

Sunday, 14 June 2009

Dear Colleagues,

The results of the local and Euro elections, earlier this month, have left working people not only without an independent, political voice but with a resurgent and more confident far-right.

The meltdown of Labour's vote, coupled with the election of 2 BNP MEPs, has led many trade unionists to question what sort of new political structure is necessary to give working people a genuine alternative they can believe in; one that will fight the haemorrhage of jobs and factories and the undermining of people's ability to resist.


The CNWP was formed three years ago and now has well over 4000 sponsors, two thirds of them active trade unionists including almost 50 who are members of their respective union national executives. We have been campaigning for a new collaboration between trades unions, socialist groups, environmental and anti-capitalist campaigners to build a working class alternative to the big three parties who have a largely common agenda of support for the interests of big business.

The most recent example of that collaboration, 'No2EU - Yes to Democracy', was a temporary coalition assembled for the Euro elections. But the lessons of trade unions such as the RMT successfully working in an electoral partnership with socialist groups such as my own shows the potential of a wider, working class coalition for future elections, particularly to combat the far-right.

Indeed, speaking after the Euro elections, No2EU convenor/RMT general secretary Bob Crow called for "*urgent discussions involving socialist organisations, campaigns and trade unions to build a concerted response following the election of 2 fascists from the BNP to the European Parliament*". The No2EU press release is printed overleaf.

My purpose in writing, therefore, is to ask if your organisation would host an urgent meeting for trade unionists in your area to discuss these issues. If you are able to do so, the CNWP would like to send a speaker to that meeting.

What No2EU did in these elections, under resourced and underfunded, was a good start. But if we can achieve that in the 9 weeks we were together, just think what we could build for the General Election, which at most is 9 months away, if we start the work now. I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards,


Cllr Dave Nellist

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No2EU calls for unity to defeat the BNP

(press release issued June 8, 2009)

No2EU - Yes to Democracy coalition convener Bob Crow has called for urgent discussions involving socialist organisations, campaigns and trade unions to build a concerted response following the election of two fascists from the BNP to the European Parliament.

No2EU was the first progressive EU-critical coalition to stand in Britain in any election and it gained 153,236 votes despite an almost complete media blackout.

The combined vote in Thursday's poll for No2EU, the Socialist Labour Party and some of the smaller left parties stacks up to nearly a third of a million votes - just over 2% of the total. In Scotland, the combined left vote was close to 4%.

Meanwhile, the Labour share of the vote has dropped by a massive 31%, the Lib Dems by over 7% and the Tories, despite all the hype, have only managed a tiny increase in share with turnout collapsing to just over 30%.

Bob Crow said today:

"There is no question that the BNP have benefitted from the collapse of the establishment political parties and from media coverage that has pumped them up like celebrities on "I'm a Nazi - Get Me Out of Here."

"Sections of the press, which have deliberately ignored anti-establishment parties from the left, need to take a long, hard look at the way the blanket coverage they have given to the fascists from the BNP has contributed to their success.

"But it's the collapse of public support for the three main parties - each of which is pro-business, pro-EU and supportive of the anti-union laws - which has created the conditions for the scapegoat-politics of the BNP to thrive.

"The fascists support in former mining communities like Barnsley is shocking and throws down a massive challenge to the Labour and Trade Union movement.

"Along with our colleagues from the SLP and other left groups we won nearly a third of a million votes. From No2EU we won over 150,000 supporters from a standing start in the teeth of a media blackout. That gives us a solid platform to build from.

"We now need urgent discussions with political parties, campaigns and our colleagues in other unions like the CWU to develop a political and industrial response to this crisis.

"I also want to pay tribute to our colleagues from the Hope Not Hate campaign. There is no doubt that without their tireless efforts the BNP would have won even more seats," he said.