



Unions respond: "Reform are no friends of working people"

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Reform

Reform "The trade unions [have hit back against](#) Farage's recent pitiful appeal to try to bring the UK labour movement over to the far-right. Quite unsurprisingly, they've seen through [his ridiculous claim that:](#)

Reform is now the party of workers.

Farage also invited unions to apply for affiliation, and welcomed union leadership to attend the party conference. However, those same leaders have now told him where to shove it in reply.

"Let's be crystal clear"

On 8 June, [the Times](#) published an interview with Nigel Farage, [trying to lure trade unions](#) into affiliation with Reform UK.

The fascist rag highlighted plummeting support for Starmer's Labour among union members "hardly surprising in itself. However, that drop was accompanied by growing support among the membership base for Reform UK.

Unfortunately for Farage, the unions themselves haven't conveniently forgotten all the time his party have spent [bashing workers' rights](#). Nor, for that matter, are they in the mood to overlook the fact that Reform UK [rests firmly in the pocket](#) of big business.

Responding to the Reform leader's two-faced appeal, Trades Union Congress (TUC) [general secretary](#) Paul Nowak said:

Let's be crystal clear: Reform are no friends of working people.

If they were, they wouldn't be planning to rip up workers' rights like day one sick pay and protection from fire and rehire and zero-hours contracts.

And they wouldn't have a leader who backs privatising the NHS.

Add to that Reform's repeated [calls to scrap the Equality Act](#) the foundation stone of protections from discrimination in the workplace.

Reform cosplaying as the workers' friend

[Nowak continued](#)

Reform can cosplay as champions of workers all they like. But the reality is they're bankrolled by corporations and crypto billionaires who want the rules rigged even further in favour of the rich and powerful at the expense of working people.

And let's not forget many of their leading voices show contempt for trade unions the very organisations that won the rights and protections they want to strip away.

Reform will say whatever they think it takes to win votes. But their record and their agenda tells the real story.

The TUC highlighted that, just last year, Farage [boasted that](#) Reform would 'go to war' with 'leftwing teaching unions'. He even went so far as to accuse union members of:

poisoning the minds of young people, not just against Reform, but against everything this country has ever stood for.

We at the *Canary* prefer the term [history lessons](#).

A threat to the working class

Of course, it wasn't just the TUC that shut the door in Farage's smug face. Even those that have [with good cause](#) cut down on their affiliation with Labour gave short shrift to Reform. Unite general secretary [Sharon Graham](#) for instance, said:

If I had a pound for every politician who said they are the party of workers I'd be a rich woman. Reform have shown absolutely no evidence that they are friends of workers. Not signing up to the Employment Rights Act, inferring privatisation of the NHS and threatening local authority pensions seems the exact opposite.

What needs to happen now is for the Labour party to stop dithering and be the voice of workers. A little less conversation – a little more action.

Likewise, the Fire Brigades Union recognised the Reform leader for the Thatcherite waste of space that he is. The spokesperson added that:

Firefighters and other workers will see this ludicrous stunt for what it is by a party led by multimillionaires that is a threat to the working class.

The same also goes for the Transport Salaried Staffs’ Association. General secretary Maryam Eslamdoust branded Farage’s invite as a “desperate gimmick” that wouldn’t succeed in conning her organisation’s members.

Reform “Don’t believe in basic rights”

Of course, Labour’s close allies in Unison also gave Farage the middle finger. Andrea Egan, the union’s general secretary, [said](#)

It’s a con to think Nigel Farage and his rich cronies are interested in unions for anything but cold, hard cash. They don’t believe in basic rights or fair pay and consistently voted against every measure to improve them.

Gary Smith, GMB’s general secretary, highlighted the fact that Reform is a refuge for Tory turncoats – hardly the workers’ friend. Speaking to the *Guardian*, he stated that:

Mr Farage and his Reform MPs say one thing to workers and do another.

They voted against sick pay and other essential safeguards. They even want to prevent people organising to make work better at places like Amazon. We see them for what they are – rebadged Tories after union members’ basic rights.

The unions stand together

However, the most damning vote of no-confidence of all was probably that from Community. The union [represents numerous different trades](#), including a significant share of UK steelworkers.

Not to be taken in, Community’s assistant general secretary, Alasdair McDiarmid, [simply said](#):

The Reform party has consistently voted against the interests of working-class people while under his leadership.

It is clear Farage will say whatever it takes to win votes, but workers will see through his misrepresentations.

Reform UK recently made a big song and dance [about offering a "redress scheme"](#) for steelworkers' pensions in an attempted appeal to a tokenised symbol of British industry.

However, what far-right scum like Farage and his cronies don't understand is the "union" part of trade unions. Reform don't get to play divide-and-conquer with workers' rights, trying to woo steelworkers with one hand whilst bashing teachers with the other.

The labour movement stands together and it stands firmly opposed to Farage, Reform, and the rest of the UK's fascist wannabes.

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By [Alex/Rose Cocker](#)

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