

How should Marxist-Leninists view the impending ‘No Deal Brexit’ withdrawal from the European Union (EU) of the UK? August 25, 2019

“The modern crisis . . . is related to what is called the “crisis of authority.” If the ruling class has lost its consensus, i.e., is no longer “leading” but only “dominant,” exercising coercive force alone, this means precisely that the great masses have become detached from their traditional ideologies, and no longer believe what they used to believe previously, etc. The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old way is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear.”

Antonio Gramsci (1973, 275–276); Cited by William I Robinson: “Global Capitalist Crisis and Twenty-First Century Fascism: Beyond the Trump Hype”; Science & Society, Vol. 83, No. 2, April 2019, 481–509

1. Introduction

The current crisis gripping the British ruling class at this time, gives a vivid shape to Gramsci’s ‘crisis of authority’ in the Britain of today (*see above*). Many ‘morbid symptoms’ could be discussed. This crisis has rapidly extended since we last wrote on this in June 2016. [See “Notes on the Brexit Referendum – the vote on Britain leaving or remaining in the European Union – of June 23rd 2016”; Former members of the Communist League; at Red Phoenix; <https://theredphoenixapl.org/2016/06/20/notes-on-the-brexit-referendum/>]

In June 2016, just prior to the referendum in the UK, we concluded:

“In the absence of a Marxist-Leninist party and a socialist revolution, the British working class will not succeed in improving its lot – whether in or outside the EU. However, a small dislocation to the plans of the USA – still the major imperialist contending against the international working class – will occur with a Brexit vote to leave the EU.” Red Phoenix June 2016; Ibid.

This was consistent with the line put under **W.B.Bland**’s leadership of the Communist League, at the referendum of 1975 in Britain (*‘The Referendum’; COMbat No. 1 March 1975, p 29-30; Cited Red Phoenix Ibid; June 2016.*)

Events have moved fast, and since the 2016 UK Referendum, **several new developments** have taken place. Now it is clear that USA imperialism has turned towards support of a trade war, and therefore a break-up of the European Union (EU). A series of events to be reviewed, has led to the most reactionary faction of the UK ruling class, occupying the post of Prime Minister, under Boris Johnson. This turn of events, forces a re-consideration of what the working class and its adherents should support. We start with a breakdown of the Referendum results.

2. The Results of the 2106 Referendum

The results of the Referendum, in which a 72% turnout participated, were very close. The final ‘Leave’ vote – or a pro-Brexit vote – amounted to 51.9% of the electoral votes. In contrast 48.1% of the electorate voted to “Remain” in the EU. But this is a population vote.

j) What did the working class of the UK Vote?

Obviously there has been much debate as to how the working class itself voted, and we must consider this in a bit of detail. But regrettably, we do not know this, as the data

we can rely on, is poor from a ML-ist viewpoint. No doubt understanding how the working class voted in the Referendum is important. However, even before considering how the class voted, ML-ists should recall that the vote ultimately reflects an alienated viewpoint. Clearly, no Marxist analysis was widely shared with the working class. At the outset, this most important caveat should be noted. But there are two other caveats to consider, before we attempt to break down the actual results of the vote.

The working class voting pattern that we know of, largely originates from one key poll. Left observers and interpreters rely heavily on the exit poll of voters known as the **Lord Ashcroft Poll**:

“The best analysis of why people voted the way they did came from Lord Ashcroft’s exit poll, which talked to over 12,000 people straight after they had cast their vote. It is the gold standard of polling accepted by most Brexit commentators...”

Wayne Asher, 'In a hole and still digging: the left and Brexit'; Issue: 161; 2nd January 2019; <http://isj.org.uk/the-left-and-brexit/>

An immediate second caveat is that it is obvious that 12,000 people represent only a relatively small sample of the population. Relying *only* on this to form ML-ist policy, is subject to error, and can be only a guess as ‘to what the class wants’.

Finally, to further consider the Poll methodology, the poll did not use a Marxist classification of class. Rather than such a definition, the Ashcroft Poll, used a social classification (from ‘A’ to ‘E’) corresponding to a job description:

“**National Readership Survey (NRS)** social classification grades. These are based on occupation and are widely used in market research. They are not the same as class divisions but they do paint a very broad picture of class and the vote.” *Charlie Kimber, 'Why did Britain vote Leave?'; 'International Socialism Journal'; Number: 152; 6th October 2016; <http://isj.org.uk/why-did-britain-vote-leave/>*

This forms the third caveat, namely that such job descriptions are devoid of a Marxist-Leninist classification. Marxist-Leninists view class as follows:

“Classes are large groups of people which differ from each other:

- 1) By their relation (of ownership or non-ownership) to the means of production;
- 2) by the method in which they obtain their income (i.e., by means of their own work or by means of the exploitation of others); and
- 3) by their role in the social organisation of work.

"Classes are large groups of people which differ from each other by the place they occupy in a historically definite system of social production, by their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated by laws) to the means of production, by their role in the social organization of labour, by the dimensions and method of acquiring the share of social wealth which they obtain".

(V. I. Lenin, "A Great Beginning", in: "Selected Works",. Volume 9; London; 1946.; p: 432-3). (W.B.Bland, for Communist League, "Classes In Modern Britain"; London UK; 1975; ".: At <http://ml-review.ca/aml/BLAND/WBBSIZECLASS.html>

Only with an appropriate and abundant caution, can the Ashcroft Poll be used to even approximate to a Marxist understanding of class. However, most left writers do not approach the Ashcroft poll with adequate caution.

For example Charlie Kimber (for the International Socialist', a Trotskyite organization) describes the 'social class' classification of the NRS, in order to approximate a Marxist view. Kimber in the below Table, next equates the NRS classification (from A to E), to its description in the second column (e.g. C2=skilled manual workers); through to the percent of the population that class represents (3rd column), and finally, the percent votes that class cast to leave Brexit:

Social class	Description	Percentage of population	Votes for Leave (percentage)
A	Higher managerial, administrative and professional	4	A and B: 43%
B	Intermediate managerial, administrative and professional	23	
C1	Supervisory, clerical and junior managerial, administrative and professional	27	C1: 51
C2	Skilled manual workers	21	C2: 64
D	Semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers	16	D and E: 64
E	State pensioners, casual and lowest grade workers, unemployed with state benefits only	9	

Charlie Kimber, *Ibid*; '<http://isj.org.uk/why-did-britain-vote-leave/>'

Kimber argues that the section C2 and D are the working class, representing 37% of the population. Since in this group, 64% voted to leave the EU – he states that the majority of the working class voted to leave. He interprets this majority vote as an 'anti-establishment' and 'anti-austerity' vote. Kimber argues the result of the vote demonstrates that the British working class has rejected the EU and that it is correct for socialists to support the 'Leave' section of the ruling class.

However there are at least two important, **methodological** problems with this view of the electoral results – even if we simply accept the earlier caveats discussed.

First – most people, would agree that a calculation where the working class amounts to only 37% of the population – is likely to be flawed.

Second, in the 24% of the population noted in either section B (or *Intermediate managerial, administrative and professional*); or in Section C (*Supervisory, clerical and junior managerial, administrative and professional*) – many persons are likely to be in reality, alienated, 'white collar workers'. Kimber does not count them as workers.

Third: To further complicate matters, most people who describe themselves as "working full time" voted for 'remain' (53%) [See below table 2].

