**Forum:** **The Crisis Committee**

**Issue:** **Leave or Remain: The battle for No.10 Downing street**

**Student Officer:** **Lucas Duan, John Park, Anastasia Lim, Hanna Badholm, Ashton Liu**

**Position:** **President, Assistant President, Backroom Presidents**

Introduction

Brexit is a portmanteau of ‘Britain’ and ‘Exit’, referring to the United Kingdom’s withdrawal from the European Union (EU). Brexit was not only about United Kingdom (UK) leaving the EU, but the result of skepticism, economic tensions, and British identity from immigrations, in conjunction with the political polarization among multiple parties. This eventually provoked a significant shift of the UK’s direction in various domains.

On 23 June 2016, referendum for Brexit was held; with 48.1% (16,141,241 votes) to remain and 51.9% (17,410,742) to leave, the narrow majority voted to leave the EU. This invoked Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), a legal mechanism that enabled the withdrawal of member states from the EU, and lead to the request for the extension of Article 50. While several requests for extension of Article 50 from Teresa May and the meetings of the European Council that reached an agreement regarding such request occurred, the Brexit deal was lost on amendment in the commons.

Boris Johnson, the next prime minister, claimed to ‘get Brexit done’ by 21 January 2020. On 23 January 2020, the EU received the royal assent, indicating the implementation of UK’s withdrawal from the EU. This aligned with prior mutual negotiations and promises made by the government.

Leave or Remain left the conservative party with deep divisions. The continuous internal discord resulted in the vote of no confidence against Teresa May’s leadership, even though the motion was rejected, her execution of Brexit deal eventually gave rise to her resignation as a leader of the conservative party and the prime minister. The implications of leave or remain were significant – internal discord of the political parties, transition of leadership, economic and social alterations brought a serious jumble to the British society.

Definition of Key Terms

Euroscepticism

This is a European political doctrine that advocates disengagement from the EU. Eurosceptics believe in intensifying immigration controls and reforming EU bureaucracy, prioritizing national sovereignty. Eurosceptics belong to the Leave stance in the Brexit.

**Second Referendum**

Second referendum is the concept of arranging a secondary referendum regarding the matters of Brexit to reconsider the decisions from the original referendum. Since there was a 4% percentage point for the results, a second referendum was proposed to suggest reconsideration in people’s votes.

**Article 50**

Article 50 is part of the EU legislation, which served as a mechanism for a member state’s withdrawal from the EU. This enabled the UK to leave the EU while conforming the international law. Since a withdrawal of a member state among the EU was unprecedented prior to the Brexit, article 50 played a dynamic role for its integration with the political and economic integrations of the UK, also provided the extensions upon the decision of Brexit.

**Vote of confidence/no confidence**

Vote of confidence or no confidence is a motion initiated by the members of the legislative body, expressing support or disfavor of the current leadership. Vote of no confidence was initiated for Teresa May twice be due to continued dissatisfaction of her Brexit deal from the conservative party. Despite the fact that May survived the vote of no confidence from the conservative party, the parliamentary vote of no confidence was successful (However, she remained in No. 10 Downing Street due to the rejection of such motion from the house). Such motions manifest the instability and dissatisfaction regarding the execution of the Brexit deal by May.

**Soft/hard Brexit**

Soft Brexit refers to UK withdrawal from EU while maintaining involvement and access to the EU single market to a certain extent, whereas Hard Brexit refers to UK’s withdrawal without any establishment of trade agreements. The Brexit implemented by Boris Johnson is classified as a Hard Brexit.

**Single market**

Single market is an economic area for the free flow of products, services, capital, and people among EU member states. This market annihilated technical, legal, and bureaucratic obstacles in trade, classified as a considerable merit for member states and the ‘greatest achievement in European Union’. Brexit, whether hard or soft, denoted loss of involvement in this market which would be exceptionally critical for UK’s economy.

Background

The Brexit referendum enabled the withdrawal of the United Kingdom (UK) from the European Union (EU) on 23 June 2016. The passing of the bill came with profound impacts on both social and economic statuses, resolving through one of the most intense House of Commons debates in UK history; discussing the passing of the Brexit Bill as well as later on leading to the debate on the continuation of the Conservative Party under Theresa May as the ruling political government against votes of no-confidence.

