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yes to democracy

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www.no2eu.com

Press Release

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New left-wing EU critical electoral alliance launched

No2EU – Yes to Democracy will be contesting seats in the European elections on June 4, 2009 on a platform of opposition to the Lisbon Treaty, against the EU-led privatisation of our public services, for workers' rights and in protest at the corrupt EU gravy train, alliance convenor Bob Crow announced today.

Speaking at the launch of *No2EU – Yes to Democracy* in the House of Commons, Bob Crow said that millions of working people felt abandoned by the main political parties and needed a voice to represent them.

"The renamed EU constitution, now called the Lisbon Treaty, would still enshrine right wing Thatcherite economic policies as constitutional goals at a time when this discredited neo-liberal agenda is failing apart.

"We were promised a referendum on this issue by this government in the 2005 election yet it has been taken away from us and the Treaty was rammed through parliament with Lib Dem and Tory help, said the transport union RMT general secretary.

Former MP Dave Nellist said that he was elected in 1983, along with former PM Tony Blair, on an EU-critical platform on the basis that the emerging EU was a cartel of big business interests.

"Today we can see the EU's privatisation agenda only to well with the endless stream of EU diktats demanding the privatisation of our public services," he said.

Indian Workers' Association vice president Avtar Sadiq said that EU's internal market rules demanding the 'free movement' of capital, goods, services and labour within the EU had created conditions for a race to the bottom in terms of wages and conditions inside the EU and a fortress Europe mentality.

"The EU is dividing people not uniting them and this is feeding the rise of racism and fascism across Europe," he said.

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A message from *No2EU – Yes to Democracy* convenor Bob Crow

It's not every day I agree to head up a new left-wing EU critical electoral alliance to stand in the European elections but it was decision not taken lightly.

My union has been following developments in the European Union for many years and has debated the impact of EU treaties and various directives each year at our annual general meetings.

Many RMT members have suffered as the result of EU diktats such as EU directive 91/440 which led to the privatisation of our rail network.

The EU drive to push market mechanisms into our public services has also now appeared with the part-privatisation of postal services as demanded by EU directive 97/67.

The EU mania for imposing increasingly discredited neo-liberal economics on over 500 million Europeans is also enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty, the renamed EU constitution rejected by French and Dutch voters in 2005.

The treaty forces governments to hand public services over to private corporations – that means handing fat cats control of railways, schools, postal services, energy and even social services across Europe.

Under Article III-147 of the EU Constitution: *“A European framework law shall establish measures to achieve the liberalisation of a specific service”*. That provision remains in the Lisbon Treaty. The current economic crisis was created by this right wing economic dogma yet, under the Lisbon Treaty, these policies become constitutional goals.

EU rules demanding the “free movement of capital, goods, services and labour” within the EU has also encouraged widespread social dumping where vulnerable exploited workers from across the EU are being used to drive down wages in member states.

Successive EU directives and European Court of Justice decisions have similarly been used to attack trade union collective bargaining, the right to strike and workers' pay and conditions.

As a result working people are feeling increasingly betrayed by a political elite that seems more interested in implementing neo-liberal EU rules rather than representing those that elected them. This crisis of working class representation, along with the growing economic crisis, has led to a deep disillusionment, cynicism and general mistrust of politicians.

That is one of the reasons why Irish voters rejected the Lisbon Treaty in June last year because they too did not want an EU constitution that took away their hard-won democracy and effectively turns the EU into an undemocratic superstate.

Yet the resounding “No” by Irish voters was ignored by politicians across Europe who are clearly more wedded to EU institutions than their own electorates.

That is why Gordon Brown's government reneged on Labour's 2005 manifesto promise to hold a referendum and instead forced the treaty through parliament with Liberal Democrat and Tory help.

The Irish electorate has now been told that they must vote for a second time on the Lisbon Treaty by October 2009 having voted to reject it in 2008. Why? Because EU and Irish politicians have decided that voters in Ireland must be overruled.

To counter this assault on democracy, No2EU – Yes to Democracy is fielding candidates on June 4 to give a voice to voters who feel betrayed by the main parties.

This crisis of democracy and the very serious economic situation is leading to a rise in support for far-right, fascist parties such as the British National Party.

Yet, the BNP has no answers. They peddle hate and seek to undermine organisations that working people rely on to protect them like trade unions.

No2EU -Yes to Democracy is an electoral platform and not a party and our candidates will not sit in the European parliament in the event of winning any seats. Our candidates will only nominally hold the title MEP but will not board the notorious EU gravy train.