	Working Status									
	Total	NET: Working	Work- ing full time	Work- ing part time	NET: Not work- ing	Not work- ing but seek- ing work	Not work- ing seek- ing work/ Stu- dent	Ret- ired on state pen- sion	Ret- ired with pri- vate pen- sion	House person
Unweighted base	12369	6827	4796	2031	5537	460	668	697	2752	960
Weighted base	12369	6804	4777	2027	5560	462	662	707	2761	968
For the UK to remain in the European Union	5949 48%	3559 52%	2535 53%	1024 51%	2387 43%	198 43%	394 59%	218 31%	1212 44%	366 38%
For the UK to leave the European Union	6420 52%	3245 48%	2242 47%	1003 49%	3173 57%	264 57%	268 41%	489 69%	1549 56%	602 62%

From: Lord Ashcroft, 'How the United Kingdom voted on Thursday... and why'; **Friday, 24 June, 2016** in *Europe Referendums*; 'EU Referendum 'How Did You Vote' Poll ONLINE Fieldwork : 21st-23rd June 2016'; <https://lordashcrofthpolls.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/How-the-UK-voted-Full-tables-1.pdf>

Consider the third column (Headed 'working full-time) and the third and fourth row. Those who are 'working full time' **are** the working class. Yet in contrast to data cited by Kimber, of those working full-time, 53% voted to remain and 49% voted to leave the EU. This also contrasts with the sixth column, where those who are "not working but seeking work" (i.e. unemployed seeking work) – 43% voted to remain while 57% voted to leave.

This suggests to us, that the most vulnerable, who have been worst hit by capital (including unemployed), had bought the bogus, and racist rhetoric of the Brexiters. (The Brexiters argue that "the EU with its policy of forced immigration into the UK has led to a shortage of jobs"). But, it looks like employed workers, do not wish to leave the EU, at least on the basis of this poll. Others who attack Kimber, make other worthwhile points:

"Two out of three Labour voters voted Remain...

Two-thirds (67 percent) of those describing themselves as Asian voted Remain. Four out of five black voters (73 percent) voted Remain, and 70 percent of Muslim voters did so too. These voters obviously understand the real dog-whistle message during the referendum campaign.

The generally accepted idea that working class areas voted massively for Leave is only partially correct; many did, but traditional working class areas in London delivered the highest Remain votes (peaking at 75 percent in Haringey and 78 percent in Hackney and Lambeth). Remain won in most of the great working class regional capitals (Bristol, Cardiff, Leicester, Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.) Only three cities of similar importance voted Leave and even then they did so by tiny margins (Birmingham, Sheffield, Nottingham). Working class Scotland voted massively for Remain of course."...

- ... the younger you are, the more likely you were to vote Remain... it was the retired who were the bedrock of Brexit support." *Wayne Asher, 'In a hole and still digging: the left and Brexit'; Issue: 161; 2nd January 2019*

ii) Geographical variations including Scotland

It is important to note that the voting pattern differed markedly by geographical area. In summary:

“Geographically, Scotland and London have voted overwhelmingly for remain, but outside the capital, every English region had a majority for leave.” *Guardian June 23, 2016; ‘EU referendum: full results and analysis’; <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/ng-interactive/2016/jun/23/eu-referendum-live-results-and-analysis>*

This is clearly seen in the following electoral map:



Melissa Etehad; This map shows Britain’s striking geographical divide over Brexit June 24; 2016; Washington Post;
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/06/24/this-map-shows-britains-striking-geographical-divide-over-brexit/>

We conclude that statements like “the working class is overwhelmingly pro-Brexit” are not based on solid evidence. It is true that a significant section of the working class, and especially the most affected by cuts and austerity (from both Conservative and Labour Party PMs, Thatcher, Blair, Brown, Miliband, Cameron and May) – support Brexit.

Nonetheless, despite the regional variances, *overall* the narrow victory of the Brexit-ers shows how almost evenly split the country was. This reflected the divisions at the level of the ruling class. Such bitter divisions signify a splintering of objective class interests.

3. How Johnson finally achieved his life goal of becoming Prime Minister.

In 2016, we had predicted that:

“It is possible that Brexit would likely bring to power a very chauvinist wing of the ruling class (led by **Boris Johnson**) who would launch an even more sustained

attack on the workers”. (*Notes on the Brexit referendum*; *Ibid*; *Red Phoenix*).

However, the intensity of the ruling class crisis in the UK, has accelerated developments. The British ruling class was so divided, that it could not agree on even the negotiated terms for an exit from the EU. The former Prime Minister, **Theresa May**, failed to achieve negotiated terms for Brexit with the EU, ones that Parliament would pass. Hence her demise as PM. Her resignation on 7 June 2019, intensified the blood bath that is destroying the Conservative Party. It was because of this maelstrom, that the widely acknowledged liar, fraudster, buffoonly incompetent and conman – Boris Johnson – became the new Prime Minister of the UK, on July 27, 2019. This followed only an internal vote amongst members of the Conservative Party, in which Johnson won 66.4 per cent of party members. But recall – this was only amongst the 160,000 Conservative Party members (of whom only 138,811 voted). This of course is only a fraction of the total population of Britain – or 0.3% of the population.

Brexit is now very likely to happen under even more adverse conditions for the British working class, than had been predicted earlier. The new scenario is one of the so-called '**No Deal Brexit**'. This means a Brexit without a negotiated settlement with the EU. In this article we argue that a fundamental division in the UK ruling class today, is between those ruling class leaders who have adopted a pro-USA position, as opposed to those who have adopted a pro-EU position.

These events require re-considering the Marxist-Leninist attitude towards a potential – in fact a very likely - Brexit. Some Marxist-Leninists still argue for Brexit. For example the **Communist Party Britain ML (CPML)**:

“Marxists want to live in an independent country for the same reason as everybody else: because no one can be free in a country where the laws are made outside that country. We don't want our country to be ruled from abroad. Still less should it be run by the European Union, whose fundamental treaties give priority to the so-called four freedoms – capital, persons, goods and services.” *CPML; “Why Marxists back Brexit”; 15 August 2019*
<https://www.cpbml.org.uk/news/why-marxists-back-brexit>

Others in the ML movement have argued that there are essentially no real political differences between Remainers and Leavers. For example on the issue of the leadership of the Conservative party, where Boris Johnson squared off against Jeremy Hunt, **Lalkar for the Communist Party Great Britain-ML (CPGB-ML)** saw only a fictional fight:

“The political differences between the candidates may also have been greatly overplayed. These political differences, the extent to which they may exist, exist only on the issue of Brexit, which of course is the important political matter of a generation...” *Lalkar; ‘Brexit and the Tory leadership race’; July/August 2019;*
<http://www.lalkar.org/article/3227/brexit-and-the-tory-leadership-race>

“There appears to be wide ranging debate containing a variety of positions with all given fair attention. In actuality one could barely fit a cigarette paper between the camps.” *Lalkar; “Brexit or bust - Yes to Brexit, No to xenophobia”; November-December 2018;* <http://www.lalkar.org/article/3071/brexit-or-bust-yes-to-brexit-no-to-xenophobia>

“What is so amazing is that for all the splits and divisions in the big two parties, they are arguing over very little... the intent is to remain as closely aligned with EU rules as possible. This is the driving force amongst the mainstream political spectrum whether Brexit or Remain. This will firstly keep us tied to EU rules without having any influence on these rules, at which point, what is the purpose of leaving? More importantly it reveals the political will is in direct contradiction with the public will. The public voted to leave the European Union and that is what must be delivered, not some kind of Brexit light. What we are observing across the political spectrum is merely the appearance of disagreement, all disagreement being merely part of a show, a part of an illusion. All wish to maintain close ties to the EU, maintaining some form of customs regulations, basically sticking to EU guidelines: the single market at all costs – the same single market which the people voted to leave.” *Lalkar, “Brexit paralysis – government and opposition in a shambles”; January/February 2019. <http://www.lalkar.org/article/3118/brexit-paralysis-government-and-opposition-in-a-shambles>*

Lalkar and CPGB-ML, like the CPB-ML, essentially argue for Brexit:

“Neither the Remainer or the Brexiteer bourgeoisie has anything to offer the working class, whose interest in Brexit lies mainly in the weakening of the exploitative power of its class enemy and the ability to carry out military aggression that it entails. We agree with the Remainers that Brexit will weaken British imperialism, and that is why we side with the Brexiteers in this debate that is tearing the main bourgeois political parties apart.” *Lalkar; “Brexit or bust – Yes to Brexit, No to xenophobia”; November-December 2018;*

But both of these approaches appear to ignore the qualitatively new feature of the Trump campaign to retain world hegemony of the USA. In doing so they simplify the crisis within the ruling class of the UK, and its divisions.

