

# Radical Options for Scotland & Europe



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## EU Deal must reflect needs of working people **FOR A RADICAL SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT** **Economic powers essential**

A petition to the Scottish Parliament is being tabled by a leading Labour left-winger, Vince Mills, on behalf of Radical Options for Scotland and Europe, ROSE.

Mr Mills comments: 'for economic and social reconstruction in Scotland it is essential that the deal negotiated by the Tories is purged of its neo-liberal prohibitions on public sector intervention. Immediately amendment is need to Clause 31 of the Bill which requires the final EU Agreement scheduled for December 2020 to be 'consistent with the 2019 Political Declaration.'

### Public Ownership

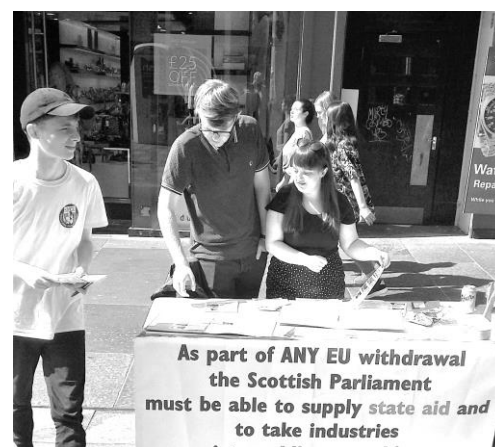
The petition asks the Scottish parliament and government to intervene to ensure that the required powers over the economy are restored as part of the EU deal – and that the ability to negotiate public ownership, state aid, public procurement and trade union rights is therefore available for delegation to the Scottish parliament.

The petition follows the terms of the motion from Clydebank TUC passed unanimously at the 2019 Scottish Trades Union Congress.

### A new unity on the Left

Mr Mills is joint secretary of ROSE and he argues that today 'the debate is no longer for or against leaving the EU. It is about how we leave – and for this we will need a new unity on the Left. While limited openings do currently exist for some state aid and for small-scale public ownership, these cannot infringe EU competition rules under the terms negotiated by Boris Johnson and the EU. Currently these rules will bind us to the terms of the final deal to be concluded in December 2020.

**'There is a window of opportunity to secure a change. On it will depend whether Scotland does at last have the capacity to use its own skills to build a new infrastructure to combat climate change, to harness green energy, to use its scientific expertise in life sciences and protect its engineering heritage – and to do in a way enhances**



**ROSE PETITIONING IN GLASGOW'S BUCHANAN STREET**

### CONFERENCE

**SATURDAY 16 NOVEMBER**

Speakers will include:

**Pauline Bryan Labour House of Lords**

**Professor Anthony Coughlan (TCD Dublin)**

**Gordon Martin RMT Scottish Regional Organiser**

**Tom Flanagan Scottish Labour Youth Communications**

**Cllr Andy Doig**

All welcome. Register 10.30 Unite Building, 145 West Regent Street, Glasgow G2

**Professor Anthony Coughlan p 2    EU in recession p 3    Labour Elliott on Workers Rights and the EU p 4**

# We say

Over the past weeks developments have taken place that did not seem likely two months ago. An EU Withdrawal Agreement has been negotiated with the EU Commission. A Bill to ratify it has passed its second reading in the House of Commons. However, thus far and no further.

The House of Commons wants more time to debate the Bill. The government doesn't. The government wants a General Election on 12 December. Opposition parties, at this stage, don't. And they have the power under the Fixed Term Parliament Act to stop it. So, as of the end of October, there appears to be a stalemate.

For the Left in Scotland action is, however, crucial and we need to keep focussed on the underlying issues of principle – not tactics.

Johnson's deal is in general somewhat worse than that negotiated by the previous prime minister. The Agreement, which mainly concerns the issue of the Irish border, limits the 'backstop' to Northern Ireland – which means that there would be no automatic extension, meantime, of EU Single Market rules to Britain.