The UK, as one of the European Union (EU)’s earliest members, was part of their precursor alliance in the form of the European Communities (EC) as early as 1973 but is also the only member state to have withdrawn. Through the EU’s development, their goal has always been to “promote peace, its values, and the well-being of its citizens[...]regulating asylum and immigration and prevent[ing] combat crimes” (EU). However, during the period of British membership, Eurosceptic groups in the UK strongly opposed the policies of the EU; primarily, Euroscepticism was driven by the beliefs that integration undermines national sovereignty as well as the existence of elitism and lack of democracy and transparency in the EU. Moreover, they say that the EU is too bureaucratic and encourages high levels of immigration that impedes the British economy. The Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson held a referendum on continued EC membership in 1975, in which over 67.2 percent voted to stay within the bloc. Despite growing political opposition to further European integration, notably from the factions of the Conservative party, no over-referendums were submitted before Brexit.

The growing pressure of Brexit from the UK Independence Party and from notable Eurosceptics, as their ideological popularity grew, convinced former Conservative prime David Cameron to initiate a referendum on British EU membership if his government were re-elected. Following the 2015 elections, where the Conservative party won, the referendum on continued EU membership was held on 23 June 2016. The notable EU Remains campaign included future prime ministers Theresa May and Liz Truss, while the Leave campaign included future ministers Boris Johnson and Rishi Sunak. The final electorate was close but ultimately leaned in favor of leaving the EU with a 51.9% majority, with all regions of Britain except London, Scotland, and Northern Ireland that voted against Brexit. Subsequently, as Cameron was against Brexit, the prime minister resigned, and his position was succeeded by Theresa May, his Home Secretary.

The negotiation in the advent of the referendum was politically challenging as well, with deep political divisions within the UK after postponement and finally May came to a proposal deal with the EU. However, the plan was frowned upon. In December 2018, the May ministration faced votes of confidence from members of the Parliamentary Conservative Party due to opposition from Eurosceptics and Conservative MPs to her Brexit withdrawal agreement, which some felt would compromise British control over its borders because it allowed the possibility of Northern Ireland remaining within the EU; the vote was passed with an overwhelming majority, but the debate on Brexit agreement was postponed. Once the parliament resumed debate in January 2019, with the vote on whether to back May’s plans, the deal was rejected by Parliament by an overwhelming majority. In the wake of the result, May stated that she would welcome a vote of confidence debate in her government. Later on, UK Prime Minister Theresa May was taken into question with a vote of no confidence in which her government survived to keep power, winning by 325 to 306. As a result, May reencouraged the House of Commons by saying she would “continue to work to deliver [on the promise of the people.” Consequently, the no-deal exit is secured from the EU.

Currently following Brexit, EU foreign policies, as well as the Court of Justice of the European Union, hold no primacy over British laws, excluding the ones adopted as domestic laws that the UK can amend or repeal. After Britain’s exit, it is worth noting that between 2021 and 2023, UK goods exported to the EU diminished by 27%, and imported goods were 32% lower if the UK had dismissed Brexit. Moreover, there are nearly two million fewer jobs overall in the UK due to Brexit, with almost 300,000 fewer jobs in the capital alone. Note that No. 10 Downing Street is the official residence of the prime minister since it is a battle for it.

Character Background

**Conservative Cabinet**

**Theresa May, Prime Minister (MP for Maidenhead)**

Stance on Brexit: Remainer to Brexiteer

May served as UK’s Prime Minister from July 2016 to 2019.

In the 2016 referendum, she initially favored staying in the EU. But after taking office, she changed her stance to one in favor of Brexit. She emphasized the importance of managing immigration and the EU's jurisdiction. In addition to seeking a fair exit strategy, she sought to respect the referendum's outcome.

**Philip Hammond, Chancellor of the Exchequer (MP for Runnymede and Weybridge)**

Stance on Brexit: Soft Brexiteer

Hammond advocated for close economic ties with the EU to safeguard the UK's financial stability. He prioritized economic pragmatism, expressing concerns that a hard Brexit could harm the UK's economy.

**Sajid Javid, Home Secretary (MP for Bromsgrove)**

Stance on Brexit: Remainer to Brexiteer

After the referendum resulted in a vote to leave, Javid aligned himself with delivering Brexit, reflecting his belief in respecting the democratic outcome.

Javid advocated for a Brexit deal that would maintain economic stability and security, emphasizing the importance of controlling immigration and restoring sovereignty in line with the leave mandate.

**Gavin Williamson, Defense Secretary (MP for South Staffordshire)**

Stance on Brexit: Brexiteer

Williamson emphasized strengthening the UK's defense capabilities and advocated for a robust military presence globally. He viewed it as an opportunity to redefine the UK's defense strategy independent of EU policies.

