



Take control

**Red lines for Brexit –
and an independent Britain**



Communist Party of Britain Marxist-Leninist

Take control

Take up the fight for an independent Britain. Seize the opportunities. Lay down the battle lines.

The referendum result, achieved despite the desperate urgings of the Conservatives, Labour, Lib Dems, the SNP and other parties, was clear. Now sections of the establishment are regrouping, manoeuvring to thwart a full Brexit by preventing a clean departure.

“Cliff-edge” scenarios are the latest instalment of Project Fear, aimed at derailing the referendum result. But what’s to be afraid about? If the EU continues to refuse real negotiations, we should be prepared to walk away. Indeed, Whitehall says it is planning for this eventuality.

We do not need to agree transitional arrangements that prolong the EU’s power over us. We must leave in March 2019 when the notice we gave under Article 50 runs out.

We do not need to pay huge sums of money to the EU. Many countries, including the USA, trade with countries in the EU without paying anything. Nor do we need to limit our independence by allowing the continued sway of the EU’s Court of Justice.

The fact is that most MPs, and most peers too, do not want a practical solution that means British withdrawal. So our campaign to leave the EU is entering a new phase.

The people must speak out. We must unite to make government and Westminster too afraid to construct deceitful half-way houses with the EU that mean no real

departure. Campaigning bodies left dormant after the referendum will have to be reactivated, so that they reconnect with the people to concentrate their influence on the exit process.

The negotiations must be guided by clear red lines:

- Control over our economy.
- Control over our borders and migration.
- Freedom to trade anywhere in the world.
- Sovereignty over our land and our seas.
- Control over our laws. No jurisdiction by foreign courts.
- Control in the workplace. An end to the EU’s anti-union laws.

That means no to the single market, no to the customs union, no to the European Court of Justice. It means real independence. And no to transition deals that would sew us into the EU straitjacket for years to come.

Leaving the EU means we cut ties with it. We are not in a “divorce”. We don’t have to pay the EU maintenance and we don’t have to give it visiting rights. We will be leaving. It’s that simple.

We are a country rich in skill, in science and technology, one of the largest economies in the world. Independence will liberate us from the diktats, doom and decline of the EU. We have a world to win. •

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Cover image shows Brexit flotilla, June 2016: photo Workers

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Control over the economy

Leaving the EU will only mean an independent Britain if we make it so.

Above all, we need control over our economy. This goes much further than the freedom to trade: it means the freedom to plan as well, to support vital industries, to ensure that we have the skills we need. In a nutshell, the freedom to provide what the people require.

That means the maximum self-reliance. It means putting an end to the idea that we don't have to train skilled workers because we can just import them.

So we must take charge of our independence, take control. And we should start with industry, the basis of independence.

We need to support strategic industries. We should direct public procurement by hospitals, schools, defence and prisons, towards British producers. We need an industry culture, an invention culture, a technical culture.

There are good signs. Inventor James Dyson has established a new Institute of Engineering and Technology. In June

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See also: "Independence means taking control", *Workers*, July/August 2017.

2017 Coventry University opened a £7 million National Transport Design Centre. An Advanced Manufacturing Technology Centre is to be set up in the West Midlands equipped with world-class digitally controlled machine tools.

These excellent initiatives should be replicated in all our major cities if we are to have the advanced manufacturing sector that an independent Britain needs.

Privatisation is the opposite of control, of self-reliance. Foreign multinationals own two-thirds of Britain's manufacturing companies with more than 500 workers, most of the rail franchises, utilities, energy companies, ports and airports, many football clubs and huge numbers of houses and flats: we are not in control.

Control means planning. But relying on market forces is the opposite of planning. Planning is indispensable for reliable cheap energy, for shipyards and steelworks, for an integrated transport system, for sound and safe infrastructure, for high-quality secular education, and for a National Health Service.

A country that cannot sign a trade deal can never be independent. Yet that is what membership of the EU and its

single market has meant for Britain since it joined what was then the European Economic Community in the early 1970s. Britain still has a seat at the World Trade Organization. It's time to sit in it again.

Membership of the single market is the opposite of taking control. The EU's single market determines not only what can be sold, but also what can be produced. So when the EU banned the sale of vacuum cleaners with motors above 1,600 watts in 2014, it also outlawed the manufacture of those cleaners, even for export.

In the single market, there is no room for national standards and preferences. And because it includes the free movement of capital, it can reach far into national life. So Greece has been forced to abandon its practice of ensuring that chemist shops are owned by qualified pharmacists – because that's a restriction on the free movement of companies and capital.