4. The Trump Administration, trade war with the European Union, agenda for UK

Current ML-ist perspectives – now as before - inevitably hinge on the relationship of Britain to the USA. This is because despite recent set-backs, the USA remains the dominant imperialist nation in the world. Under the presidency of **President Barack Obama**, the dominant section of USA capital deemed that it was in their interests that the UK stays in the European Union (EU), to serve as the pawn of the USA. In fact this had always been the original plan of the USA with respect to Britain’s membership of the EU.

However since **President Donald Trump** became President of the USA in January 20, 2017, a different policy has taken hold. We discuss elsewhere the forces in the USA that propelled Trump to power (*‘What is Behind Trump – Is There Method Behind His Madness? Finance Capital and Industrial Capital – An Evolutionary History’; at <http://ml-today.com/2019/08/18/trump-finance-capital/>*). In summary:

1. A division of interests in the ruling classes of the USA has evolved. The two segments of capital – the financial wing and the industrial wing - had differing aims. Nonetheless, a relative dominance of the financial capitalist class had emerged since the dissolution of the Bretton Woods Agreement following the Second World War. This increasingly dominant financial wing was supported

by both the Democratic Party and the Republican Party. However, in addition the Republican Party had a long-standing commitment to the oil, and heavy industrial sections of capital. And in addition, the Democratic party showed a relative favouring of the newer high tech industries.

2. Increasingly even the industrial wing has shifted to a financial profiteering through what **Karl Marx** had called '**fictitious capital**'. Correspondingly, there had been a so-called 'de-industrialisation' of industry. Under the further spur to decrease their overheads and increase their profits, manufacturing bases were moved to the increasingly more exploited 'under-developed' world. All this was accompanied by an explosive accentuation of the inequality of wealth and incomes.
3. At the same time, the USA was being challenged by its capitalist-imperialist rivals. Of these the most important was China. But the USA was also being challenged by the EU, dominated by German capital.
4. Trump was financed and supported by the oil, gas, automotive and industrial bases, as well as smaller businesses, who wanted to reinvest in the USA homeland. This would provide some boost to employment, thereby blunting working class resistance to capitalism. In order to facilitate their profits, the Trump administration immediately moved to remove any environmental restrictions that hampered their crude exploitation of the environment. To blind and mystify the working class of the USA, a crude 'America First' jingoism was hoisted up. It was accompanied by crude racism, anti-immigration legislation and unprecedented jailing of migrant minors who were separated from their parents.
5. Meanwhile the Trump administration attacked the trading basis as regulated by the **World Trade Organisation**, that had long been accepted by all capitalist nations. The USA now unilaterally erected tariffs, to undermine the entry of finished goods into the USA. A trade war had been initiated. While primarily aimed at China, the EU was also a major target.

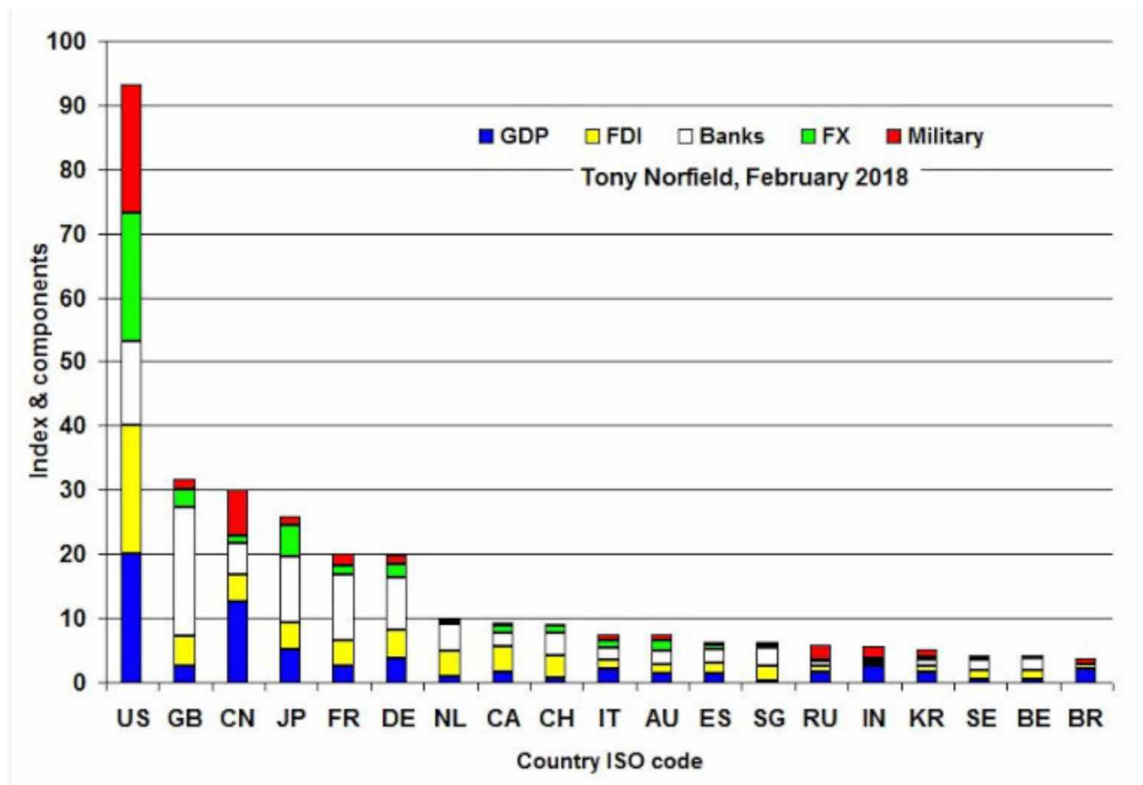
It is in this light that the Brexit debate must be re-examined.

Why is the USA so interested in further embroiling the UK into its net?

It is widely acknowledged that after the Second World War, the position of the UK – or Great Britain (GB) – as the premier imperialist was challenged, and impossible to maintain. The debacle at Suez demonstrated this even to the most obtuse and ambitious English politicians. Yet the UK state found itself a new vitality, by exploiting the petrodollar market, and remade itself into a **financial rentier** state (*See Alliance 3; and <http://ml-today.com/2019/08/18/trump-finance-capital/>*). With this, coupled to its former overtly colonial overlordship (transformed into a neo-colonial and more discreet exploitation), the UK until recently, retained its position as a major capitalist nation. Indeed, an **Index of Power**, compiled by Tony Norfield (who wrote "The City: London and the Global Power of Finance"; 2017; London) shows that the UK still ranks number two in the world (**Figure 1** UK is listed as GB for Great Britain). Norfield uses five measures to arrive at a synthesized Index:

“Nominal GDP (2017 estimates, IMF)
 - Foreign Direct Investment stock outstanding (at end-2016, UNCTAD)
 - Outstanding cross-border lending and borrowing by banks (September 2017, BIS)
 - The use of a country’s currency in international markets (April 2016, BIS)
 - A country’s military expenditure (2016, SIPRI);
 12 February 2018; at: <https://economicsofimperialism.blogspot.com/2018/02/index-of-power.html>

Figure 1: Index of Power, from Tony Norfield’s blogsite; 12 February 2018; at: <https://economicsofimperialism.blogspot.com/2018/02/index-of-power.html>



Legend: “The height of each bar is given by the country’s total index value, which is then broken down into the respective components. Countries are identified by their two-letter ISO code. Take care, because CH is Switzerland, not China (which is CN), and DE is Germany. The overall picture shows a small number of countries, led by the US, towering over the rest. Only 33 countries out of 180 have an index that is more than 1% of the US index number! In a chart, most of the columns would look like the x-axis, so here I have shown just the top 20 countries. Of those, only five are close to or above 20% of the US number: the UK, China, Japan, France and Germany. The UK remains number 2 on these updated figures. But its index value has slipped back in the past few years on most measures, and likely will slip further in future with the impact of Brexit. China stays number 3, but has come in closer, helped by its GDP growth, a greater use of its currency in world markets and by the size of its foreign direct investment assets (FDI). France has edged a little above Germany in the latest ranking, helped by the better relative position of banks in France.”

