

The European Union controls everything that we do and, if you don't believe this to be true, consider this fact: nine out of every ten pieces of new legislation enacted in the United Kingdom come from Brussels, i.e. the EU.

Quite simply, the laws of this land are no longer laws of this land. The laws that govern the United Kingdom, by and large, originate in the European Union's headquarters, and not in the United Kingdom. This means that the Houses of Parliament are left in a political vacuum, they can still pass laws but these laws tend to be focused on less influential issues rather than on the real problems facing modern Britain.

Some could deny this is the case, for example with the recent Smoking Ban, which is an influential law. This ban is likely to lead to a reduction in the numbers smoking, improve working and leisure environments, and reduce rates of heart disease and lung cancer rates, thereby cutting NHS expenditure. Likewise the terrorism bill that has been passed will, supposedly, result in more terrorists being arrested and thus reduce the risk of terrorist attacks in the UK, both pieces having a significant impact on the UK.

However, it could be said that legislation produced by the EU, such as the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) also heavily influences the UK. In order to secure the original CAP agreement, which would benefit France, the French President purposely kept Britain out of the European Union. This was because in 1961, 25% of French employment was in Agriculture, compared with only 4% in Britain. Therefore it was essential, if the French President was to prevent political instability, that he got a good deal for France.

This meant that, when Britain finally started negotiations for entry, it had to accept the CAP as a term of its entry, despite the fact that it would severely damage Britain's economy. With such a small percentage employed in agriculture, Britain receives very little of the CAP subsidies.

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Although this may seem a slightly odd example to include in this article, as CAP was introduced over forty years ago the most significant consequences are still affecting us today. The EU is faced with a budget out of control and a situation where non-agricultural countries, e.g. Britain, are in bitter dispute with agricultural countries, e.g. France. At the same time the surplus food is being dumped on second and third world countries, destroying their local farms and farmers who cannot compete with the cheap EU food.

The undeniable question is, how much more, unpublicised, damage is being done to Britain and other countries? The problem is that Britain's relationship with the EU is undemocratic and heavily bureaucratic, which is partly our own fault. For over thirty years, Britain has been using the 'Enabling Act' to make EU legislation become law in the UK without it having to go through the Houses of Parliament. In other words, the power to make laws has been placed into the hands of unelected officials.

# The European Union

Economists and social planners, specialists in their field, are deeply concerned with Britain and the EU's future if the current situation prevails. In 1999 Bill Jamieson and Patrick Minford, two leading economists, claim that without serious reform the EU will become 'a cul de sac of stagnation, decline and inevitable global eclipse'. Simply put, the EU's economy will collapse and its place in the world market will disappear. It will become an economic non-player.

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However, it is not all gloom and doom. Jamieson and Minford claim that by replacing the customs union within the EU with a free-trade area and by joining NAFTA (North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement) Britain may yet pull through. As they put it, 'Britain does have choices'. The only question is, will our generation seize these opportunities and choices or will we take the path of least resistance like our forebears?

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