## All the worst neo-liberal elements

Yet this is not so with the wording of the accompanying Political Declaration, which outlines the further and final agreement to be negotiated with the EU by December 2020 and which details relations with Britain. This incorporates all the worst neo-liberal elements of the existing EU treaties.

The Political Declaration indicates an intention to bind Britain strictly to the EU's competition rules for the production of all goods. EU state aid rules, outlawing any significant of government intervention to rescue major companies from closure, would continue. Also banned would be strategic state intervention to fund new areas of industrial excellence.

Equally there is a commitment to the EU's 'right to establishment', shorthand for the unfettered right of external businesses to hire labour largely unimpeded by local law and on terms set by their country of origin. It is this 'right' that has forced Norway, as a Single Market member, to re-casualise its dock labour force.

Again, it seems that 'public procurement' would also have to operate under existing EU rules – gravely limiting any possibility of using the powers of national and local government to leverage regional benefit, working conditions and trade union membership.

Could these elements be negotiated away if there was a new progressive government? Unfortunately not as easily as before. Clause 31 of the Bill now states that any amendments 'must be consistent with the Political Declaration'.

## A campaign of explanation needed

This is why Labour is right to demand more time to examine and amend the Bill now before parliament. But ultimately any progressive change will depend on a Left-led government. Johnson's government will defend the existing deal – which privileges the freedom of the City of London and the government's ability to negotiate Free Trade Agreements that would further benefit big business.

This is why we urgently need a campaign of explanation here in Scotland. If a Scottish Parliament is to have the powers it needs to regenerate our economy and to defend the rights of trade unionists, then these powers must be regained. This is the object of the petition to the Scottish Parliament currently being launched.

## An Alternative View from the Irish Republic

# The EU, Brexit and Irexit

By Anthony Coughlan

**The EU Treaties are a contract not to have socialism or anything like it. They enshrine free movement of goods, services, capital and labour and the accompanying austerity policies in a Federal-type EU Constitution that is binding supranationally on all EU States.**

This is ideal for Europe's transnational firms, for it frees them from control by the democratic State which is the only instrument that history has evolved for imposing social controls on private capital. EU law would make Jeremy Corbyn's Labour programme impossible to implement.

## Tony Benn opposed

In 1973 the Tories under Edward Heath brought Britain into the EEC. The Labour Left under Tony Benn opposed this at the time. Heath hoped either to divide France from Germany or be coopted by the Franco-Germans in a triumvirate that would run what he called "Europe" together. These hopes turned to ashes and the resultant disillusionment fuelled the rise of Tory Euro-scepticism.

However the bulk of Britain's Establishment wanted – and still wants – to remain in the EU. David Cameron's Government, backed by the City, the CBI, Goldman Sachs et al, campaigned strongly for "Remain" in the 2016 referendum. Most Tory MPs voted "Remain". It was the implicit backing of the 17 million "Leave" voters that enabled the Tory Brexiteers to take over the Tory Party. But the Tory "Remainer" MPs and the Labour Party's Blairite ones have used their voting majority in the House of Commons to try and frustrate Brexit altogether.

The "Remainer" Theresa May spent three years negotiating a Brexit in name only. May's deal would have kept the UK in the EU customs union and single market, but without any say in deciding their rules.

It was the grassroots revolt inside the Tory Party against this that made Boris Johnson prime minister. Johnson voted "Leave" and is committed to a real Brexit. He has succeeded in negotiating a divorce settlement with the EU and wants to follow that with a long-term free trade treaty that would give the UK back its sovereignty and free it from having to obey supranational EU laws - if he can only break free from the current "Remainer"- dominated House of Commons.

## The Republic's Europhile establishment

In Ireland the Republic's europhile Establishment was in consternation at the UK's Brexit referendum vote. Irish voters are less Europhile than their politicians and media, as shown by their rejection of the EU's Nice Treaty in 2001 and its Lisbon Treaty in 2008. Dublin's career federalists responded by making people vote a second time on these treaties to reverse the initial result.