The siren voices in parliament and elsewhere that say we must have "access" to the EU's single market at any cost must be resisted – not least within the Labour Party, many of whose manifesto promises cannot be fulfilled inside the EU. •



Control over our borders

Who should decide who is allowed to live in Britain? The question was central to our decision to leave the EU in June 2016. The British people clearly rejected having no say over the future of our country and especially no control over who comes and who stays.

Freedom of the citizens of member states to live and chase work (or be shifted from country to country) anywhere within the EU is central to EU law, so regaining control means leaving.

In June 2017 the government published a policy paper saying that free movement will end by March 2019 when we leave, and that the jurisdiction of the EU's Court of Justice over non-British citizens living here will cease.

Latest official estimates suggest there are around 3.3 million citizens of other EU states in Britain at present, a rise of 126,000 since June 2016. Of these, 2.37 million are working,

The policy paper outlines the future status of EU citizens living here at present and how they can apply for

“settled status” allowing them to stay after Brexit by meeting certain criteria.

So far, so good. It's reasonable to clarify for those who have lived here continuously for at least five years how they can become part of an independent Britain, as long as they stay.

But there have been reports that after Brexit citizens of EU states can continue freely to come and live here and apply for work – employers wanting to hire them will have to apply for permits.

Worryingly, the system would be policed by spot checks as “at present”. And we all know how well that works – not really at all.

We need clarity. The government should start being straight with the British people. We have demanded control over our borders and ordered government to provide this.

Why should we worry about Britons living abroad? If you choose to live in another country you should be subject to the laws of that country, and be aware that those laws can change. It's part of the risk you take.

After a period which enables eligible EU citizens to achieve “settled status” here, there should be a clear cut-off point

after which would-be migrants from the EU should be subject to the same laws as non-EU people, and be allowed to work on the basis of strict criteria related to Britain's needs.

Control of immigration doesn't mean putting up a wall around Britain, but is about our control.

To achieve that control, we need a system of enforcement, properly staffed and funded and thorough in approach. Nothing like the present patchy, leaky and inefficient way that checks are carried out on non-EU “black economy” workers.

Free movement feeds a system which suits cheapskate employers and undermines British workers with imported cheap labour – it must end. It defies the laws of economic gravity to think that you can massively expand the supply of labour without lowering its price.

The possibilities for our country are bright when we leave. We can develop our own economy independent from the EU, but we have to educate and train our own population to provide what we need. Government must now demonstrate that it is fully committed to this future. ●

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See also “No borders, no control”, *Workers*, March/April 2016 (cpbml.org.uk/control).



Brexit flotilla, London, June 2016. Photo Workers

Control over our food

With Brexit, Britain has the opportunity to find new solutions to the problem that every human society, at whatever stage of development, has to face: how to feed the people.

Inside the EU we have seen farmers paid to grow nothing on their land under the set-aside rules, fishermen forced to throw fish back into the sea, or to stand by as others plundered our natural resources, with our fishing ports becoming as damaged as mining towns.

We have seen the payment of subsidies to other European countries whose agricultural economies were still peasant-based. We have witnessed butter mountains and wine lakes across the EU.

More recently, the “three crop rule”, introduced by the EU in 2015, and described by the National Farmers’ Union as “utter madness”, requires some farmers with more than 30 hectares of arable land to grow three different crops. Yet it was British farmers who pioneered crop-rotation systems, and sustainable

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See also “Agriculture and fisheries can look to the future”, *Workers*, January/February 2017; “Take control, say skippers”, *Workers* May/June 2017.

continuous cropping systems!

Now, with an end to EU membership in sight, we can start to put things right.

We have the opportunity – and the responsibility – to take stock of what we need. Where does our food come from? How do we want to produce it? And what should be the balance between food we produce ourselves and food we import from elsewhere?

Some employers in agriculture and horticulture – mainly the large ones – still back the EU and the “right to free movement”. It allows them to employ itinerant, seasonal workers on poverty wages, herded into filthy dormitories perpetuating the gangmaster system.

Now is the time, the opportunity to build more proper jobs in agriculture, with guaranteed year-round employment, and career structures. The intelligence of a modern nation can find a solution to geographical and seasonal fluctuations in the need for labour.

We are an island nation, sustained by fish in the seas around us since the earliest times as discovered in archaeological sites around our coasts. Traditionally we have always had fishermen. But over the past 40 years we

have come perilously close to losing them, along with the fish they catch, as a direct result of our membership of the EU and the enforcement of its Common Fisheries Policy.

