

Left Unity conference

15-16 November 2014

Final motions and amendments



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Session 1: Environment

A. Environment Policy Commission report

1 Our party is both red and green. Our aims and objectives are quite different from the crude imperative to capital accumulation that is currently the sole driver of economic activity in our society. We recognise both the inherent instability and brutality of capitalism and the limits to our ecosystem; that our planet's resources are finite and that the ecological balance that makes all life possible on it is fragile and under threat.

2 Today, humanity faces the unprecedented threat of an ever worsening series of catastrophes, caused by the interlocked economic and environmental crises brought about by our current economic system. Capitalism has always been ecologically destructive, but in our lifetimes these assaults on the planet have accelerated. Ecological devastation, resulting from the insatiable need to increase profits, is not an accidental feature of capitalism: it is built into the system's DNA and cannot be reformed away. Capitalism is increasingly demonstrating its total incompatibility with the maintenance of our ecosystem through its ruthless exploitation of ever scarcer natural resources, its pollution of the environment, the growing loss of biological and agricultural diversity and increasing climate change.

3 A global temperature rise of 2°C is the threshold which scientists have agreed we must not cross, for fear of triggering climate feedbacks which, once started, will be almost impossible to stop and will drive accelerated warming out of our control. But even 2°C is actually too much for many ecosystems and the effects of climate change are already starting to make themselves felt in the form of increasingly unstable weather patterns that are having dire effects on communities all over the world.

4 As a result of the rise in global temperature, the ice caps are shrinking, sea levels are rising, deserts are expanding, water is become more scarce, agriculture is under threat and extreme

weather events are becoming more frequent. In Britain, four of the five wettest years ever recorded have occurred since the year 2000. In 2005 Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans, Hurricane Sandy hit New York in 2012 and super-typhoon Haiyan devastated the Philippines in 2013. The winter of 2013/14 saw devastating floods, storms and tidal surges battering Britain as the government continued to deny their basic cause: human induced climate change.

5 Possibly the biggest single most damaging effect of the environmental crisis is the impact that it is having on biodiversity - or 'the sixth extinction' as it is increasingly known. It is now clear that an increase in global average temperature of several degrees means that 50% or more of all species - plants and animals - will be driven to extinction. A quarter of all mammal species are at risk. The acidification of the oceans means that coral reefs are dying off, as are organisms that rely on calcification for their shell structure.

6 Successive International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports have made it clear that climate change will get worse if we fail to act. The solutions are available and affordable, but time is short. Therefore, we must urgently implement policies which reduce greenhouse gas emission levels by at least 80% of 1990 levels by 2030 and by 90% by 2050. This will require dramatic changes in the ways in which we generate the energy we use, the ways we build, heat and cool our homes, the ways in which we travel and the ways in which we produce our food. It will require the restructuring of our energy generation, transport and manufacturing industries, the rebuilding or refurbishment of millions of our homes and workplaces and the re-ordering of our land use.

7 We do not believe that some form of 'business as usual' is an option. The increasingly frantic search for more sources of hydrocarbons has created the spectre of 'extreme energy', the process whereby energy extraction methods grow more intense as easier to extract resources are depleted, and ever more ambitious proposals for a techno-fix. New and damaging technologies such as shale oil and gas, coal-bed methane and underground coal gasification are now threatening environments and communities around the world, and ever wilder geo-engineering

techniques are being promoted. But there is no silver bullet - the climate change crisis we face is being driven by unsustainable energy consumption and finding evermore damaging new ways to extract oil and gas will simply make it worse in the long run.

Energy

8 Electricity generation in Britain produces around 420 million tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂) every year. We face two linked challenges; first, even though a huge energy conservation programme is (along with a radical overhaul of transport) the quickest and most effective way to drastically reduce demand for energy, over the next few years we will have to increase the amount of electricity generated in order to replace the fossil fuels currently used in space and water heating and transport. Second, we will also face additional demand for electricity as an alternative to current energy sources as we modernise and decarbonise industrial processes such as chemicals and iron and steel production.

9 Because we reject current nuclear technology for electricity generation we will have to undertake a programme of hugely expanding our generation capacity using other, genuinely zero carbon, technologies based on wind, sun and water.

10 Our opposition to current nuclear technology is evidence based rather than an emotional rejection of 'big' technology. Nuclear power poses numerous threats to people and the environment. These threats include health risks and environmental damage from uranium mining, processing and transport, the risk of nuclear weapons proliferation or sabotage, the unsolved problem of radioactive waste storage and the unforgiving nature of nuclear technology, which is both enormously complex and hugely destructive when it goes wrong, as at Chernobyl or Fukushima.

11 However, other related technologies, such as thorium reactors and fusion power, may prove to be safer and more sustainable at some time in the future and, while sceptical, we would support ongoing research into their practicability, while research into new energy storage technologies is a vital complement to the development of inevitably intermittent sun, wind and wave sourced energy.

12 In order to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels we have to develop an integrated approach, one which the Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT) calls 'powering-down' (reducing energy wastage) and 'powering-up' (deploying renewable energy technologies).

13 'Powering down' would require a massive energy conservation programme involving the insulation and renovation of all homes and public and commercial buildings. Such a programme, which would create hundreds of thousands of jobs, has been proposed in the pamphlet One Million Climate Jobs and we fully endorse its proposals.

14 It is widely accepted that it is possible for us to dramatically reduce our energy demands by through the energy-efficiency retrofitting of homes, offices and industrial premises, and by improving transport systems through changes in technology and use. However, even after such large scale energy conservation measures, electricity generation will have to be roughly double its current capacity in order to largely replace the fossil fuels (coal, gas and oil) now used for heating and transport, and by the decarbonisation of many industrial processes. If this is to be carbon neutral the need for the dramatic expansion of electricity generation from a mix of renewable sources is even more urgent.

15 However, fracking is not part of that sustainable mix. Scientists have pointed out that fracking does not offer a lasting solution, with the estimated total potential yield from UK fracking fields being likely to meet only around two months' worth of Britain's current oil demand and no more than four years' worth of current demand for gas. Fracking, with its potential for triggering earth tremors, polluting water supplies and causing massive damage and disruption to local environments and communities, is a chimera which we oppose.

16 Fuel poverty is a major social crisis in the UK. There are over five million households in fuel poverty - needing to spend more than 10% of their income on energy in order to keep warm. Under the current pricing system, the more energy you use, the cheaper it gets. This means that those with the lowest incomes pay the most for

their energy, because they use the least, while the luxury consumption of the rich is subsidised by the rest of us. A fair pricing system would reverse this, making the first units of energy used cheap or even free, with prices increasing as usage grows.

17 The current privatised gas and electricity production and distribution systems are models of how not to run essential public services. In order to develop the efficient low carbon energy production and distribution systems that are vital for our future, huge investment over a prolonged period will be necessary. Investment on such a level will require direct public funding and such funding will require levels of democratic public accountability that can only be guaranteed by public ownership.

18 Developments in generation technology have made distributed energy systems increasingly practicable. Distributed energy (the local generation and supply of both electricity and heat) technologies, whether they are local wind turbines owned by a parish council or tenants' association, municipally owned mini Combined Heat and Power plants based in local schools, hospitals and libraries, or tidal lagoons owned by the people of Swansea or Liverpool, open up possibilities of new forms of community ownership and control.

Transport

19 Transport accounts for 24% of our greenhouse gas emissions and while, since 1990, emissions from other sectors have gone down (by modest amounts) those from transport have gone up by 11%. Even as other sectors begin, or continue, to decarbonise, transport demand is predicted to continue to grow. But simply providing for anticipated demand is wasteful, damaging and unsustainable. We need a transport policy that manages demand and which provides services that are efficient and necessary within the overarching need to dramatically reduce CO₂ emissions. That policy should be based on the following principles:

Transport should be equally available and affordable to all, with local needs having priority. Transport and transport infrastructure should have the minimum impact on the environment and local communities.

The use of unsustainable modes of transport

(in particular private cars and planes) should progressively reduce.

Transport should, where possible, contribute to the health of individuals and communities rather than damage them.

20 There are three ways in which the issue of lowering these emissions can be addressed; first, through better land use planning and redesigning the urban environment, so that people are able to live closer to their work and less transportation is needed. Second, by a progressive move from oil to renewably generated electricity as a major transport fuel. Third, a major shift in the balance between transport modes from private motor vehicles to walking, cycling and public transport.

21 Almost 70% of journeys made in Britain are under 5 miles. 43% of people in Britain own or have access to a bicycle and the experience of other countries show that a major programme of investment in dedicated infrastructure to make cycling safer and more convenient would lead to a huge increase in the numbers of people regularly travelling those short distances by bike.