**Professor Anthony Coughlan**

They hoped that Britain’s Establishment under Theresa May would do the same with Brexit. But since Boris Johnson became Prime Minister last June they are faced with the nightmare – for them – of a real Brexit.

The fundamental fear of Ireland’s Establishment is that when the UK leaves the EU public opinion in the Republic will start to shift towards Irexit (Ireland Exit). That is quite likely for there are few advantages for Ireland these days in staying in the EU. From 1973, when it first joined, up to 2014 Ireland was a net beneficiary of EU funds because of the way the EU subsidized its farmers. Irish opinion regarded the EU as the proverbial “cash cow”. The Republic has now become a net contributor to the EU and will be expected to pay more when the UK leaves. Euro-federalism has become the ideology of Ireland’s ruling elite, but there is little support for it among ordinary citizens.

Outside the EU Ireland would get its valuable fishing waters back. Its trade with the UK and America is now greater than its trade with the continental EU. If it stays in the EU when Northern Ireland leaves along with Britain, new dimensions are bound to be added to the island’s North-South internal border. If it remains an EU member its military neutrality will be threatened by Brussels plans for an EU army. The Republic’s main problem in leaving would be that it foolishly abolished the Irish pound and adopted the euro, which all new EU Members are obliged to do. But that problem will be overcome.

The EU challenges democrats in Britain, Ireland and every EU country. The classical position of the Left is that the first duty of Labour Movement activists, leftwingers and socialists is to be the foremost champions of the fullest democracy. In the EU context this means upholding the right to make one’s own laws and not have to obey supranational laws made by the Commission, Council of Ministers, Court and Parliament of the EU.

*Anthony Coughlan is director of the National Platform EU Research and Information Centre, Ireland, and is Associate Professor Emeritus in Social Policy, Trinity College Dublin*

**AFFILIATE TO ROSE**

Individual membership is £5; local organisation £10;  
Scottish level organisation £50

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Fee \_\_\_\_\_

Cheques payable to SCAEF: Jim McDaid, 41 Craufurd Ave,  
West Kilbride KA23 9PD

Current affiliates include Scottish Unite, Unison and RMT and Trades Union Councils for Glasgow, Dundee, West Lothian, Mid Lothian, Fife, North Ayrshire, Dumfries, Clydebank and Kilmarnock & Loudon. Vice Presidents include Elaine Smith MSP, former Labour MEP Alex Smith and former deputy leader of the SNP Jim Sillars.

# EU moves into recession

The EU, and particularly the Eurozone, appears to be on the edge of its first major downturn for seven years. Industrial production in the Eurozone was down 0.4 per cent in July on July 2018. In Germany it was down 0.8 per cent and on 23 October the Bundesbank announced a recession after three quarters of decline in German GDP.



Retail trade was down 0.6 per cent in the Eurozone and 2.2 per cent in Germany. Germany’s export sector has been particularly badly hit. For the first six months of 2019 there was no growth in Germany exports to the rest of the EU – although Germany’s extra-EU exports increased by 3 per cent. German car exports for July and August 2019 were 359,000 and 313,000 respectively as against a 1999-2019 monthly average of 453,000. In some other countries the situation is worse. Greece has 17 per cent unemployment and Spain 14 per cent (Sources: Eurostat and Trading Economics).

## The EU’s beef for cars treaty threatens Amazonia

A trade agreement between the EU and the Mercosur countries of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay was signed in August.

It has yet to be agreed by the EU parliament. The deal allows for the tariff free import of 99,000 tonnes of beef a year together with soya animal feed stuff. In return the Mercosur countries have agreed to open public sector procurement to EU firms, open services in IT, telephones, finance and transport and also end tariffs on cars, machinery, chemicals and pharmaceutical.