Undoubtedly the UK owes its second position to a close alliance with the USA. However it has sectors that are in some competition with the USA. This is primarily in the financial sectors. This is likely to change as Norfield states elsewhere:

“Brexit’s impact is likely show up in at least one of the Index components, that for the volume of international banking conducted from the UK base.”

Tony Norfield, Finance, Power & Brexit; Economics of Imperialism Blog; October 8, 1918; at: <https://economicsofimperialism.blogspot.com/search?q=Brexit>

In manufacturing, the UK also serves as the base for foreign automakers, which also act as competitors for the USA and other manufacturers including steel makers.

We conclude that the USA is anxious to more completely dominate the UK economy as:

- (i) Today, any competition for both USA manufacturers and financiers, is unacceptable. Furthermore, the prospect of opening up the National Health Services (NHS) for further penetration of USA firms, is tantalizing.
- (ii) There are also some ‘pure’ political goals of the USA, that prompt it to tie the UK more securely into its mesh. This became clear in a recent visit to the UK by **John Bolton**, the national security adviser to Trump.

It is well known that Trump supported **Boris Johnson** and **Nigel Farage** (see below) both leading lights of ‘Brexit’, for some time. Today, the new UK Prime Minister Johnson is fast leading the UK, into a renewed and deeper subservience to the USA. Lest there be lingering confusion in the UK about this, the path was clearly signposted by John Bolton. In his recent visit to the UK, he had 3 aims:

“John Bolton... has three main aims. The first is... the UK’s withdrawal from the hard-won, US-trashed 2015 Iran nuclear agreement and the abandonment of fellow signatories France and Germany... Bolton’s second aim is to drive a wedge between the UK and Europe... to disrupt, subvert and weaken the EU, whose very existence offends him... If the UK, ever more beholden to the US for its daily bread, can be used to foil Emmanuel Macron’s ideas about integrated European defence, or undermine EU regulations covering digital multinationals, so much the better...”

The third Bolton aim: (is) to enlist a radically repurposed and realigned UK in pursuit of his singular vision of American global hegemony, of the truly exceptional nation whose power and dominion know no limits..”

Simon Tisdall; John Bolton doesn’t want a trade deal with the UK – he wants to colonise us; Guardian; 13 August 2019.

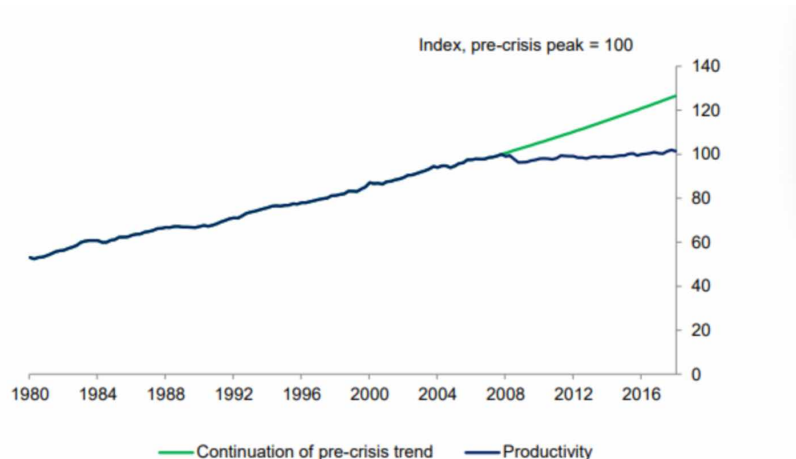
5. The splintering of the capitalist class unity in the UK as they struggle with lower productivity

There has been a tremendous splintering of the ruling class unity. This has its objective base in the crisis that British capitalism has been since the last financial storms of 2007-8. It has never recovered fully, and moreover, the structural problems persist. This can be seen in the fall in productivity of the UK, as warned about by the Bank of England.

This key fact, in reality, dwarfs the impact of Brexit for the capitalists of the UK. This situation is summarised by Michael Roberts, and is shown graphically in **Figure 2**:

“An economic slump and the Long Depression are way more damaging to the UK economy than Brexit. Brexit will just be an extra burden for British capital to face. The UK economy already has weak investment and productivity growth compared with the 1990s and with other OECD countries. As

it is a 'rentier' economy that depends too heavily on its financial and business services sector, services sector trade with the EU is likely to fall 50-65% after Brexit." *Michael Roberts, 'Breit Britain'; Rupture Magazine 4 August 2019;* <https://rupturemagazine.org/2019/08/04/brexit-britain-michael-roberts/>



Sources: ONS and Bank calculations.

Notes: Productivity is output per hour worked. Extrapolation of pre-crisis trend based on continuation of average growth from 1971 and 2007 beyond 2007Q4.

Figure 2: *Michael Roberts, "The productivity puzzle again"; 'Michael Roberts Blog' 29 June 2018;* <https://thenextrecession.wordpress.com/2018/06/29/the-productivity-puzzle-again/>

In fact, the ruling class itself, is divided – because it does not know who to combat this in a way that all in it, will agree. In the long drawn out recovery from the last economic crisis, the capitalists cannot unanimously agree on the best policy for itself.

Even the dominant, financial wing of the capitalists has not agreed amongst itself. Only this can explain the vivid spectacle whereby the current Governor of the Bank of England (**Mark Carney**) is at a 180 degree disagreement, with the former Governor of the Bank (**Mervyn King**). The former heavily cautions against a "No Deal Brexit", while the latter blithely insists this poses no real problem. The contrast in their public statements is stark:

"Mark Carney has thrown his weight behind Theresa May's Brexit deal, warning that a no-deal scenario would damage the economy, trigger job losses, lead to lower pay for workers and cause inflation to rise.

The governor of the Bank of England said May's draft EU withdrawal would "support economic outcomes" that would be positive for the British economy, primarily because it would give Britain more time to prepare for whatever final Brexit deal is agreed between Westminster and Brussels.

"We welcome the transition arrangements in the withdrawal agreement. ..[The deal] improves our ability to discharge our function relative to having no deal," he added."

Richard Partington and Phillip Inman; "Mark Carney backs Theresa May's Brexit deal"; The Guardian; 20 November 2018.

"Mervyn King, the former governor of the Bank of England, has launched a stinging attack on Theresa May's Brexit deal, likening it to the appeasement of the Nazis in the 1930s. In a sweeping attack on No 10, the Treasury and his successor, Mark Carney, the Brexit-supporting King said the political elite was allowing the UK to become a vassal state that would be forced to accept Brussels diktats. He described the deal negotiated by the government as "incompetence of a high order". King's comments came as Carney told the Treasury select committee on Tuesday that the price of food could go up by 10% if the UK left the EU with no deal and with no plans to avoid chaos at the country's ports. He said Britain's ports were not ready for a shift to World Trade Organization rules for the country's exports and imports with the EU. King, however, slammed May's deal as "a muddled commitment to perpetual subordination from which the UK cannot withdraw without the agreement of the EU".

Phillip Inman, "Mervyn King: Theresa May's Brexit deal is like appeasement"; The Guardian; 4 December 2018.

"The former governor of the Bank of England, Mervyn King, has attacked MPs over their handling of Brexit and called for Britain to leave the EU without a deal after six months of preparation... Lord King said it appeared Britain's political class had "suffered a collective nervous breakdown" and accused MPs of exaggerating the economic risks of no-deal Brexit... He said it was not clear that a no-deal Brexit would trigger job losses across the country and that, with adequate preparation, the long-term economic costs of leaving without a deal would not be very different from staying in the bloc... The former governor said the decisions about leaving the EU should not be all about economics, and that considerations of identity, culture and politics were more important. "... There are arguments for staying and leaving, but it's about politics. Do we want to belong to this club?" he asked."