22 While cars, vans and taxis account for over six times as many passenger miles as public transport they generate thirteen times the emissions. It is therefore clearly essential to undertake a massive development of public transport capacity and quality in order to enable a rapid shift from cars to buses, coaches, trams and trains.

23 Two factors which make public transport unattractive to many people are poor access to services and high prices. Therefore, in addition to improving its quality and quantity we would make public transport much more affordable. However, we believe that low fares must be only be at the first step in a planned programme to make local public transport free for everyone at the point of use.

24 However, we recognise both that many living in rural areas have transport needs difficult to fully meet by conventional public transport and cycling and that in urban areas there will still be times when the people or load carrying capacities of a car or van are genuinely needed. Therefore we advocate the widespread development of local authority and community controlled car pools in every neighbourhood to provide the services

currently provided by commercial car clubs, but at a much reduced cost to users.

25 It is inconceivable that the current shambolic and fragmented provision of public transport could be reorganised and dramatically expanded on the basis of the current pattern of ownership. There is widespread public support for the railway system being brought back into full public ownership, but public ownership of bus and coach services, whether on a municipal, regional or national basis - or, most probably, a combination of the three - is also vital.

26 A publicly owned and democratically controlled public transport system would not only be able to integrate its various transport modes into a seamless service but would be able to experiment with new and more environmentally benign transport solutions. It would give high priority to increasing the capacity and quality of existing services, by adding more tracks to existing lines where possible, reintroducing passenger services to lines that at present are used only for freight, major investment in new rail infrastructure, either along disused lines where applicable, or by building new lines where a need is clearly shown.

27 We do not believe that long-distance service provision should concentrate on high speeds where this will adversely affect local service provision. While we support the development of new high speed rail services in order to reduce the number of short-haul flights within the UK, we do not support the current proposals for HS2. Nor do we support the never ending growth in the capacity of airports.

Construction

28 The design, construction, maintenance, refurbishment and management of our built environment is central to the achievement of a low carbon society.

29 A nation-wide, street by street programme to retrofit all existing homes is needed, not just to minimise energy use by draught proofing and insulating, but also, wherever possible, to install renewable energy sources, such as solar water heating, ground source heat pumps and photovoltaic generators. It has been estimated that

such a programme (accompanied by a switchover to renewably generated electricity for heating) would reduce greenhouse emissions generated by heating homes by 70%, while creating tens of thousands of jobs.

30 Although there are, criminally, over one million empty homes in Britain, not all houses are where they are currently needed, demographic changes are increasingly requiring changes in the housing type mix and many existing houses have such low potential to meet increasingly demanding building standards that they need to be replaced. In addition, there are over two million households on council housing waiting lists who urgently need decent homes.

31 In order to undertake the huge building and refurbishment programme that is required to meet this demand it will be necessary for the construction industry to be able to offer proper training and jobs that offer security and a worthwhile career path. It will be necessary to disseminate and put into practice on a national scale those examples of good practice and innovative technology that can be found, both in Britain and (more frequently) elsewhere in Europe and further afield. And it will be necessary to develop, fund and implement a plan of action both nationally and locally that is democratically accountable to the people whose daily lives will be affected by it.

32 None of that will be deliverable by the industry as it currently exists. It will be necessary to radically reorganise the industry and introduce a large measure of social enterprise in a range of forms, from the revival of local authority and housing association DLOs to the establishment of community based environmental refurbishment co-operatives and the development of publicly owned regional and national civil engineering and construction undertakings.

Agriculture

33 Agribusiness, concentrated into fewer and fewer hands, pollutes air, water, and soil, reduces biodiversity, and contributes to global climate change. Nowhere in Britain is power more concentrated than in the countryside. It is estimated that almost 69% of the land is owned by 0.6% of the population. The biggest

174 landowners in England take £120m in agricultural subsidies between them. We advocate a dual policy. Firstly, the imposition of a limit to the area of land any private individual or commercial company can own (which will vary from area to area based on soil type and other factors of production). Secondly, the defence and expansion of public and social land ownership which incorporates public values (sustainable farming, democratic access to land, wildlife and heritage conservation, public access, etc), such as local council ownership (as the County Council Smallholdings Estates still partially model), conservation trusts, sustainable farming trusts, etc. We support the use of the agricultural subsidy system to help small farmers who are animal welfare and nature conservation friendly to stay and return to the land. This should include both means testing and statutory targetting of all agri-environmental subsidies.

34 In the Global South the key issue is food sovereignty. This would give people the rights and means to define their own food systems. It would give control to those who produce, distribute and consume food rather than the corporations and market institutions that dominate the global food system. It would mean an end to land grabs and would require extensive land redistribution to put the land in the hands of those who produce the food.

35 Over the last twenty years, the big agrochemical corporations have bought up most of the world's seed companies. The largest 10 companies now control 73% of the world's commercial seed market, with the top 3 controlling over 50%. They are among the most dangerous of the environment's enemies.

36 In principle, genetic modification of plants (GM), a very powerful though potentially very dangerous technology, could play a useful role in developing more productive plant strains that are resistant to particular pests and diseases, more drought resistant or which require no artificial fertiliser. However, the big agrochemical companies like Monsanto, DuPont and Dow are more interested in using the technology to make farmers around the world dependent on their other products - fertilisers, insecticides and herbicides. Therefore, while we support continuing research in genetic engineering, we also support

a moratorium on the use of genetically modified organisms in commercial agriculture.

37 The agrochemical industries and agribusiness are heavily dependent on oil and gas - not just as fuel but also as raw materials in the production of nitrogen based fertilisers and the herbicides and pesticides on which agribusiness depends. Agriculture causes 9% of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions. 55% of this is nitrous oxide, which is produced by the use of synthetic fertilisers and 36% is created through the production and use of manure and slurry.

38 Producing biogas from anaerobic digestion could - in theory - help to solve both problems at once. Farms generate around 100 million tonnes of animal manure and slurry, a major cause of water pollution and methane. It could all be processed in digesters and produce up to 30 TWh of electricity, with the residue being used as organic fertiliser. However, biogas producers are increasingly using purpose grown crops, mainly maize, which needs high levels of fertiliser and pesticide to grow well in this country, in order to increase profits. Therefore we advocate a ban on the use of all purpose-grown biomass feedstocks, along with a guaranteed price for electricity generated by anaerobic digestion.

Campaigning

39 In the coming period therefore, we will campaign on the following issues:

For an energy conservation strategy involving a massive infrastructural investment and reconstruction programme to make all existing homes and workplaces energy efficient. Against any plans for 'fracking' or any other unconventional oil, gas or coal extraction methods.

For the public ownership of the public utilities; water, electricity and gas.

For a progressive electricity tariff system that guarantees the free supply of a basic quota to all, balanced by higher charges for heavy users.

Against a new generation of nuclear power stations.

For a huge expansion of wind, wave, tidal and solar based energy generation.

Against the uncontrolled introduction of GM technology by giant multinational agrochemical corporations such as Monsanto and Dow.

For the renationalisation of the railway system and the public ownership of all bus and coach services and the creation of a cheap, efficient and integrated public transport system.

Against all proposals for increasing airport capacity in London and elsewhere.

For a huge expansion of safe dedicated facilities for cyclists in all our towns and cities.

For massive investment in improved rail capacity, but against the current HS2 proposals.

40 We resolve to affiliate to the Campaign Against Climate Change (CACC) and its Trade Union Group. We support the campaign called by the CACC around the slogan A Time To Act On Climate Change and the demonstration in London on March 7 that will be the climax of the campaign. We will mobilise for the demonstration, support the call for organising committees around the country to organise for it, and be represented on them where we are able. We also support the international mobilisation and counter summit at the UN COP21 climate summit at the end of next year (2015). This is the first such summit since the disastrous failure in Copenhagen in 2009

41 The Arctic as one of the last unspoilt wilderness areas on earth is under threat. Those threats include the intentions of Shell and other energy companies to drill for oil there. This would have a huge and damaging impact on the wildlife and indigenous peoples of the Arctic, as well as seriously affecting global warming. Greenpeace have been leading a major international campaign to save the Arctic. We call upon the UN and other international bodies to declare the Arctic an internationally protected wilderness area and global site of scientific interest. Left Unity will also support the campaign to save the Arctic and do all it can to prevent its plunder by rapacious global capitalism.

