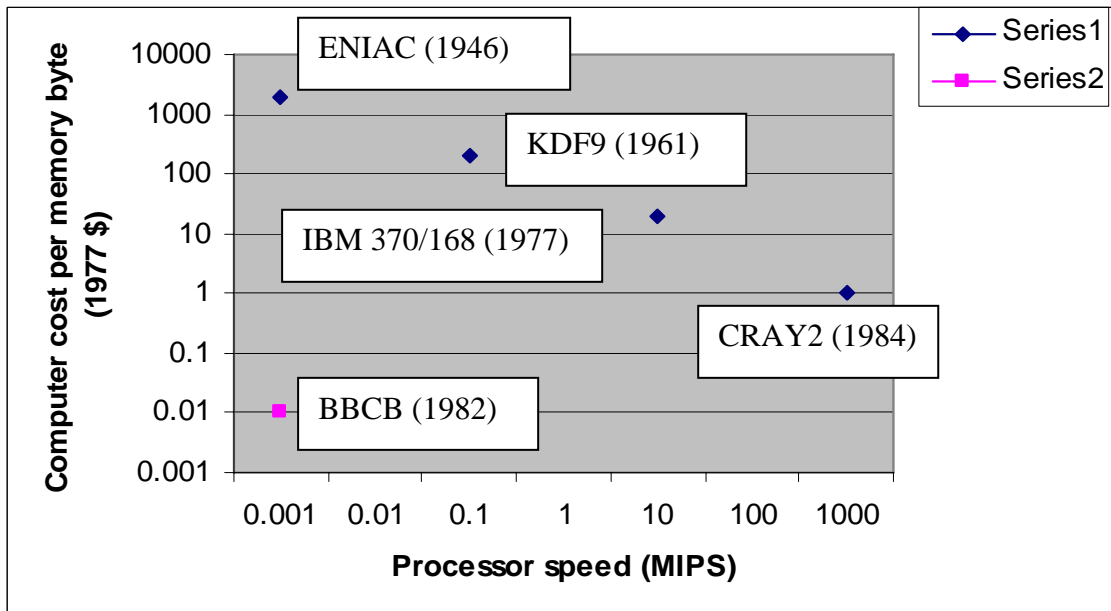


Figure 2(b): Cost and Performance

It is the tremendous effect of these and other technological advances which determine a society's strength and security. Services – the latest quick fix for Britain's problems – play at best a peripheral real part. They show very little productivity gain and where superficially they do, it usually depends on a manufactured product. Thus I have estimated that most if not all of the much vaunted surplus on City financial services in recent years is practically wiped out by the deficit generated by the financial world on two classes of manufactured import – IT goods (computers, terminals, printers) and prefabricated building products – a deficit of £1.5 billion on one current City project alone (Canary Wharf).

The real point though is that tangible goods and software are overwhelmingly the economic vehicle for brains – it is how brains are applied beneficially to the whole of society – via the enormous replicating power of modern manufacture. In the material world, work on this process is the highest service that the talented can render their fellow men.

In the years since 1910 – the low point of our industrial fortunes – we have I believe registered considerable improvement – despite the leadership handicap I have cited. And within the improving trend there have been outstanding successes: a chemical industry has been established and through the formation of Imperial Chemical Industries in 1926, a deliberate act for the purpose, established at world scale and maintained ever since at world rank. Within the chemical industry the last decade has witnessed a quite spectacular success – in pharmaceuticals – where at one point three of the five best selling ethical drugs *in the world* were British and largely manufactured in British or British controlled plant.

During the six years of the Second World War, British Agriculture was transformed from relative backwardness to one of the most labour and capital efficient in the whole world – with an agricultural machinery industry established as a byproduct. This was brought about by a national act of will, by the expertise of our farmers, by mechanisation and by chemistry – applied most obviously via nitrates made from the synthetic ammonia I have referred to.

