



Managed Decline: Guardian Says Britain's Economic System Can't Deal with Brexit

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Inman — a graduate of Liverpool John Moores University in a city once believed to be worthy of managed decline itself — has decided that the reasons Britain voted for Brexit are indeed the reasons Britain can't handle Brexit.

A decline in our manufacturing, our fisheries, and with key economic decisions made by a foreign power in a foreign city. These are just some of the reasons Britain wants out of the European Union.

Inman, however, sees it the other way:

Manufacturers were unable to make things cheaply, reliably or efficiently enough against the headwind of a high-value currency, forcing many to give up. An economy that boasted 20% of its income coming from manufacturing in the 1980s found it was the source of barely 10% at the beginning of this decade.

To this, Brexiteers may say: "Yeah exactly," and Inman would reply, "Yeah exactly". The differences stand in the optimistic disposition of Leavers, and the refusal of the political establishment to want to deal with any level of political or economic activity that might take us beyond their lifespans to fully realise: short term thinking.

The author would do well to read up on Alexander Hamilton's approach to a similar situation following the original Brexit in 1776.

Hamilton, recognising that the economy of a new American nation could no longer rely on Great Britain, set forth the , arguing for a more protectionist position which encouraged national investment and to this day has encouraged our trans-Atlantic cousins to produce and buy American.

CATO Institute scholars alongside Adam Smith Institute researchers would have fits at such proposals today. But these are the national interest-based theories which Inman refuses to even acknowledge, let alone deal with.

He claims Brexiteers are “stuck in the mire of hope-for-the-best management”. Maybe he’s right. But on what planet, and in which nation, did cheer-leading for the worst as Inman is doing lead to the best?

There are not many state assets left to flog. Raw materials and energy costs are rising, while the foreign ownership and management of key industries could decline as Brexit cuts off easy access to the world’s largest free-trade bloc.

Again Inman misdiagnoses the solutions to a renewed British economy. Flogging assets and encouraging foreign ownership are tactics of the neo-liberal political establishment which — despite Jeremy Corbyn’s leadership of the Labour Party — still dominates across Britain’s political spectrum.

The solutions are more likely to be found on the “radical fringes” of British politics — in Brexit and yes maybe even in Corbyn — than in the know-how of the managed decliners.

Of course the radical fringes in Westminster are popular thought out in the actual country. But Inman can’t seem to break the stranglehold of his establishment economics textbooks. How curious for the once hard-left Guardian to have gone full-on neo-liberal.

Inman closes with the following:

This week, GDP figures for the fourth quarter of 2017 will show the economy trundling along in the run-up to Christmas. If modest growth is all that is required, it can be achieved as long as borrowing remains cheap.

It is worth noting the words of Enoch Powell MP, speaking on Radio Clyde in 1977 on the programme Platform, in response to the GDP-obsessives:

How angry it makes me to be told that Britain does not grow like other nations. Well they say the figures show that Japan grows 10, 15, 20 per cent to our 2 per cent or 0 per cent. All I can say is if this is growing, what I see and understand of the way the Japanese live, well give me nil growth.

The things that this country’s great in are things the majority of which you can’t measure on these statistics. And I resent those who, well it’s their choice let them have their own choice, go for the things that can be measured in quantity, turning round and saying to us because we went through, 100 years ago, the stage of economic development they are going through, turning around to us and saying you are lagging behind. You must imitate us if you wish to catch up with us.

I do not believe there is any catching up to be done but I do believe we shall lose that in which we were great unless we are prepared to be true to ourselves and we cannot be true to ourselves unless we are both free and self-governed.