A1. Amendment

Proposed by Lambeth branch

1. Insert after para 7

“When the politicians propose using market mechanisms to limit carbon emissions, it is clear that they cannot see a more democratic or sane way out of the climate crisis. International policies like carbon “cap and trade” that allow companies

to buy the “rights” to pollute, or an ecotax that end up punishing the poor, are all measures that will not work in the long term to save the planet - instead giving the rich and powerful nations and individuals the right to continue to pollute legally. Climate change is now inevitable, the question is how much and for how long and how much damage will it do. For us, socialism is the best way to manage the resources of the planet and ensure their democratic distribution in such a way that we are not destroying the environment to make a profit - as the corporations and energy companies are. No more “business as usual” means ending business as the driving force of the economy and instead looking to human - and environmental - need not corporate greed. If we want to save the planet we need socialism and we need it soon”.

2. Add to point 39 before “For a huge expansion...”:

“For a massive and planned shift away from fossil fuels towards renewable energy production”.

3. Add at end of report :

“For the socialisation of the petrochemical companies under democratic ownership and control of society.

No more deep sea oil wells

End all involvement in carbon trading at a national and international level”.

B. Factory Farming and Animal Welfare

Proposed by Hackney branch

We note that factory farming is a major cause of cruelty to animals. It is also the cause of significant harm to human health, to the environment and to communities throughout the world.

We believe that factory farming must be abolished and caring, sustainable farming methods put in its place. Animals should be raised on the land so that they can convert things like pasture (which people can't eat) into food- rather than being intensively reared on grains and cereals that could otherwise feed many people directly. Factory farms do not produce food; they waste food. For every 100 calories of edible crops fed to livestock we get back just 30 calories in the form of meat and milk- a 70% loss! There are also problems with the extensive use of chemicals and pesticides

in cereal production which is harmful to human health.

We call on policy makers to take the following immediate steps in order to phase out factory farming and commit ourselves to pursue this objective through active campaigning:

1. Abolish cruel factory farming systems such as cages and crates
2. Stop feeding farm animals human edible crops
3. Stop the routine use of antibiotics on farm animals to prevent diseases that are caused by crowded and stressful conditions
4. Introduce mandatory product labelling
5. Ensure that public-sector bodies buy only humanely produced, sustainable food
6. Government and EU subsidies and tax measures should only be directed towards the production and consumption of humanely produced, sustainable food.
7. Creation of an effective European Union enforcement agency

Session 2: Crime & Justice

A. Crime & Justice Policy Commission report

Left Unity believes that Britain's over reliance on policing, prosecution and punishment is socially harmful, economically wasteful, and prevents us from tackling the complex problems our society faces in a sustainable, socially just manner. Criminal justice is far too big; far too costly; far too intrusive. Far from being a means of delivering social justice, it is the cause of much social injustice. The large footprint in society occupied by the combined criminal justice institutions is profoundly socially harmful.

The criminal justice process inflicts unnecessary suffering on many thousands of suspects, defendants and convictees every year. This suffering is experienced very differently depending on your position in society: for instance whether you are young or old, black or white, male or female, rich or poor.

The collateral damage of the criminal justice process is also profound. A criminal record is a life sentence for many: an ongoing obstacle to participation in work and the wider community. Families and communities whose loved ones are arrested, prosecuted, imprisoned and supervised experience deep and lasting loss. Collateral damage is also found in the stress experienced by many victims of crime, whose traumas and distress are often left unresolved, and in the dissatisfaction of witnesses, whose experience of the criminal justice process can be so negative.

Criminal justice also crowds out other, more innovative, just and effective policy and practice solutions to the problems our society faces. It is good at punishing certain individuals and groups. It fails to prevent social problems from arising, or to resolve those that occur.

Left Unity supports a much smaller criminal justice footprint in society and the development of an alternative set of justice policies and practices that are a proportionate response to the harms that people experience.

Left Unity Proposes:

Downsize:

We will develop ideas to downsize fundamentally criminal justice in Britain as part of taking steps to an equal society.

We are interested in exploring an across the board reduction in the social footprint occupied by criminal justice.

This means fewer arrests; fewer prosecutions; fewer prisoners; fewer probationers. It will also means fewer criminal justice workers, whether police officers, judges and magistrates, prison and probation officers or others.

Whatever the size of the criminal justice system it should be in public not private hands.

Build:

We will explore options to build policy and practice alternatives to criminal justice.

This is not about enhancing the capacity of criminal justice agencies to address the needs of those convicted of offences.

It is about rethinking the configuration of policy and practice – for instance in housing, education, health, social security and employment – so that many current criminal justice responses are not required at all.

Transform employment

Left Unity recognises that in downsizing criminal justice will require a comprehensive programme of jobs retraining and conversion for many of those currently employed in criminal justice to ensure unemployment does not result from a managed transition to a much smaller footprint for criminal justice system.

A1. Amendment

Proposed by Lambeth branch

Insert at the end

“We will deal with crime by tackling poverty, building strong communities, expanding youth facilities and improving public safety— employing more concierges, investing in better street lighting, designing or redesigning housing estates so that everyone can walk to and from their home freely, without fear of being trapped in a place hidden from public view.

We support all measures to make the police more accountable to democratically elected civilian bodies. Stop police attacks on trade unionists, black people, young people and those exercising

the right to protest or demonstrate. End the armed policing policies that led to the shootings of people like Mark Duggan. End the use of CS gas, batons, manacles and other forms of weaponry on vulnerable people. Disband all special police units. Sack and bring to justice the violent and racist police.

Legalise cannabis and decriminalise all drugs. For more accessible health facilities for users who need them”.

B. Impact on children of austerity and child abuse

Proposed by Liverpool branch

Conference agrees to campaign in the interests of children.

Children are damaged by Austerity policies.

The damage is from

- cuts to services, including social services
- inadequate parental/carer income through low wages or inadequate benefits
- the cost of good quality food
- poor housing
- damage to the NHS
- closure of sure start centres and youth centres
- lack of space for safe outdoor play

A different kind of damage is caused by the curriculum and testing regime imposed in schools.

Further harm is caused by the hate campaigns against the poor and people disabled by our society, racism, hatred against Islamic peoples and against migrants. The refusal of NHS maternity care to migrant women is but one example. The prevalence of sexual violence against women and children damages children. Pressure to conform to Sex stereo types causes still more damage.

The stress of hatred and violence produce mental health problems in children and young people.

The scandal of endemic and facilitated child abuse, including child pornography, in organised groups including those deep in the establishment cause appalling harm . Abuse in ordinary homes is also a problem.

Left Unity will work with the White Balloons White Flowers campaign, a project shared by survivors and campaigners often blacklisted for whistle blowing, to challenge for a full and free

enquiry headed by someone not linked to the establishment. We join those calling for Michael Mansfield as an excellent candidate for this role.

This needs to be raised by the party to answer the strange in action in much of the media. Our work can help give confidence to those who need to fight for justice.

We call for full legal aid for the survivors and families of victims and a significant development of post traumatic stress disorder treatments and others facilities to help survivors lead full and joyful lives.

In order to end child poverty and child stress Left Unity will campaign for

- a living wage
- for equal pay for mothers
- for living wage level benefits for those who care for children
- for well-resourced child care
- for good children's social services
- a shorter working week
- and child friendly schools
- NHS care for all mothers
- qualitatively improved mental health services
- good safe play facilities.

C. Fighting injustice, defending democratic rights

Proposed by Islington branch and LGBTQ Caucus

Conference notes that in the run up to the General Election on 7 May 2014 certain issues about criminal justice will be taken up in a populist reactionary manner by the Government, Labour and UKIP. On the other hand there will be silence from these parties about grossly unjust developments that have taken place and are threatened in the future. Conference resolves that Left Unity vigorously takes up these issues over the coming months.

Cuts in Legal Aid

Under capitalism there has always been one law for the rich and one law for the poor. But this has been mitigated by the by legal aid, the result of years of struggle. The Government, as well as its new Labour predecessor, has made swingeing cuts to legal aid so once again working class people cannot afford to take legal action over a vast array of issues or to have the quality of criminal defence they should receive. The Government

proposes to make further cuts which will have the effect of further limiting access to justice and decreasing the number of legal aid providers. It is only as a result of legal action that government proposals to deny legal aid to those who have not been "lawfully resident" in the UK for at least a year have been defeated for now. Left Unity Says reverse the cuts, extend legal aid and make it available to all, regardless of immigration status.

Human Rights

At the Tory Party Conference, David Cameron promised to repeal the Human Rights Act and withdraw from the European Convention on Human Rights unless the European Court agrees for the Government to ignore those rulings it doesn't like. This forms part of an anti-European and anti-immigration campaign by the Government. This way the Government will render itself immune from action against human rights violations. Left Unity Says Defend the Human Rights Act! No Repudiation of the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Court!

Stop and Search

Despite reforms to the system, Black people and Muslims are subject to stop and search grossly disproportionately. Young people disproportionately suffer this interference. Left Unity Says get rid of stop & search.