This is because the European parliament is, in fact, not a parliament but a very expensive talking shop with no law-making powers – those powers lay with the unelected European Commission. A recent report showed that MEPs can make over one million pounds from a single five-year term by claiming various allowances and even for assistants for whom no record exists. The pay of British MEPs' will even rise by almost 50 per cent after June's election to over £120,000.

While in the real world banks go under and hundreds of thousands of workers are losing their jobs, EU elites continue to enrich themselves at the taxpayers' expense.

Lend us your vote on June 4 and we will continue to campaign against the EU's privatisation drive and the widespread corruption that goes with it.

It is clear that millions of people would reject the Lisbon Treaty if they were given the chance to and demand the repatriation of democratic powers to the member states. The time has come to give these people a voice.

Vote *No2EU –Yes to Democracy* on June 4.



Policy briefing

Say No to the Lisbon Treaty

The Lisbon Treaty is the renamed European Union constitution rejected by French and Dutch voters in 2005.

It turns the EU into a state in its own right and gives the bloc its own legal identity. The unaccountable European Court of Justice, an EU institution, would effectively become the 'supreme court' of the EU.

Under the treaty, the unelected EU commission would propose all EU law which would then be imposed on member states by the council of ministers mostly on the basis of qualified majority voting.

The treaty also contains a so-called 'Paseralle clause' which would allow the EU to give itself more powers as it sees fit without the need for any more treaties.

The Labour government was elected in 2005 on a manifesto promising a referendum on the European Union constitution, which has now been rehashed as the Lisbon Treaty.

The House of Commons' European Scrutiny Committee even described the Lisbon Treaty as: "*substantially equivalent*" to the EU Constitution and former French President Giscard D'Estaing even told us the treaty was a con.

"Public opinion will be led to adopt, without knowing it, the proposals that we dare not present to them directly.

"All the earlier proposals will be in the new text, but will be hidden and disguised in some way," he said.

As part of this strategy, Gordon Brown's government reneged on Labour's manifesto promise to hold a referendum and instead forced the treaty through parliament with Liberal Democrat and Tory help.

The Irish electorate has also been told that they must vote for a second time on the Lisbon Treaty by October 2009 having voted to reject it in 2008. Why? Because EU and Irish politicians have decided Irish voters' must be overruled.

Politicians across Europe hold their electorates in contempt: refusing to hold a referendum on the Treaty despite voters in France, the Netherlands and Ireland rejecting their plans for an undemocratic, neo-liberal superstate.

Vote *No2EU* - Yes to Democracy to oppose the Lisbon Treaty and defend democracy across Europe.

Keep your public services public

The Lisbon Treaty and the EU's privatisation agenda represent a significant threat to working class communities and to the services we all rely on.

The renamed EU constitution forces governments to hand public services over to private corporations – that means handing fat cats control of railways, schools, postal services, energy and even social services across Europe.

Under Article III-147 of the EU Constitution: “*A European framework law shall establish measures to achieve the liberalisation of a specific service*”. That provision remains in the Lisbon Treaty. This commitment to ‘free competition’ enshrined in successive EU treaties was the main reason that Tories originally supported the EU. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher signed the Single European Act in 1986 to establish a single European market and John Major agreed the Maastricht Treaty, which created the Euro, the European Central Bank and tied European economies into a ‘Growth and Stability Pact’ that squeezes public investment in public services. The current economic crisis was created by these discredited neo-liberal policies yet, under the Lisbon Treaty, they become constitutional goals. We should be defending public services in Britain not allowing bankers and eurocrats take them over in order to make money for big business in Europe.

Vote *No2EU* - Yes to Democracy to defend public services such as Post Offices and the NHS and to renationalise our railways and develop manufacturing in Britain.

Stand up for workers' rights

The social dumping of exploited foreign workers in Britain is being carried out under EU rules demanding the “free movement of capital, goods, services and labour” within the EU.

Successive EU Directives and European Court of Justice decisions have also been used to attack trade union collective bargaining, the right to strike and workers' pay and conditions.

The Single European Market, created by the Tory government with the Single European Act in 1987, creates a pool of working people to be exploited and treated no better than a commodity like a tin of beans. These EU rules allow employers to escape from national collective bargaining and employment legislation and impose lower wages and worse working conditions, creating a “race to the bottom”.

These EU rules, which no-one asked for, have been behind some of the most bitter industrial disputes in recent years, like the Irish Ferries dispute, the strike of Gate Gourmet workers at Heathrow, and the Lindsey oil refinery workers' strike.

