



# Labour: Kick out May with mass mobilisations - but come clean on Brexit!

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Theresa May faces the complete shipwreck of her Brexit negotiations and the 585 page draft Withdrawal Agreement she brought back from Brussels. Two cabinet ministers, including her second Brexit secretary, Dominic Raab, and two junior ministers, have resigned from her government and more could follow. She needs 320 votes but only has 315 after her ill-fated 2017 snap election. In fact, anything up to 80 Tory MPs are likely to vote against the deal, because it preserves some links to the EU, such as a form of customs union.

At Question Time in the Commons, she had to hear Tory after Tory tell her she could never get a majority for the deal. Jacob Rees-Mogg warned her she will now face a leadership challenge. As was to be expected, the Democratic Unionists have rejected her deal, in mortal fear of anything that might weaken the Union. For them, an open border with the Republic is more of a threat than a benefit.

The strongest card in May's hand is the fact that Britain's bosses overwhelmingly want the closest continued trade links with the European Union. The previously bilious pro-Brexit papers, the Express and the Mail, have moved close to supporting her, and the Brexit-maniacs have no alternative but to leave the EU with No Deal at all.

Against this background, her only chance is that enough MPs will panic at that prospect, and the economic meltdown it would herald, with the added incentive for Tories that it would probably mean a general election which could split their party and put Jeremy Corbyn into 10, Downing Street. There is certainly a majority of MPs against the No Deal option.

Nonetheless, given the defection of the DUP and the tiny plurality the Tory Party has in the Commons, as long as Labour, the Scottish and Welsh Nats and the Lib-Dems stick to their pledge to vote against May's Deal, she cannot win a vote on it. Since it seems that only a tiny handful of the 257 Labour MPs might be cajoled into voting for the deal, the House of Commons, as elected in 2017, does not have a majority for any option.

Labour under Jeremy Corbyn is quite right to call for a general election and to whip its MPs to vote against May's deal when, if, it returns to Westminster from Brussels having won the approval of the other 27 EU member states. It is right, not just because the deal does not meet Labour's 6 key tests, but because any withdrawal from the EU by a capitalist Britain is worse than staying in the EU and fighting for a socialist Europe.

If, nevertheless, the Tories somehow get May's deal through, or change leaders and go for No Deal, then Labour supporters should mobilise to demand a referendum which includes the only real alternative, abandoning Brexit altogether. It is now far clearer to millions that severing the economic links to Europe will mean chaos.

The Tories in their present mess will do everything they can to avoid a general election and, with DUP backing, could still defeat any vote of no confidence in the Commons. The NEC, the local bodies of the Party, and the affiliated unions should call demonstrations demanding a general election NOW. The Tories must not be allowed to change their leader yet again behind the back of the electorate.

But we need a general election in which parties explain what they will do; not only on Brexit but on the many issues of justified discontent, such as the run down of old industrial areas and the continuing austerity policies, that no doubt

contributed to the Leave vote in the last referendum.

That means that Labour must abandon the fudged position on Brexit that it has presented since the referendum. The six tests are utopian because the EU has made it clear that Britain could not expect to receive the 'exact same benefits' as we currently have as members of the Single Market and Customs Union. Labour should say we were right to oppose Brexit in 2016 and, now the consequences of this wrong decision are becoming plain, we will seek the withdrawal of Article 50 and an end to the whole Brexit farrago. Labour should seek a majority and a mandate on this basis as well as on an anti-austerity manifesto.

For Red Flag supporters, the most fundamental reason for rejecting Brexit is that it will end free movement of people, with very damaging consequences for our vital services, for the millions of workers and students from the EU already here, and those planning to come here in future, as well their British equivalents in other EU countries. Ending free movement will have the effect of dividing us further from our class sisters and brothers in Europe.

Labour has shamefully abandoned defence of free movement and has tried to square the circle between Remain and Leave, spreading the illusion that Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell could negotiate a better deal than May. Likewise, the statement of John McDonnell that 'if we can't get a general election we will keep a People's Vote on the table' is a shoddy evasion. Awkward as it may be for the left leadership, we have to change this policy. How can we go to the country with the same sort of evasion that the Tories have been trying for the past two years?

A major feature of the reactionary period we are going through is the rise of nationalism and racism in Europe, the USA and in countries like Brazil, Turkey, India, too. The Brexit campaign, with its anti-migrant worker propaganda was part of this. The phobia about immigration is fueling racism and the rise of the far right. International links between workers and, indeed, the whole of economic life, are a progressive feature under capitalism, national isolation or autarky is a reactionary one. So too would be a trade deal with Trump's America that would open up the NHS and our public services to US private monopolies.

Labour and unions, mobilise for a general election now  
For a Labour Government on a radical anti-austerity manifesto  
Abandon Brexit - fight for a socialist Europe

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