Abdication by the Middle Classes

Besides will and determination, the commitment to quality – to precision, in being right first time – are now clearly identified as key ingredients of industrial success. These qualities, which it is clearly comical to suggest have anything to do with EC membership, are precisely those qualities most discouraged by the predominant educational philosophy of the last thirty years. For while we have had, until the last five years or so, near total abdication of industrial leadership, it would not have mattered quite so much if the middle ranks of our society had not so completely lost their nerve in upholding not only the civic virtues of politeness, tidiness and honesty, but their industrial equivalents of care, reliability, hard work and punctuality. The middle classes – particularly those involved in the educational service – have been bludgeoned into abandoning these virtues in favour of an emphasis on so-called creativity – on a misplaced sympathy for failure – on a barely disguised egalitarianism. One of Ronald Reagan’s supporters, a young black woman called Shirley Mackenzie from Miami, said to a British reporter covering the 1983 Republican convention:

“I’m not interested in talking about poor people. The best way I can help poor people is not to be one of them”.

This is the attitude which we should espouse in education above all. Young people have to acquire the determination to pull themselves up by their own efforts instead of being encouraged to see themselves as victims of the system. Unfortunately at the present time, a massive egalitarian pressure is being exerted by the educational Establishment to follow their triumph in abolishing ‘O’ levels by abolishing ‘A’ levels – the one truly world class feature of our school system – as I and others have warned in the national press they would.

Pressure by the European Community

To provide all our young people with a range of qualifications for which they can aim, the Government has devised a comprehensive system of qualifications through the National Council for Vocational Qualifications, but this is to work alongside ‘A’ levels, not as their replacement. It will take some years to work through and does not need, and is indeed hindered by, the major distraction of entanglement with the EC with its constant pressure to influence education. Predictably however the imposition on our country of rules issued by the European Commission using majority voting in the Council of Ministers now impinges directly on every citizen of our country:

“EEC slaps import duty on our rice; Britain struggles for financial justice in EEC; cake sales hit by unfair EEC currency rules; EEC refuses to devalue green pound; EEC rules prevent stamping of Lion on eggs; EEC ruling reduces space for hens; EEC threat to holiday prices”.

These are a typical random selection over a few months from an enormous and growing list of directives from the EC, unvoted on by our Parliament – a form of government offensive to us even if it were not foreign.

The voting used in EC affairs is itself a travesty. Many decisions are taken now on the basis of one country one vote, so that Holland, Denmark, Belgium, Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Luxembourg, whose combined population is 51 millions, have seven votes to the one vote for Britain’s 57 millions. Even where voting weighted by countries applies –as in the European Parliament in Strasbourg – the aforesaid seven countries have 134 seats to Britain’s 81. Personally I cannot think of one thing where our idea has prevailed – and we are not a dull people. We are permanently in a minority of 12 per cent.

	1972¹	1988
Trade Balances:	£ million	£ million
with EC Eleven ²	-510	-14,900
with ESW Four ³	-250	+300
with ROW ⁴	+1,000	+1,200
Net British Taxpayer transfers to EC countries:		
to European Commission	nil	1,900
for British military forces stationed in Germany ⁵	300	2,100

Figure 3: Key Data⁶

The extraordinary thing, unbelievable if were not happening in front of our very eyes, is that the British people pay huge sums of money to belong to this system. Something over £2.5 billion net per annum rising is now passed to Brussels and this net sum is only achieved after a mass of time-consuming applications are made for grants and rebates from a much larger gross sum initially paid over. To put it in perspective this sum is about the annual cost of the whole British university system. Between 1973 when Britain joined the EC and 1988, the colossal sum of about £11 billion was paid over, enough to rebuild over the same period the whole of the railway network from scratch, for instance. It should be emphasised also that apart from Germany, Britain is the *only* substantial contributor to the EC. All the other ten members pay virtually nothing or make a profit

¹ Last year before joining the EEC

² Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Netherlands, Denmark, Belgium, Luxembourg, Ireland, Greece, Portugal

³ ESW (English-speaking World): USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand

⁴ ROW (Rest of World) includes invisible trade

⁵ Estimate from Defence Budget and net Government transfers

⁶ Rounded figures from CSO Annual Abstracts of Statistics, 1976, 1990

from it. Moreover, Britain in *addition* pays another £2.1 billion in foreign currency to maintain its forces in Germany.

But why, it may be asked, are we doing this? Surely there must be a reason. The reason usually offered by the Europeanists is that of belonging to a large free market of 300 odd million people, though why we and Germany only should pay for this privilege is never answered. The absolutely key point however, which the Europeanists never mention, is that *this market is open to any European country*, whether they belong to the EC or *not*. Britain's trade with Sweden is as free as Britain's with Germany – freer in many cases because of smaller non-tariff barriers to trade. In fact Sweden sold Germany £440 per head, while the UK exported £170 per head in 1988.

