

THE LEAVE CAMPAIGN'S HIDDEN AGENDA

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Foreword

Those advocating Brexit have been unable and unwilling to spell out what kind of future they see for Britain. This is partly down to a reluctance to engage with the facts about what kind of relationship we could have with the European Union (EU) post-Brexit.

But there is another reason we haven't been hearing about their vision for Britain's future, and that is that those at the heart of the Leave campaign have an agenda that they want to keep hidden from the British public.

It is an agenda that envisions a free market, low regulation, race-to-the-bottom Britain; a Britain in which companies are free to treat workers and the environment as they please, and where government retreats and leaves everything to the market. To get to this dystopia, the Outers know they must first take Britain out of the EU.

This paper sheds a light on the real agenda of those campaigning to leave. While a desire to undermine the hard-won rights of British workers is hardly unique amongst Tory MPs, for the Outers, a Britain out of Europe is a means to allow them to launch the assault on labour, social and environmental protections they have long been campaigning for.

It was the trade union movement and successive Labour governments who worked to ensure that our EU membership helps to protect us against this right wing Tory agenda.

We are proud to be a signatory to many of the EU's great achievements. Improved holiday, maternity and paternity rights for workers, limits to working hours, measures to tackle discrimination at work, protections for agency and part time workers, stronger health and safety standards, and the protection of disabled and LGBTI rights in law. And our environment continues to benefit from the fact we work through the EU to tackle climate change, and from regulations protecting everything from the air we breathe to the quality of our beaches.

So on June 23 the British people face a profound decision. We can choose to remain in the European Union and continue to benefit from a union which has not only enhanced Britain's economy and security, but also driven greater protections for workers, consumers and the environment. Or we can cut ourselves adrift and leave the decisions over Britain's future to those who have consistently opposed efforts to raise labour, social and environmental standards.

It is a choice we must make with our eyes wide open. Whichever way the British people vote, it will be our children and our grandchildren who will live with the consequences.

Tom Watson MP

Deputy Leader of the Labour Party

Background

Britain's membership of the European Union protects working people, consumers and the environment.

It was Labour that made sure that our EU membership gave British workers the rights to minimum paid leave, rights for agency workers, paid maternity and paternity leave, equal pay, anti-discrimination laws, and protection for the workforce when companies change ownership.

If we leave the EU the real agenda of the Tory Outers - Boris Johnson, Iain Duncan Smith, Michael Gove, Chris Grayling and the many others - will quickly become depressingly clear. Having dragged Britain out of Europe on the back of misinformation, scaremongering and false promises, the Tories would be free to launch the assault on labour and social protections that the Tory Party as a whole has long been lobbying for. Environmental legislation would also likely come under the knife.

The Brexiters want Britain to be a deregulated, laissez-faire economy where companies are free to treat workers and the environment as they please, and where Government retreats and leaves everything to the market.

They want a free market, low regulation, race-to-the-bottom Britain.

The following paper sets out the Tory Brexiters' real agenda when it comes to leaving the EU.

Workers' rights

Many of the Tory Brexiters – including former Conservative Party Leader Iain Duncan Smith – have long campaigned against the Social Chapter.

“Let me begin by congratulating my right hon. Friends the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary and the Chancellor on their great negotiating skills, which have produced the treaty that is now before us. Their achievements in securing our exclusion from the social chapter protocol, and in reserving Parliament’s right to decide whether to enter currency union, are greatly appreciated by hon. Members on both sides of the House.”

Iain Duncan Smith, maiden speech, 20 May 1992 <http://www.ukpol.co.uk/2016/02/04/iain-duncan-smith-1992-maiden-speech-in-the-house-of-commons/>

Having left British workers under-protected by opting out of the Social Chapter in 1992, they fought tooth and nail to try and stop Labour from signing up to it in 1997.

“The costs to industry will be severe and will be borne across the economy in lost employment, as the flexibility to employ under the previous conditions changes. The [Working Time] directive also breaks the historical way in which successive British Governments--ironically, even socialist Governments--have accepted the more laissez-faire and relaxed view on the way in which employers and employees negotiate contracts in this country.