On leaving the EU we can assert our legal right to sovereignty over an exclusive economic zone 200 miles out from our coast (or to a midway point). But the EU has not given up hope of retaining its control over the waters around Britain.

A leaked memo cited in the *Guardian* newspaper in February 2017 shows that the European Parliament wants Britain’s “exit agreement” to stipulate that there will be “no increase to the UK’s share of fishing opportunities for jointly fished stocks [maintaining the existing quota distribution in UK and EU waters]”.

And a House of Lords report in December 2016 said that the UK may have to continue to allow EU boats to fish in our waters in return for a “deal” on access to EU markets. No wonder fishing communities around Britain, used as a bargaining chip in the entry negotiations in 1973, are campaigning fiercely for guarantees that their industry will not lose out again after Brexit. ●



Control over our laws

When we joined the EU our parliament became subject to foreign laws for the first time in over 400 years. The effect has been felt in all aspects of life – from diminishing the rights of trade unions (see opposite) to setting the rights in the UK of citizens of other countries above those of our own people.

Not to mention the EU's diktats over what shapes of fruit can be sold, and the jailing of grocers who fought to be able to sell their produce in pounds and ounces. The so-called "Metric Martyrs" eventually won their battle, forcing the EU to retreat.

But the diktats continue. Take the recent opinion of the EU's Court of Justice's advocate general on the case involving the Turkish husband of a Spanish-born woman who took British nationality in 2010.

The British courts said that as a British national – along with more than 60 million Britons – she had no automatic right to bring her family into the UK. Astonishingly, the advocate

general said EU nationals do have an automatic right to bring their families with them to the UK.

And what is more, the EU is claiming to be the judge of what rights are held by UK citizens with dual nationality.

The case highlights the fact that maintaining the rights of EU citizens in the UK after Brexit cannot be a question of simply saying that they will continue, as some are arguing.

The EU now says its law is superior to our law. Or more specifically, the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union is superior to British law.

EU nationals living in Britain already have rights not available to UK citizens. And of course EU nationals living in Britain also have rights (these come from the EU, not from Scotland) to free tuition in Scottish universities, while English and Welsh students have to pay.

If this situation is maintained after Brexit, Britain will find that the rights of EU citizens (and of citizens with dual UK/EU nationality) will be determined and policed not by Britain but by the European Union. And that's a long way from the government's position that after Brexit the rulings of the Court of Justice

will cease to apply here.

The government's White Paper on leaving the EU starts with two priorities: to provide "certainty and clarity" and to "take control of our own statute book and bring an end to the jurisdiction of the Court of Justice of the European Union in the UK". We should stick with that.

The EU is clear about what it wants. Take a look at its Brexit negotiating guidelines, published in March 2017.

In a key section on governance the EU says that the withdrawal agreement should cover disputes in relation to the continued application of EU law, citizens' rights, and issues like the financial settlement.

And it goes further. In these matters, says the EU, "the jurisdiction of the Court of Justice of the European Union (and the supervisory role of the Commission) should be maintained."

So the EU will only agree to guarantee existing British and EU citizens' rights if we continue to accept the direct legal authority of the European Court of Justice and the European Commission. The EU is reserving the right to do what it wants to us for ever and ever. That cannot happen. •

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See also "Why it has to be one law for all", *Workers*, July/August 2017"; Migration and control", *Workers*, September/October 2017.



TUC rally for union rights at Central Hall, London, 2015. Photo Workers

Control in the workplace

The TUC and many union leaders are campaigning for Britain to stay in the single market for as long as possible, under a transitional agreement, to “keep workers’ rights safe”. And they see the EU’s Court of Justice as the guardian of workers’ rights.

It is anything but. Successive rulings have made it perfectly clear that the rights to free movement – of goods, labour, services and capital – come first.

Court of Justice Advocate General Poiares Maduro put it baldly in 2007: “the possibility for a company to relocate to a Member State where its operating costs will be lower is pivotal to the pursuit of effective intra Community trade”. There’s the EU in a nutshell: companies have a fundamental right to switch countries in search of lower and lower labour costs.

The EU’s fundamental rights are all about the market. In effect, it acts as a superstate whose constitution embodies the freedom of capital and capitalists in a way unheard of in any other country.