Hate Crime

As the economic depression drags on and as all the mainstream parties adopt policies that scapegoat minorities, violence and other form of hate crimes have increased against Black and minority ethnic people; the disabled; women and lesbians, gay, bisexual and transgendered people. For example one in five lesbian and gay people have experienced a hate crime in the last three years. It is also estimated that 90% of hate crime is unreported. At the same time Community Safety Units that help victims of hate crime and co-ordinate community responses to it have been savagely cut. Left Unity will campaign for a reversal of these cuts and for better monitoring and training across these areas within the criminal justice system, as well as more generally among public & private sector employers and for greater support for voluntary organisations to set up their own reporting centres.

LGBT Prisoners

We recognise that many LGBTQ people end up in the prison system as a result of interlinked patterns of discrimination, particularly racism, poverty and ableism. Those from poor backgrounds and Black and minority ethnic communities are disproportionately funnelled into the prison system as a result of systemic discrimination, inequality and social exclusion. We also know that queer, trans and gender non-conforming people are often subject to increased isolation, harassment, violence and assault when in prison. Left Unity will seek to outreach to organisations that work with LGBTQ prisoners to develop policies to improve their position and tackle the underlying causes that lead to disproportional numbers of LGBTQ people being in prison

'Independent' Police Complaints Commission

Despite its change of name from the Police Complaints Authority a few years ago, the IPCC is not fully independent and moreover is not involved in investigating the majority of complaints. In most cases if you make a complaint to the police it will be investigated either by a local senior police officer or a police officer from the Professional Standards Unit. Only in very serious cases, or in an appeal against a decision, will non-police personnel become involved in the case. Even then, the majority of IPCC investigators are ex-police officers. For most people, complaining to the IPCC is a demoralising experience, raising expectations only to find the police investigating the police. Left Unity demands that there is a genuinely INDEPENDENT organisation to investigate all complaints.

Deaths in Custody

Between 1969 and 2011 there were 3,180 deaths in custody (source: United Friends and Family). That includes in police custody, prisons, immigration detention centres and people forcibly detained in hospital. Yet NOBODY has been convicted in relation to any of these deaths. Left Unity supports the United Friends & Families Campaign and supports their demands, namely:

- Prison deaths be subject to a system of properly funded investigation that is completely independent of the Prison Service;
- Officers involved in custody deaths be suspended until investigations are completed;
- Prosecutions should automatically follow

'unlawful killing' verdicts;

- Police forces be made accountable to the communities they serve;
- Legal Aid and full disclosure of information is available to the relatives of victims regardless of financial means;
- Officers responsible for deaths should face criminal charges, even if retired.

Privatising the criminal justice system

Everyday more of the criminal justice system is being outsourced to private companies. They are running prisons, electronic monitoring, custody suites in police stations and escorting prisoners. Company profits rise while standards of service deteriorate. Private companies have a financial interest in maintaining a high prison population and cut-price care, and are difficult to hold to account. The police and prison services are a law unto themselves as it is, but these companies are even worse and even more difficult to hold to account.

Don't sell off the probation service

The Coalition is currently pushing through measures to privatise 70% of a once effective state-run Probation Service. The service and staff will be split between the National Probation Service (which will supervise high risk offenders) and 21 regional Community Rehabilitation Companies. These CRCs are to be sold off to commercial bidders by the end of 2014, which might include G4S and Serco, despite their proven track record of overcharging on their contracts. Left Unity says no to the privatisation of the criminal justice system Left Unity says no privatisation!

D. No repeal of the Human Rights Act, no withdrawal from the European Convention of Human Rights

Proposed by Islington branch

1. The Conservative Party has for the last decade had a policy of scrapping the Human Rights Act (1998), which brings the provision of the European Convention on Human Rights directly into British law, and replacing it with a weaker, "British Bill of Rights and Responsibilities" with less

protection for fundamental rights and freedoms. They have also said they would openly defy rulings of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) which they do not agree with, leaving it as no more than an advisory body – a similar policy to that of Putin’s Russia.

2. Since its introduction the Human Rights Act has been important guarantor of basic freedoms for all, especially for vulnerable groups. Some of its achievements include:

a. Defending the rights of migrants and foreign nationals. Immigration lawyers and pro-migrant campaign groups have successfully used article 8 that guarantees ‘the right to family life’ and article 3 that bans ‘inhuman and degrading treatment’ to halt deportations of foreign nationals living in the UK.

b. Challenging ‘anti-terrorist’ extraditions to the United States and other states that practice torture in their criminal justice system. Article 3 was also used in the cases of Gary McKinnon (successfully) and Talha Ahsan (unsuccessfully) in an attempt to stop their extraditions to the United States where they would be/were held in the notoriously inhumane ‘supermax prisons’.

c. Helping victims of domestic violence let down by the state. The Human Rights Act has been successfully used to defend a woman who constantly moved house to flee a violent husband against the charge of the local authorities that she had ‘intentionally made her family homeless’ and was therefore an unfit mother.

d. Defending the right to protest. Anti-war campaigners attempting to protest at RAF Fairford were stopped and sent back to London under heavy police escort in 2003. Their lawyers successfully argued in court that this violated article 10 of the convention that guarantees freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

e. Helping victims of rape and sexual assault, who have been able to bring civil claims for damages for breach of article 3 resulting from failings in police investigations.

3. The ECHR has also proven to be an important body in defence of fundamental rights:

a. Upholding universal suffrage for all. In 2005 the ECHR ruled in defence of universal suffrage for all adults by saying that prisoners could not be automatically barred from voting in elections simply on account of being in prison. The UK parliament is still openly defying this European

ruling.

b. Defending LGBTQ rights. Back in 1981 the ECHR decriminalised gay sex in Northern Ireland and has recently ruled against two marriage registrars who claimed they were unfairly dismissed for refusing to marry gay couples.

c. Ensuring religious freedom. In 2013, the ECHR ruled against British Airways after it had banned an employee from wearing a cross around their neck.

d. Rights for prisoners. In 2013, the ECHR found that ‘whole life sentences’ – which rule out the possibility of release completely, i.e. with no possibility of review – was a form of torture and as such in contravention of article 3.

4. We also note that a case is currently being pursued in the ECHR against GCHQ’s industrial-scale snooping of ordinary people as a violation of article 8 (right to privacy and family life) in light of the Snowden leaks. If successful this case will represent a very important blow against the surveillance state with serious implications for British politics.

5. Left Unity recognises that the proposal to repeal the Human Rights Act and de facto withdraw from the European Convention of Human Rights takes place in a climate of increased state repression and surveillance. If repealed it will lead to further miscarriages of justice, more attacks on the right to protest, more state surveillance over ordinary people, and more attacks on migrants and foreign nationals. This is why we categorically oppose the repeal of the Human Rights Act and UK withdrawal from the European Convention of Human Rights, and will energetically campaign against it alongside others.

6. We also recognise that human rights legislation in itself will not guarantee rights and freedoms and the record of the British court system on these issues is at the very best inadequate. For example, article 2 of the ECHR protects the right to life and provides the state with an obligation to investigate deaths in custody. While this has greatly assisted many families of people who have died in prison or police custody in gaining more detailed inquests and bringing successful civil claims, the lack of any criminal prosecutions arising from the 4,500 deaths in custody between 1990 and 2013 (source: Inquest) remains an outrage.

7. The anti-terrorist legislation passed in the UK in 2001 and 2005 has also had huge human rights implications, dramatically empowering the state against citizens. While the Human Rights Act has provided legal avenues to challenge aspects of these laws, it does not replace the need to politically campaign for the withdrawal of all repressive legislation and for fundamental and far-reaching political reform of the criminal justice system.

8. Ultimately, the court system cannot be relied upon to guarantee the rights and freedoms of working people, and will inevitably exhibit bias towards ruling class interests. But we fully support the rights of all people, regardless of class, ethnicity and social status, to seek redress in the courts system against injustice and oppression in all its forms. We recognise that the Human Rights Act provides important avenues for them to do this.

9. Left Unity also does not uncritically endorse all judgements of the ECHR and supports progressive reforms to the European Convention itself where necessary (for instance, we would support the inclusion of an explicit right to strike in the convention). But in line with our broader policy we call for 'the re-foundation of Europe' and oppose the dead end of parochial nationalism. This means we support all steps to increase democratic control over European institutions, including the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe that appoints ECHR judges. In Britain, where anti-human rights attitudes go alongside xenophobic hostility to the peoples of Europe, we will campaign not for a withdrawal from Europe, but for an alternative, democratic and socialist Europe.

E. Crime and punishment

Proposed by Sheffield branch

Crime can only be understood in relationship to society. In class society crime is a product of alienation, want or resistance. Under capitalism the criminal justice system is anti-working class, irrational and inhuman. Property is considered primary; the person merely a form of property.