Iain Duncan Smith, 24 July 1996

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199596/cmhansrd/vo960724/debtext/60724-11.htm>

Iain Duncan Smith even suggested the Working Time Directive would lead to “turmoil on the streets”.

“The idea that this country would put up with those problems and not have constant turmoil on the streets is unbelievable.”

Iain Duncan Smith, 24 July 1996

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199596/cmhansrd/vo960724/debtext/60724-11.htm>

And the Tories have continued to bang on about removing vital European employment protections, including the Working Time Directive, the Agency Workers Directive. Tory Minister Dominic Raab has, for example, argued that the Working Time Directive is “costly” and “anti-jobs”.

“Britain should secure a total opt-out from the Working Time Directive and scrap the UK Regulations, ensuring that this costly, anti-jobs legislation cannot cause further damage to the economy.”

Dominic Raab, ‘Escaping the Strait Jacket’, 3 November 2011

<https://www.cps.org.uk/files/reports/original/111114155257-escapingthestraitjacket.pdf>

"Next, secure an exemption from the draconian Working Time Directive that stifles flexibility – for employees and employers – costing our economy £3.6billion each year. Then, scrap the Agency Worker Regulations that will cost jobs and deny workers flexibility. Today, the race to the bottom is not malevolent businesses exploiting workers, but the sclerotic business regulation that cosssets those in work, by filling the ranks of the unemployed."

Dominic Raab, Conservative Home, 16 November 2011,

<http://www.conservativehome.com/thecolumnists/2011/11/dominic-raab-mp-small-firms-and-start-ups-are-being-stifled-by-red-tape.html>

"Following the ratification of the Lisbon treaty, we made a commitment not to let matters rest, and to negotiate the return to Britain of criminal justice powers and the opt-outs of the charter of fundamental rights and of social and employment legislation."

Priti Patel, 1 February 2011

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm110201/debtext/110201-0002.htm>

In 2012 Boris Johnson said the UK should "scrap the social chapter", while last year he said the Tory Government should "weigh in" on "all that social chapter stuff". Boris Johnson has also claimed that the weight of employment regulation is "back-breaking".

"Boil it down to the single market. Scrap the social chapter."

Boris Johnson, The Independent, 4 December 2012

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/boil-it-down-to-the-single-market-boris-johnson-calls-for-eu-referendum-8381456.html>

"I looked at the headlines this morning about the possibility of Britain dropping its insistence on changes to employment law and I thought that was very disappointing. I think we need to move forward on that. I think one of the reasons we have got low growth in Europe is not just travails of the Eurozone but also because we've got too much regulation, too much stuff coming from Brussels, too many laws that are promulgated by Brussels that make it hard for business. So I think we need to weigh in on all that stuff, all that social chapter stuff, and I have got every confidence that the Prime Minister will do that."

Boris Johnson, Telegraph, 1 September 2015

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/eureferendum/11836209/Boris-Johnson-I-could-vote-for-Britain-to-leave-the-European-Union.html>

"There is little doubt that it is that extra stuff, the stuff from Brussels, that is helping to fur the arteries to the point of sclerosis. The weight of employment regulation is now back-breaking: the collective redundancies directive, the atypical workers directive, the working time directive and a thousand more."

Boris Johnson, Daily Express, 6 June 2014

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/495970/Boris-Johnson-says-Britain-could-have-good-future-outside-European-Union>

Meanwhile Employment Minister Priti Patel has described the Agency Workers Directive – designed to protect agency workers – as a 'bureaucratic requirement'.

"The price of the food we eat is directly influenced by the barrage of regulations Europe imposes on farmers and producers in Essex and throughout Britain. The doctors who treat us in hospital are affected by the Working Time Directive. And the cost of the goods and services we buy are also high due to Europe's bureaucratic requirements, such as the Agency Workers Directive."

Priti Patel, Tiptee Tribune, January 2013, <http://www.priti4witham.com/content/article-tiptree-tribune-22>

Jacob Rees-Mogg has suggested that a future Tory Government may wish to "reduce" employment rights and that Europe should not be able to stop that.

