

Eyeless in Brexitland

By John Mair, Visiting Professor at the Centre for Brexit Studies

I am a lost soul. What can I do among all the confusion of Pre Brexit Britain with my vote? Like Antony Beavis in Aldous Huxley's dystopian novel, I am truly 'Eyeless in Brexitland'.

I have been a tribal Labour voter for the last half century. Nearly relentlessly. The odd tactical diversion to the Liberal Democrats as I live in North Oxford where Labour does not have a prayer. Never Conservative-that to me is beyond the ken.

Where is my political home now? The Brexit debate has scrambled so many political pre-conceptions, thrown them out of the window that I have lost my bearings. I suspect that I am not alone in being Homeless in Brexitland.

I think I am a European, an internationalist, a social democrat. 'My' party is struggling with that at the moment. Just what does Labour stand for with regard to the EU in 2019? Is it the official voice of Jezza and Seamus Milne or is it the varying degrees of 'context' coming from samizdats from John McDonnell, Tom Watson and Sir Keir Starmer? It is hard to find a consistent frequency among all the noise.

Do us 'Remoaners' have any place in the 'People's Party'?

I am yet to be convinced by the People's Vote and certainly not by the Tory Brexiteers of all shades. Theresa May has stamina and courage but is selling an unsaleable product in her Withdrawal Agreement.

That duck is dead and ready for roasting. May has discovered the deep European fault line that runs through her party and always has done. It is now a chasm the size of the Grand Canyon.

In contrast, one group certain of their convictions are the Academic Brexiteers. They have been out in the intellectual cold for three decades and more. Now they are in the driving seat with history and '17.4 million' on their side.

I, along with Neil Fowler and Alex de Ruyter, have been working with them for the last two months to mastermind '[The Case for Brexit](#)' – just published by Bite Size Books and the Centre for Brexit Studies. It includes chapters from well-known Brexiteer academics, including Patrick Minford, Graham Gudgin and Gwythian Prins.

However, there are also new perspectives from Sir Andrew Wood the former Ambassador to Russia, Professors David Paton and Robert Tombs and John Mills who chaired Labour Leave. A cracking introduction from the (new) Sir John Redwood makes for a stimulating, short read. You may not agree with much of it but do not close your mind.

Whatever your thoughts, they deserve to be heard. The margin has become the mainstream.

John Mair is a Visiting Professor at the Centre for Brexit Studies at BCU. He is a former BBC, ITV and Channel Four producer and has edited twenty eight books on journalism and the media in the last decade. Currently two of the Bite Sized Brexit series have been published. Two more are in the pipeline. All his books are available on Amazon