**Michael Gove, Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Secretary (MP for Surrey Heath)**

Stance on Brexit: Leading Brexiteer

Gove advocated for Brexit to restore parliamentary sovereignty and reform domestic policies, particularly in agriculture and fisheries. As Environment Secretary, he sought to utilize Brexit to implement environmental reforms and shift away from EU regulations.

**Steve Barclay, Brexit Secretary (MP for North East Cambridgeshire)**

Stance on Brexit: Brexiteer

Barclay was focusing on ensuring a smooth transition and negotiating favorable terms. Barclay's role was pivotal in navigating the complex withdrawal process.

**Jeremy Hunt, Foreign Secretary (MP for South West Surrey)**

Stance on Brexit: Remainer to Brexiteer

Jeremy Hunt initially supported remaining in the EU but later advocated for delivering Brexit in line with the referendum result. Hunt's diplomatic approach aimed at balancing Brexit with global partnerships.

**Andrea Leadsom, Leader of the House (MP for South Northamptonshire)**

Stance on Brexit: Brexiteer

Leadsom advocates for Brexit to regain control over laws and borders. As Leader of the House, she played a crucial role in managing Brexit-related legislation, emphasizing the need to honor the referendum's outcome.

**David Gauke, Justice Secretary (MP for South West Hertfordshire)**

Stance on Brexit: Remainer

Gauke expressed concerns about the legal implications of Brexit. He advocated for a pragmatic approach, emphasizing the importance of legal continuity and the protection of rights post-Brexit. Gauke's focus was on ensuring a stable legal framework during the transition.

**Julian Smith, Chief Whip (MP for Skipton and Ripon)**

Stance on Brexit: Remainer

Smith was instrumental in securing parliamentary support for government policies during the Brexit process. He worked to bridge divides within the party, aiming to unify differing stances on Brexit to pass necessary legislation. Smith's role was critical in navigating the parliamentary challenges of Brexit.

**Conservative Backbench**

**Penny Mordaunt MP for Portsmouth North**

Stance on Brexit: Strong Brexiteer.

Mordaunt was a forward and clear supporter of Brexit during the 2016 EU Referendum. She had consistently both advocated and campaigning for leaving the EU even without a deal if it came down to that.

Mordaunt resigned from her role as Defense Secretary in 2019 after Boris Johnson became Prime Minister and replaced her, despite her alignment with his Brexit.

**John Redwood MP for Wokingham**

Stance on Brexit: Strong Brexiteer.

Since the 1990’s when he opposed more European integration, Redwood has been a strong advocate and in favor of leaving the EU. He argued for a clean no deal break from the EU in order for Britain to regain “full” sovereignty and specifically trade on World Trade Organization terms.

**Rishi Sunak MP for Richmond Yorks**

Stance on Brexit: Supported Brexit.

Sunak backed the Leave campaign in the 2016 referendum and has since been a strong advocate for delivering Brexit. As Chancellor under Boris Johnson, Sunak supported the government’s efforts to leave the EU and finalize a deal, including preparations for a no-deal Brexit. He has emphasized the economic opportunities Brexit could provide, such as free trade agreements and regulatory freedom.

**Boris Johnson MP for Uxbridge and South Ruislip**

Stance on Brexit: Lead Brexiteer.

Johnson was one of the most prominent figures of the Leave campaign during the 2016 referendum. His slogan, "Take Back Control," became a defining phrase of the campaign. Prime Minister, Johnson negotiated a revised Brexit deal with the EU in 2019 that removed the Irish backstop, replacing it with a new arrangement. He pushed for the UK to leave the EU by his deadline of January 31, 2020, and oversaw the transition period and eventual departure.

**Jacob Rees-Mogg MP for North East Somerset**

Stance on Brexit: Strong Brexiteer.

Rees-Mogg has been one of the most vocal advocates for Brexit, both before and after the referendum. He chairs the pro-Brexit European Research Group (ERG), which has been influential in pushing for a hard Brexit. Rees-Mogg consistently supported leaving the EU without a deal if necessary and criticized any compromises that he believed undermined sovereignty.

**Dominic Raab MP for Esher and Walton**

Stance on Brexit: Strong Brexiteer.

Raab was a prominent figure in the Leave campaign and has consistently supported a hard Brexit. He served as Brexit Secretary in 2018 but resigned over Theresa May’s proposed Brexit deal, arguing it would keep the UK too closely aligned with the EU. Raab has supported no-deal Brexit preparations and was a key ally of Boris Johnson in delivering Brexit.