"I don't think those laws need to be made for us by foreigners. A Labour government may wish to campaign for more employment rights; a Conservative government may wish to reduce them. But surely that is the right of voters, not the European courts... I don't support all the employment rights that come from Europe."

*Jacob Rees-Mogg, Channel 4 News, 16 February 2016
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SKAcD48B6U>*

The Brexiters consistently complain about Brussels "red tape", using spurious examples of bad bits of European legislation to play on public concerns about EU interference.

"It's become obvious that many senior people in Brussels are simply not living in the real world. They are caught up in a dogma that says the solution to every problem is more European regulation."

Chris Grayling, ITV News, 9 June 2013

<http://www.itv.com/news/update/2013-06-09/chris-grayling-criticises-mad-eu-red-tape/>

"Britain would be better off economically if it regained the power to strike its own trade deals and was freed of the crippling burden of red tape, costing many billions a year, imposed by Brussels."

David Davis, Daily Mail, 6 March 2016

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3479566/An-honest-man-knifed-No-10-Downing-Street-accused-having-hand-ousting-pro-Brexit-business-chief.html>

But the truth is that "red tape" is code for "protections for workers, consumers and the environment". They use this misleading language because they wish to keep hidden their real motives.

Yet you do not have to look too far for evidence of the "red tape" those who want to leave the EU would like to scrap.

In his 2007 policy report for the Conservative Shadow Cabinet, commissioned by David Cameron, John Redwood MP proposed a shopping list of the demands he and much of the eurosceptic Tory right would like to see. His proposals included repealing the Working Time Regulations, along with all data protection laws, which are an "expensive bureaucracy which fails to protect people's data".

"1. Working Time Regulations. These regulations make up almost one third of the additional cost imposed on British business, on the British Chamber of Commerce's (BCC) Cumulative Burdens Barometer from 1997-2006. The regulations restrict people's access to overtime, and reduce businesses' flexibility to respond to their employees' wishes, as well as their ability to manage their workload sensibly. They should be repealed.

"2. Data Protection. We recommend the repeal of this expensive bureaucracy, which fails to protect people's data."

Freeing Britain to Compete: Equipping the UK for Globalisation Submission to the Shadow Cabinet, John Redwood and Simon Wolfson, August 2007, p.58

At the same time, Redwood proposed that a vast range of regulations on the financial services industry should either be abolished or watered down, including money-laundering restrictions affecting banks and building societies.

In 2011 Tory donor Adrian Beecroft proposed a bonfire of labour regulations in a report produced for the Tory-led Government. Its recommendations included ripping up the rules on unfair dismissal to make it easier to sack "underperforming" staff, and allowing companies to opt out of pension contributions, flexible parental leave and equal pay audits.¹

The Brexiters also show contempt for health and safety protections – a catch-all term they use as shorthand for measures which have been put in place to protect working people. Measures they would like to scrap.

"I found for example in the arena of health and safety when I was Minister previously, there were changes being brought in that were going to cost British businesses money. I want us as a nation to be able to decide what Health and Safety rules we want in the UK, not to have them imposed on us."

Chris Grayling, BBC Sunday Politics, 21 February 2016

¹ Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 'Report on Employment Law', Adrian Beecroft, October 2011

The NHS

The Tory Brexiters are in denial about the contribution EU membership brings to our NHS: support for our highly skilled workforce, world class facilities, access to the latest medical research and technologies, and the economic growth that comes from being part of the single market.

Some of them have views about the NHS that are out of touch with the general public.

In 2011, a darling of the radical Tory right, Kwasi Kwarteng MP, was recorded suggesting the NHS budget may have to be cut.

"We have always been very clear that deficit reduction is absolutely important and if you are going to reduce the deficit then everything should be put on the table and considered equally... It's common knowledge that there has been a consensus on international aid . . . that we should ring-fence that, [and] on health spending. I think that consensus will be under a lot of strain given the budget realities. That will force change in the political discussion."

Kwasi Kwarteng MP, New Statesman, 3 December 2014

<http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/economy/2016/04/heres-how-londons-next-mayor-can-make-big-difference-single-parents>

In a recent interview, Dominic Raab MP drew a comparison between the private sector and the public sector, implying the junior doctors' contract dispute would not have occurred had the NHS been privatised.

