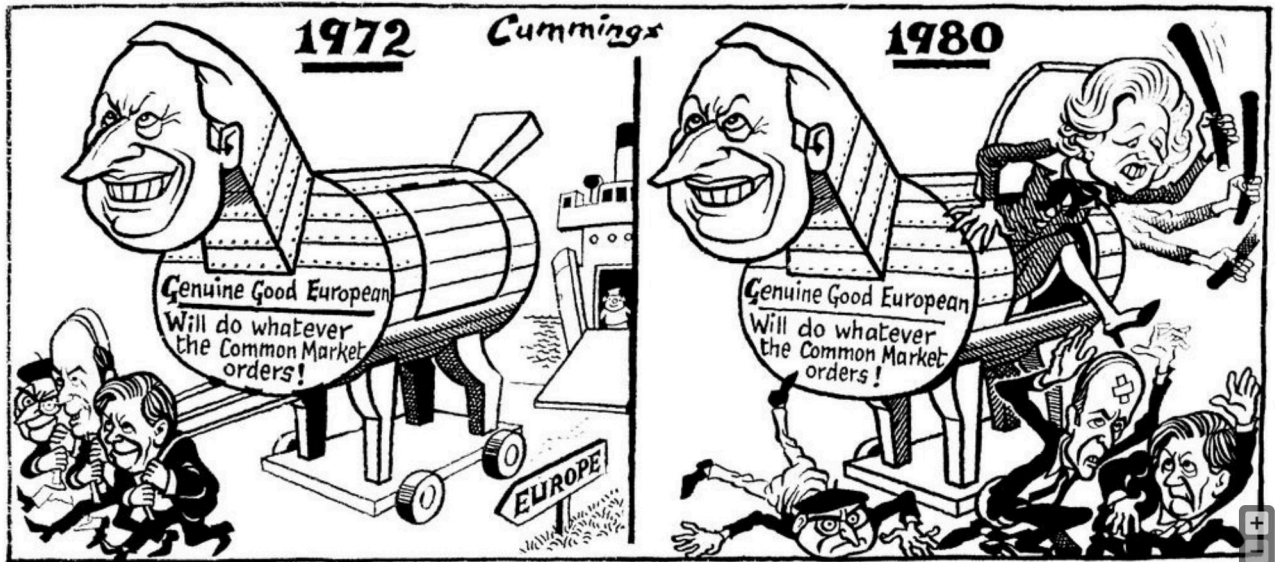

Britain and Europe: the 1980s, or the Thatcher era.

❶ Caricature by Cummings, 30 April 1980. Using the caricature of Edward Heath (as the Trojan horse), the cartoonist alluded to the tensions within the EEC following the advent of Margaret Thatcher.



❷ Margaret THATCHER, Speech to the College of Europe, Bruges, 20 September 1988.

“My first guiding principle is this: willing and active cooperation between independent sovereign states is the best way to build a successful European Community. To try to suppress nationhood and concentrate power at the centre of a European conglomerate would be highly damaging and would jeopardise the objectives we seek to achieve. Europe will be stronger precisely because it has France as France, Spain as Spain, Britain as Britain, each with its own customs, traditions and identity. It would be folly to try to fit them into some sort of identikit¹ European personality.

Some of the founding fathers of the Community thought that the United States of America might be its model. (...) I am the first to say that on many great issues the countries of Europe should try to speak with a single voice. (...) But working more closely together does not require power to be centralised in Brussels or decisions to be taken by an appointed bureaucracy.

Indeed, it is ironic that just when those countries such as the Soviet Union, which have tried to run everything from the centre, are learning that success depends on dispersing power and decisions away from the centre, there are some in the Community who seem to want to move in the opposite direction.

We have not successfully rolled back the frontiers of the state in Britain, only to see them re-imposed at a European level with a European super-state exercising a new dominance from Brussels.”

➤ Using the documents and your knowledge, to what extent did Margaret Thatcher’s policy exemplify Britain’s relationship to Europe?

1. Identikit: a picture of a person, esp. one sought by the police, reconstructed from typical facial features according to witnesses’ descriptions.