**Amber Rudd MP for Hastings and Rye**

Stance on Brexit: Remainer turned reluctant supporter of Brexit.

Rudd campaigned for Remain in the 2016 referendum and was critical of Brexit, warning of its potential economic consequences. Despite her initial opposition, she later supported Theresa May’s Brexit deal and argued for a pragmatic approach to leaving the EU. Rudd resigned from Boris Johnson’s cabinet in 2019, citing concerns over his no-deal Brexit strategy and the treatment of moderate Conservatives.

**Kenneth Clarke MP for Rushcliffe**

Stance on Brexit: Strong Remainer.

Clarke was one of the most prominent pro-EU voices in the Conservative Party, having opposed Brexit from the beginning. He consistently voted against Brexit-related legislation and Theresa May’s withdrawal agreements. Clarke lost the Conservative whip in 2019 after voting against Boris Johnson’s government to prevent a no-deal Brexit. He later stood down as an MP.

**Rory Stewart MP for Penrith and The Border**

Stance on Brexit: Remainer turned pragmatic supporter of May’s deal.

Stewart campaigned for Remain in 2016 and was critical of Brexit, but he later supported Theresa May’s withdrawal agreement as a compromise. He opposed a no-deal Brexit and was critical of Boris Johnson’s approach, particularly his willingness to prorogue Parliament. Stewart left the Conservative Party in 2019 after losing the whip and chose not to stand for re-election.

**Esther McVey MP for Tatton**

Stance on Brexit: Strong Brexiteer.

McVey campaigned for Leave in the 2016 referendum and has consistently supported a hard Brexit. She resigned from Theresa May’s cabinet in 2018, citing opposition to her Brexit deal. McVey has advocated for no-deal Brexit as a viable outcome, arguing it would allow the UK to fully take back control.

**Dominic Grieve MP for Beaconsfield**

Stance on Brexit: Strong Remainer.

Grieve was one of the most vocal Conservative opponents of Brexit, campaigning for Remain in 2016 and continuing to oppose Brexit afterward. He consistently voted against Theresa May’s and Boris Johnson’s Brexit plans, advocating for a second referendum. Grieve lost the Conservative whip in 2019 after voting to block a no-deal Brexit and stood as an independent candidate in the 2019 election but was defeated.

**Labour Shadow Cabinet**

**Jeremy Corbyn, Leader of the Opposition (MP for Islington North)**

Stance on Brexit: Strong Remainer

Corbyn supported remaining in the EU but was critical of EU policies, especially regarding austerity and state aid rules. As leader, he advocated for a "soft Brexit," including a customs union with the EU, and later supported holding a second referendum on any Brexit deal. Corbyn’s approach sought to bridge divides within Labour while emphasizing a pro-worker, anti-austerity narrative

**Tom Watson (Deputy Leader of the Opposition, MP for West Bromwich East)**

Stance on Brexit: Strong Remainer

Watson argued that remaining was the best way to protect workers’ rights, jobs, and economic stability. This position often placed him at odds with Corbyn and highlighted the divisions within Labour on Brexit.

**John McDonnell (Shadow Chancellor, MP for Hayes and Harlington)**

Stance on Brexit: Soft Brexit

McDonnell favors a customs union and maintaining close ties with the EU to safeguard workers' rights. However, McDonnell supported a second referendum as Labour policy evolved, framing it as necessary for democratic legitimacy. He was also critical of hardline Brexit strategies, emphasizing the economic risks

**Keir Starmer (Shadow Brexit Secretary, MP for Holborn and St Pancras)**

Stance on Brexit: Remainer

Starmer’s legal background and precise articulation made him a key figure in holding the government accountable during Brexit negotiations. His focus was on protecting economic interests and ensuring parliamentary oversight

**Diane Abbott (Shadow Home Secretary, MP for Hackney North and Stoke Newington)**

Stance on Brexit: Remainer

Abbott emphasizes the risks Brexit posed to minority communities and social cohesion. She was a vocal advocate for protecting freedom of movement and opposing a hard Brexit, aligning with Labour’s eventual policy of pushing for a confirmatory referendum

**Emily Thornberry (Shadow First Secretary, MP for Islington South and Finsbury)**

Stance on Brexit: Strong Remainer

Thornberry consistently argued for staying in the EU and was an early advocate for a second referendum. Thornberry criticized both the government’s Brexit strategy and Labour’s mixed messaging under Corbyn, calling for greater clarity and a more assertive pro-European stance