The European Court of Justice has even decreed in the Laval and Viking cases that collective agreements that protect workers' conditions contravene the ‘free movement’ of labour in the single market.

The recent protests at Lindsey, supported by workers across Britain, were not against foreign workers or xenophobic. These workers were simply defending the fundamental right to work under union agreements – a right not given by EU directives or treaties.

The so-called ‘free movement’ of labour is part of the development of a deeply racist Fortress Europe which would increasingly exclude people from outside the EU and undermine wages and working conditions inside the bloc.

To ferry workers across Europe to carry out jobs that local workers can be trained to perform is an environmental, economic and social nonsense.

If 'food-miles' represent an unacceptably large carbon footprint, then 'labour-miles' and shunting human beings around Europe in the pursuit of profit is even more damaging.

In the 1980s recession Tory minister Norman Tebbit famously told the unemployed to 'get on their bikes' to look for work. Now well-shod government ministers advise workers in Britain 'to get on a plane' and find work elsewhere in the EU!

Vote *No2EU - Yes to Democracy* to resist the EU turning human beings into commodities to be shunted around Europe while local workers are excluded from being able to provide for their families.

Vote to keep out the BNP

Support by the main political parties' support for turning over huge legal, economic and political powers to unelected and remote EU institutions has alienated millions of people from politics. The growing cynicism created by politicians is leading to a rise in support for far-right, fascist parties such as the British National Party.

Yet, the BNP has no answers. They peddle hate and seek to undermine organisations that working people rely on to protect them like trade unions.

The BNP claims to oppose the European Union but its leader, who denies the holocaust took place, can't wait to get on the gravy train and link up with other fascist parties from Italy and France in the European parliament.

Vote *No2EU - Yes to Democracy* to oppose the BNP and resist the threat to exploit the current economic crisis to promote racist political ends.

Let's take back democracy

No2EU - Yes to Democracy will not sit in the European parliament in the event of winning any seats. Our candidates will only nominally hold the title MEP but will not board the notorious EU gravy train.

The so-called European 'parliament' is an expensive fraud which has no law-making or parliamentary powers. All EU laws are proposed by another EU institution, the unelected European Commission, which is heavily influenced by corporate and big business lobbyists. A recent report showed that MEPs can make over one million pounds from a single five-year term by claiming various allowances and even for assistants for whom no record exists. The pay of British MEPs' will even rise by almost 50 per cent after June's election to over £120,000.

While in the real world banks go under, shares nosedive and hundreds of thousands of workers lose their jobs, EU elites continue to enrich themselves at the taxpayers' expense. If you vote *No2EU - Yes to Democracy* we will continue to campaign against the Lisbon Treaty and wasteful and corrupt EU institutions and demand the repatriation of democratic powers to member states.

Vote *No2EU - Yes to Democracy* to protest against self-serving and well-heeled political elites that serve EU institutions which impose laws on over 500 million European citizens without their consent.

We Say...

- **Reject the Lisbon Treaty**
- **No to EU directives that privatise our public services**
- **Defend and develop manufacturing, agriculture and fishing industries in Britain**
- **Repeal anti-trade union ECJ rulings and EU rules promoting social dumping**
- **No to racism and fascism, Yes to international solidarity of working people**
- **No to EU militarisation**
- **Repatriate democratic powers to EU member states**
- **Replace unequal EU trade deals with fair trade that benefits developing nations**
- **Scrap EU rules designed to stop member states from implementing independent economic policies**
- **Keep Britain out of the eurozone**



