



# PEOPLE BEFORE PROFIT

FIGHTING FOR WORKERS & ECO-SOCIALISM

## Brexit Policy

Jan 2022 Revision

PEOPLE BEFORE PROFIT

## Summary

- Reject the DUP moves to use a debate over the Irish Protocol for sectarian electioneering.
- Reject all moves to re-create a hard border, customs posts or immigration checks on the island of Ireland.
- Reject moves to weaken the economic linkages between North and South.
- Oppose neoliberal reforms imposed by London or Brussels.
- Oppose imperialism imposed by London or Brussels.
- Oppose PESCO – the move towards a European Army.
- Ensure that working people do not pay the economic costs of Brexit

## Brexit And Partition

The Democratic Unionist Party aligned itself with Boris Johnson and the Tory Party to try to push through Brexit. They did so with total disregard for the democratically expressed wishes of people in the North.

Faced with a choice of getting a deal with Europe which appeared to benefit the English economy, Johnson dropped his promises to the DUP and accepted an economic border on the Irish sea.

Despite their current protestations, the DUP initially implemented the Irish protocol.

However, as their electoral base began to shrink, they are now trying to pose as opponents on the Irish protocol, seeking to wrap themselves in the Union Jack.

People Before Profit reject this rhetoric entirely. The DUP is a right-wing party that wants to divide workers in order to get away with policies that defend privilege and wealth.

In the South, the government claim that they want to separate the economic impact of Brexit from the 'constitutional question'. We also reject this argument.

The border between the North and South of Ireland is not akin to that between Italy and Switzerland, for example. The Irish border was imposed on the majority of the Irish people by a counter-revolution, instigated by the British Empire. It was designed to produce a 'carnival of reaction' and to blunt the impact of the Irish revolution. Its effect was to imprison Northern nationalists in an oppressive state and to allow the Unionist elite to suppress the class instinct of Protestant workers by pointing to an 'internal enemy'. Partition also helped to produce a mirror image state in the South where the Catholic Church and its charity network became a replacement for social rights.

The debate on Brexit has thrown a sharp light on the absurdity of partition. Not only are we for greater economic integration between North and South- we want to remove the border entirely.

Like James Connolly, therefore, we reject any move to produce a hard border – not just because of the massive inconvenience it would cause, but because it would strengthen a reactionary settlement of Ireland’s national question – at the very time when that issue is re-emerging.

Specifically, this means that the left should:

- Reject any attempt to establish customs posts or immigration checks on the island of Ireland
- Reject moves to weaken the economic linkages between North and South.

This position puts us into outright opposition to the Democratic Unionist Party. Far from representing the interests of the ‘Unionist community’ the right-wing DUP see Brexit as an opportunity to strengthen the link between the North and the UK including the border.

## Neither London nor Brussels

What matters is the lives of working people in Ireland and Europe. Neither London nor Brussels share this objective, as they both want to push neoliberalism in their respective areas and to make working people pay the costs.

Neither should be seen as the partners of Irish workers.

Austerity created bitterness among the British working population. The Tories and their media friends stepped up their anti-immigrant and racist rhetoric to re-connect with that bitterness. Corbyn’s critical view of the EU was rarely heard and Brexit took on a right-wing and xenophobic form.

But political developments are only one reflection of a deeper fragmentation among the allies of US imperialism.

Today an intense rivalry has been set off between the leaders of British capitalism and those of Franco-German capitalism who dominate the EU.

The Tories believe they can power forward British capitalism by turning it, into what Corbyn has described, as a bargain basement economy’ built on low wages and more de-regulation. They fantasise about making Britain ‘great again’ and hope they can use this rhetoric to retain electoral support.

The EU leaders have a different imperial agenda – but, despite the use of a liberal progressive rhetoric – an equally nasty one.

They want to use the departure of Britain to strengthen the EU and turn it into a more centralised, ‘federal’ system where decision making is increasingly sealed off from popular pressure. The first step in this process was to discipline Greece and other peripheral nations for stepping out of line. It was the EU that pushed massive austerity onto working people and reinforced neoliberalism by creating the fiscal compact and closer banking and capital markets. The next step is the creation of an EU army, through the PESCO project.

## Workers Shouldn't Pay the Costs

The British elite wants to make workers in Northern Ireland and Britain pay for the cost of a break with the EU by creating a low wage, low regulation economy.

But the Southern elite also wants to keep down wage increases and to offer more subsidies to their business friends. They are moving towards signing up for the PESCO programme which will commit states to spend 2% of their GDP on the military. This means an increase from the current level of €900 million to €4.5 billion.

By contrast, they are using Brexit to bring in more tax dodges for their friends in business.

People Before Profit insists that working people must not bear the cost of any dislocation that occurs because of Brexit.

- We support an increase in wages to match the rate of the Irish economy and the immediate removal of FEMPI legislation.
- We want increased investment in public enterprises to create jobs – particularly jobs that help mitigate against climate change, such as those in insulating buildings or developing public transport.

At the same time, we would redistribute wealth and income in the country away from the rich, towards the majority. This is the best insurance we now have against the bigger powers using Brexit for their own interests. Below we summarise our main ideas:

- A major redistribution of wealth through new taxes on the rich to provide resources for state-led development.
- We need to create jobs by a major programme of house building and insulation. A state construction company can do this and avoid the blackmail from private developers who are holding back on building until prices rise even more.
- We need a switch to manufacturing in such areas as generic pharmaceuticals and products for a green economy.
- We need public control of natural resources used to diversify towards a green economy that is not reliant on fossil fuels.
- We need to break the grip that the beef barons have over Irish agriculture and re-orientate to more tillage and locally produced food.

BLACK  
LIVES  
MATTER

