**Minutes of Left Unity NC meeting 23.04.16**

**Present: Pete, Kate, Bianca, Graham, Janet, Julie, Susan, Bob, Jon, Richard, Nick, Alison, Doug, Ed, Andrew, Oliver, Eve, Alan, Andy, Fred, Joseph, Terry, Siobhan, Eva, Alice, Felicity,**

**Apologies: Anna, Chris, John, Martin, Louise, Len, Ann, Annie, Stephen**

**Meeting started: 12.00**

**Chairs: Doug and Kate**

1. Minutes of the last meeting agreed as true record once amended by EC.

a) NC minutes 20 Feb - ratified

b) EC 19th March corrected accuracy of minutes.

**Matters arising**

NC minutes error- Point 4 – motion 17- the motion did not fall. Motion 17 was about retaining joint registration LU-TUSC.

Greece-

AB gave a brief report- situation is deteriorating. Similar conditions to those of a year ago. Possibility of proposal for a European Debt Campaign (approach- Corbyn/McDonnell) - campaigns etc. LU involved.

Minutes agreed.

**EC elections- national officers, 1 rep from each region, 1 caucus rep, 10 NC reps**

Paper circulated for those wishing to be candidates for the EC.

KH confirmed EC: national officers plus: Doug DE, Graham DE and NW, Richard DE, Eve DE, Julie DE, Nick and Kath (Yorks and Humber), Louise DE, Jon (Eastern),Len and Ann (Wales), Susan (women’s caucus)

**Next EC meeting 21st May Birmingham**

1. **Political Discussion- May elections and the referendum - Felicity**

* **EU debate- Vote to extend discussion- 11 votes to 10**

Wars have been caused and assisted by European and other governments - people are fleeing these wars and countries. Europe is confronted by the consequences of this - refugee crisis, internal pressure of austerity in EU countries.

France -has seen developments such as ‘night assemblies’ (les nuits debouts), young people in revolt regarding proposed labour reforms.

Greece - acute refugee crisis

Support refugees - many people have sympathy and have donated despite faces acute problems.

If BREXIT wins- Immigration laws will impact negatively on- 2-3 million people.

The gains in the EU that are under consideration are worth defending.

We reject the EU in the way it is organised and run. The European left – argue for a European Solidarity.

We have seen some promising shoots - teachers, doctors, some private industry disputes recently - but this is a faint glimmer of industrial disputes some decades ago.

We need to make some basic points - housing, wages, education, health - translate, if we lose we will be organising with these communities.

Discussion

* We have worse policies than TTIP already, the right would do even more damage re workers rights. There is potential for even more reactionary views to cross Europe. Eg. Front National, AFD (Alternative für Deutschland)
* We as LU should make explicit criticism of Europe e.g. handing of refugees, lack of democracy, driving privatisation - acknowledge that there are problems. More understanding of what the EU is. The ‘Another Europe is possible’ does not really give credence to these views.
* Look at how Europe has dealt with refugees - appalling treatment - ignoring laws and norms. Manipulation - to remove Greece from Schengen agreement.
* All who contributed agreed Europe has problems- but overwhelming supporting the campaign for a social Europe - solidarity across Europe.
* More discussion -What would a Brexit look like? Has the Left considered how it may respond?

**May elections**-

* Proposal from Joseph: to support Sadiq Khan - discussion – Conference policy: ***Motion 9 section A- agreed not to stand in London election but support a Labour victory.*** Some unhappy.

Sadiq Khan has faced unprecedented opposition due to him being a Muslim. The wave of racism - means voting for him - first or second preference.

* Wigan - disappointed that they could not stand. LU has run well. Nazis have been organising - a real pity LU were unable to put our raise our profile. Problems with Devo Manc and lack of democracy - a lot to do - the LP are implementing rotten policies. LU should have been there to support JC and oppose right wing labour.
* Vote to extend discussion- 11 votes to 10

Felicity - summing up

Acknowledge that the idea of a Left union organisation has gone-in many workplaces. People are alienated - misdirecting anger at minorities.

There are small northern towns where the Brexit may be in the majority.

Europe has changed recently in response to managing dissatisfaction with the perceived refugee/migrant crisis. There is a noisy racist sentiment. Young people are often very good on the EU.

Proposals:

1. Back Khan- LU policy is labour victory, de facto support for Khan. One abstention.
2. Put out a statement condemning attacks on Khan and President of NUS - agreed
3. Produce translations of leaflets - agreed
4. Support the Calais convoy - agreed
5. FAQ EU on webpage – agreed.
6. Plan protests if Brexit wins - particular emphasis on migrant workers, anti-racism/anti-fascism.

**Chairs: Joseph and Sharon**

1. ***Political Priorities***

***Members and supporters- are encouraged to submit short reports to the LU page about activities they are involved in. This is key to informing debate.***

**Housing**-

Housing campaign- some big meetings in London- very well attended. Birmingham conference- attracted support. Leeds Conference had 60 people attracting people from Yorkshire and Humberside, North East. Things happening outside London.

Islington- organised a big mtg with very militant non-aligned audience of mainly working class women. Council put a leaflet through each council house explaining the Bill to people.

Traveller groups visible on the PA march in London and are organising.

