



Who is next in line to be DUPed? *If the Deal passes, someone has been lied to*

By Martin Smith

Northern Ireland's place in the union is hanging off the edge of a cliff and the DUP has been thrown under the bus. The Prime Minister lied to them as he has done to so many others, abandoning his [previous commitment](#) to avoiding a hard border between Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

To get the Deal over the line without the DUP's 10 votes, the PM is displaying his usual duplicitousness in telling different groups of MPs different things about exactly what happens down the track. For the truth is, there is no majority for any individual version of Brexit in Parliament, just as there isn't in the country: different groups aiming to deliver Brexit in Parliament – just like different groups in the country who voted for it – have irreconcilable differences. The only way he can get a majority in Parliament for his Deal is to say different things to different people.

And wouldn't you know it, that's exactly what he has been doing.

He has [told](#) Conservative MPs that they can use the deal to take back control of regulations while [telling](#) Labour MPs that workers' rights, consumer protections, and environmental protection are guaranteed. He has [told](#) the ERG that this deal is a pathway to No Deal if a future trade agreement has not been reached – and few ever are in 14 months – by the end of the transition period at the end of 2020 while [telling](#) ex-Tory rebels and [potential Labour rebels](#) that it avoids No Deal.

And of course, the Prime Minister has form. The fact that the only way to “deliver the referendum” is to break up the UK stems from his campaign's ability to pull the wool over everyone's eyes in 2016: the [claim](#) that we could leave the internal market to take back control of regulations while replicating the same market access that we have now; the claim that we could [leave](#) the internal market and customs union [with no change](#) to Northern Ireland's borders.

The mendacity of the latter claim is now laid bare and out in the open for all to see as the DUP – [like](#) the [rest](#) of the [unionist community](#) in Northern Ireland – exclaims “betrayal”. The difference with whoever is being DUPed now is that they may not discover it until the chickens come home to roost. Far from getting Brexit done, the MayMinusMinus Deal simply postpones the biggest fights.

The fight in Parliament over No Deal could dominate the agenda in autumn 2020 as it has done for months since summer 2019. Whether it is prevented or not – and who knows what parliament will look like by then – the public will angrily turn on the MPs who assured them that Brexit was “done”.

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Repealing of EU legislation of workers' rights will start a massive fight in Parliament over whether Brexit was supposed to mean deviating from EU standards and will cause Labour Leave voters and the Labour MPs representing them who voted for the deal to feel betrayed. Alternatively, it won't happen and swathes of the Conservative Party will feel that Brexit has been pointless. It is worth noting that workers' rights are one of the few areas of EU regulation likely to be addressable: business – which is supposed to benefit from deregulation - will [lobby for alignment on product standards](#) in order to maintain market access.

The question for MPs is how many more of Boris Johnson's promises they want to sign up to.

The question if the Deal passes is simply this: which group is the DUPed now?

Martin Smith is a member of the CGE's executive committee. He works as a strategic consultant for Fortune 500 and Private Equity owned firms and was previously a lobbyist in Westminster and Brussels for UK small business organisations as well as a researcher in a think tank.

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