

Is Brexit Ready to Exit: Mayhem and Changing Opinions in the UK

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Global Research, July 13, 2017

Region: [Europe](#)

Theme: [Global Economy](#)

A year ago the UK voted to leave the EU after a stupid, unnecessary referendum. And although Brexiteers pronounced this an 'overwhelming' result, the true facts were that, out of the total electorate, 37 per cent voted Leave, 35 per cent voted Remain, and 28 per cent didn't bother to vote. Hardly overwhelming.

Not only that, but it has emerged that the Brexit campaign was [funded](#) by some [secretive](#) and [dodgy](#) deals. The campaigns on both sides misled the public with the result that people voted without understanding the issues. So where are we now?

The United Kingdom is in a large hole, and **Theresa May**'s Brexit team just keep on digging, regardless of what is happening to the nation, the citizens, the impoverished 'you and I' who are increasingly having to use food banks, live on the streets of rich cities, or live with their family in a bed-and-breakfast hotel room. Not that it matters to senior Tory MPs who are well supplied with private funds.

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson, has just enlarged the hole – Boris never worries about where he puts his careless feet. As part of the process of leaving the EU, the UK has to settle any financial obligations and commitments it has made with the EU. This is part of the 'divorce' settlement and might be a sizeable sum. Johnson said the EU could '[go whistle for it](#)'. A diplomat he is not.

Chief EU negotiator **Michel Barnier** carefully [explained](#) the situation. This is not a price charged by the EU for leaving the EU. It is not the EU trying to 'punish' the UK or 'demanding' an extortionate sum. But the UK must acknowledge the obligations it has signed up to. Until that is sorted talks on the future relationship with the EU cannot proceed. "I cannot hear any whistling," said Barnier, "only a clock ticking." A quiet hint, perhaps, that Johnson and his colleagues are wasting Barnier's time?

In the last few weeks major voices have been saying we made a mistake. There are calls for, at the very least, a 'soft' Brexit – the Norway option, wherein the UK would be a member of the European Economic Area with access to the Single Market.

'Hard' Brexiteers insist we must leave both the Customs Union and the Single Market, even while arrogantly claiming the UK should keep the benefits of staying in both. But leaving the Customs Union means we can never trade with *any* EU country. Do they even understand that? Michel Barnier [says not](#).

And people *are* changing their minds. As more facts come out about what we'd lose, and how far away any realistic trade deals are; as EU workers leave the UK, leaving damaging gaps in our hospitals, schools, universities and businesses; as prices rise and wages

stagnate, ever more people regret voting to leave.

It can be hard to understand what pro-Brexit people were thinking when they voted Leave. Take the Brexit-voting farmer Harry Hall, who now [complains](#) he'll go out of business because he won't be able to access the 2500 EU workers he needs to pick his fruit. And in case you're wondering, such farmers can't persuade British workers to fill the jobs - too much hard work for a nation that has got used to a soft life.

Many of those reluctant workers will have voted to leave, and if we do leave the EU they'll moan when they can't afford to buy the fruit and vegetables they won't harvest. Harry Hall says his vote was about 'sovereignty'. Like so many Leave voters, he had been led to believe by the Brexiteers that the EU had somehow stolen the UK's sovereignty.

But we have never been without our sovereignty - that has always been a massive red herring trailed by people who quite simply don't like 'Johnny Foreigner', and want something to blame for everything wrong in their lives. Even the government with its cabinet of hard Brexiteers now [admits](#) we never lost our sovereignty and have stopped claiming we're 'getting it back'. Bit late to admit that now, isn't it?

Nobody but Theresa May and her cronies have ever believed 'Brexit means Brexit'. It was nothing more than a meaningless phrase from a meaningless Prime Minister. Asked to explain it she could only, endlessly, repeat it, making it obvious that neither she nor her cabinet (or indeed her weird wardrobe) actually knew what to do.

Once Article 50 was triggered, committing the UK to leaving Europe, and May's useless team of 'negotiators' were staring at the vast problem of trying to divorce our country from the best trading partner in the world, May started to intone 'No deal is better than a bad deal' in answer to any awkward questions - well, any questions at all really. She is notable for not answering questions. Mrs May, no deal *is* a bad deal.

She is sartorially as well as politically challenged. Many of her suits look like material boxes hiding the body inside. Her skirts are tight as well as short. When she sits down she displays far too much middle-aged thigh. But the key to her state of mind are the necklaces she sports. Starting with strings of round beads like ball bearings and the occasional chain, as Brexit approached the ball bearings grew and the chains had larger links. In the closing days of her disastrous general election campaign, the ball bearings were approaching golf-ball size and the chain had VERY LARGE links.

