

# **British Politics after the Election: next steps - “Left Unity stands...”**

Tuesday 18 July 2017, by [DOWLING Felicity](#) (Date first published: 13 July 2017).

**The general election has seen a humiliating defeat for Theresa May - now reduced to a minority government Coalition of Chaos - and a huge surge to the Corbyn-led Labour Party, standing on a popular left-wing manifesto. Discussing the next steps is urgent: how to get rid of the Tories, how to finally defeat austerity and end the attacks on the working class. As one of the first opportunities to discuss these developments, Left Unity’s summer conference took place in London on 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> June.**

**National Secretary, Felicity Dowling, writes:**

‘Left Unity stands for socialism, for Freedom of Movement, for feminism, for internationalism, for environmentalism, for nuclear disarmament. We opposed Brexit and believe we have to stand up for the rights of all workers and communities, including those of the 4 million EU migrants who had no vote on Brexit and no vote in this election.

The election was a lift for the spirit. We are thrilled with the campaign run by Jeremy Corbyn and delighted to see Theresa May lose her majority. Left Unity members worked hard in the election and will in the next. Theresa May’s government has no credibility and the deal with the DUP is sickening. May must go!

We mourn and rage at the deaths in Grenfell Tower. The ideas that demonised working class poor and migrant people led to this murder, but so did the policies against council housing, and against the rights of tenants.

Right from our founding, we have called for a million well-insulated council houses, built with union labour. This is an essential policy.

The reality of life and death in Austerity Britain can be harsh, destructive and cruel; though now a flame of hope is burning. Austerity is going to be harsher still as Universal Credit, benefit caps, the two-child benefit limit, cruel changes for those with disabilities, and local authority cuts, all come into play. The NHS is in ever-greater danger. Wages are far too low. Child poverty is appalling. Left Unity stands with the hardest hit.

Left Unity will offer support and practical solidarity whenever we can to struggles against austerity.

The pace of change in the world is stunning. The concentration of wealth into the hands of the few is increasing, and the rule of the very rich ever more damaging to humanity. People have to live with poverty, war, failed states, famine, reaction, climate disasters, and terrorism; all of these drive forced migration, and the horrors of people drowning in the Mediterranean. Across Europe, health, workers’ rights, education and the environment are all under threat from Austerity. We want to work together across the countries to build a better world.

Mainstream and far right media peddle foul ideologies and propaganda. Our materials try to speak truth to power.

Left Unity has a presence in major campaigns and in resistance to the government, resistance to bad employers, and resistance to war. We continued to be a force, albeit a small one as yet, for an internationalist approach to politics and struggle. Our defence of free movement, and of migrant and refugee rights, has been unwavering.

We opposed Brexit, and we are building active links with the struggles in Europe. We are an affiliate of the European Left party, which includes parties from across Europe, from different left traditions. We are trying to build support for the Forum in Marseille on 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> November 2017, which aims to be a new political space with different political forces of the Left, trade union, and social organizations, NGOs, intellectuals, and movements of citizens from all over Europe.

Left Unity applauds the Corbyn campaign. We are delighted at the recruitment of tens of thousands of young people into the Labour Party on Jeremy Corbyn's programme. Only mass involvement in politics and struggle can change the world. We have an admirable man, and long term left social democrat as the leader of the opposition, and a few bold and courageous MPs in parliament. Let us hope this fighting spirit begins to be reflected in Labour councils. Much as we all respond to clever slogans or brilliant leaders, they are no substitute for thousands of people in solidarity, involved in struggle across the globe.

When a Corbyn government is elected, it will be crucial to mobilise support on the streets and in the war of ideas.

Why do we then, not fold up and join Labour? We will work for a Jeremy Corbyn-led Labour victory. But we will also continue to campaign for our left policies that include freedom of movement, opposition to all austerity, for a fully funded publically provided NHS, for socialism, feminism, environmentalism and internationalism and for an end to capitalism. Many in Labour share our policies and we want to work in solidarity with everyone fighting for these aims. New ways of working together will have to be developed.

### **Reaction though is truly dangerous across the world.**

The election and the chaotic government of Trump, show reaction in all its gory detail. Turkey too has taken the path of fierce reaction. France has elected a neo-liberal president who now has a majority in parliament, (though this is better than a Le Pen victory.)

The rulers of Saudi Arabia act with impunity, and Palestine still struggles for its freedom. The dispute between Saudi Arabia and Qatar could well morph into a war with Iran, which would be a disaster. Trump could be fool enough to risk war with China. We stand opposed to war and support the growing opposition to Trump in the USA.

Because of the pace of events, this conference did not deal with changes to the constitution of the Left Unity. This will be delayed until next conference.

We will continue to work in campaigns and to advocate our policies of socialism, feminism, opposition to war and to nuclear weapons, internationalism, defence of the environment and calling for an end to capitalism. We will work on small campaigns around local issues and in national and international campaigns. We will continue to do this in the same open comradely way we have done so far.'

**Felicity Dowling**

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\* <http://leftunity.org/2017-summer-conference/>