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## ***Pro-European Union demonstration mobilises hundreds of thousands in London***

Hundreds of thousands demonstrated in London Saturday in a huge outpouring of concern at the economic and social impact of Brexit, with the UK set to leave the European Union (EU) on October 31. The People's Vote and the *Independent* newspaper's "Final Say" campaign claimed up to one million people participated.

Many expressed fears over their jobs, livelihoods, ability to travel and the anti-immigration measures being put in place by Boris Johnson's government in preparation to leave the EU. Despite such legitimate sentiment, the march reflected dangerous levels of political disorientation produced as a result of the Brexit crisis and the suppression of the independent interests of the working class by the Labour and trade union bureaucracy.



**A section of the crowd marching through London**

The protest was led by a right-wing coalition of Blairites, Liberal Democrats and pro-EU Conservatives that culminated in a joint video presentation on a giant screen in Parliament Square featuring former Tory and Labour prime ministers, John Major and Tony Blair.

Other political scoundrels spoke in person at the rally, including Tory Lord Michael Heseltine, Liberal Democrat leader Jo Swinson, Scottish National Party Westminster leader Ian Blackford, Blairite London Mayor Sadiq Khan, Tony Blair's spin doctor Alastair Campbell, Shadow Brexit Secretary Sir Keir Starmer, Blairites Hilary Benn, Jess Phillips and David Lammy, Tory MP Dominic Grieve, Independent Group (IG) leader and former Tory Anna Soubry and the IG's former Blairite MP and chief witch-hunter, Luciana Berger.

These right-wing forces were joined by Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell and Shadow Home Secretary Diane Abbott. Part of the core leadership of Labour's "Corbynite left," their role in the demonstration proved that their politics are indistinguishable from the Blairites they once claimed to oppose.



**John McDonnell speaks to the crowd in Parliament Square**

This is a movement that, though able to mobilise hundreds of thousands, is entirely an adjunct of parliamentary manoeuvring of that section of the ruling elite that sees continued membership of the EU as central to the strategic interests of British imperialism. Its central aim to hold a second referendum in order to reverse the 2016 vote in which the UK population, by a narrow margin, voted to leave the EU.

The high point of yesterday's events for many was when the amendment put by Conservative MP Sir Oliver Letwin passed in parliament—meaning that there would be a delay in approving the Brexit agreement Johnson signed with the EU just days earlier until all the necessary legislation had been passed.

The crowd massed on Parliament Square, adjacent to the House of Commons, erupted into cheers. As Letwin left parliament after the vote, he was cheered and hailed. This was despite him making clear after his amendment passed that he will vote for Johnson's deal when it next comes to a vote.

Letwin was a member of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's Policy Unit from 1983 to 1986 and was an advocate of the privatisation of the National Health Service. He successfully advised Thatcher to roll out the hated Poll Tax, first in Scotland as a test bed for the rest of the UK. From 2010, he held key government positions and, as Minister of State for Government Policy in David Cameron's coalition with the Liberal Democrats, played a key role in formulating the Tories' austerity agenda from 2010—devastating the lives of millions.

The march consisted of a sea of EU flags—with many people draping themselves in the EU's colours—interspersed with Union Jacks. Some of the home-made placards showed the extent to which millions have been dragooned behind the nationalist agenda of one faction of the ruling elite. One woman held a placard, "I am marching because I would rather be a bulldog in the EUROPEAN kennel not a poodle in an AMERICAN pound."

Pride of place was given to Lord Michael Heseltine who closed the rally. He had been introduced in a People's Vote video making the statement of the Remain campaign that "We are the British patriots. We are the ones who fight for Britain's national self-interest."

Heseltine warned in his speech that the "very existence of our United Kingdom now hangs by a thread." If Brexit went ahead, "Europe, our largest home market will embroil us in years of detailed negotiations ... leaving us at the mercy of every European pressure group."



### **War criminal Tony Blair addresses the crowd by video in Trafalgar Square**

Heseltine stated that the Brexiteers advocated a “rampant capitalism” in which our “poorer citizens” would “pay the price.” To cheers, he added, “Certainly, no Conservative government in which I served would have contemplated policies of that sort.”

Heseltine was a senior figure in the Conservative governments of Margaret Thatcher (1979-91) and John Major (1992-1997), serving as deputy prime minister under Major from 1995 to 1997. He played a central role in the de-industrialisation and decimation of working-class communities. He said of Thatcher’s class war offensive during the 1984-85 miners’ strike, “This issue had to be faced, and there was no nice way to do it.” As Minister for Trade and Industry under Major, Heseltine announced in 1992 the closure of 31 out of the remaining 50 deep coal mines in the UK—the death knell for the industry.

Blair and his former spin doctor, Alastair Campbell, were given an even more thorough whitewash. Both were promoted via a video presentation as the architects of the Good Friday Agreement that has maintained peace in Northern Ireland since 1997. Of course, they are more infamously known as key architects of the 2003 Iraq War which has cost over a million lives.



**Nick**

It should be noted that McDonnell, in a recent **interview** with Campbell, said that Blair wasn't a war criminal and "I'm hoping that he goes down in history for that [the Good Friday Agreement] rather than Iraq. Sealing that deal, which is now under threat a bit by the way, was just magnificent."

WSWS reporters spoke with some of those who attended the march.

**Nick**, a social worker said, "My fear is that our lives will be impoverished in every possible way by Brexit. Workers' rights will be threatened, environmental rights will be threatened, citizenship rights will be threatened. There are huge amounts of companies and organisations which will, if they don't go bust, reduce their turnover and people will become unemployed.

*21 October 2019*