"Well look, if you're outside watching this and you're in the private sector, the idea that you could be held to ransom over a contract is ridiculous."

Dominic Raab MP, BBC Daily Politics, 9 March 2016

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dBNuRmdJEUc>

Equalities

As Justice Secretary, Chris Grayling introduced a steep rise in employment tribunal fees, which impacts on every working person in the UK and is clearly unfair to the average waged worker. One consequence has been an increase in sex discrimination in the workplace, with people unwilling or unable to pay to take their case to court.

"For someone to go to a tribunal there should be some degree of hurdle for them to cross."

Chris Grayling, Yorkshire Post, 17 November 2014

<http://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/grayling-defends-tribunal-reforms-as-vital-to-business-1-6955447>

Grayling also caused deep concern in 2010 when he said B&B owners should be allowed to turn away gay couples, views for which he was awarded the 'Bigot of the Year award' at the Stonewall Awards².

"I think we need to allow people to have their own consciences. I personally always took the view that, if you look at the case of should a Christian hotel owner have the right to exclude a gay couple from a hotel, I took the view that if it's a question of somebody who's doing a B&B in their own home, that individual should have the right to decide who does and who doesn't come into their own home."

Chris Grayling, The Guardian, 3 April 2010

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/apr/03/tory-tape-gays-bed-breakfast>

²Pink News, 5 November, 2010, <http://www.pinknews.co.uk/2010/11/05/tory-mp-chris-grayling-named-stonewall-bigot-of-the-year/>

The environment

A number of those campaigning for Brexit have a track record of failing to stand up for the environment, and of attacking Europe over the issue.

"I leave the post [of Environment Secretary] with great misgivings about the power and irresponsibility of – to coin a phrase – the Green Blob. By this I mean the mutually supportive network of environmental pressure groups, renewable energy companies and some public officials who keep each other well supplied with lavish funds, scare stories and green tape. The Green Blob sprouts especially vigorously in Brussels."

Owen Patterson, The Telegraph, 20 July 2014

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/10978678/Owen-Paterson-Im-proud-of-standing-up-to-the-green-lobby.html>

Some are even sceptical as to whether climate change is man-made.

"We should just accept that the climate has been changing for centuries."

Owen Patterson, The Guardian, 10 September 2014

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/sep/10/climate-scepticism-still-rife-among-tory-mps-poll>

"Al Gore and The BBC climate change propaganda machine tell us the science of climate change is settled – all sensible scientists believe in global warming, and think the major cause is human produced CO₂. This reveals an ignorance of the way science works. Science is never settled."

John Redwood, 10 April 2008

<http://johnredwoodsdiary.com/2008/04/10/uk-human-co2-output-represents-0.0025-of-greenhouse-gases/>

When pressed to say whether he believed climate change was one of the most serious issues facing mankind, Chris Grayling repeatedly refused to do so, preferring simply to say: "There's no doubt that climate change is an issue around the world."³

David Davis has argued against Britain's target, of reducing carbon emissions by 80 per cent by 2050, which is secured in law under the Climate Change Act.

"If the Government wants to help manufacturers it should scrap Britain's unilateral commitment to cut carbon emissions by 80% by 2050. There is no point imposing climate targets which send energy prices skywards unless the rest of the world follows suit... we should not sacrifice Britain's economic recovery on the altar of climate change."

David Davis, Conservative Home, 29 November 2011

<http://www.conservativehome.com/platform/2011/11/david-davis-mp-the-government-must-go-for-growth-if-it-doesnt-take-bold-action-the-economy-will-foun.html>

And this isn't just a few people on the fringe of the Tory Party. In October 2015 the European Parliament voted to set their common position ahead of the December climate change conference in Paris. The Tory MEPs proposed an amendment, tabled

³ BBC Daily Politics, 26 February 2014

by Tory Ian Duncan MEP, that removed calls for legally binding energy efficiency targets and reduced the proposal for a renewables target from 30 per cent to 27 per cent.