**Nick Brown (Opposition Chief Whip, MP for Newcastle upon Tyne East)**

Stance on Brexit: Soft Brexiteer/ Remainer

Brown worked to manage the diverse views on Brexit within the Labour Party. While his personal views leaned toward a soft Brexit or remain, his primary role was to ensure party discipline during crucial votes, reflecting the leadership’s shifting stance

**Valerie Vaz (Opposition House Leader, MP for Walsall South)**

Stance on Brexit: Remainer

Vaz focused on the economic and social benefits of EU membership. She played a quieter but supportive role in advocating for a second referendum and aligning with Labour’s evolving position on Brexit

**Labour Backbench**

**Ed Miliband MP for Doncaster North**

Stance on Brexit: Remainer, later focused on respecting the outcome.

Miliband campaigned for Remain during the 2016 referendum, arguing that Brexit would harm the UK economically and socially. However, after the referendum, he acknowledged the result and emphasized the need for a balanced Brexit that protected jobs and workers' rights. He supported efforts to prevent a no-deal Brexit and voted in favor of a second referendum on Brexit in 2019.

**Dennis Skinner MP for Bolsover**

Stance on Brexit: Vocal Leaver.

Skinner supported Brexit, reflecting the pro-Leave sentiment in his constituency. A long-time critic of the EU, Skinner saw it as a bureaucratic institution that undermined workers' rights and national sovereignty. Despite being a Labour MP, he often aligned with Brexiteers during Brexit debates and voted against Theresa May's deal, as well as motions for a second referendum.

**Chris Bryant MP for Rhondda**

Stance on Brexit: Strong Remainer.

Bryant campaigned for Remain during the 2016 referendum and consistently opposed Brexit afterward. He advocated for a second referendum, believing the public should have a chance to reconsider Brexit once the terms were clear. Bryant voted against no-deal Brexit and often spoke out in Parliament about the risks of leaving the EU.

**Yvette Cooper MP for Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford**

Stance on Brexit: Remainer, later focused on avoiding a no-deal Brexit.

Cooper campaigned for Remain but later emphasized the importance of delivering Brexit in a way that protected the economy and avoided harm to her constituents. She became a leading figure in efforts to prevent a no-deal Brexit, tabling amendments to extend Article 50 and delay the Brexit deadline to avoid economic disruption. Cooper did not strongly support a second referendum but focused on parliamentary measures to ensure a managed Brexit.

**Hilary Benn MP for Leeds Central**

Stance on Brexit: Strong Remainer.

Benn campaigned for Remain in 2016 and has been one of the most vocal opponents of Brexit in the Labour Party. He chaired the Brexit Select Committee in Parliament, where he scrutinized the government’s Brexit plans and pushed for transparency. Benn co-sponsored the Benn Act (2019), which required the Prime Minister to seek an extension to the Brexit deadline to avoid a no-deal scenario. He supported a second referendum as a way to resolve the Brexit deadlock.

**Harriet Harman MP for Camberwell and Peckham**

Stance on Brexit: Strong Remainer.

Harman campaigned for Remain during the referendum and consistently opposed Brexit afterward. She supported efforts to prevent a no-deal Brexit and voted for a second referendum. Harman emphasized the damage Brexit could do to the economy and public services, particularly in areas like London, which voted overwhelmingly to remain in the EU.

**Kate Hoey MP for Vauxhall)**

Stance on Brexit: Strong Leaver.

Hoey was a prominent pro-Brexit voice within the Labour Party, campaigning for Leave during the 2016 referendum. Representing a heavily Remain-voting constituency, Hoey faced criticism for her position but argued that Brexit was about reclaiming national sovereignty. She consistently sided with Conservative Brexiteers on Brexit votes and supported leaving the EU without a deal if necessary. Hoey stood down as an MP in 2019 and became a vocal advocate for Brexit after leaving Parliament.

**SNP**

**Ian Blackford, Leader of the SNP (MP for Ross, Skye and Lochaber)**

Stance on Brexit: Remainer

A staunch advocate for Scottish independence, Blackford emphasized the need for a second referendum to allow Scotland to rejoin the European Union. He was critical of the UK government's handling of Brexit and its implications for Scotland, arguing that independence was essential to protect Scotland's interests and values.