Richard Partington; "UK should leave EU with no deal, says former Bank of England governor"; The Guardian; 29 March 2019.

We must conclude that even the financial wing of capital – now dominant in the UK state – is divided as to the best options regarding the EU.

In contrast the large service and non-financial wing of the UK bourgeoisie – in general - wishes to stay within the EU.

Note that the industrial segment of capital in the UK is either not a huge segment, or, has mainly foreign ownership (for example, such as the Japanese car plants). Regardless of this, most large businesses in the top 100 of the Financial Times listed, and the big foreign banks Stock Exchange (FTSE 100) companies, favour remaining in the EU. However **small business owners** are split, and many support Brexit:

"The British executive class has long been largely against the idea of leaving the EU...

Bosses from Vodafone, easyJet and BT were among the FTSE 100 bosses who signed a letter in February saying that Brexit would threaten investment in

UK. And a recent YouGov poll found that senior executives at big businesses prefer to remain in the EU by an overwhelming majority of 93% to 7%.

Though it's far from unanimous – a British Chambers of Commerce boss was suspended for expressing support for Brexit – it seems that big business broadly favours the status quo.

But what about small-business owners, who, despite accounting for 99.3% of all private-sector businesses, have not been afforded the same level of media coverage?

Well, the aforementioned YouGov poll suggests sentiments are rather more mixed among smaller enterprises, albeit they still favour the 'remain' camp marginally, by 47% to 42%. “

Jo Thornely; 'Brexit: forget the FTSE 100 – what do small businesses think?'; UK Business For Sale; ; at: <https://uk.businessesforsale.com/uk/search/businesses-for-sale/articles/brexit-forget-the-ftse-100-what-do-small-businesses-think>

“Some 99 out of 100 FTSE firms back Remain. As the deadline for leaving the EU approaches, many of these firms are making desperate and direct appeals to the political establishment and the wider population urging either an abandonment of Brexit, or the softest of soft Brexits. Airbus, all the major supermarkets and car manufacturers are just some of the household names that have joined the chorus of disapproval which also includes the CBI, the Bank of England, the *Financial Times*, and the *Economist*’.

John Rees; 'Marxism and the Brexit crisis'; Counter-Fire; February 5, 2019; <https://www.counterfire.org/articles/analysis/20123-marxism-and-the-brexit-crisis>

“The principal support for Leave from within the bourgeoisie came from relatively small capital—small businesses shading into the petty bourgeoisie proper. These are people who find European Union directives difficult to meet because, unlike large corporations, they can less easily afford to meet health and safety standards or regulations about maternity leave. (Although some of the laws they resent most do not actually originate from the EU, but stem from the British legislative process.) These people, not “the white working class,” are central to the United Kingdom Independent Party (UKIP).”

Neil Davidson; "After Brexit Will the European Union crack up?" 'International Socialism Journal'; Issue #102; May 2, 2019; <https://isreview.org/issue/102/after-brexit>

Despite their original wish to Remain, many large companies have seen the writing on the wall, and have made contingency plans to ensure European market access. These often involve job closures within the UK, or moving operations to Europe:

“Declining manufacturing growth; £44bn-worth of transactions in jeopardy every day and retailers chiming in to say prices of some foods could rise by 45 per cent, to say it's looking dicey out there is putting it mildly...

Even Somerset Capital Management, a firm co-founded by Brexiteer Jacob Rees-Mogg, has warned that the UK's departure from the EU could cause "considerable uncertainty".

Joe Sommerland and Ben Chapman, "Which companies are leaving UK, downsizing or cutting jobs ahead of Brexit?' Dozens of companies have cut jobs, beefed up their European operations or issued warnings on the impact of the UK's departure from the EU'; 26 February 2019, The Independent; at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/brexit-companies-leaving-uk-list-job-cuts-eu-no-deal-customs-union-a8792296.html>

“Many banks, insurers and asset managers who want to retain access to customers in the EU have already redirected hundreds of millions of pounds of investment towards new or expanded hubs in the bloc. Nearly 40 banks from London have applied to the European Central Bank for licences. According to Frankfurt Main Finance, which promotes German financial capital, these are set to transfer 750-800 billion euros in assets in 2019. This is still a trickle, but it could turn into a flood.”

*Michael Roberts, 'Brexit Britain'; Rupture Magazine 4 August 2019;
<https://rupturemagazine.org/2019/08/04/brexit-britain-michael-roberts/>*

A partial list of these firms making ‘emergency’ plans to take account of Brexit, includes: Airbus (14,000 jobs at risk), Aviva (moving 7.8 Billion Pounds Sterling (PS) to Dublin); Bank of America Merrill Lynch (transfer European HQ to Paris and Dublin, spending 306 m PS on this), Barclays (already moved £166bn of its clients' assets to Dublin, planning 150 m expenditure to offset post-Brexit losses, moving 200 staff to Dublin), British Steel (440 jobs lost, with 4,000 more at risk); Credit Suisse (250 branches moved to Europe from London); Dyson (HQ move to Singapore); Ford (Cuts of 370 jobs, and offset 613m PS if Brexit); Honda (loss of 3,500 jobs); Jaguar Land Rover (now owned by Tata, cuts of 4,500 jobs); BMW and Toyota (similarly about 4,500 job losses); Rolls-Royce (cuts 4,600 jobs, and moving plants to Germany); UBS (chooses HQ in Frankfurt rather than London); Panasonic (European HQ to Amsterdam) etc etc. (*Joe Sommerland and Ben Chapman;The Independent'; Ibid*).

6. Effects of economic disagreement upon the political representatives of the capitalist class

We noted the Conservative party take-over by Boris Johnson. This only occurred after a bitter struggle between Tory Remainers led by the ex-chancellor **Philip Hammond**, and **Jeremy Hunt** - and the No Deal Brexiters – led by **Boris Johnson**. It is appropriate to just return to 2016 to trace the unsteady path taken by the tottering Conservative Party.

Following the Referendum, **Theresa May** was appointed as Prime Minister by her party. She herself had been a ‘Remainer’. But already the Conservative Party was split, and she was the compromise candidate. In essence she was set up to be the fall-guy for the difficult task ahead – to obtain a negotiated settlement with the EU, while ensuring on-going trade relations with the EU, and maintaining the unity of the United Kingdom (including Northern Ireland and Scotland); but also obtaining the parliamentary votes to endorse her deal. Her government immediately triggered ‘Article 50’, of the 2007 Lisbon Treaty, which originally meant that the UK had to leave by March 29, 2019. This deadline was then extended.

Accordingly, Prime Minister **Theresa May** tried to obtain a negotiated settlement to enable Brexit, with the EU. But again - one that would be acceptable to the many factions within the Conservative Party and Parliament. Despite over two years of bitter negotiations the PM Theresa May failed to convince parliament to pass approval on her final deal. She was therefore forced to resign. But, she only did so after a new round of EU elections in the UK, on 23 May 2019.

The results of that election, confirmed the extensive splintering of electoral support for both the Labour Party and the Conservative Party. The two oldest, and formerly leading

parties – were trashed at the polls. They were overtaken by the newly formed ‘**Brexit party**’ of the rabid **Nigel Farage** and another newer party – the **Liberal Democrats**.

Farage was a co-founder of the **UK Independence Party (UKIP)**. This ultra-right party adopted two key platforms. The first was ‘Euroskepticism’ – meaning a rejection of the European Union. At the same time it emphasized “Britishness” – or really “English-ism”. In the latter frame, it opposed the growth of Welsh and Scottish nationalisms. It demagogically describes its followers as the “People’s Army”. But as these positions indicate, it skirts close to fascism. **Farage** led UKIP from 2006-2009, and 2010-2016. Hypocritically as a profound Eurosceptic, he stood for and became Member of European Parliament (MEP) in 1999, and subsequently – up to the present day. **Farage** had been instrumental in pushing the Conservative party Government of Prime Minister **David Cameron** into holding the 2016 Brexit Referendum. A referendum that **Cameron** and other Remainers, confidently felt would settle the issue once and for all, in their favour.

