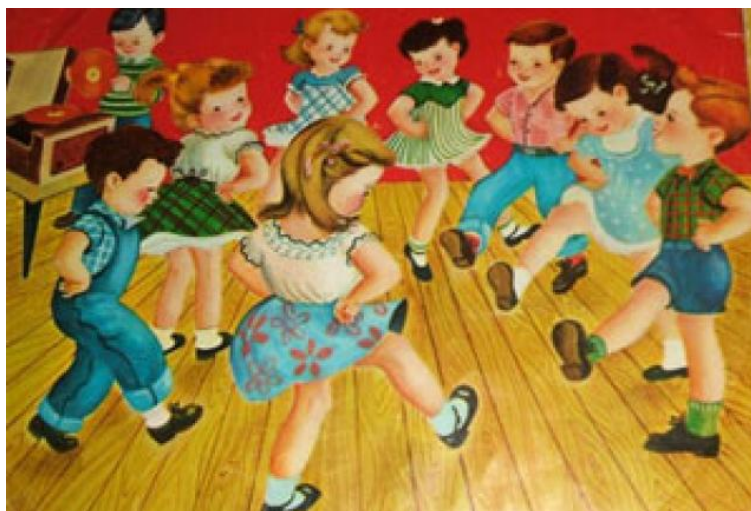


In Out, In Out, Shake It All About

by **Lisa McKenzie** (@redrumlisa)



I'm not voting in the European Referendum, I can already hear the cries of 'what about Mrs Pankhurst', 'What would she say', and 'women have died so you can vote'. Every time I tell people I'm not going to vote there are gasps, and frowns, and everyone is unhappy with me. The Brexiters tell me my vote will go to David Cameron, and the Remainers tell me I will be responsible for fortress Britain. To be honest I don't believe any of it. Regardless of the decision, on Friday the people who I care about will see nothing change for them, people will still be summoned to the DWP for fit-to-work assessments, and no new council houses will be built.

Last year when the announcement came that there would be a referendum, I knew it was about the Conservative Party's internal cancer that has been part of their politics on Europe for generations, that ultimately gave birth to its bastard son UKIP. I consider both sides of the argument illegitimate: do I want to stay in a Europe that has had no problem removing welfare, healthcare, and pensions to Greek working class people – No I don't. Equally do I want to throw my hat in with Nigel and Boris, who want out so they can further reduce workers rights without the EU interfering, and see European migrants as nothing more than cheap labour they can exploit to clean their homes, and take their dogs for walks – No Thanks. But what really sealed it for me was David Cameron's finest hour when he 'negotiated hard' and played 'hard ball' with Brussels, and his main achievement was that EU migrants would not be able to claim welfare benefits until they had been working for over two years in the UK. For me this was a game changer, Britain is already deeply divided on lines of class, race, and gender, and disability to put in another level of welfare division is fundamentally wrong. Cameron's finest hour means that there will be another tier of people, the EU migrant that will work or starve, and whose children will be at a greater risk of living in poverty than any other child. I will not vote to legitimise any of that.

I want to vote, I really do. But I want to vote for a Europe where there are no borders, so people, families and even communities can move where they are recognised as people and not labour. I want to see a universal minimum wage and universal welfare benefits. I want migration to happen because people are curious and not because they are hungry. I am a sociologist and I can imagine a better society, however I am not an economist and I don't know how we can make that happen, perhaps the economists will tell me it can't be done. But until that option is on the table, the EU referendum can do the hokey cokey.

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