**Mhairi Black (MP for Paisley and Renfrewshire South)**

Stance on Brexit: Remainer

Black called for the party to more effectively communicate the reasons for Scottish independence to the Scottish public. She believes that a clearer explanation is necessary to garner broader support for independence.

**Stephen Flynn (MP for Aberdeen South)**

Stance on Brexit: Remainer

A vocal critic of both the Conservative and Labour parties, Flynn has described them as "one and the same," highlighting his belief in the need for a distinct Scottish political voice. He continues to advocate for Scottish independence and has emphasized the importance of rejoining the European Union to mitigate the negative impacts of Brexit on Scotland.

**Liberal Democrats**

**Vince Cable (Leader of the Liberal Democrats, MP for Twickenham)**

Stance on Brexit: Strong Remainer and Anti-Brexit.

Vince Cable was a leading voice against Brexit and a prominent advocate for remaining in the EU. As leader of the Liberal Democrats (2017–2019), he campaigned for a second referendum (often called a "People’s Vote") to give the public another chance to vote on Brexit, with the Lib Dems explicitly supporting the option to remain in the EU. Cable argued that Brexit would harm the UK economy, reduce its influence globally, and create unnecessary barriers to trade and cooperation. He also supported revoking Article 50 if necessary to avoid a no-deal Brexit.

**Tim Farron MP for Westmorland and Lonsdale**

Stance on Brexit: Strong Remainer and Anti-Brexit.

Farron, who was leader of the Liberal Democrats during the 2016 EU Referendum and its immediate aftermath, was a vocal advocate for remaining in the EU. He led the Lib Dems’ campaign for a second referendum, arguing that the public deserved a chance to vote on the final Brexit deal. Farron highlighted the potential economic and social harms of Brexit, particularly in rural areas like his constituency that benefited from EU funding and support for agriculture. Like Vince Cable, Farron consistently opposed Brexit in Parliament and supported efforts to block a no-deal scenario.

Major Parties Involved

Conservative Party (Tories)

The Conservative party, also known as the Tories, is one of the oldest political parties in the UK. Founded in 1834, its history traces back to the 18th century. Associated with strict conservatism and right-wing policies, the party dominated British politics for most of the 20th century. Under piquant leadership from Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s, these reforms were most pronounced, while the Conservative party took the lead in securing British membership in the EEC, which founded the EU.

Party positions on Brexit in the 2010s evolved little through the first few years. The Conservatives were initially voiced skeptical of EU membership but shifted toward clearly Eurosceptic views with the leadership transitions from David Cameron to Boris Johnson. Much of the Conservative party saw the 2016 result to be a mandate for delivering Brexit, consequently giving subsequent leader Boris Johnson the impetus to advance negotiations toward UK exit from the EU in enacting an exit transition period thereafter.

Throughout the Brexit process, external authority engaged in spats with the party, particularly Remain-supporting rebels within their own ranks, as well as other parties like the Brexit party. Despite these pressures, the party effectively reinforced its commitment to carry leave, although enthusiasm differed within party ranks. The Conservatives' performance regarding the management of Brexit has been consequential for their electoral prospects, as it has put them at grave risk of getting defeated in some constituencies that support Brexit during the outgoing elections.

Labour Party

Formed in the late 1890s, the Labour Party has an exhaustive history. Initially a federation of socialist organizations, it gave birth to one of the largest and most influential political parties in the United Kingdom. Traditionally, the Labour Party occupies the center-left of British politics. It calls for workers' rights, social justice, and interventionist economic policies.

There have been historically many divisions within the Labour Party on the issue of EU membership. Leaders such as Tony Blair were in favor of the UK joining the EU, whereas others such as Jeremy Corbyn Lucidcale have more critical views on EU policies. In the candidature of an eligible elector to decide in a referendum in the year 2016, many Labour MPs stay in favor of Remain.

Internally there was a split within the party in its response to Brexit after the referendum. The party's leadership initially opposed triggering Article 50, opting for the prospective renegotiation of EU membership terms. This approach put Labour on an opposing side to a good number of its adherents-opposing working-class people-who supported Leave. Since Keir Starmer assumed leadership duties in 2020, Labour's approach began to stabilize, standing up more for Brexit, while still on the attack against certain other items within the withdrawal agreement.

Labour's approach to Brexit illustrates a party still grappling to balance its traditional base against the changing voter preferences. Labour's slant has much evolved since the earlier referendum outcome, exemplifying a broader change in public opinion and Labour's tussle to remain relevant in post-Brexit politics.