Proposal to have an updated leaflet- draw link to housing, benefits cuts

Brighton organised a protest to remember rough sleepers who have died. Public space orders have been used to criminalise the homeless. The social cleansing of moving people out of area.

If someone wishes to join the lobby 3rd May- LU will subsidise one member.

**Anti-Cuts**

**PA /convoy - PA march 50,000- 150,000**. Was successful- lots of young people. There are more cuts to come.

Protests- should not all be in London. LU keen to support and assist with any initiatives locally.

6th June Social Work action proposal- LU agreed to support. (?)

**Trident**

Kate - successful Stop Trident demonstration. Lots of young people, cross party consensus- had JC, Nicola Sturgeon, Plaid, Greens, main opposition is the Tory government.

1. Labour has a defence policy review likely to be voted on at the end of September. Need to get motions and proposals, encourage groups , unions, individuals, campaigns to scrap Trident to ensure that people get a hearing. Publicise – deadline defence review 30th April; further deadline for international policy review in June.
2. Stop Trident Lobby 13th July in Parliament- agreed to support formally as LU (i.e logo on publicity)

Both proposals approved.

**Health**

1. NHS- privatisation- 400% increase, very hard to pin down- often happens without any public consultation or scrutiny of health professionals.

Ealing Save Our NHS- campaign working well- links with

Student nurses- ongoing campaign over bursary

Junior Doctors- ongoing- contract

1. **Labour and Health**- reorganisation ‘footprints’ – the local NHS trust and Clinical Commissioning Groups with local authority involvement will push forward privatisation and cuts. There is no transparency or democratic accountability. Mental health campaigns- and geriatric social care cuts need to be given more of a priority. Cuts in care packages.
2. Labour- minutes John McDonald and Heidi Alexander and Health Campaigns Together- labour discussing their priorities- and the NHS/Health is not on it. Labour is divided on NHS reinstatement Bill and ending the market. Labour party members will be surprised- we should encourage them to put motions to Labour. Heidi Alexander “It would be highly inappropriate to be on a health worker picket line.”

Labour are letting people down badly.

**Education**

Record teacher shortage coupled with crisis in pupil places

Baseline testing has ended- ‘testing four year olds’- very unpopular.

A recent Spelling and Grammar test has been pulled for primary children.

Forced academisation- possible cross party rebellion of MP’s

Academisation removes teaches pay and conditions and will eradicate man local agreements- sickness and absence, maternity, grievance and disciplinary.

Parent Governors will be removed- lack of scrutiny and accountability.

NUT balloting for industrial action- join campaigns. Some councils voted the policy down- Kent, Birmingham etc.

**Brexit Protest**

We support beginning an immediate campaign alongside those affected by a Brexit - and need to explore organising a protest- millions of workers will be put at risk- potential loss of employment, forced repatriation-loss of home, family.

**Climate Change**

Saturday 8th May London- a protest against retreats on climate change policies. Called ‘Going Backwards. It will march backwards. Protests occurring in other parts of the country. e.g. Leeds 8th May.

Link to refugees- the largest group of refugees are linked to this- PCS are planning a Climate refugee in conference on October 2016. Climate refugees do not currently have any status in order to apply for help/assistance/ residency.

LU to support the conference and give support- promote.

**Trade Unions: Left Unity meeting re Trades Councils-** in Sheffield June 7th ?

**Membership Report- Andrew Burgin**

Vote of thanks to Terry C for organising the recent elections. There are vacancies- asked branches to discuss and see if people can be persuaded to stand- but will leave for a while.

Membership currently 1255 (see list produced)

Branch organisation has been difficult- we have lost some key activists.

London branch reorganisation to be put to a members meeting.

Strategies:

Try and put people in contact with each other in neighbouring areas.

People are now contacted when they join- have a chat- find out more about them and their interests. Offer support. Andrew invited people to call him if you can assist with branch development- open invite.

**Alice Kilroy Treasurer report.**

Income remaining steady at present- £3000 per month.

Branch payments will be made when all members have been allocated to a branch. Some reorganisation required and admin work before allocating money to branches.

**Conference Planning Report**

Friends Meeting House Liverpool provisionally booked for October 29th one day conference. It holds 200 people.

**Media Report Bianca Todd**

An appeal to use the following whenever you are involved in activity and it will assist.

**#Left Unity**

Left Unity Trade Union FB page had a 250,000 hit re British Steel.

Quite a lot of traffic. Short videos are really popular. Experiment- snapchat, webpages are often too static.

Try and share the website and articles and it will generate interest. Aim to have a focus on recruitment.

**Rosa Luxemburg Foundation- 11th June**

Raised that the RLF have approached LU for a European conference in- skype mtg.

TUC have made Congress House available. President of TUC and International Cooperation agreed to speak. IN and Out of the EU- What difference will it make? Speakers from France, Germany, Greece, Spain, etc. Possibly Jeremy Corbyn. Three panels- Europe Against Austerity (Varoufakis etc) Panel 2 Migration –free movement and fortress Europe - panel 3 How can the Left shift the balance in the interests of the people? Does the EU advance or constrain workers rights? What changes can we bring?

**RLF- organising and paying**

**Motion to support Awami Workers Party-** merger of left parties.

Send official representative to the meeting. Agreed.

**AOB-**

Martin Ralph – solidarity statement from LU to strikers in France. Agreed