

<https://www.internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article6941>



Britain and Brexit

Labour must oppose any Brexit deal

- IV Online magazine - 2020 - IV551 - December 2020 -

Publication date: Saturday 12 December 2020

Copyright © International Viewpoint - online socialist magazine - All rights reserved

Whilst after years of Brexit and the end-game of the end-game taking place we still don't know if there will be a deal with the European Union (EU). What we do know if there is a deal it will be reactionary, economically and socially regressive, and racist. We will be heading towards a race to the bottom, deregulated, little Englander future based on World Trade Organisation (WTO) terms. Johnson refers to this as an Australian style deal, but he could just as reasonably call it an Uzbekistan or Mali style deal.

It is remarkable that under such conditions that Labour Party leader Keir Starmer is actually considering backing such a deal whatever it contains in order, it appears, to bury the hatchet with the Brexiteers. It is hard to envisage a more disastrous position to adopt. This would tie Labour into every disaster, crisis, and reactionary decision produced by Brexit as the realities unfold. Any opposition would simply be met with the response that 'you voted for it'.

We have to be clear, there is no acceptable Brexit. Whilst the impact of Brexit on top of the Covid pandemic has yet to be calculated, what is clear is that the results going to be brutal. Not only will there be chaos in the ports but food prices will rise as tariffs (40% on lamb for example) are imposed supply chains clog up and previous sources become unavailable.

Car manufacture in Britain, for example, with its just-in-time European-wide operation, is very unlikely to survive what lies ahead.

Higher prices, further unemployment, more attacks on working conditions, more casualisation; it is working class people who will pay the price – and the already disadvantaged the greatest amongst us.

We see a glimpse of the future with Home Secretary Priti Patel currently rushing to deport scores of vulnerable asylum seekers, including suspected victims of trafficking, back to EU countries before this becomes more difficult after the end of the month. There are three flights this week, two to Germany and one to France, with other possible transfers to Austria, Poland, Spain and Lithuania.

According to the *Guardian*, there 'growing unease' in the Labour Party as to Starmer's expected position. A conference call to affiliated unions, however, seems to have been indecisive. Some were hesitant, although Len McCluskey is understood to be supportive of backing a Brexit deal to show former pro-Leave voters that the party accepts the referendum outcome. [1] This is a dangerous road to tread.

Standing with the education unions organising against unsafe working conditions, or with those demonstrating against job losses at Nissan in Sunderland on Friday night [2], would be a much better way of reaching voters in so called 'Red Wall' seats than the constant abstaining of the current Labour Front Bench.

Amongst Labour MPs said to be torn about it the *Guardian* lists Anneliese Dodds, David Lammy, and Emily Thornberry. [3] Several others, it says, were "really pissed off" by what they saw as a concerted attempt by Starmer to marginalise those with doubts about backing a deal. Even Neil Kinnock, from the House of Lords, is worried about [4]

The left must demand that Starmer pulls back from this position and at least leave the door open for a fightback against the consequences of Brexit, which is a retrograde step of historic proportions. The conference organised by

Labour must oppose any Brexit deal

[Another Europe is Possible](#) on December 12 will be an important opportunity to discuss how the step up the campaign against this disaster.

7 December 2020

Source [Socialist Resistance](#).

PS:

If you like this article or have found it useful, please consider donating towards the work of International Viewpoint. Simply follow this link: [Donate](#) then enter an amount of your choice. One-off donations are very welcome. But regular donations by standing order are also vital to our continuing functioning. See the last paragraph of [this article](#) for our bank account details and take out a standing order. Thanks.

[1] Len McCluskey is General Secretary of Unite the Union, the largest affiliate and a major donor to the Labour Party.

[2] *ChronicleLive*, 5 December 2020 "[Protest held at Sunderland Nissan plant to highlight "dangers" of a no-deal Brexit](#)".

[3] These are members of Starmer's frontbench team: Anneliese Dodds is Shadow Chancellor, David Lammy Shadow Secretary of State for Justice and Shadow Lord Chancellor, Emily Thornberry is Shadow Secretary of State for International Trade.

[4] Neil Kinnock was leader of the Labour Party and thus Leader of the Opposition 1983-1992.