## A disaster for the environment

It is strongly supported by Germany but opposed by the climate change lobby and agricultural dependent economies such as Austria and Ireland. Nicolas Hulot, who resigned from the French government last year in protest at its failure to take action on climate change, condemned the new treaty: ‘the deal leaves no doubts about the EU’s intentions. We are letting a president, Jar Bolsonaro, destroy the Amazon rain forest without which we have no chance of winning the climate battle’. Greenpeace described the agreement as ‘a disaster for the environment on both sides of the Atlantic: ‘trading more cars for cows is never acceptable when it leads to the destruction of the Amazon’



# Remain and Reform ?

Asks Robert Laurie



**Another Europe is Possible” and “Remain and Reform” are just two of the slogans which sum up the view of those on the left who argue that Britain should ignore the results of the 2016 referendum. But how is this to be done ?**

## Treaty change impossible without major powers

Any move for fundamental Treaty change is virtually impossible unless backed by a consortium of major powers. Changes can be vetoed by a single country, such as the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg, or by the EU Commission. And today the political make-up of the European parliament shows that it is in right-wing hands.

Of the 751 seats, the largest grouping is the European People’s Party with 182 which includes the German Christian Democrats, the heirs of the Greek Colonels in New Democracy, Franco’s successors the People’s Party of Spain and the free market liberals from Hungary. Even further to the right is the 73 strong Identity and Democracy which includes open fascists. The second biggest group is the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats with 154 which includes the British Labour Party but also parties with a much stronger neo-liberal pedigree such as the German social democrats.

## The right and hard right have 450 seats out of 751

Third come the “Renew Europe” group which includes the British Liberal Democrats. The British Tories belong to the 62 strong European Conservatives and Reformists Group. The European United Left Group has just 41 members while the Greens have 74 – the biggest contingent being the German Greens who are economically neo-liberal and are strong supporters of using German armed forces abroad. This group also includes the SNP and Plaid Cymru. So, even if you counted the Greens and Social Democrats as the Left, along with the ULG, the total would come to only 299 out of 751.

## A new Centre Right EU Commission President



**The new EU president Ursula Von Der Leyden was previously German Defence Minister between 2009 and 2019 – where she supported an active deployment of German troops in Afghanistan, Syria/Iraq and Africa.**

A member of the Christian Democratic Union, she was backed by Centre Right parties in her election as EU President. Her most controversial decision so far has been to create a Vice President for ‘Protecting the European Way of Life’ whose portfolio includes immigration, asylum policy, security and education.

This decision has been criticised by the outgoing EU President Juncker. But, on 23 September President Macron of France announced support for a harder line on immigration and the ‘need to be extremely firm in applying asylum rules’.

# Guardian’s Larry Elliott pans EU on workers’ rights



**On 24 October Larry Elliott, Guardian Economics Editor, laid into those who have argued that the EU defends workers’ rights in an article entitled ‘Don’t be fooled – the EU is no defender of workers’ rights’**

He pointed out that although Britain has been an EU member since 1973, the EU never lifted a finger to oppose any of the subsequent anti-trade laws – laws that illegalised solidarity strikes and made all strikes subject to increasingly prohibitive laws. ‘Why should we expect the EU to start defending workers’ rights now?’.

## Trade union action – not EU

On the contrary, Elliott argues that our key rights in terms of Equality and Health and Safety were the result of legislation by Labour governments in the late 1960s and 1970s – and under pressure from trade union action such as that by the women workers in Ford’s Dagenham plant in 1968.

He quotes from judgement of the EU Court of Justice in the 2007 Viking case to demonstrate the inherently anti-TU bias of EU law: ‘the possibility for a company to relocate to a member state where its operating costs will be lower is pivotal to the pursuit of intra-Community trade’.

## ‘Loaded in favour of employers’

He concludes: ‘The left does not need the EU to fight its battles. What it needs is to make the case for better working conditions and win over a public sick of a labour market loaded in favour of employers’.

## ATOS boss to be EU Commissioner for the Single Market

**Thierry Breton, Chief Executive of ATOS, has been nominated by President Macron to be the Commissioner for the EU Single Market, a nomination currently reserved for France.**

ATOS is the subcontractor which was previously responsible for ‘health assessments’ for the Tory Universal Benefit.