Farage resigned from UKIP in 2018, seeking a measure of respectability, as the UKIP steadily became more overtly fascist. The precipitating issue was appointing **Tommy Robinson** as adviser to the UKIP leader, **Gerard Batten**. **Robinson** (birth name **Stephen Yaxley-Lennon**) is a former member of the fascist **British National Party**, became involved with Pegida UK (British branch of the German fascist organization **Pegida**); and is a convicted criminal (violence and assault, financial and immigration frauds, drug possession and public order offences).

Farage formed the **Brexit Party** in January 2019 and became leader from its birth. It has 29 members in European parliament (MEPs). It advocates for a “clean-break Brexit” – but in reality, its positions are identical to those of the No Dealers led by Boris Johnson. **Farage’s** love-fest with **Trump** illustrate this. His views on **Trump** are identical to those of **Jacob Rees-Mogg**, and those of the overtly fascist UKIP:

“**Farage** told the BBC (in January 2017): “If I speak to **Trump’s** team, **Trump’s** close advisers, or even to the president-elect himself, none of them think **Trump** would have won if Brexit had not happened”. The fascists marching to demand that **Tommy Robinson** be freed from jail carried banners supporting **Trump** and **Brexit**. The links between Brexit fundamentalists and the **Trump** administration are becoming closer week by week. **Rees-Mogg**—who supported **Trump** before he was elected president—noted that the latter “appealed to voters left behind by the metropolitan elite and he exudes confidence about his own nation and a determination not to be a manager of decline, which also inspires the Brexiteers”.
Wayne Asher, 'In a hole and still digging: the left and Brexit'; International Socialism; Issue: 161; 2nd January 2019

The **Liberal Democrats** had been formed in 1981, from an alliance between the Liberal Party and the Social Democratic Party – a splinter in the Labour Party. They accepted a ‘junior partnership’ with the Conservatives under **David Cameron’s** Prime Ministry in 2007. They are led by **Jo Swinson** and have 14 elected Member of Parliament (MPs) of today.

In these European elections, the **Brexit Party** won most support, followed by the **Lib Dems**:

“The election saw the Brexit party top the polls, with 31.6% of the overall vote. Having made an impression in the polls after its launch, Change UK secured just 3.4% of the vote. The best performing pro-Remain party was the Lib Dems, who finished second with 20.3%.”

Michael Savage, “How Brexit party won Euro elections on social media – simple, negative messages to older voters”; Guardian 29 June 2019.

“Nigel Farage’s party... polled around 31.6%, taking votes from the Conservatives and Labour...

The Lib Dems... achieved 20.3%, placing it comfortably in second...

Labour fared poorly, coming third behind the Lib Dems and... results placed Labour at about 14.1%...

The Conservatives performed even more poorly than predicted, coming behind the Greens in fifth after early results, with about 9.1% of the vote. That is the worst national election result for the party in its history...”

Dan Sabbagh, ‘Five things we have learned from UK’s European elections’; The Guardian 27 May 2019.

“The other pro-second referendum parties did well, with the exception of Change UK. The Greens achieved a share of 12.1%... The Scottish National Party’s (SNP) 38% in Scotland. Plaid Cymru came second in Wales on 19.6%, up four percentage points from last time. Only Change UK struggled, finishing just ahead of UKIP at 3.4%, reflecting a crowded field of anti-Brexit parties. Most significantly, the share of the two unambiguously pro-Brexit parties – the Brexit party and UKIP – was 34.9%, markedly lower than the aggregate total of the pro-second referendum parties (the Lib Dems, Greens, Change UK, the Scottish National party and Plaid) at 40.3%.”

Dan Sabbagh, ‘Five things we have learned from UK’s European elections’; The Guardian 27 May 2019.

Observers noted the poor results of the Conservatives and the Labour Party:

“The vacancy at 10 Downing Street occurs less than three years after May, who succeeded fellow Tory David Cameron, pledged to implement the Brexit referendum to quit the European Union. Yet she leaves office with Britain still a member. Two deadlines for shedding EU membership have passed, with a third attempt set for the end of October. One of the delays forced the U.K. to hold elections for the European Parliament, a legal requirement of EU membership. The Conservative Party lost almost all its seats, but the electoral results proved rewarding for a new political force—Nigel Farage’s Brexit Party, which made a simple appeal: get out now.

The Labour Party managed to lose much of its vote, too. Presiding over a coalition of working-class Leave supporters and a larger group of Remainers, Labour seemed unable to make up its mind. The Liberal Democrats, meantime, surged, as voters who never made their peace with Brexit sought a way to stop it. Once a small center-left party, the Liberal Democrats also offered a simple message: let’s have another referendum and stop the whole thing.”

Daniel Finkelstein, “The Brexit Factions. Prime Minister’s Theresa May’s Resignation further complicates Britain’s divorce from the EU”; City Journal; June 4, 2019; at <https://www.city-journal.org/brexit-factions>

What of Labour in this last 2 years of “Will we – Will we not – Brexit?”

In the midst of this gory and bloody power struggle inside the ruling class and the Conservative Party, the Labour Party was completely and deliberately ineffectual. In the 2016 election, the faction of the Labour Party supporting **Jeremy Corbyn's** leadership, Momentum, argued the need to stay in the EU:

“The pro-Corbyn group Momentum... After originally not taking a position, just one month before the vote, the leadership polled the members, who voted by two to one to support a Remain position. Momentum criticised the EU... it called for a pan-European anti-austerity movement, radical democratisation of the EU and an end to fortress Europe. But on the concrete issue of the day it concluded that Brexit would be “a victory for the nationalist right and their campaign against migrants.”

Wayne Asher, 'In a hole and still digging: the left and Brexit'; International Socialism; Issue: 161; 2nd January 2019

Yet shortly after the Brexit vote, Corbyn became very coy about Labour's real position. He came under attack from the section of the Labour Party that had supported the bankrupt former Labour PM, Tony Blair. This section was represented by Tom Watson, Deputy leader of the Labour Party. To facilitate their immobilization of Corbyn, they launched accusations of anti-Semitism within the Labour Party. To ease Corbyn's awkward silences, Momentum ensured that the Labour Party Conferences of 2017 and 2018, had only muted discussions upon the issue of the EU. The debate on a Second Referendum was clipped. This despite the growing support for this within the Labour Party ranks:

“More than 150 constituency Labour parties (CLPs) have been considering mounting a challenge to Jeremy Corbyn's Brexit policy at conference this autumn, with an apparent rise in support for a referendum on a final deal among some of his key allies... Support for a fresh vote has also been quietly growing in Momentum, the Corbyn-supporting grassroots group which played a crucial role in preventing activists at last year's conference from getting a vote on the party's Brexit stance...

A petition of Momentum members calling for a second referendum has almost reached 4,000 signatories. It needs 4,400, or 10% of the group's membership, to force a vote of all members. A senior Momentum source said: “There's definitely a view that there should be a debate on it at conference. The problem last year was that a lot of the motions put forward were put forward by remainers who didn't have the best interests of leadership at heart.

But this year it looks like there will be motions that will be about Brexit and the Labour party's position on it without being deliberately written in a way that would criticise the leadership. They're likely to be more sympathetic to Corbyn so will get a better hearing.” *Crerar, Pippa, 2018, "Corbyn's Brexit Policy Likely to be Challenged at Labour Conference", Guardian (31 July), www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/jul/31/corbyn-brexit-policy-likely-to-be-challenged-at-labour-conference*

The Labour Party has therefore effectively refused to attack the weakened Conservative Party. No doubt the attacks on Jeremy Corbyn, launched under the guise of eradicating

a putative anti-Semitism in the Labour Party, intensified the paralysis of the Labour Party. Yet a vigorous and principled rebuttal that anti-Semitism is quite distinct (and should be fought) from anti-Zionism (which should be supported) – never emerged. Such a rebuttal could have led to a rallying of left forces. This failure of Labour, once again, signifies that the leadership of the Labour Party, is complicit with the dominant section of the ruling class of the UK.