Against this Left Unity demands:

1. The codification of criminal law. Judges cannot be allowed to 'rediscover' old offences or invent new ones.

2. All judges and magistrates must be subject to election and recall.

3. Defend and extend the jury system. Anyone charged with an offence that carries the possibility of a prison sentence can elect for a jury trial.

4. Fines to be proportionate to income.

5. Prison should always be considered a last resort. There must be workers' supervision of prisons. Prisoners must be allowed the maximum opportunity to develop themselves as human beings. People should only be imprisoned within a short distance of their home locality – if not, families must be given full cost of travel for visits.

6. Prison life must be made as near normal as possible. The aim of prison should be rehabilitation, not punishment.

7. Prisoners should have the right to vote in parliamentary and other such elections and to stand for election. Prisoners to have the choice to vote within the constituency where they are imprisoned or where they lived before they were imprisoned

F. Child sexual abuse

Proposed by Brighton and Hove branch

Conference notes:

1. The uncovering of child sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation in the UK as a widespread phenomenon.

2. The failure of the police to take these allegations seriously in the past.

3 The collusion and cover up of such abuse by political parties, media, churches, social services and other institutions.

4. That right wing groups tend to make the running on this politically, either by direct campaigning for justice, but only if the perpetrators are Muslim, or by supporting local protests and revulsion against named paedophiles.

Conference believes:

1. That much of the left has not taken child sexual abuse seriously, both when it comes to an analysis of abuse and campaigning with survivors.
2. That socialist and feminist politics can explain both why abuse happens and why it gets covered up, by understanding that it is the unequal power relations between the abuser and the abused which is the underlying cause of both the abuse and the cover up.
3. Millions of survivors are now having to deal with memories often buried for decades, yet they often have nowhere to go for support.

Conference resolves:

1. To try to bring together socialist feminist academics to study the relationship between class, gender and child abuse with a view to publishing an in depth article - either online or in print.
2. To urge local branches to try to bring together the following groups with a view to campaigning for justice and resources whenever local abuse scandals occur:- survivors groups, women's groups, unions in relevant workplaces, anti-austerity campaigners.
3. To support local campaigns to achieve justice for survivors, whilst also opposing racism and scapegoating.
- 4 To work nationally with survivors' groups, women's groups and other appropriate organisations to come up with a programme of demands for the resources necessary to offer all survivors counselling, therapy and other appropriate support.

G. Criminal justice system

Proposed by Liverpool branch

Conference recognises the increasingly punitive nature of capitalist society and the marketisation of criminal justice and the prison system. Britain's over reliance on policing, prosecution and punishment is socially harmful, economically wasteful, and prevents us from tackling the complex problems our society faces in a sustainable, socially just manner.

As of the week ending 3rd October 2014 the prison population of England and Wales stood at 85,705 in prisons and young offender institutions – 1,078 more than the same point in 2013. The 5 most overcrowded prisons in England and Wales range between 178% and 165% of their Certified

Normal Accommodation. This must be viewed against the background of a continued levelling off in recorded crime, and decreasing estimates of most crime types and overall crime rates based on the Crime Survey of England and Wales.

The Criminal Justice System, far from being a means of delivering social justice, is the cause of much social injustice and the increasing criminalisation of young people simply for being young, the poor simply for being poor, the mentally ill simply for being mentally ill. The criminal justice process inflicts unnecessary suffering on many thousands of suspects, defendants and convictees every year. This suffering is experienced very differently depending on an individual's position in society: young or old, black or white, male or female, rich or poor.

The 'collateral damage' of the criminal justice process is profound. A criminal record is a life sentence for many: an ongoing obstacle to participation in work, housing and the wider community. Families and communities whose loved ones are arrested, prosecuted, imprisoned and supervised experience deep and lasting loss. Many victims of crime face traumas and distress, often left unresolved.

The Criminal Justice System crowds out other, more innovative, just and effective policy and practice solutions to the problems our society faces. It is good at punishing certain individuals and groups on the basis of age, gender, ethnicity, and increasingly at generating profits for private industry as prisons, probation and increasingly police functions are privatised and marketised. It fails to prevent social problems from arising, or to resolve those that occur.

Conference considers that we must urgently explore options to build Socialist policy and practice alternatives to Neo-Liberal Criminal Justice, developing class based socialist policy on the judicial system, youth and criminal justice and penal reform, but also through tying in initiatives in housing, education, health, social security and employment.

To this end we call on the National Council to convene a Left Unity National Policy Conference on Crime and Justice in 2015 on the themes of Youth Justice, Criminal Justice and Penal Reform, drawing on the policy commission report, resolutions from branches and input from critical left academics and practitioners.

Session 3: Social Security

A. Social Security Policy Commission report

1:1 Introduction

The 2010 UK government austerity regime of 80% cuts to public spending and 20% tax rises is nowhere near complete but plans are laid to continue the reduction of social security and other welfare expenditure in what is fundamentally the most vicious and inhumane transfer of wealth from the poor to the rich that the country has seen for generations.

Whilst corporate media echo government emphasis on 'financial independence' "the saving of public funds" and "a strategic aspiration to shift the place of social security support in society", millions of people on marginal or non-existent incomes struggle through crashing computer screens to apply for scraps of help, spending hours commuting to interviews, assessments and mini-jobs, paying prohibitive fares and extortionate housing costs that sink them further into debt.

Benefits are now well below the level of subsistence and are only available under draconian contracts designed to 'activate' the labour market rather than meet welfare need. Claiming benefits is so highly conditional on behaviour and attitudes that claimants can instantly lose several weeks of income if they are a few minutes late for appointments, or fail to complete up to 150 job applications per week. New authoritarian 'exclusions' to receipt of benefits are in continuous development, for example, four trials are currently underway in which benefits for mental health survivors are dependent on compulsory medical treatment.

Emergency safety net measures are immediately required along with introduction of new forms of support more relevant to a future green and non-competitive society, including local and regional democratic structures to provide oversight of welfare need and progress planning towards an inclusive, socialist programme. The measures needed include structural reforms of our state systems and institutions. In particular the foundation of mutual aid on which the

current National Insurance system was built may be more fit for purpose if relevant HMRC and DWP functions transferred to new municipal organisations run collectively by representatives from Trades Unions, equalities and user groups.

Basic Premises

Humans are social animals. We tend to live in groups, whether small or large, settled or mobile. Our social nature is a part of, and interacts with, the world's ecosystem including other animals. All living inhabitants are creative agents of our shared future. Whilst human society is incredibly diverse, it is essentially, one society. The future of the planet depends on our social organisation as based on one diverse and inclusive society adaptive to the ecological needs of the global environment.

Our Social Ethos

Fundamental to our vision of human society is universal access to a decent material living standard understood as including the right to full and equal democratic participation. This is based on recognition of, and respect for our mutual inter-dependence, as summed up by the statement, 'from each according to their abilities, to each according to their needs'.

2. Key Strategies

2.1. National Insurance

We support full employment measures through Green and Purple Living Wage jobs as currently the best overall strategy to securing decent incomes for most people i.e. on a national scale. Along with a guaranteed minimum income for pensioners we would make the National Insurance (N.I.) system more effective and fairer for everybody. We would do this by extending the principle of social solidarity to those on higher earnings, (e.g. the top 15% on salaries over £42 000) by raising the current ceiling for employee contributions, and extending an employer-only contribution to include part-time workers currently earning below the N.I. lower earnings level. Those with caring obligations not seeking work in the labor market, would also be credited with contributions. N.I. benefits paid in UK are among the least generous of the older European democracies, and steps are needed to address this e.g. the duration of contributory unemployment benefit is too short and should be

12 months followed by assessment for means-tested unemployment benefit.

We would also raise awareness of what National Insurance pays for and how, e.g. pay slip information could show Employer's contributions that are paid in addition to gross pay.

2.2. Free childcare

Free childcare would be available 24 hours a day for parents with children under 5 (e.g. via the Purple Jobs scheme), to facilitate access to paid work and economic independence for women who bear substantial pay inequality and poverty that arises through their traditional unpaid role as caregivers. (The pay gap between men and women is c.20% and women are disproportionately represented in the bottom 10%). It is envisaged that much of this childcare could be provided through a national scheme of small, street-level cooperatives.

