



"Workers' Unity for Jobs, Services, Democracy"

"Workers' Unity for Jobs, Services, Democracy" - that is the sort of platform that a trade-union-based slate for the Euro-elections should have, not "No to EU, Yes to Democracy".

It is good news that trade unionists are seriously discussing a major union-based electoral challenge. New Labour has stifled working-class political representation.

But restoring working-class political representation means speaking out for working-class policies against capitalism, not for "Britain" against "the EU".

The real enemy is capitalism. It is not the EU. Capitalism brought the crisis which is destroying jobs and homes. Not the EU.

Capitalism is the driving force behind the moves to privatise Royal Mail. Not the EU.

Capitalism, not the EU, gets the supposedly "Labour" government pumping over £1100 billion of cash and guarantees into the banks - and leaving the top bankers to enjoy their bonuses and pensions, and adjust their business for maximum profit, untouched.

A serious working-class alternative in the Euro-elections has to focus on demands like:

- full public ownership and democratic control over the banks;
- expanded public services, and cuts in the working week, to guarantee jobs for all;
- the nationalisation, without compensation to the big shareholders, of all the big firms
- sacking workers, and their reorganisation under workers' control;
- renationalisation of rail and other public services and utilities, under workers' control;
- Government funding for councils to build or buy up huge numbers of houses.

With the Daily Star and similar papers blustering about "British Jobs For British Workers", and trumpeting anti-migrant and anti-Muslim lies, it must preach workers' unity - unity across the borders, and unity across differences of origin. It must uphold migrant workers' rights.

It must offer a clear alternative to UKIP and the BNP. It cannot do that if it restricts itself to anti-EU policies which are very similar to what UKIP and the BNP say about the EU, plus a formal declaration "against racism and fascism".

The EU is certainly not responsible for Britain's anti-union laws, pushed through by the anti-EU Margaret Thatcher. Remember Tony Blair boasting that the laws are more "restrictive"

than any other "in the Western world".

On the contrary, when the EU tweaked the Lisbon Treaty to give some sops to the Irish Government, it was Gordon Brown - and no other EU prime minister - who rushed to Brussels to make sure none of the extra wording would increase rights to strike in Britain.

The British government has been the one major EU government resisting the Working Time Directive and the Agency Workers' Directive.

A serious campaign should take up the anti-union laws. It cannot do that if it is limited to "no to the EU".

Of course the European Commission and the Council of Ministers push capitalist policies. They are associations of capitalist governments. But workers in the EU resist those policies. The answer to EU capitalist policies is not "no to the EU", but EU-wide workers' unity for socialist policies.

Running even a quarter-serious Euro-election campaign is a major business. It costs £55,000 just for the candidates' deposits, and at least £500,000 to cover the "paper" minimum of campaigning by producing even the scrappiest material to use the Freepost facility.

The campaign has really started only when enough activists have been mobilised, organised, and provided with transport and materials to reach the doorsteps of at least a significant proportion of the 24 million voting households.

To mobilise the labour movement for a political campaign of that scope would be a great thing. It would require focusing on the class issues which unite workers, rather than old-fashioned anti-EUism which can only divide.

And it would require a thorough, democratic discussion throughout the movement, working out a platform after open debates and meetings, giving every activist a say - not presenting take-it-or-leave-it slogans and platforms concocted behind closed doors.

Today's meeting should open an urgent but democratic discussion of how the trade unions can reassert themselves in politics, drawing in the maximum number of activists round a unifying class programme.