Liberal Democrats (Lib Dems)

The Liberal Democrats have their roots in the 19th-century Liberal Party. They merged with the Social Democratic Party (SDP) in 1988 to form the Liberal Democrats. The party occupies a centrist position in British politics, advocating for civil liberties, social justice, and economic liberalism.

The Liberal Democrats have been staunchly opposed to Brexit throughout, with one of the strongest voices of the Ifs during the 2016 referendum campaign and eventually advocating after the victory of Leave for reversing it or putting the question to yet another referendum. Under the leadership of Tim Farron and Jo Swinson, the Liberal Democrats have firmly opposed Brexit, already in various occasions at odds with both the Conservative and Labour parties. But anxiety over economic damage, about potential losses to civil liberty, and what they regarded as a loss of international stature for Britain out of the blanket of the European Union have been crucial drivers of their ideological disposition.

However, the strongly Remain position of the party indeed limits its appeal in constituencies that tended to support Leave but has won it many ardent supporters among the pro-EU voters Since the 2016 referendum result, there have been moments when the Liberal Democrats saw spikes in their membership, which correlated very closely with major events in the Brexit process. To them, the party's opposition to Brexit is tantamount to splitting securities of the party, especially as such considerations bear down on how to navigate the situation. Despite this, the party aims to stay committed to its anti-Brexit position, seeing such considerations as intrinsic to the party in its identity and values.

Scottish National Party (SNP)

Ever since its inception in 1934, the Scottish National Party has sought to realize the independence of Scotland. It is presently amongst the largest and most effective political parties in Scotland with an influential role in Scottish Parliament since the devolution of powers to Scotland in 1999. The SNP positions its opposition to Brexit as part of a broader nationalist agenda. It supported Remain during the referendum on Brexit in 2016 but has also cited the very act of Brexit as a rationale for Scottish independence: Scotland was of course forced out of the European Union against its wishes.

Under Nicola Sturgeon's leadership from 2014 and since, the SNP has placed itself in the vanguard of the campaign for Scottish independence, as well as opposing Brexit. This stance has put the party in direct confrontation with the UK government, while some Scottish Leave voters may also find themselves in opposition. The SNP has found it difficult to square its Remain position with its larger nationalist agenda. A prominent party member has stated that supporting Remain is consistent with the SNP's long-sought objective of Scottish independence, while another opposite takes the view that this is contrary to the core emphasis on Scottish self-determination.

Throughout the Brexit process, the SNP has openly criticized key elements of the bilateral agreement of England on the exit from the EU. The party has continued using Brexit in its discourse about Scottish independence, claiming, among other things, that Scotland should have had the prerogative to stay with the EU while joined with England and Wales in exiting.

Timeline of Events

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date | Description of event |
| January 1st, 1973 | The UK joins the European Economic Community (EEC), precursor to the EU |
| June 5th, 1975 | A national referendum results to continued UK membership of the EEC with 67.23% voting to remain |
| 1980s-1990s | Eurosceptic attitudes grow within Britain's main political parties |
| November 22nd, 1990 | Margaret Thatcher resigns as Prime Minister amid divisions over UK involvement in Europe |
| 2005 | David Cameron becomes leader of the Conservative Party |
| May 6th, 2010 | General election results in a hung parliament |
| May 12th, 2010 | Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition agreement formed with Cameron as PM |
| October 24th, 2011 | Largest rebellion over European integration since WWII - 81 Conservative MPs vote for EU referendum |
| January 23rd, 2013 | Cameron delivers Bloomberg speech promising an in-out EU referendum if Conservatives win 2015 election |
| May 7th, 2015 | Conservatives win general election with majority |
| February 2016 | Cameron sets referendum date for June 23, 2016 |
| April-June 2016 | Campaigning takes place ahead of the referendum |
| June 23, 2016 | UK votes to leave EU by 51.89% to 48.11% |
| July 13th, 2016 | Theresa May becomes Prime Minister |
| March 29th, 2017 | Article 50 invoked, starting formal withdrawal process |
| June 2017 | Brexit negotiations begin between UK and EU |
| January 31st, 2020 | UK officially leaves EU at 23:00 GMT |

Bibliography

“30th Anniversary of the EU Single Market.” *Consilium*, 2023, [www.consilium.europa.eu/en/infographics/30-years-of-the-eu-single-market/](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/infographics/30-years-of-the-eu-single-market/).

“Brexit Witness Archive - Philip Hammond.” *UK in a Changing Europe*, ukandeu.ac.uk/brexit-witness-archive/philip-hammond/.

Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Boris Johnson". Encyclopedia Britannica, 3 Dec. 2024, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Boris-Johnson. Accessed 5 December 2024.

“Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union.” *Legislation.gov.uk*, 2020, www.legislation.gov.uk/eut/teu/article/50.

Grice, Andrew. “Gavin Williamson Is Positioning Himself as the next Tory Leader in the Most Cunning Way Possible | the Independent.” *The Independent*, 20 Dec. 2017, www.independent.co.uk/voices/gavin-williamson-wants-to-be-prime-minister-theresa-may-cronus-tarantula-scheme-a8120191.html. Accessed 4 Dec. 2024.

“House of Lords - the Invoking of Article 50 - Constitution Committee.” *Publications.parliament.uk*, 2016, publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201617/ldselect/ldconst/44/4404.htm.

Kellner, Peter. "Michael Gove". Encyclopedia Britannica, 12 Nov. 2024, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Michael-Gove. Accessed 5 December 2024.

“Jeremy Corbyn - All You Need to Know.” *Politics.co.uk*, [www.politics.co.uk/reference/jeremy-corbyn/](https://www.politics.co.uk/reference/jeremy-corbyn/).

Marshall, John*.* ["Membership of UK political parties, House of Commons, SN/SG/5125; 2009, page 6"](https://web.archive.org/web/20100423150318/http%3A//www.parliament.uk/commons/lib/research/briefings/snsg-05125.pdf) (PDF). Archived from [the original](http://www.parliament.uk/commons/lib/research/briefings/snsg-05125.pdf) (PDF) on 23 April 2010. Retrieved 5 December 2024.

McGee, Luke . “Legacy of Failure: Theresa May Was a Disaster as Prime Minister.” CNN, 26 May 2019, edition.cnn.com/2019/05/24/uk/theresa-may-legacy-of-failure-analysis-intl-gbr/index.html.

Paton, Craig. “SNP Must Explain to Scots Why They Want Independence, Says Black.” *The Independent*, 18 Dec. 2022, www.the-independent.com/news/uk/mhairi-black-snp-scots-ian-blackford-scotland-b2247449.html?utm\_source=chatgpt.com. Accessed 4 Dec. 2024.

Ray, Michael. "Euroskepticism". Encyclopedia Britannica, 8 Nov. 2024, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Euroskepticism. Accessed 5 December 2024.

Schnapper, Pauline. “Brexit, or Theresa May’s Headache.” *Observatoire de La Société Britannique*, no. 21, 22 June 2018, pp. 21–34, <https://doi.org/10.4000/osb.2048>.

---. “The Key Players in Brexit.” *Investopedia*, 2019, www.investopedia.com/key-players-of-brexit-4584676.

Stacey, Kiran, and Kiran Stacey Political correspondent. “Theresa May: Loyal Constituency MP Who Lost Tory Support over Brexit.” *The Guardian*, 8 Mar. 2024, [www.theguardian.com/politics/2024/mar/08/theresa-may-loyal-constituency-mp-who-lost-tory-support-over-brexit](https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2024/mar/08/theresa-may-loyal-constituency-mp-who-lost-tory-support-over-brexit).

“Theresa May - EU Assurances and the Second “Meaningful Vote.”” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, www.britannica.com/biography/Theresa-May/EU-assurances-and-the-second-meaningful-vote.

Walker, Nigel. “Brexit Timeline: Events Leading to the UK’s Exit from the European Union.” UK Parliament, vol. 7960, 6 Jan. 2021, commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7960/.‌

Wearmouth, Rachel. “Stephen Flynn: “the Tories and Labour Are One and the Same.”” *New Statesman*, 24 Jan. 2023, www.newstatesman.com/politics/politics-interview/2023/01/tories-labour-stephen-flynn-interview?utm\_source=chatgpt.com. Accessed 4 Dec. 2024.

“Who Is Sajid Javid, the UK’s New Home Secretary?” *The Guardian*, 30 Apr. 2018, www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/apr/30/for-sajid-javid-the-hostile-environment-is-political-and-personal. Accessed 25 Aug. 2022.

“Who’s Who Guide: Theresa May’s Cabinet.” *Www.bbc.com*, 8 Jan. 2018, www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-42615109.

---. “What Is Theresa May’s View on Brexit?” *Euronews*, Euronews.com, 16 Jan. 2019, www.euronews.com/2019/01/16/what-is-theresa-may-s-view-on-brexit.

‌

‌

‌