

## We must have our say on the European Union

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THERE are some lines of poetry written by Percy Shelley nearly 200 years ago that capture perfectly the instincts of the British people when freedom is denied them by their ruling classes.

â€œRise like lions after slumber in unvanquishable number, Shake your chains to earth like dew which in sleep had fallen on you. Ye are many - they are few.â€•

The British lion has been in slumber for far too long - tied to the European Union like a goat tethered to a post in a field. But it is awakening and it wants its freedom back.

It is a scandalous abuse of democracy that the people of Britain have been denied a vote on their relationship with Brussels for 36 years. During that time what was originally billed as a â€œCommon Marketâ€• has become something wholly different - a project by ruling elites to give birth to a United States of Europe via the technique of promoting â€œever-closer unionâ€• at every turn.

Britain was only spared being dragged into the disaster zone of the single currency because the main political parties were forced to promise a referendum before any such step was taken. Knowing they had no chance of winning such a public vote, Tony Blair and Gordon Brown were thankfully compelled to retain the pound sterling.

But the political elite has contrived to break or dodge promises of a referendum on many other substantial transfers of power to Brussels. Labour promised a public vote on the European Constitution and then shamefully ratified it without one after it was repackaged as the â€œLisbon Treatyâ€•. For Ed Miliband to now be ordering his MPs to vote against a referendum on EU membership shows that his claim to be a new kind of leader who will tackle corrupt elites on behalf of the public is frankly laughable.

The Conservatives, of course, broke their own â€œcast-ironâ€• pledge to hold a referendum on the Lisbon Treaty. David Cameronâ€™s current position sees him arguing, absurdly, that a referendum will be essential to lend legitimacy to any future transfers of sovereignty but is out of the question as regards all the illegitimate transfers that have already taken place.

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