

# Brexit and the Sovereignty Delusion

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Global Research, May 18, 2020

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*Brexit is nothing if not exclusive and elitist. The government and Conservative party are united in contempt for the sovereignty of parliament, and the sovereignty of the people. The Remain campaign may have been one of the most vibrant and hopeful and articulate movements of recent political history but it has few friends in the establishment. And should Labour succeed in vetoing and tabling amendments to an erroneous and misguided agenda devised by the acolytes of May, the only thing we can look forward to with any certainty is that the country will be more bitterly and deeply polarised than before.*

At risk of stating the obvious it is nevertheless worth reiterating that, whilst the public voted to give parliament a mandate to untether itself from the eu, nobody made an informed choice about on what terms and conditions this exit is to occur. One suspects that if all the truth were told beforehand, that the conservatives are pursuing a hard brexit that could penalise workers and small businesses, the margin of victory may have been smaller, nay, in favour of remain. Moreover, minds change. Opinion polls have repeatedly yielded results that prove people have changed their minds. People are beginning to realise a vote for brexit was not a vote against the establishment, it was only a vote of confidence in its lies.

The principle of sovereignty, in the context of parliamentary democracy, is that the government must be accountable to the representatives elected to serve the interests of the electorate. Which is precisely what is being jeopardised by the hackneyed manner in which brexit is being negotiated. As an intern for Unlock Democracy I came to understand that good policy is made when all relevant, affected parties are consulted on the content of the legislation. Bad policy is bludgeoned through before due scrutiny can be applied. Hard brexit is bad policy, and bad policy that hasn't won a mandate in Parliament, and amongst the people.

The supreme court ruling that the government must have the approval of parliament to trigger article fifty has created an apoplectic, irrational rage from the right wing populist media, when in fact this ruling is what is needed to ensure we have a brexit that ensures people's rights. Be not deceived in to thinking this is a transfer of power from the top down, the Conservatives will no doubt have a bonfire of legislation designed to protect workers, democracy and the environment, transferring more wealth and power upwards.

My tutor on constitutional politics replied to my observation that we aren't a popular democracy by pointing out that people who think we are are definitely deluded. As much could be said of the press, who stoke the delusion that we are regaining popular sovereignty with Brexit. Parties may be keen to court public opinion and focus groups when they're trying to look engaged to win a vote, but hard brexit is an exclusive, elitist brexit, which serves the establishment, and not the people.

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