Another reason often advanced is that membership of the EC is necessary to prevent our technological domination by the USA and Japan. The technological benefits of large units are however vastly over-stated by politicians eager for roles to play and conferences to attend. With the possible exception of a moon-shot and certain nuclear missile projects, there are probably no technological goals outside the competence of an industrial nation of 60 million people. In the USA for instance the world's most powerful computers and the most advanced work-stations are both made by relatively small firms, staffed by gifted individuals, a significant proportion of whom are drawn from these islands.

A Renewed Commitment to our National Future

The blend of skill, national commitment and technology identified for the successful industries above is urgently needed in the rest of our industry, before it shrinks still further or passes completely into foreign hands. To revive our manufacturing industry on which everything effectively depends, we need above all a national commitment to making it happen. If we cease in any meaningful sense to be an independent nation, it cannot happen. We will need specific measures such as the power to protect ourselves against foreign dumping which we have lost to the EC. But above all we shall need to convince our young people that we are still in business as a nation and that it is their duty as well as in their interest to help us survive. Without this commitment to our independent future, our most talented people, deliberately left unaware of their own country's history and achievements by that same education establishment, trying to destroy 'A' levels, will drift away to the industrial heartlands of Germany and the USA; already German firms are actively recruiting engineering and science graduates on our campuses, while the flow to the USA is a long established fact, as any visitor to the Hi-tech industries of California will find.

Of course you cannot stop free people moving to other countries, but you do not create a counter magnet by giving those countries the right to make your economic policy and determine your currency. But for Britain, the suggestion by Mr Andriessen, the Dutch EC commissioner, that we should resume membership of an enlarged European Free Trade Association (EFTA), embracing the countries of Eastern Europe, linked to the EC in a wider European Economic System (EES), though derided by that prime example of the defeatist tendency, the Foreign Office, offers us everything we could possibly want. This is clearly the way to accommodate our own deep desire to remain independent, the aspirations of the newly independent nations of Eastern Europe to link with the West and the desire of the other EC countries to unite in some fashion. Even for politicians so eager to act out roles on the international stage, there will be a place, since it is likely that in such a system Britain would be the leader in any negotiations with the EC countries. From this position of freedom we could trade with the whole of Europe, engage in sensible non-bureaucratic technical cooperation through the Eureka programmes, arrange our own trade agreements with the rest of the world where our trade is fundamentally in balance (see data above in Figure 3), reduce our food bills and balance of payments deficit overnight, and exploit our unique links of language and history with the rest of

the world, in particular with the Pacific basin – already the centre of over half the world’s manufacture. Culturally we can devote our efforts to tending that huge legacy to mankind: the English language and its literature.

Doubtless the Europeanists will protest that absorption of Britain into a Franco-German dominated United States of Europe is not intended at all. But as I have indicated, and we all know, we are already in the position of having EC regulations imposed without agreement by our own Parliament. A country that does not control its money or its economic policy is no more independent than California or Florida.

But you need not take my word for it. Listeners to the BBC Radio4 programme ‘Today’ in February (1990) will have heard the Vice President of the West German central bank, the Bundesbank, remark in the course of an interview about the unification of East and West Germany that:

“... of course a country which merges its currency completely cannot remain independent politically”.

Thus the matter-of-fact tones of someone stating an incontestable fact demolish completely the claims of those Europeanists, including some prominent members of the Conservative Party, that European Monetary Union would not mean the end of us as an independent country – subject to a foreign flag, a foreign president, a foreign government.

The Supreme Issue

For all the talk of “*pooling sovereignty*” the supreme issue is precisely what it was at that last great crossroads for our country – the Reformation in 1534 – isolated, menaced far more dangerously than now by a Catholic Continent united against us:

“Who or what is to be the supreme source of Law in our country?”

Now as then there is no fudging, no Middle Way between mutually exclusive alternatives. The passing of the ‘Act of Supremacy’ in 1534 by Henry VIII’s parliament made it clear that England, on the fringe of Europe then as now, would go her own way, not in isolation, but not in fear of what others would think. Repeal of the European Communities Act 1972 will be our Act of Supremacy. We have nothing to fear from repeal but fear itself.

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