“the European Council conclusions of 23 and 24 October which unanimously agreed a domestic GHG reduction target for 2030 of at least 40%, an EU renewables target of 27% and a non-binding energy efficiency target; notes that the European Council ruled out any binding national sub-targets in order to provide the flexibility for Member States, in accordance with the EU Treaties, to determine their own cost-effective low-carbon energy mix, including renewables, energy efficiency and other low-carbon technologies.”

European Parliament, 7 October 2015,

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=AMD&format=PDF&reference=A8-0275/2015&secondRef=001-003&language=EN>

The amendment was voted down, but all 19 Tory MEPs voted for it.

UKIP & the Brexiters: A shared agenda for NHS privatisation

Many of the Tory Brexiters have made no secret of the fact they want to work more closely with UKIP. Those Tory MPs who called for a pact with UKIP at the General Election are now campaigning to leave the European Union.

"I'd like to see us work better together."

Adam Afriyie, *Daily Mirror*, 14 October 2014, <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/tories-tatters-pm-faces-calls-4438341>

"There's a compelling logic to not dividing the small-c conservative vote."

Jacob Rees-Mogg, *Daily Mirror*, 14 October 2014, <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/tories-tatters-pm-faces-calls-4438341>

"I think it's fair to say I agree with Nigel Farage and UKIP on virtually everything."

Phillip Davies, *BBC Sunday Politics*, 19 October 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b04l2vvh/sunday-politics-yorkshire-and-lincolnshire-19102014>

"Why is it not possible for us to stand as Conservative and UKIP candidates as for instance Labour stands as Labour and Co-operative candidates?"

Peter Bone, *Radio Five Live*, 23 May, 2014

"Clearly, if by some miracle the two parties were able to agree at the very highest level a common programme and the right in British politics, were it to be united, that would be a beneficial thing."

David Nuttall, *BBC One: Vote 2014*, 23 May, 2014

"Sir Edward, who was knighted last year, also called for an "informal" Tory pact with UKIP"

Edward Leigh, *Pink News*, 10 June 2014, <http://www.pinknews.co.uk/2014/06/10/tory-mp-gay-marriage-was-a-mistake-labour-would-have-done-it-anyway/>

The truth is that the two groups are ideologically close to one another.

Britain out of Europe, and with a Eurosceptic Tory Government, could open the way for more Tory/UKIP co-operation. That could put vital services like the NHS at risk.

In government the Tories have already pursued policies which put profit before patient care.

The Tory Health and Social Care Act opened up the service to the full force of competition law. It permitted hospitals to drastically increase their private patient income, up to half of their total income, and removed proper democratic accountability for service provision. Private providers have won a third of NHS contracts to provide clinical services since the reforms.

This agenda of privatisation is shared by UKIP.

Nigel Farage, for example, has said the NHS could be replaced by a private health insurance system.

“Nigel Farage has suggested that the NHS might have to be replaced by a system of private health insurance within 10 years.”

The Independent, 20 January 2015, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/nigel-farage-nhs-might-have-to-be-replaced-by-private-health-insurance-9988904.html>

Tory-UKIP switcher Douglas Carswell MP has called for an “open market” in healthcare contracts.

“Open market procurement: when tax payer money is spent on buying goods and services, it ought to go to the firm that provides the best value. For all the lip service paid to open tender, in reality the rules often act as a barrier, keeping out competition.

“Rather than centralise the procurement system, which will exacerbate these problems in pursuit of illusory gains from economies of scale, government needs to go for genuine open market rules for everything from health contracts to IT and defence.”

Douglas Carswell, 9 January 2012, <http://www.talkcarswell.com/home/let-battle-against-crony-capitalism-commence/2216+&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=uk>

UKIP’s Deputy Leader has congratulated the Government on “bringing a whiff of privatisation into the beleaguered National Health Service” and warned that “the very existence of the NHS stifles competition”.⁴

The risks are clear: having dragged Britain out of Europe on the back of misinformation, scaremongering and false promises, the Tory right would be in the ascendancy in the Conservative Party and would be free to launch an assault on the labour, social and environmental protections they have long been campaigning for.

⁴ Paul Nuttall UKIP Deputy Leader, July 14, 2010, <http://www.paulnuttallmep.com/?p=712> [now deleted]