2.3. Cash transfers and (Green) Services In-kind

We recognize non-contributory benefits (social assistance) are essential and the most urgent reforms are given below. But whether contributory or non-contributory benefits are awarded we aim to move towards a system that combines cash benefits for social security users with universal free in-kind services and resources, such as a connected (modular)* mobile phone, and a minimum quota of energy and water according to need. Access to these resources - for heating, cooking and bathing - is not a privilege but a basic human right that capitalism routinely denies and now in Austerity GB several million are forced daily to choose between heating or eating. We recognize that at the international level access to these resources is massively unequal, and due to the effects of climate change, claims to these resources will intensify in the future. Money is no guarantee of use value so these resources must be distributed in ways that are non-destructive to the environment and also guarantee fair and equal access. Key to the operation of the quota system would be to surcharge usage over and above the basic allowance at a progressively more expensive rate (inverting the current fuel charges which become progressively cheaper the more you use). With careful management of the quota it should be feasible to avoid any payment, however. This system would be best managed with the respective

industries under public ownership and control. The overall combination of cash benefits and in-kind services and resources would amount to an equivalent standard of living as the Joseph Rowntree Trust Minimum Income Standard.

*A modular phone has replaceable parts.

2.4. Universal Credit

Universal Credit (which is still in development) essentially rolls up several benefits including JSA and housing support into one working age benefit that is capped (£500/£350 paw for couples and singles respectively). It will need to be claimed online on a monthly basis despite the fact that up to 50% of claimants lack a computer. It is biased against working mothers (IFS 2013)) as benefit is withdrawn at a higher rate for second earner's income. Since the benefit is also assessed and paid per household, not to individuals separately, it also carries grave implications for women's financial independence and ability to escape domestic violence. Whilst most progressives believe benefit simplification is much needed, approaches that target the unit of the 'household' can be divisive and encourage the marginalization of the 2% of the population, who, in ONS statistics comprise 'non-households', for example:

- Residential care home residents (around 450,000);
- Looked-after children (around 22,000 not in foster homes);
- People detained in prison, police cells and detention centres (around 85,000);
- People in armed forces accommodation (around 220,000);
- Nomadic Gypsies and Travellers (around 100,000); and
- Street homeless people, who are sleeping rough (several hundred or more).

(An Anatomy of Economic Inequality in UK)

2.5. Housing

After the State Pension Housing Benefit is the largest and fastest growing item of welfare spending standing at £16.9 billion. A high proportion of this bill is paid to people who are in work. This has been caused by a shift in policy from capital investment in council housing stock (originally built and maintained via rents in line with wages) to selling off stock and supporting

individuals' housing costs in the private market. The resulting shortage of homes combined with credit expansion and tax incentives (for profiteering landlords) force up property prices and hence rents.

2.6. Pensions

Over half of the welfare budget (c. £85 billion IFS 2012) is spent on pensioners, including the Basic State Pension and Pension Credit plus other transfers. The age at which people are able to draw these benefits is being raised by several years as a measure to control this 'burden' as people live longer.

3. Immediate demands

General

- a) End the commercialization of social security administration by the Department of Work and Pensions that inevitably involves a redistribution of income from claimants to corporate interests e.g. ATOS, A4E.
- b) End all benefit sanctions - the cause of desperation, debt and destitution.
- c) Rents must be capped to 30% of average wage levels and housing benefit restrictions lifted.
- d) Scrap the Universal Credit programme as an unworkable idea.
- e) Pensioners should be guaranteed the median working income as the level of the basic state pension and that the personal tax allowance for pensioners should be raised to match this.
- f) Scrap the Benefit Cap and "Bedroom Tax" - these measures take away people's dignity and punish those who should not be blamed for the housing crisis.
- g) Bring back the Education Maintenance Allowance to help over-16s with school and college expenses.
- h) Scrap benefit restrictions for under 26.
- i) Scrap Workfare - this serves no purpose, as work is only meaningful when it is freely entered into and for the common good. Such work should be a right for all.
- j) A statutory entitlement to voluntary, free, inclusive education and training opportunities following 13 weeks of unemployment, and available as a permanent offer to disabled people, including Computer Training, Basic Education and ESAL, Employment Rights, Equalities Training and Continuing Education.

k) All benefits to be increased by 20% and linked to RPIJ that more accurately reflects inflation including housing costs.

l) Rents must be capped to 30% of average wage levels and housing benefit restrictions lifted.

Disabled People

- m) Increase funding for Access to Work programme that has been extremely successfully supporting disabled people to work.
- n) End Work Capability Assessments for disabled people's benefits - except those by the NHS for clinical reasons only.
- o) Halt the introduction of Personal Independence Payments (PIP) and retain the Disability Living Allowance (DLA). The backlog of PIP applications means thousands of disabled are struggling to survive with no support, whilst many thousands more who currently receive DLA will lose their mobility when they transfer to PIP because it does not cover specially adapted vehicles or taxi fares.
- p) Re-open the Independent Living Fund and widen eligibility criteria. This is a top-up payment to ensure disabled people with very high-level care needs can stay in their own homes and live productive lives.
- q) Significantly raise the threshold of earnings restrictions for all claimants.

Sickness benefit/work-accident benefit

(The following would bring UK in line with the most progressive European social insurance programmes).

- a) Abolition of waiting days before payment of sickness benefit/ work-accident benefit.
 - b) Provision of NHS medical certification required after the seventh day of illness in order to continue receiving sickness benefit.
 - c) Duration of sickness/accident related benefit to be 12 months following which medical assessment to be carried out by the NHS for disability benefit.
 - d) Diagnosis of work capability in regard to short-term and longer periods of sickness to be made by the NHS on clinical grounds only.
 - e) Statutory duty on employers to provide occupational health services and to create healthy working environments.
 - f) Rehabilitation programmes for employees with longer periods of sickness to be provided by the NHS based on clinical assessment.
 - g) Work-accident sickness benefit to be paid for the same duration as sickness benefit.
- This list is not exclusive and in particular, benefits

relating to children, migrants (including non-EU) and rights issues such as free legal advice need further development.

Appendix 1: Social Security and Neoliberalism:

There are many overlapping social supports provided by the public sector agencies of housing, health, social care, social security and education. Across Europe there is a wide range of social security systems but all countries report economically inactive adult populations between 29-34%¹, (including pensioners) which is set to increase in most cases due to people living longer which capital sees as a major challenge to profits. Welfare Reforms begun in the 80's have taken place across the region to respond to this in a way that meets the liberal (free-trade) harmonization agenda, e.g. privatization of public services. Since then UK governments have successfully re-cast their assaults on trade union freedom and collective bargaining (particularly in the public sector) as defending the vulnerable rather than the ideological interventions of a state captured by powerful oligarchies. This has led to extremely low pay and poor conditions and a high social security budget which clearly delivers better welfare for corporates and landlords than workers and benefit claimants, who are increasingly the same group: some form of income support now extends to a fifth of the in-work population including over 4 million workers (mostly women) who earn less than the tax threshold.

The current approach to social security has three elements: First, harsh terms and conditions of benefits are used to discipline the labour force into accepting poverty pay and conditions, (particularly in public services), and also to separate out those whose productivity challenges capitalist profit margins. Second, welfare needs are rationalised into discrete units of consumption to support capital expansion into the public sector, particularly services for sections of the population whose level of need attracts long term or lifelong public funding. Third, biased tax /benefit treatment is applied to prevent participation in the labour market by those who traditionally have provided unpaid care whose exploitation is 'locked in' via withdrawal of benefits as they move into work. This biased treatment is also demonstrated by high rents but capped housing benefits that force low income citizens to vacate

localities where potential for capital gains is high, and where deregulated banks are emboldened to print money virtually direct from the public purse in the form of capital charges to debt-financed property speculators who can claim this interest as a cost to business.

These processes began in earnest with the 1989 White Paper Caring for People: Community Care in the Next Decade and Beyond that stipulated 85% of new resources (money transferred from the social security budget) should be spent on private and voluntary sector care providers, (ESCR 2006). At the same time rent and credit deregulation enabled capital to follow up the profit-making from Right to Buy with free licence to make further claims on the wages and homes of working class people. Since 1994, U.S. and Australian private insurance lobbyists have been employed within government departments to advise on the restructuring of health, social care and social security systems. Now assessment, delivery and administration of social security and employment support services (e.g. Work Capability Assessments for Employment and Support Allowance) is increasingly contracted out to private business (e.g. ATOS) or devolved to local government with reduced grants (e.g. Council Tax Support). The residential care market is almost entirely in the private sector now. A 2012 industry assessment of the Health and Social Care market valued residential care at around £16.2 billion and the home care market at £8.5bn, which includes working age physically disabled people as well as retirees. The overall Health and Social Care market was valued at £137 billion. (Clearwater LLP, 2012).

