

Brexit means ... remain!



The ruling class is divided over whether its best bet is to create a 'Brexit' in name only, or to re-run the referendum in the hopes of reversing the leave vote altogether.

Prime minister Theresa May's Brexit deal, accepted by the European Union (EU) on Sunday 25 November, has attracted harsh criticism from almost every quarter, and sparked a fresh wave of Tory resignations. The northern Irish Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), which received a £1bn bribe to support May's government after she lost her majority in a snap election last year, is threatening to withdraw its support and has firmly stated that it will not vote for the deal. ([DUP may back Norway-style Brexit deal, says Arlene Foster](#) by Peter Walker, The Guardian, 25 November 2018) Jean-Claude Juncker, president of the European Commission and the man who turned Luxembourg into Europe's tax haven (which allows Amazon, among others, to pay just 0.5 percent tax despite having a [turnover of £1.46bn](#) in Britain in 2016), has flat-out stated: "This is the only deal possible," adding: "Those who think that, by rejecting the deal, they would get a better deal, will be disappointed." ([EU's Juncker says of Brexit: 'This is the best deal ... the only deal possible'](#), Reuters, 25 November 2018) The deal shows that everything else can and will be sacrificed to save the sacred cow – the single market – ensuring that Britain continues to follow EU regulations and customs arrangements in return for keeping access to free trade across the EU. As the March deadline approaches, the EU is baring its fangs, desperate to ensure it can maintain as much control over Britain's economy and politics as possible in order to pursue the neoliberal agenda that has utterly devastated countries such as Greece, Spain, and Portugal. Italy is experiencing the latest example of the EU's kindness – the commission has started disciplinary proceedings that could lead to financial sanctions because its government has drafted a budget with the intent of spending money on public services and investing in infrastructure and industry. ([European Commission begins proceedings against Italy over budget](#), Euronews, 22 November 2018) Meanwhile, remainers' hysterical campaigning in Britain is reaching a fever pitch as they try to garner support for a second referendum, insisting that remaining in the EU is our best bet economically. Despite their accusations that the leave campaigners pulled the wool over the public's eyes (indeed, they were quite as

dishonest as the remain campaigners), they are unable or unwilling to see the reality staring them in the face – that so long as the mass of British workers continue to suffer ever more degrading conditions of work and standards of living, the warnings of *future* poverty and destitution with which they are being threatened are becoming daily more meaningless. A recent UN investigation found some 14 million Britons living in poverty, with [staggering levels of child poverty](#). Rising homelessness means 1 in 200 British people are sleeping rough or living in temporary accommodation, rising to [1 in 52 in London](#). Fuel poverty and the continuing privatisation of the NHS led to 50,000 'excess' (ie, entirely preventable) deaths last winter, and will lead to more this year. While Brexit will undoubtedly cause disruption and economic shocks in the short term (the EU will make sure of that, especially if there is no deal), remaining in the EU means remaining in, and strengthening, an anti-worker, anti-union, anti-socialist imperialist club that pushes the agenda of privatisation and austerity in Britain and across Europe. Trade liberalisation at all costs is what is driving Theresa May, Boris Johnson and the Labour party alike. All are fighting to preserve this present arrangement. This true essence of the European Union is obviously in contradiction with the false tales about how the EU 'protects workers' rights' – something which neither bourgeois Brexiteers nor bourgeois remainers have the slightest interest in doing. Realising that British imperialism is incapable of maintaining itself as an independent imperialist power, the privileged section of the labour movement in Britain has come down on the side of remaining in the European imperialist bloc. It sees this as its best way of defending its relatively privileged position, since ([as Lenin long ago pointed out](#)), its higher wages and better lifestyles depend on British imperialist superprofits. Manuel Cortes of the TSSA union (representing 22,300 mainly clerical workers in the transport industry) is [completely opposed](#) to Mrs May's deal, supporting a reversal of Brexit or a Brexit in name only that would offer frictionless trade and full access to the single market. (All Labour MPs need to vote with Corbyn and sink this rotten Brexit deal – to do otherwise would be betrayal, Independent, 1 December

2018) Likewise, the IWGB has [called for a second referendum](#) – or at least for the government to ensure that Britain remains in the single market. It is a shame that a union so active and successful in fighting for the rights of some of the most precarious workers in Britain either lacks the political understanding or will to place the long-term interests of workers above their short-term interests. Labour’s shadow chancellor John McDonnell has revealed that his party would support a referendum on the deal if a general election is not held, with the party’s principal objection being that the deal “fails to provide for a permanent UK-EU customs union and strong single market”. Labour’s Brexit resolution, adopted at its recent party conference, sets out near-impossible conditions for any deal and vetoes a no-deal Brexit, in effect setting Labour squarely against Brexit. ([Labour will inevitably back second Brexit referendum, says McDonnell](#) by Jessica Elgot and Heather Stewart, The Guardian, 28 November 2018) For all of the intrigue and in-fighting among the big two parties, they are not arguing over much at all – both want to see Britain retain its membership of the customs union in some form or other. The argument is mostly over how this can be presented to the public as ‘Brexit’; and whether the public can be persuaded to accept a second referendum without losing all faith in British bourgeois democracy now that the ‘full horror’ of leaving the EU has been made clear to them. If we truly want to fight against austerity, privatisation, the loss of our jobs, homes, hospitals and everything else that we value, we must not allow the referendum result to be overturned. The short-term consequences may well be painful, since the working-class movement at the present time is weak and the capitalists are stronger, and Brexit will only be the first step, but landing this blow will weaken the class enemy and set British workers on the road to organising for their own interests, against the interests of the bourgeoisie. The first step to realising a decent future for our children is to recognise that *workers and capitalists have opposing interests*. What makes capitalists strong, makes workers weak; what makes capitalists weak gives workers opportunities to become strong. To effectively organise and exercise working-class power we must be guided by the understanding that we need to kick out the class-collaborationist traitors from our midst and organise on the basis of class against class!

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