

<https://internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article4584>



Britain

â€˜It is better to light a candle than curse the darkness'

- IV Online magazine - 2016 - IV497 - June 2016 -

Publication date: Friday 24 June 2016

Copyright © International Viewpoint - online socialist magazine - All rights reserved

This statement was made by the "Another Europe is Possible" campaign in Britain, that had campaigned for a "Remain" vote from a left perspective, on Friday 24 June, once it had become clear that the vote for Britain to leave the European Union had won in the referendum the previous day.

Another Europe is Possible worked tirelessly over the past few months to forge a movement that could progress an alternative vision for Europe. Britain's decision to leave the European Union opens a world of uncertainty that campaigners in the UK must now try to steer in a positive direction, in spite of the divisions that have been stirred. We don't pretend that this will be easy. The mainstream campaign to leave the EU has pandered to nationalism, has encouraged a wave of anti-immigrant sentiment and has fostered a notion that outside the EU we can return to an age when Britain was the world's foremost 'great power'.

We understand and share the distrust many people feel towards the institutions of the EU. The EU lacks proper democratic accountability, negotiates exploitative trade policies like TTIP, visits economic destruction on its own member states, and at times has treated refugees as if they were criminals.

Our argument for remaining in the EU was that, together with the hundreds of millions of fellow Europeans, we have the power to transform Europe and, in so doing, to control corporations, halt climate change and overcome the nationalisms that have haunted our continent for centuries. The campaign to leave the EU has demonised some of the poorest people in Europe. We share the sense of fear that many of those people must now feel.

That's why many of us who have worked to build "Another Europe is Possible" will not stop working towards forging a better Europe, and a better country, with allies and friends across the continent. We commit ourselves to fighting the rising tide of nationalism and racism across Europe and building a campaign to defend the rights and dignity of immigrants in Britain. We will work for the most just transition out of the EU possible, campaigning against the erosion of human and workers' rights and the type of extreme free trade deals which the leaders of the Leave campaign have threatened.

We will not give up in our attempts to build a very different sort of world based on equality, democracy and humanity. In this new Britain, we believe our movement is even more important. In coming weeks we will revisit our work and propose new priorities with those who have worked so tirelessly in the past few months, pounding the pavement across the UK to make our voices heard. We hope some of those who campaigned for a left-wing exit will also join us in this work.

It is better to light a candle than curse the darkness. In the months ahead we will try to ensure that we lay the foundations for a better country. We must prove to the world that Britain will not become a byword for intolerance, insularity and despair. Another Europe is possible. Another Britain is necessary.

Signatories:

Caroline Lucas, Green MP for Brighton Pavilion; Clive Lewis, Labour MP for Norwich South; Owen Jones, author; Matt Wrack, FBU union general secretary; Steve Turner, Unite the Union deputy general secretary; Dave Ward, Communication Workers Union general secretary; Manuel Cortes, Transport Salaried Staff Association general secretary; Zoe Williams, journalist; Neal Lawson, Chair of Compass; Zoe Gardner, migrant rights activist; Nick Dearden, Director of Global Justice Now; Natalie Bennett, Leader of the Green Party of England and Wales; Julie Ward MEP; Claude Mores MEP; Molly Scott Cato MEP; Cat Smith MP; Luke Cooper, Convenor of Another Europe is

â€˜It is better to light a candle than curse the darkness'

Possible; Michael Chessum, Momentum Steering Committee and Another Europe is Possible National Organiser; Michael Mansfield QC, human rights lawyer; Deborah Hermanns, National Union of Students EU students representative; Kate Hudson, Left Unity; Salman Shaheen, journalist; Liz Davies, human rights lawyer and Honorary Vice-President Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers (personal capacity)

Marina Prentoulis, Syriza UK; Anastazya Oppenheim, National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts; Lord Wood, Labour Peer