Since 2010 there has been over £15 billion per year in cuts to welfare payments (rising soon to £19 billion) but the impact varies across the country. "At the extremes, the worst-hit local authority areas lose around four times as much per adult of working age as the authorities least affected by the reforms" (Beatty and Fothergill, CRESR, 2013). Geographical areas still depressed from deindustrialization are now further hit by the loss of jobs in the public sector, whilst tax revenues are used to subsidize massive infrastructure development (particularly in London/ SE) to create "sponges for value", to the detriment of local workers whose wages cannot meet the rising housing and council tax costs inflated by those seeking "the realization of surplus value created elsewhere...under slavery,

under capitalism, under authoritarian regimes”, (Michael Edwards, UCL 2012). A clear example here would be the Council of Mortgage Lenders, formed in 1996 specifically to create and promote Buy to Let Mortgages, the market for which grew to £360 billion in a decade, (CML 2012). To reiterate: these interest-only loans are entirely tax-deductible so rental property bought this way is directly funded from the public purse. At the same time housing benefit and council tax support is reduced with every round of cuts.

Social Security Marketisation: Micro-commissioning and self-directed budgets

Some services and benefits have been marketised with recipients now treated as ‘micro-commissioners’, that is, individual customers with either tax breaks or individual budgets for spending on services in the market. These budgets are ring-fenced for spending on private sector childcare or personal assistants and other approved services in the private / independent sector. This is in contrast to the reduction in the tax credit childcare element for working class parents that has forced many poor women back into the home. (CEDAW Working Group, 2013). Similarly decently funded budgets for disabled people are very hard for individuals to get, and the payroll administration tasks attached to them are too much of a burden for many. The involvement of user-led social enterprises to provide supportive workers and administration has stalled with most lacking capacity to keep going, so larger organisations are taking over but lack synergy with the demands of the disabled rights movements whose discourse of control and independent living has been appropriated. Substantial regional variation in the degree of flexibility and choice available to users has also been reported (Disabled People and Direct Payments: A Comparative UK Study, Riddell et al, ESRC, 2006). Micro-commissioning and self-directed budgets are being increasingly touted as for ex-offenders, substance misuse services and support for young people not in education, employment or training. (Alekeson, V. ‘Active Patient’, 2011) which could entrench the commodification of social life on an unimaginable scale. For example, it is notable that these groups fall under the population category of ‘non-households’ used by the Office of National Statistics and include a high number

of young people who are now specifically denied entitlement to housing benefit in almost all circumstances and all other forms of income support are paid at much lower rates than those paid to the over 25 working age population. But even access to these meager hand-outs is increasingly subject to Workfare on a semi-permanent basis, which is tantamount to forced labour (as defined by the International Labour Organisation). Sadly the Trade Union Congress is complicit here in approving such schemes as performing a training role. (See Kilburn Unemployed Workers Group website).

The centralisation of policy command and revenue with accompanying devolution of responsibility and risk

The responsibility for implementation of austere central policy is increasingly being devolved to local government, which has no influence over the content of such policy. For example, the National Planning Policy Framework dictates that local authorities are compelled to prioritise the allocation of available land to Free Schools, regardless of whether a new school is actually needed or whether other public uses have been identified. The government has cut many forms of social assistance, such as the Independent Living Fund (enabling disabled people with high needs to live in the community rather than residential care) and Council Tax Support (which unfairly targets those in rental accommodation) and it is now up to councils how much to fund these, if at all. The disaster that is national welfare reform thus breaks up into postcode issues. Worse is to come as local authorities are being given increased responsibility for ‘labour market activation’, but with no means to fund development and services in the community interest which would create real jobs. Such ‘localism’ further enables central government to wash its hands of responsibility to those on low or no incomes, whilst local politicians increasingly adopt gentrification measures, forcing out poorer residents unable to afford the resulting upscale in living costs.

Civil society over-ruled by the fourth estate (the media)

Despite outright objection to welfare reform as “not fit for purpose” and “discriminatory” by medical institutions, senior judges, religious

leaders and the United Nations, the national media still relentlessly churns out images of those receiving benefits as either vicious shirkers, violent extremists or angelic victims. Consequently the public has been trained to support the coercion of unemployed / under-employed people into workfare or marginally paid work under the threat of stopped benefits. Media portrayal of the trade union movement as disruptive and self-interested is another weapon used to wage war on the welfare state - not only because unions resist cuts to services and jobs, but also because unions promote understanding and practice of equalities and human rights amongst the 7 million workers they represent. Media pressure is also partly responsible for the abandonment of the union movement by the Labour Party, which, like all political parties, depends heavily on mainstream television to reach voters. When independent speakers argue that a mandatory living wage would bring down the welfare bill, broadcasters turn this upside down and insist that fair pay kills jobs and /or that social security is responsible for keeping people out of work. At the same time independent media is stifled through surveillance, blocking, and constant attempts to impose legal limits to internet freedom.

Spiraling Impact of Welfare Reforms

Women and disabled people are worst hit and the effects cascade into the social fabric, compounding deprivation as these groups spend a large amount of time as unpaid carers. 18% of women's income is made up of welfare payments (compared to 8% of men's income), whilst attempts have been made to deny Employment and Support Allowance benefits to over a million disabled people - over half of which have been overturned on appeal. Disabled people are twice as likely to be unemployed as non-disabled and statistics for disabled women from BAME communities indicate that the highest level of structural inequality is borne by this group in terms of employment. Benefit caps and impossible job search (conditionality) requirements and sanctions have forced many (including employed people) to rely on food banks, and in 2013 there were over 900 000 referrals to just one network alone, The Tressell Trust, (up 163% from 2012). Welfare claimants can be sanctioned (benefits stopped) for up to 3 years. There were 860 000 sanctions in the year to June 2013 and Homeless Link reported

nearly 20% of homeless disabled people have been sanctioned. There are also over a hundred known cases of disabled people who have been sanctioned for 3 years. With almost no social housing being built and rents absorbing over 50% of incomes, young people are being forced to live with their parents into their thirties. The number of children living in poverty has risen by half a million, and the statistics for destitution and suicide are rising.

In conclusion, the neoliberal agenda has stripped back some of the most important improvements in conditions for the majority of the UK population in the 20th century – the Welfare State. Attempts to recreate it or launch any new form of social provision will need to address the past weaknesses of the left in its response to the 'moving frontier' of liberal capital. We must target and face down the endless sabotage enacted by elites against all our attempts to improve conditions, and in particular challenge the falsity that liberal capitalists constantly trot out, that their so-called "progressive modernization" is for the benefit of all, not the few. It is neither utopian nor backward looking to be optimistic for change if, at the same time we can learn from the past and how to be stronger not just for ourselves, but for each other and the wider ecosystem of which we are part.

A1. Amendment

Proposed by Brighton & Hove branch

To the section 'Disabled People'
After 'q) Significantly raise the threshold of earnings restrictions for all claimants'
add the following:

'r) Recognise and incorporate into the benefits system an understanding of the difference between working and making a living. Many of those with disabilities, particularly invisible disabilities such as long standing mental health problems, are keen to work, if and when they can, and they should be supported in this. It should also be understood that many people with disabilities are not able to earn a regular living through work, and they should be supported accordingly'.

A2. Amendment

Proposed by Anna Fisher

Seconded by Stephanie Webber

Add the following at the end of the document:

Appendix 2: Social Security Policy – the Short Version

Restore the Safety Net for All

People with the greatest needs in society are bearing the full brunt of the austerity agenda. This outrage is being hidden from the population as a whole by the media, consequently there is no public outcry, but only unaware complicity whilst our own citizens are dying of despair.

This must change.

Background

After the Second World War the people of Britain were determined to build a fairer society. Based on recognition of, and respect for, our mutual inter-dependence – decent homes, employment, education, and healthcare were seen as basic human rights for everyone.

Underpinning this was the concept of Social Security – a safety net that would catch anyone who fell on hard times whether through bereavement, unemployment, sickness, or disability. It would also provide a secure income once retired (The State Pension) paid for by a system of National Insurance. The understanding was that if anyone was allowed to sink into absolute destitution, it would be almost impossible for them to get their lives together again and it would cost society more in the long run.

We have since developed many overlapping social supports provided by the public sector agencies of health, social care, social security and education. These include special needs supports in schools, care packages provided by councils to elderly and disabled people, bereavement, sickness and maternity benefits, unemployment and housing benefits. These services are now all under threat.

The system to manage this provision became statutory under the National Assistance Act (1948) and the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act (1970). The system worked on the principle of:

A right to have one's needs (as defined by the Acts) assessed and, when a person was found eligible for assistance that assistance had to be provided. It could not be withdrawn unless it had

been proved that the need for such assistance no longer existed.

If the provision was in the form of a cash benefit, it was set at a level that guaranteed the minimum needed to live on. Your income was not allowed to fall below this level, as long as you remained eligible.

This system was backed up by social housing at affordable rents, and rent controls on private landlords.