In effect, we argue, that the Labour Party Corbyn leadership has surrendered to the currently dominant pro-USA wing of the Conservative Party.

6. Impediments to a negotiated settlement with the European Union on the terms of withdrawal

Perhaps the major sticking point has been the question of the “back stop”. This refers to the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. When the war between the republicans (represented by the Irish Republican Army IRA) and the British army with its Northern Ireland militias became a bloody stand-off, a truce was brokered. Known as the “Good Friday Agreement”, it was signed in 1998. One key term was that there would be no policed-hard border between the Irish republic and the state of Northern Ireland.

But since the Republic of Ireland is a member of the EU, this created a problem for the negotiated withdrawal. It is not possible to have one part of Ireland in the EU (the republic) and than other part in the UK in a Brexit state, without a hard border. As till now, both the Republic and Northern Ireland have been part of the EU, there has been an open border – with free flow of goods, services and peoples across the border. The term ‘hard border’ means the existence of border checks on goods.

But the hard border is not wanted by many people in the North or South (republic) of Ireland. They are quite used to an open border. The Republic of Ireland supports an open border. Meanwhile, the Democratic Unionist Party, does not want an open border - as it views this as an invitation to a united Ireland. Moreover, the proposed solution of the ‘backstop’, mandates a border between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK, treating it differently from the rest of the UK. Meanwhile the hard Brexiters within the Conservative Party, reject it, as they fear it entraps the UK into a customs union with the EU, if an agreement cannot be ultimately sealed.

So the ‘backstop’ is meant to be an interim bridge’, or an ‘insurance policy’, which acknowledges the issue is not settled – while maintaining an open border:

“The backstop is a position of last resort, to maintain a seamless border on the island of Ireland. It would involve the UK retaining a very close relationship with the EU for an indefinite period.

It will apply if the UK and EU have not agreed a final deal at the end of a standstill transition period or if that final deal does not guarantee a soft border.

It will not apply if the UK leaves without a deal in October.

The EU have insisted that any Brexit deal must contain the backstop.

The preference of both sides is to prevent this happening through a deep and comprehensive trade deal.

However, the UK's current red lines, which include leaving the customs union and the single market, make that very difficult.

A technological solution for the border is favoured by many Brexit supporters, but the EU is very skeptical about whether it can work without a degree of close regulatory alignment.

If the trade deal or the technology aren't enough - Then the backstop would be applied. It would see Northern Ireland staying aligned to some rules of the EU single market." *John Campbell, 'Brexit: What is the Irish border backstop?'; BBC August 1 2019; at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-politics-44615404>*

This is what is so unacceptable to the No Deal Brexiters. The assurances by the EU that this would be subject to reinterpretation by a 'dispute mechanism', have not been accepted:

"In March 2019 the EU and UK agreed a joint interpretation of the backstop, clarifying the earlier deal. It explained the ways in which UK could start a "formal dispute" against the EU, if it tried to keep the UK tied into the backstop indefinitely. It also emphasised that the EU would undertake joint work to find the technological solutions favoured by Brexit supporters..."

However, (the) Attorney General, Geoffrey Cox, concluded that "the legal risk remains unchanged" that if a post-Brexit trade agreement cannot be reached due to genuinely "intractable differences", the UK would have "no internationally lawful means" of leaving the backstop without EU agreement.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson says he is committed to "getting rid" of the backstop, describing it as "divisive" and "anti-democratic". "No country that values its independence, and indeed its self-respect, could agree to a treaty which signed away our economic independence and self-government as this backstop does," Mr. Johnson told the House of Commons."

John Campbell, Ibid; <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-politics-44615404>

It only remains in this section to point out that if a No Deal Brexit goes through, this will trigger a hard border in Ireland. In turn – a likely fallout will be a **United Ireland**. As the Irish **Taoiseach** (or Prime Minister) **Leo Varadkar**, said very recently:

"People in Northern Ireland will "come to question the union" with England, Scotland and Wales if there is a no-deal Brexit, but discussion about a United Ireland now would be "provocative" ...

"I think if there is a hard Brexit on the 31st of October, if the United Kingdom takes Northern Ireland out of the European Union against the wishes of the majority of people in Northern Ireland, takes away their European citizenship and undermines the Good Friday Agreement in doing so, those questions will arise whether we like it or not and we have to be ready for that,"

On Brexit, the Taoiseach insisted that the existing European Union/United Kingdom withdrawal agreement will not be renegotiated, despite repeated declarations to the contrary by the newly installed Boris Johnson."

Fiach Kelly, Pat Leahy, Freya McClements, Denis Staunton; 'Varadkar says no-deal Brexit could break up UK; The Irish Times, August 18, 2019; at: <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/varadkar-says-no-deal-brexit-could-break-up-uk-1.3968821>

7. The current divisions in the British Ruling class

Divisions within the British ruling class have formed a complex raft of shifting factions. The majority of the capitalist class had been in favour of the UK being in the EU. However these can be roughly divided into four main blocs:

1. The 'No-dealers'.

These form an overt pro-USA combination of Conservative Party members led by **Boris Johnson, Jacob Rees-Mogg, and Dominic Raab** –who formed the “European Research Group“. They are joined by members of the Northern Ireland party, the Democratic Unionist Party:

“No Dealers, perhaps 100 or so Tory MPs, who will vote against the Leave legislation if the backstop is included. The Democratic Unionist Party, whose 10 MPs are required for the government to maintain its majority, share this position. May failed to secure their support... No Dealers acknowledge that leaving without a transition period will be tough, but they don't share the Dealers' fear of disaster. They hope to trade with the EU on terms similar to the World Trade Organization—but that would require an end to the backstop.”

Daniel Finkelstein, Ibid; at <https://www.city-journal.org/brexit-factions>

This core is in combination with the non-Conservative party Brexiters led by an increasingly rabid **Nigel Farage**, the leader of the **Brexit Party**. As discussed above, this latter party, was only formed to gain some 'respectable' distance from the more openly neo-fascist party of **UK Independence Party (UKIP)**, now led by **Richard Braine**. In reality, Braine is only at the extreme right-wing end of this combination. In other words, he simply expresses a more open racism than Boris Johnson. For example, Braine advocates banning of the sales of the Qu'ran in the UK:

“The newly-elected leader of UKIP has been condemned for “virulent Islamophobia” after footage emerged of him arguing it should be illegal to publicly distribute the Qur'an in the UK and that some British towns are no-go areas for non-Muslims. Speaking to UKIP members at hustings, Richard Braine also claimed that British Islam has particular problems with bigamy and welfare abuse, and referred to the jailed far-right anti-Islam activist Tommy Robinson as a “political prisoner”.

Peter Walker, “New Ukip leader condemned for 'virulent Islamophobia'; Guardian; 12 August 2019.

2. The Dealers

A group of more cautious Brexiters desire to keep links with the EU and may be termed pro-EU. They come from both the Conservative Party now led by Philip Hammond, former Chancellor under Mrs. May; and the Labour Party – led by Kate Hoey, John Mann, Ian Austin, Sir Kevin Barron, Caroline Flint, and Melanie Onn. They also include the Scottish National Party led by Nicola Sturgeon since 2014. All these wish to retain some independence from the USA. This set of forces can be loosely characterised as follows:

“the Dealers, who accept the Brexit referendum as a clear mandate for Britain to leave. Even most Conservative Remainers acknowledge that a democracy requires adherence to this vote. But Dealers also agree that the separation requires a withdrawal agreement with the EU - a settlement of outstanding debts, clarification on the status of citizens abroad, the establishment of a transition period, and a future trading bill to

protect Britain's economy. But there is a problem. The EU insists that any deal guarantee an open border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Known as the "backstop," this provision would require a significant alignment between U.K. and EU interests on trade and regulation." *Daniel Finkelstein, Ibid; at <https://www.city-journal.org/brexit-factions>*

3. A group of largely Labour Party "Remainers" – who are loosely described by the following:

"The Different Dealers are those who want the withdrawal agreement attached to a declaration that Britain will negotiate a close relationship with the EU, aping its policies. This is Labour's position, and while it has few true adherents, it has allowed the party to acknowledge the referendum result while not actually voting to support the deal required to leave."

