

This latest report from the PAC shows how the Tories have run a rigged economy – John McDonnell

John

McDonnell MP, Labour's Shadow Chancellor, commenting on the Public Affairs Committee (PAC)

report on HMRC's tax collection efforts from high net worth individuals, which

shows that the very wealthy are receiving preferential treatment, said:

"This latest report from the PAC shows how the Tories have run a rigged economy

where the super-rich pay less and less in tax while earnings for average working households are still below their level of a decade ago. It's a national

disgrace that the amount lost in tax from a super-rich elite under the Tories would be enough to help end the crisis in social care.

"Labour will call time on the super-rich tax-dodgers and give HMRC the legal and staff resources it needs to close the tax avoidance loopholes and scams. We'll stop the Tories using the excuse of Brexit to turn Britain into a

tax haven off the coast of Europe, and build an economy that leaves no-one and

no community behind."

It is beyond belief that our Prime Minister is bartering away our health service in her desperation for post-Brexit trade deals – Ashworth

Jonathan

Ashworth, Labour's Shadow Health Secretary, commenting on reports that the Prime Minister has

refused to exclude health services from a possible trade deal with the US, said:

"It

is beyond belief that our Prime Minister is bartering away our health service

in her desperation for post-Brexit trade deals. Labour is committed to the NHS

both free at the point of use and free at the point of delivery. Theresa May has presided over the worst winter for the NHS in years and she must not now be

allowed to sell off the NHS to big US healthcare corporations.

"Labour

will oppose any attempt to sell off our health service. The Prime Minister needs to urgently confirm that a rushed trade deal with President Trump will not be a Trojan horse for NHS privatisation. The British people did not vote for Theresa May to use our NHS as a bargaining chip with Donald Trump."

Jeremy Corbyn statement on the passing of Tam Dalyell

Jeremy Corbyn, Leader of the Labour Party said:

"I'm so sad to hear of the death of my good friend and comrade Tam Dalyell. Our thoughts are with his family.

"Tam was a titan of parliamentary scrutiny, fearless in pursuit of the truth. From Iraq to the miners' strike, he doggedly fought to expose official wrongdoing and cover ups.

"The title of his autobiography summed Tam up to a tee: 'The Importance of Being Awkward.'

"But he was much more than that: Tam was an outstanding parliamentarian, a socialist and internationalist, and a champion of the underdog, here and abroad."

Labour tables targeted amendments to Article 50 Bill

Today

Labour has tabled a number of targeted amendments to the Article 50 Bill (the European Union [Notification of Withdrawal] Bill).

The

amendments seek to improve the process, and would ensure Parliament is able to hold the Government to account throughout the Brexit negotiations.

Labour

is also tabling an anti-tax haven amendment to ensure the Prime Minister doesn't use Brexit to weaken Britain's laws concerning tax avoidance and evasion.

Labour

will also support two amendments drafted by Melanie Onn MP which would protect workers' rights and ensure there is no drop in employment protection after the UK leaves the EU.

Labour's

amendments will:

i)

Allow a meaningful vote in Parliament on the final Brexit deal. **Labour's amendment would ensure that the House of Commons has the first say on any proposed deal** and that the consent of Parliament would be required before the deal is referred to the European Council and Parliament.

ii)

Establish a number of key principles the Government must seek to negotiate during the process, including **protecting workers' rights, securing full tariff and impediment free access to the Single Market.**

iii)

Ensure there is robust and regular Parliamentary scrutiny by requiring the Secretary of State to **report to the House at least every two months** on the progress being made on negotiations throughout the Brexit process

iv)

Guarantee legal rights for EU nationals living in the UK. Labour has repeatedly called for the Government to take this step, and this amendment would ensure EU citizens' rights are not part of the Brexit negotiations.

v)

Require the Government to **consult regularly with the governments in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland** throughout Brexit negotiations. Labour's amendment would put the Joint Ministerial Committee (JMC) on a statutory footing and require the UK Government to consult the JMC at least every two months.

vi)

Require the Government to **publish impact assessments** conducted since the referendum of any new proposed trading relationship with the EU. This amendment seeks to ensure there is much greater clarity on the likely impact of the

Government's decision to exit the Single Market and seek new relationship with the Customs Union

vii)

Ensure

the Government must **seek to retain all existing EU tax avoidance and evasion measures** post-Brexit

Jeremy

Corbyn, leader of the Labour Party, said:

"Labour

will seek to amend the Article 50 Bill to prevent the Government using Brexit to turn Britain into a bargain basement tax haven off the coast of Europe.

Our

country can do much better than that.

"We

respect the will of the British people, but not the will of this Tory government to impose fewer rights at work and worse public services, while the

largest corporations pay even less tax.

"Labour

will ensure that the British people, through Parliament, have genuine accountability and oversight over the Brexit negotiations because no one voted

to give Prime Minister Theresa May a free hand over our future."

Keir

Starmer, Shadow Secretary of State for Exiting the EU, said:

"Now

that Parliament has the right to trigger Article 50, we need to ensure there is

proper grip and accountability built into the process.

"Labour's

amendments will also seek to ensure the Prime Minister secures the best deal for the whole country – including tariff and impediment free access to the Single Market and that there is no drop in workers' rights.

"Labour's

amendments will significantly improve the Government's Bill – in particular by

ensuring the House of Commons has the first say on the final Brexit deal and that there are regular opportunities to hold the Government to account.

"Labour's

amendments will also seek to ensure the Prime Minister secures the best deal for the whole country – including tariff and impediment free access to the Single Market and that there is no drop in workers' rights. We will also vigorously oppose any plans to reduce powers to tackle tax avoidance or

evasion’.

“The Article 50 Bill will be the start, not the end of the Brexit process and Labour will hold the Government to account all the way”

Melanie

Onn MP,

who has tabled two amendments with Frontbench support on workers’ rights said:

“The Tories can’t be allowed to use Brexit as an excuse to water-down people’s rights at work.

“That’s why I am introducing amendments to protect in British law all workers’ rights which originate from the EU, including maternity pay, equal rights for agency and part-time workers, and the working time directive.

“The British people voted to leave the EU, but I don’t think anyone was voting for more insecure contracts or a less safe workplace.”

Only this government’s distorted austerity agenda could lead to such contradictory policies – Debbie Abrahams

Debbie Abrahams MP, Labour’s

Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary,

responding to the Government’s announcement of jobcentre closures, said:

“At a time when the Tories are cutting social security and introducing sanctions for low-paid workers, it’s reckless at best and perverse at worst for the Government to close so many Jobcentres.

“Only this government’s distorted austerity agenda could lead to such contradictory policies.

“This

Tory Government's decision to close Jobcentres across the country shows they are not serious about helping people to find decent, secure and well-paid work'.