Her **Chancellor Philip Hammond** [says](#) the 'people want a sensible Brexit'. Actually - no. By now a slowly growing majority seems to be saying there is nothing at all sensible about Brexit.

Dominic Cummings, one of those who headed the Leave campaign, [admits](#) that leaving the EU might be an error. He has even [labelled](#) those in government as 'morons'. Business leaders are [demanding](#) an indefinite (like forever?) delay in leaving the Single Market. More than 2 million UK workers are with companies that [rely](#) on EU funding, and over 40,000 Britons who live in the UK but work in Europe could [lose](#) their jobs. None of those had crossed the government's radar.

The problems associated with leaving the EU look very messy and will damage all our lives. As more people waver, those wedded to the dream of Brexit are becoming much more

angry, defensive and loud in their demand for a complete severance from the EU.

One year on from the EU referendum, I found myself standing on a bridge over a busy main road, waving EU flags. The response from the drivers below was telling. Yes, many cars ignored us but there was a surprising amount of reaction from both Remain and Leave people. Hitting the car horn was popular. Remainers gave a quick series of jolly toot-toot-toots. Leavers expressed their displeasure with prolonged angry blasts.

Remainers gave the thumbs-up to us and our flags. Families driving to and from the coast waved up at us, husband and wife in front and children's hands sticking out of the back windows. Now, a thumbs-down from the Brexiteers would be okay, but as I said, they are angry, so it was pumping fists, V-signs and the finger - not just rude but crude.

They are seeing the possibility of their dream fade. They know by now they won't get the Brexit they want. I could see that from where I stood on the bridge. The wavers and thumbs-up outnumbered the Brexiteers by quite some margin. A majority of people now back a [second referendum](#). And our future starts to look a little more positive.

And what should the Labour Party be doing? Some Remainers point accusing fingers at Labour's leader **Jeremy Corbyn**, saying he wants a 'hard Brexit'. The fact that such a thing would seriously hit the rights of the average UK worker, which surely must be against his principles, is not taken into consideration.

It is true that he appears not to think too much of the EU, but which bits of it are we talking about? He is, after all, an internationalist. Many people, including myself, look at some aspects of the EU and despair. It is in desperate need of reform, something that Labour's **Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell** has supported, [alongside](#) Greek economist **Yanis Varoufakis**.

People worry that Corbyn and his Party are doing nothing, standing aside while the Tory government stumbles towards a Brexit disaster. But really, what could or should they do at this precise point, when things are changing around them?

Of course some call for another referendum, seeing that the last one was so dishonest and disastrous. But that would still leave us with those Tory/UKIP people constantly creating divisive trouble - something not to be desired if this divided country wants to be at peace with itself.

Corbyn has been widely reported in the mainstream media as being anti-EU. He himself has been silent on the matter. Prior to the referendum he appeared to be campaigning on the basis of 'yes' to EU and 'yes' to reform of the EU, but that was barely mentioned by the media.

His silence is not appreciated by many people. Is he sitting on the fence? However, the Labour Party does have some very anti-EU members and the last thing people want is a Labour equivalent of the Tory anti-EU MPs making trouble. So, while Theresa May and her [hated](#) team make such a mess of Brexit, Labour need do nothing but sit back and watch the Tories destroy their own party.

There is a further point. Since Corbyn, totally out of the blue, became leader, many more people have become members of his Party. And millions [registered to vote](#) after May called the June general election, particularly young people. Many back Labour, but they also back

the EU, which they see as their future.

Corbyn believes utterly in democracy. He has campaigned against nuclear weapons all his life and while he personally wishes to see an end to the UK's Trident nuclear missile programme, the Party policy is to renew Trident – because *that* was what members voted for at the Labour Party Conference. So what he could do, seeing that he is the leader of a party with several hundred thousand members, is to set up an on-line poll of those members on whether they now want to leave or stay with Europe. A poll of such proportions would have far greater weight than the usual poll of 1000 or 2000 people.

If the majority of those members vote to stay with the EU, then Corbyn's democratic principles and belief in the membership will demand that Labour must lobby, agitate, work flat out to prevent Brexit – for the sake of our rights, our businesses, our jobs, our EU residents and neighbours, our environment, and all those other things that *should* make living in this country worthwhile for the 99% (the Tory Party being firmly wedded to the 1%).

If Corbyn regards the 2% majority vote for Leave as a democratic result that must be upheld, then surely even a low percentage of members in favour of remaining would demand that Labour fights in their interests.

With the government in such disarray and trying every dirty [deal](#) to stay in power, it can't be long before another election and a government headed by someone who much prefers real, non-confrontational diplomacy. And then, cap in hand and with much humility, something that has been entirely missing from the Tory Brexit team (the Tories being noted for entitlement) we may get to stay in the EU.

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