Objectively, this position – the 'official leadership' view – has been reduced to silently standing on the sidelines. It is objectively, a pro-US position, as it enables the Brexiters to plough through. It has two wings. Corbyn's wing seeks to mollify the more left of the Labour party. The right wing, represented by Tom Watson, also strongly supports the more blatant anti-working class 'austerity' policies of Tony Blair's 'New Labour'. Within the Labour party, yet another section is the so-called "Norway Plus" faction, who can be described as follows:

"Lucy Powell and Aberavon MP Stephen Kinnock are at the forefront of cross-party attempts to pivot towards a different model for Britain's future relationship with the EU that they argue meets Labour's six tests and delivers on the referendum result.

More colloquially known as "Norway plus", it would remove Britain from the contentious Common Fisheries Policy and Common Agricultural Policy but the UK would have to accept the free movement of people in most circumstances." *Laurence Sleator; "Brexit: Where Labour's factions stand"; BBC at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-47062893>*

In the same camp are the Liberal Democrats who are led by Jo Swinson.

4. Another section of the Labour Party are asking for a second referendum, and have mobilised under the slogan "**People's Vote**", which is led by **Chuka Umunna**. Objectively this grouping claims to endorse the wishes of the majority of the working class, but is a pro-EU bourgeoisie viewpoint.

" If Labour voted to leave, it would have infuriated the majority of the fourth group—the No Brexiters. This group seeks a second referendum, with Remain as one of the options, without being too picky about what the other option is (no deal, the deal, a different deal)."

They believe with good reason, that the first referendum was too vague about the conditions and effects of withdrawal. Correspondingly they believe a new referendum will be won by the Remainers, and they are therefore objectively, pro-EU. Within the rank and file of the Labour Party, they may have considerable support:

“People's Vote supporters point to the views of the party members to support their decision. A recent survey of more than 1,000 Labour members suggested 83% had voted Remain and 72% wanted Jeremy Corbyn to back another referendum.”

Laurence Sleator; BBC Ibid; at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-47062893>

The position of the Labour Party leader, Jeremy Corbyn – is quite unclear in regards to a Second Referendum. In his refusal to take active steps against the Conservative party – whether under Theresa May and now, under Boris Johnson – he is in effect announcing an agreement to allow the UK to become completely subservient to USA capitalism.

8. The Immediate Future

The judgment of the European leaders, upon Boris Johnson, Jacob Rees-Mogg and their cronies is acutely sharp:

“Germany’s Europe minister (Michael Roth) has accused “90 percent” of the British cabinet of having “no idea how workers think, live, work and behave”, as politicians in the union are finding Westminster turmoil to be a useful argument in the campaign for upcoming elections... (he) dispensed with diplomatic etiquette to condemn what he called the “big shitshow” of Brexit.

UK politicians “born with silver spoons in their mouths, who went to private schools and elite universities” were responsible for the current impasse in parliament, but were unlikely to suffer the direct consequences of their actions, he said. “I don’t know if William Shakespeare could have come up with such a tragedy but who will foot the bill?” asked Roth.”

Philip Oltermann; “The “UK ‘silver spoon’ cabinet will escape Brexit fallout, says German minister Michael Roth describes Brexit as a ‘big shitshow’ run by out-of-touch politicians; 1 Apr 2019

Of course Germany’s leaders are themselves simply more streamlined, more modern... denizens of the capitalist ruling class. But it is certainly true that the posturing of the British upper class twits is astounding and disgusting. But as Lenin said, it would not be capitalism otherwise.

What is the best policy to advocate for the working class?

We believe that this policy must encompass the following points:

- 1) Both ‘Leave’ or ‘Remain’ – entails subservience of the UK state, to one of the two major imperialist blocks.
Leave – supports US imperialism. Remain – supports EU imperialism.
We argue that it is more important to disrupt the USA.
- 2) Since it is apparent that there will be a new world recession over the next 1-3 years (*see forthcoming article at ML Currents Today*), the short term living standards of the already suffering working class of the UK will likely fall. The gloomy prospects are summarized here by Michael Roberts:

“From the point of view of labour, the failure of British capitalism and the prospect of yet another slump in the next few years is much more of concern than Brexit as such. Indeed, the EU as a trading destination for UK exports is in relative decline – as it is for other EU economies. The

fastest-growing areas for trade are outside the EU, in particular, Asia. British labour is already taking a pounding. Research by the British Trades Union Congress (TUC) found that the average worker has lost £11,800 in real earnings since 2008. The UK has suffered the worst real wage slump among leading economies. Stephen Clarke, senior economic analyst at the Resolution Foundation think tank, put it: *“While wages are currently growing at their fastest rate in a decade and employment is at a record high, the sobering big picture is that inflation-adjusted pay is still almost £5,000 a year lower than when Lehman Brothers was still around.”* Michael Roberts, ‘Brexit Britain’; Rupture Magazine 4 August 2019; <https://rupturemagazine.org/2019/08/04/brexit-britain-michael-roberts/>

But this will not improve in the absence of revolutionary change. This in turn, we argue – hinges on the formation of a ML-ist party free of revisionism in the UK. This is not a task that will be achieved overnight. We agree with Roberts’ overall assessment:

“On balance, leaving the EU is a negative for British capital but it is also not good news for British labour, even if the hit is relatively small compared to the hit that working-class households suffer from regular and recurring slumps in capitalist production, especially when followed by a depressionary stagnation, as in the last ten years. The Brexit debacle will leave its scar on the living standards of the British people.” Michael Roberts, ‘Brexit Britain’; Rupture Magazine 4 August 2019; <https://rupturemagazine.org/2019/08/04/brexit-britain-michael-roberts/>

- 3) The fascist, racist rhetoric about immigration will undoubtedly continue. We should acknowledge that a part of the class was hoodwinked by the Brexiters, Farage and Johnson and all. In reality:

“Immigration into the UK from EU countries has been significant; but it also works the other way; with many Brits working and living in continental Europe. The number of EU citizens living in member states other than their own has risen from 4.6 million in 1995 to 16 million in 2015.” Michael Roberts, ‘Brexit Britain’; Rupture Magazine 4 August 2019; <https://rupturemagazine.org/2019/08/04/brexit-britain-michael-roberts/>

Again, a ML-ist party to participate in working class struggles is needed to overcome the scourge of racism in the UK.

- 4) The effects of Brexit on the unity of the UK entity itself are important. It is very likely that there will both be an impetus to Irish unity, and to Scottish nationhood. Both will weaken the Conservative party dominance. Yet, it appears that the Conservative Party is displaying a complacency about this prospect of both. Marxist-Leninists have long called for a United Ireland – and we fully support the demand for Ireland as a single nation. The question of Scotland needs to be re-discussed in a longer forum.

Our conclusions are twofold:

First it is in the interests of USA capital, the dominant imperialism, that the UK Leave the EU, especially under a difficult ‘No Deal’ scenario; We therefore argue for Remain – yet we recognize that this will likely not happen.

Second we reprise what we said in 2016: *“In the absence of a Marxist-Leninist party and a socialist revolution, the British working class will not succeed in improving its lot – whether in or outside the EU.”*

We urge Marxist-Leninists of the UK to urgently move together to unite into a single party.

At the time of writing, Johnson is exploring ways that he can ‘prorogue’ (dissolve Parliament) before 31 October 2019. That is the date Johnson has of his will, set to effect withdrawal. Proroguing Parliament will free the Brexiters from any oversight of Parliament.

Hari Kumar, August 25, 2019.