

UK: Boris Johnson selects extreme right cabinet

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Newly elected Conservative Party leader Boris Johnson is now prime minister of Britain's most-right wing, anti-working-class government since the Second World War.

His is a class war government, with all the main positions filled by representatives of the extreme right of a very right-wing party. On Wednesday evening, Johnson finalised a Cabinet dominated by hard Brexiteers, with former pro-Remain Tories having to sign up to support leaving the European Union on October 31, with or without a deal. He sacked 17 ministers who were either Remainers or allies of outgoing Prime Minister Theresa May.

Johnson nominated as Chancellor Sajid Javid, who favours slashing corporation tax from 19 percent (the lowest rate in the G20) to 12.5 percent and has mooted abolishing altogether the 45 percent rate of income tax paid by the richest.

Among the most significant forces in Johnson's government are those grouped around Dominic Raab, a clique within the Thatcherite Free Enterprise Group involved in publishing *Britannia Unchained* in 2012. The collection of articles written by Raab, Kwasi Kwarteng, Priti Patel, Chris Skidmore and Liz Truss argued for deregulation of trade, tax cuts and hiking up the exploitation of the working class, declaring, "The British are among the worst idlers in the world. We work among the lowest hours, we retire early and our productivity is poor."

Raab was handed the post of foreign secretary and deputy prime minister. Patel is home secretary. Kwarteng is the minister for business and energy and industrial strategy minister.

In the past, Patel has argued for the restoration of capital punishment. She is chair of the Conservative Friends of Israel. As Secretary of State for International Development she opposed giving aid to the Palestinians without guarantees that it would be used for "health and

education services, in order to meet the immediate needs of the Palestinian people and maximise value for money." She was forced to resign in November 2017 for organising private meetings with leading Israeli political figures including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Truss is international trade secretary. Her chosen side project is working with a group of extreme right political and media figures to secure funding for a Museum of Communist Terror to be established in London. At a recent fundraising dinner, she called for the defeat of the "monster of the hard left." The right had been "asleep at the wheel in the battle of ideas" since the end of the Thatcher government, she complained.

Jacob Rees-Mogg, the head of the backbench European Research Group, who has been described as the "minister for the 18th century," will become Leader of the House and co-ordinate the government's parliamentary business over Brexit.

Johnson's main pro-Brexit rival, Michael Gove, will co-ordinate Brexit policy across the government's departments, with a mandate to "turbo-charge" preparations for a "no-deal Brexit outcome." He will work with Johnson's new adviser, Dominic Cummings, who led the Vote Leave campaign.

In the November following the 2016 Brexit referendum, Margaret Thatcher's former chancellor, Nigel Lawson, wrote an opinion piece for the *Financial Times* declaring, "Brexit gives us a chance to finish the Thatcher revolution." Her transformation of the British economy "was done by a thoroughgoing programme of supply side reform, of which judicious deregulation was a critically important part." Now, however, the UK was "bound by a growing corpus of EU regulation which, so long as we remain in the bloc, we cannot touch. Brexit gives us the opportunity to address this ... to finish the job that Margaret Thatcher started."

This is Johnson's agenda for government. In his

statement to parliament in the government's priorities, he said leaving the EU "is not just about seeking to mitigate the challenges, but about grasping the opportunities ... we will begin right away on working to change the tax rules to provide extra incentives to invest in capital and research. We will now be accelerating the talks on those free trade deals, and we will prepare an economic package to boost British business and lengthen this country's lead ... as the number one destination in this continent for overseas investment."

There are two de facto members of Johnson's government who are not in his cabinet—Nigel Farage, of the Brexit Party, and US President Donald Trump.

The pro-Remain former Tory whip Nick Boles complained to *The Times*, "The hard right has taken over the Conservative Party. Thatcherites, libertarians and no-deal Brexiteers control it top to bottom. The Brexit Party has won the war without electing a single MP. Boris Johnson isn't our new prime minister, Nigel Farage is."

Farage is in the US, where Trump hailed Johnson's victory and said he and Farage would achieve "tremendous things" together. Picking Farage out of the crowd at a Washington rally, Trump said, "I know he's going to work well with Boris," who he described as "Britain's Trump ... That's what they wanted. That's what they need."

Writing in the *Daily Telegraph* about a possible electoral alliance with Johnson, Farage declared, "If he is able to convince us, then together we would electorally smash the Labour Party, he would assume a big working majority, and he would go down as one of the great leaders in British history. All this is possible, but is Boris Johnson brave enough?"

Trump backs Johnson because he is seeking to break up the EU as part of his "America First" agenda. The "alliance" he offers the UK, on which Johnson bases his own strategy, will deepen the descent into trade war—pitching Britain against German and French imperialism—and bring with it further colonial-style wars.

Backing US aggression against Iran is already being described as the acid test of the new alliance, with the *Wall Street Journal* speculating, "Johnson could simply announce that the UK is joining America's maximum-pressure campaign and calls for a new (Iran) deal ... The rest of Europe would likely have no choice but to join its Anglophone partners—and finally present a united front."

The dangers presented to the working class are acute and no response can be expected from the Labour Party under Jeremy Corbyn. His spokesman spent yesterday in a

spat with the new Liberal Democrats leader Jo Swinson, who accused Corbyn of "aiding and abetting" a Conservative Brexit by refusing to immediately call for a vote of no confidence—which is the privilege of the leader of the main opposition party.

Corbyn has said he will only do so when it is "appropriate." A Labour spokesman described such a vote as a "nuclear option."

Pro-Corbyn sources are stressing that the party is preparing for a possible snap general election in the autumn, in anticipation of Johnson failing to secure a deal with the EU and a Tory rebellion against a no-deal exit that would have devastating economic consequences. But all discussion is focused on Corbyn arriving at a formula that satisfies the pro-Remain demands of the Blairite right of the party.

The five election pledges launched by Corbyn yesterday centre on the promise of a public vote on any Conservative Brexit deal, in which Labour would campaign to remain in the event of a no-deal or a poor deal.

For the working class faced with savage austerity, Corbyn promised the thin gruel of increased National Health Service funding, a £10 an hour living wage, a job-creating "green industrial revolution", and free school meals for primary school children. He could not do more without provoking a backlash from the Blairites he has capitulated to and protected ever since becoming party leader. His refusal to drive out the Blairites and mobilise the working class against the Tories is the sole reason why Johnson can now plan to wage devastating social warfare.



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