Our supporters

Initial sponsors of the No2EU-Yes to Democracy election campaign

All in a personal capacity

Bob Crow - RMT general secretary
Carolyn Jones - Director, Institute of Employment Rights
Avtar Sadiq - Vice President Indian Workers Association (GB)
Dyal Bagri, - President, Indian Workers Association (GB)
Joginder Bains - Secretary, Association of Indian Women
John King - Author
Mick Lynch - RMT executive
Alex Gordon - RMT executive
Andy Bain - President TSSA
Trish Lavelle - Head of Education and Training CWU
Stuart Hyslop - Treasurer Dumfries Trades Union Council
Stuart Turnbull - Trade unionist, peace campaigner and community activist
Craig Johnston - RMT executive
Nick Quirk - RMT executive committee
Alex Smith - former MEP for South of Scotland
Arthur West - Secretary Kilmarnock and Loudon Trade Union Council
John Kelly - Professor of Industrial Relations, Birbeck University of London
John Hendy QC - Councillor Dave Nellist, Labour MP (1983-1992)
Bill Ronksley - Former ASLEF president
Tony Donaghey - Former RMT president
Graham Stevenson - T&G National Organiser-Transport
Tim Pendry - Former Grassroots Alliance co-ordinator
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Brian Denny - Trade Unionists Against the EU Constitution
Tom Morrison - Secretary Clydebank TUC
Tony Conway - Public and Commercial Services Union NEC member
Councillor Steve Radford - Liberal Party
Chris Reeves - Platform Films
Mark Baker - PCS union NEC
Bill Benfield - Editor Morning Star
John Haylett - Political editor Morning Star
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Robert Griffiths - General Secretary, Communist Party of Britain
Ben Stevenson - General Secretary, Young Communist League
Professor John Foster - Secretary, Scottish Campaign against Euro Federalism
Rob Williams - UNITE union convenor, Linamar plant, Swansea
Bill O'Dowd - RMT Tube driver rep#
Roger Bannister - UNISON NEC
Katrine Williams - PCS DWP Group Executive
Councillor Rob Windsor - Coventry council
Liz Elkind - Scottish TUC General Council
Mick Costello - Former industrial correspondent, Morning Star
Dr Peter Latham - Croydon TUC

Arthur West - Kilmarnock and Loudon TUC
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Keith Gibson - GMB union, member of the Lindsey Oil Refinery strike committee
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Paul Astbury - Liverpool council deputy-leader, 1986-87
Geoff Martin - Merton TUC
Mike Perkins - Southampton TUC
John Stevenson - Worcester TUC
Judy Beishon - Editor, The Socialist
Glyn Davies - Vice-president Deeside TUC
Trevor Jones - Deeside Secretary TUC
Graeme McIver
Ron Rodwell
Dave Warren - PCS Wales committee
Councillor Chris Flood - Lewisham council
Harry Smith - Liverpool councillor, 1983-87
David Drever - President Educational Institute of Scotland
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Nick Hemming - Chair, Northants MOJ PCS
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Kevin Parslow - Secretary, UNITE 1/1228
Andrew Price - Secretary, Cardiff Trades Council
Dave Walsh - Secretary, Liverpool council UNITE
Theodore MacDonald – Prof. Emeritus of Global Health Rights, London Metropolitan University
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Dave Bartlett - PCS Wales committee
John Ewers - Secretary, UNISON South West Gas Branch
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John Reid - Level 1 industrial rep, Edgware Group RMT.
Tracy Edwards - PCS Young Members organizer
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Brian Debus - Chair, Hackney UNISON
Andrew Walton - Leicestershire Health UNISON steward
Linda Taaffe - Waltham Forest NUT committee
Dr Jon Dale - Former Derbyshire pit doctor
Michael Wrack - Homerton Hospital UNISON Young Members officer
Jim Guild - UCU executive member
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Roger Davey - Chair, UNISON Swindon & Wiltshire Health branch
Phil Clarke - Secretary, Lewes & Eastbourne NUT
Mick Griffiths - Secretary, Wakefield Hospitals UNISON
Hannah Walter - UNISON shop steward
Jacqui Berry - President, Medway Trades Council
Andrew Tullis - Lambeth UNISON Children's services convenor
Bill North - Secretary, Brighton & Hove Trades Council
Kevin Pattison - West Yorkshire CWU branch committee
Mike Foster - Senior steward, Kirklees UNISON

Shelia Caffrey - Bristol NUT branch committee
Monique Hirst - Kirklees UNISON Young Members officer
James Kerr - Lewisham UNISON steward
Kevin Crowe - Steward, Kirklees UNISON
Lee Vernon - Sussex University Students' Union executive
Paul Hunt - Coventry UNISON steward
Annette Sallow - Steward, Kirklees UNISON
Nancy Taaffe - Branch officer, Waltham Forest UNISON
Josie Nicholls - Secretary, Leicester UNISON
Steve North - Salford UNISON steward
Kevin Hayes - UNITE 2/251 (Southampton Ford)
Ed Doveton - Kirklees NUT
Jim Thomson - Somerset NUT
Nick Chaffey - Southampton UNISON
Robert Nash - PCS
David Goode - Cambridge president, UCU
Ivan Beavis - Hackney TUC delegate
Martin Levy - President, Newcastle upon Tyne TUC
Christiane Ohsan - UCU national official
David Drever - President, Educational Institute of Scotland
Charlie Taylor – GMB
Brian Loader – UNISON
Andy Beadle – UNITE
Rob MacDonald – UCATT
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Tom Baldwin – UNITE
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