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Brexit – The Cold Hard Truth Emerges

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Brexit has turned out to be some sort of quasi-crusade for the radical right and their acolytes in the form of buccaneering Brexiteers and swashbuckling 'Spartans.' The truth about Brexit is really quite simple when boiled down. After all the bubbling water has turned into steam its real ingredients are eventually revealed. And what has been revealed is nothing but a sour and bitter aftertaste once we've taken our first helping. A sort of trade deal has been thrashed out – but not with our European neighbours, but with the American's.

The withdrawal agreement with the EU agreed by Boris Johnson is worse than Theresa May's deal that was rejected three times. This is how disaster capitalism works. Grinding down the populace and then offering something to end the pain is its modus operandi. And so it is – we have a worse deal than the original bad deal.

For example – the EU customs arrangements within the new Withdrawal Agreement Bill (WAB) are allowed to be routinely updated. That bit explains (in Para 23) that "any such updates will be able to take effect without the need for further domestic legislation." Little things like that leave the door wide open to agreeing to all sorts of things later without debate.

The DUP is, despite its objection is actually incandescent with fury that Johnson's deal effectively turns Northern Ireland into an EU colony. Strange how the buccaneering Brexiters and their Spartans are completely silent about how the PM is selling Britain into vassalage now that the truth is emerging. And this vassalage is a double-edged sword which will eventually bleed Britain for years.

Leaving aside the trade deal Britain will end up with when it has finally left the biggest trading bloc in the world – it will have already done a deal with America.

Take just one example of what is going to happen in dealing with the USA. The investigation by Channel4's current affairs programme 'Dispatches' on the the Us/UK trade deal can be boiled down to this. It found that no less than six secret meetings have taken place between senior civil servants and representatives of US pharmaceutical firms where the price the NHS pays for its drugs has been discussed. US drug firms have been given direct access to British trade negotiators and senior British officials and then not declared those meetings. An agreement has been reached that drug pricing caps to American drug companies will be lifted. The fact that US drug companies will be able to increase prices and hold the health of the nation up to ransom as they do in the USA is a fact we should all be aware of. This one example should be taken note of.

If any government in Britain allows the NHS to become beholden to American drug

companies – literally anything you can think of is up for grabs. The NHS in Britain is sacrosanct and desecrating its function to the society it serves for profit is a cardinal sin. If there is one thing that riles the citizenry of Britain – its screwing with the NHS. There won't just be protests – riots will follow. If nothing else, remainers or leavers – both will fight for the NHS. And yet – the government will waive in such desecrations anyway.

How did Boros Johnson get this through? He hasn't yet. But his plan will unfold when the general election result has been announced. Let's assume Johnson wins with a workable majority. He has granted himself something known as "Henry VIII powers.". They're named after Henry VIII because he was the first person in Britain to use them. What they did was let him change laws without passing new ones. And with Brexit – Johnson has granted nineteen of these laws. Hail – Ceasar.

In essence – a Henry VIII power enables a minister to amend an Act of Parliament without needing another Act of Parliament. Normally this is done by issuing regulations. This is more than just controversial as it reduces the government's accountability to Parliament. In other words – it gives the government executive powers over the scrutiny of Parliament (representative democracy). While MPs can amend Acts, they can't do that to regulations.

One of these Henry VIII powers allows the government to change the WAB – any part of it. This has enraged the DUP as they can see what's coming in Clause 21 of the WAB. The government has given itself powers to even scrap the independent monitoring body whose only role is to protect the rights of EU citizens. Another one of those powers says – that a minister may make regulations that he or she "considers appropriate."

This overly fluffed up 102-page document published alongside the Withdrawal Agreement Bill effectively hands unprecedented powers to the government that no peace-time government has ever had in Britain. Imagine that in the hands of people like Dominic Cummings and Jacob Rees-Mogg, let alone Boris Johnson. This is what Donald Trump has wet dreams about – not being accountable to congress.