Workers pay the price. They must

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See also “Why trade unionists should vote to leave”, *Workers*, March/April 2016 (cpbml.org.uk/tuleave).

allow outsourcing and privatisation of national industries and services. They cannot strike to stop work being outsourced to a cheaper country. And they are supposed to stand by while the free movement of labour erodes pay.

For too long many unions and many of their members have forgotten the truth that you only get what you fight for. Take equal pay, still far off almost 50 years after the UK Equal Pay Act of 1970

What, then, does the EU offer workers in the way of rights? Its defenders talk admiringly about working hours legislation – but what’s to admire? The number of hours people are working is climbing steadily. So too is the amount of unpaid overtime. In almost every workplace we have lost control of the hours that we work.

The EU’s Working Time Directive also mandates a minimum 20 days’ holiday – *including* public holidays. Our law says 20 days *excluding* public holidays, making our minimum 28 days.

So any government could cut statutory holidays by eight days without contravening any EU law. Not that you would hear this from the TUC.

Maternity leave is another area where

alarmists have been trying to sow suspicion. Yet our law is up to 52 weeks of maternity leave, with Statutory Maternity Pay for up to 39 weeks. The EU mandates only pay and leave of up to 14 weeks.

And then there is health and safety. The TUC says, “It should be written into the [Brexit] deal that the UK and EU will meet the same standards, for both existing rights and future improvements.”

That would leave Britain unable to improve health and safety law unless the EU agreed to do the same. It would give Brussels sovereignty over workplace safety legislation in Britain – which is no kind of Brexit at all.

When the government banned unions at GCHQ in 1992, nothing in EU law stopped it doing so. And nothing in EU law stopped the progress of the, draconian Trade Union Act 2016.

In Greece, the EU intervened against collective bargaining, reduced the role of unions in setting the minimum wage, and forced a reduction in the minimum wage itself. Call that protection?

No wonder the leading labour lawyer John Hendy says, “The EU has become a disaster for the collective rights of workers and their unions.” ●



Plan for freedom

When the British people voted to leave the EU, it was nothing less than a declaration of independence. It must be clear what this means: in March 2019, two years after invoking Article 50, Britain will be out of the EU.

We should be confident. Once outside the EU, we can chart our own future. Free of the EU, Britain can support crucial industries and invest in creating new ones. The focus will have to be on our economy, the foundation of social life.

Many organisations in Britain are now putting forward their own ideas of how we can benefit from independence.

The General Medical Council, which regulates doctors in Britain, wants to rectify a dangerous situation whereby medical graduates from Europe have their qualifications recognised here without any test of their competence.

Companies are planning for independence, too. Billionaire inventor James Dyson has set up a new Institute of Engineering and Technology, part of the University of Warwick, to ensure Britain

has the skills to compete globally.

Rail unions and others want to restore the ability to take privatised industries back into public ownership.

Maritime officers' union Nautilus International, though it campaigned for Remain, now says the referendum decision "provides a unique opportunity to set ambitious goals for the future of the country's maritime industries".

Fishermen have been notably active. Fishing for Leave, for example, drew up plans to take back our waters, pushing politicians to adopt them.

Others must do likewise. Britain has all the potential to make a success of independence – but we must all work at it.

The alternative to leaving the EU is clear to all, or should be. Things would not stay as they are. That's because the EU's leaders have ambitious plans to consolidate a superstate that would strip members of any traces of independence.

In the referendum campaign, the EU and its proposals for integration of defence and a European army had been controversial. Some even denied the proposals existed. After the referendum, the EU's plans advanced rapidly.

In September 2017 Germany's

Defence Minister declared it was time to move forward to a European Defence Union, a "Schengen of defence", as he called it. The Italian defence and foreign ministers called for a joint permanent military force.

EU Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker reaffirmed the vision of the European Defence Union in his State of the Union address in September 2017.

He also called for a European Minister of Economy and Finance to take charge of nations' budgeting, as well as ending national vetoes on foreign policy, corporate taxation and VAT.

On his list are measures to force countries like Sweden and Poland to sign up to the euro. Our escape from the EU is not a moment too soon: the EU also has its eyes on our NHS, which so far has been outside its control.

That would have been our future if we hadn't voted to leave – ever-shrinking sovereignty over all that's vital to an independent country. That can never be.

The EU has so far shown itself unwilling to negotiate, despite Article 50, which requires it to do so. More fool Brussels. Britain will leave, and the EU's ultimatums will vanish into thin air. ●

Read more

See Juncker's State of the Union speech in full at http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-17-3165_en.htm