Johnson is ducking and diving and avoiding scrutiny of any type – be it in parliament, select committees or even TV broadcast interviews. He knows a set of quick-fire questions will force another pack of lies on the question of these powers.

Listen carefully to this interview with ex Bank of England boss Mervyn King. He clearly says there is a stark reality behind Brexit – that the only deal required to get freedom from the regulation of others like the EU is a hard no-deal Brexit. And so Boris Johnson is aiming to achieve that by forcing an election. Corbyn knows it's game over if he loses. He and his followers will be the victim of an ensuing purge – and workers rights will be sold down a river.

Jim Pickard at the FT has picked over the WAB and its associated documents and concludes this – "*The British government is planning to diverge from the EU on regulation and workers' rights after Brexit, despite its pledge to maintain a "level playing field" in prime minister Boris Johnson's deal.*" Pickard went further to describe this as a "*significant divergence*' where the government has no intention of sticking to its deal with the EU and that the leaked government document also said the drafting of workers' rights and environmental protection commitments "leaves room for interpretation." When Johnson announced that he is committed to "the highest possible standards" within the WAB – it's no exaggeration to

say he's lying – again.

A government spokesperson said the UK government "has no intention of lowering the standards of workers' rights or environmental protection after we leave the EU". When Jenny Chapman, Labour's shadow Brexit minister got sight of the leaked documents she said – "*These documents confirm our worst fears. Boris Johnson's Brexit is a blueprint for a deregulated economy, which will see vital rights and protections torn up*."

The sleight of hand here is not just Henry VIII powers and other trickery – under Johnson's deal, the legally binding "level playing field" provisions they keep boasting about that remain in the exit treaty are almost exclusively limited to Northern Ireland – but not to the rest of the UK.

So the cold hard truth about Brexit is this. There is only one Brexit as Mervyn King says – a hard-Brexit. And you can wrap it up in all sorts of fluffy comforting soundbites and official documentation dripping with hot wax seals and triumphant photoshoots. The government is going to the polls to extend its powers to the point of authoritarianism in order that it can bypass representative democracy and do as it pleases. Its legacy will be to force a deregulation festival upon Britain if it wins.

All those over the age of 65 who voted for Brexit should take note. You had the benefit of the decades-long fight that gave you working rights, pension rights, maternity rights and more – along with a growing post-war economy that enriched your world beyond the wildest dreams of your forebearers – and have dealt a massive body blow to your children and their children to deny them these things. It is pure fabrication to think anything else. If Brexit was so good why would the government need to pass laws to give it the power to bypass representative democracy? This is what Brexit really is – about executive power.

Exploitative corporate power kept in check by the political strength of post-war social democracy is about to be unchecked. It's a coup d'etat. The Singapore Scenario we wrote about is soon to become a truth and it is a very ugly looking truth if you're on the wrong side – and 90% of the population is on the wrong side.

And one last thought for the swashbuckling Brexiteers and their fellow travellers. When a foreign country sits down with the UK and wants to thrash out a trade deal – their first question will be – who are they dealing with. We won't even be able to answer that. Scotland has just agreed to vote with this government for a general election but only because it wants an independence referendum of its own. For the following few years, trade negotiators will not know if Scotland (40% of UK land, 60% of UK fishing, and huge new oil find) will end up being an EU member state or when. Northern Ireland is now asking itself the same question – and there are even murmurings that Wales is considering it.

It took an American comedian to tell us what's really happening in America –

> "They'll get it. They'll get it all from you, sooner or later, 'cause they own this fucking place. It's a big club, and you ain't in it. You and I are not in the big club. And by the way, it's the same big club they use to beat you over the head with all day long when they tell you what to believe."

George Carlin, bless his soul – is right on the button with these immortal words.

If Boris Johnson wins this election – it's because we've all been conned and you're about to find out what not being in his club is like.

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