The Current Situation – a system of Social Insecurity

Inch by inch, below the radar of our awareness, the safety net as it was originally conceived is being dismantled.

We now have a system of Social Insecurity as a deliberate policy. We are told that this is because people are living longer, because of our national debt, etc, but these arguments do not hold water. People are being left destitute, including severely disabled people, families with small children, pregnant women. This will lead to much higher costs in the long term as individuals and families fall apart and communities disintegrate. For example, temporary housing, foster care and adoption services, psychiatric hospitals, care homes and even prisons typically cost far more than the benefits that have been withdrawn. And there is no evidence that the changes for unemployed claimants have actually resulted in more people being 'helped into work'. The number of people unemployed for more than 12 months was 796,000 in August 2010 and rose to 807,000 in 2014 after four years of the welfare reforms.

Insecurity is a profound emotional state. It is experienced as a lack of control over our own lives, a constant anxiety which keeps us awake at night. It spreads to our children and other dependents, who absorb the violence into themselves and have no outlet for their anger. Whilst in this state it is almost impossible to do the things which are needed to cope with life, even less to progress our lives to a more stable situation. It also makes us ill.

A large and growing percentage of claimants are working people who simply cannot survive financially without a top up from the public purse, with Housing Benefit totaling 5.2% (£16.94 billion) of the whole annual benefits budget in 2013. Even with this top up, many people still cannot afford to feed their families becoming one of the

913,138 people in 2013-2014 forced to rely on foodbanks. (See Trussell Trust Statistics 2014)

Why are they doing this?

The withdrawal of the economic safety net is designed to make people feel insecure and frightened so we can be more easily forced into accepting ever decreasing wages and worse conditions of employment. The demonizing of the poor helps distract us from the reality of the increasing inequality we suffer, and its real causes. The purpose is to continue, unchallenged, the movement of money from the creators of wealth – the general population, into the private ownership of the owning class, or the 1%.

Immediate Demands

The escalating welfare bill is primarily the result of the privatization of the housing market, and of low pay, resulting in increasing numbers of working people needing 'top up' benefits. Rent controls and a Living Wage are the only ways to reduce this need. Meanwhile the administration of benefits should be based on a humane and 'respectful' view of those in need of support rather the current 'punitive' model. To this end we want a commitment to:

- Ending sanctions (the cause of desperation and destitution amongst even terminally ill people)
- Ending Work Capability Assessments (except those by the NHS for clinical reasons only)
- Accepting that Universal Credit is an unworkable idea. (Retaining Housing Benefit and Income Support at JRF minimum income standards) (Universal Credit essentially rolls up several benefits including JSA and housing support into one benefit that is capped at £350 per week for a single person, £500 per week for a couple. As it is to be paid to households, not individuals it also carries grave implications for women's financial independence and ability to escape domestic violence. Universal Credit has to be applied for monthly online whilst 50% of potential claimants do not have access to a computer, cannot afford broadband, or do not have the literary and technical skills to comply with this requirement. Proponents of UC have already wasted £25 million on a failed IT system and the whole scheme has been sent back to the drawing board by the Government's own scrutiny committee)
- Scrapping the Benefit Cap and 'Bedroom Tax'

- Scrapping Workfare (work is only meaningful when it is freely entered into and for the common good. Such work should be a right for all)
- Halting the programme to introduce Personal Independence Payments (Retain the Disability Living Allowance) (thousands of disabled people are backed up in a queue for assessment for this new and unnecessary benefit without any support, whilst many more thousands of existing claimants are threatened with losing their mobility through withdrawal of specially adapted vehicles or taxi fares when their DLA is taken.
- Re-opening the Independent Living Fund. (This is a top-up payment to ensure disabled people with very high-level care needs can stay in their own homes and live productive lives)
- Scrapping the earnings restrictions for Disabled People and Carers (Making 'work pay' by allowing people to become more self-sufficient without fear of losing benefits.)
- Significantly raise the threshold of earnings restrictions for all claimants (as above)

So far the Trade Union movement is fighting only for the rights of people who are newly unemployed to be able to claim benefits without delay, but Left Unity will fight for everyone – for the principles of justice and security for all.

A3. Amendment

Proposed by Lambeth branch

In Section 3 'Immediate demands':
After paragraph (d) referring to Pensions, add new paragraph (e) and renumber thereafter :
"Lower the state pension age to 60"

B. Social Security

Proposed by West London branch

Together with the NHS, the British social security system has been one of the greatest achievements of the post-war period. Though far from perfect, it was largely successful in achieving its goal of mitigating extreme hardship. In recent decades, a narrative has emerged from all three main parties that accused the social security system of creating

generations of people dependent on it and of encouraging fraud, thus adding to myth that cuts are necessary. While it is true that the current system is not flexible enough to motivate people to work, most of the claims are wildly exaggerated. Furthermore, high rents, zero hours contracts, low wages, lack of affordable childcare and a very competitive job market act as a disincentive to work and discriminate against certain categories of people.

Two Welfare Reform Acts (in 2007 and 2012) have completely changed the social security system in recent years, creating a regime which is more punitive, whilst failing to address the causes of poverty. The Reforms have also increased the use of private companies, for example ATOS and A4E, to assess claimants or to help them find employment. These companies have often proved not to be cost effective to the taxpayer and to harass and bully claimants.

At the same time, the welfare system has provided massive taxpayer subsidies to low paying employers through Working Tax Credit and to landlords through Housing Benefit.

We agree that current system needs reforming, but disagree that it has to be more punitive and less supportive. We also disagree with the division into deserving and undeserving poor, categories that are completely arbitrary, as most social security recipients are actually in work and the vast majority of people claiming out of work benefits have worked and paid contributions.

The increase in food banks, homelessness and suicides shows that Labour and the Coalition's reforms have only increased poverty and despair, and not adequately supported people in a period of high unemployment and little job security. The reforms have also affected disabled people, women with children and young people the most. Many people in these groups have been affected by cuts and reforms multiple times as different benefits have been cut or abolished, without even taking into account the pain caused by cuts to local services and to NHS services.

A few facts:

- 66% of children in poverty are in working households, 21% of working people are not paid the living wage, Zero hours contracts have increased 75% in 2 years while 64% of UK families receive at least one social security benefit
- Lone parent households are losing 18.5% net

income by 2015, single parents are forced to work while problems with childcare have not been solved

- 149,000 JSA claimants per year wrongfully sanctioned, claimants from ethnic minorities and disabled people are disproportionately sanctioned. Most people claim JSA only for short periods of times, Joshua Rowntree Foundation tried to find families with 3 generations out of work (often mentioned by IDS and the tabloids) and found none.
- Many sick and disabled people face up to 6 different benefit cuts, losing up to £5,000 each a year. DWP figures says that fraud for DLA was only 0.7% yet implemented costly and stressful reassessments to combat 'rampant fraud'.

We need a social security system, as part of a general campaign against poverty, that guarantees a minimum living standard to people when unemployed, under-employed, sick and disabled people, unpaid carers and older people. Furthermore, we expect a social security system to also empower people to make an active contribution to society and the economy, according to their abilities, which should be adequately rewarded. The system must be publicly funded and administered.

Our immediate tasks should include:-

- Personal Independent Payment (PIP) is replacing Disability Living Allowance (DLA) with the aim of cutting support to 20% of DLA claimants. PIP should be scrapped and DLA reinstated
- Abolish all sanctions (benefit cuts) and Workfare for Jobseekers Allowance and Employment & Support Allowance claimants; no-one should be left with no income.
- Scrap the Bedroom Tax
- Scrap the Benefit Cap as it discriminates against all larger families and in particular families from ethnic minority communities.
- Abolish the Work Capability Assessment in Employment Support Allowance and consequently abolish the Work Related Activity Group. Introduce a basic payment and a higher rate and re-introduce GP assessments.
- Restore the annual uprating of benefits based on the the Retail Price Index.
- Reverse the cuts made to Tax Credits
- Scrap Universal Credit

Session 4: Education

A. Education Policy Commission report

Framework Policy Statement on Education

Pre-amble – The problem with the current system
Education is under threat internationally from the values and practices of free market capitalism. This varies across the UK, but is most severe in England's education system which pits school against school, parent against parent, the wealthy against the poor, and child against child, all under the myth of 'choice'. The choice only really applies to some families and is linked to the idea of league tables and "winners and losers".

These values are endemic in society and the education system is only one means of driving them forwards.

This driving force is a result of the competitive nature of capitalism itself i.e. the false notion that we must concentrate on the highest fliers in an academic sense or die a death in the struggle to survive in the global market.

Some of the major effects within the Education System are:

- The chronic under-funding, and misuse of funding, of an essential service (Britain is ranked 54th in the world in terms of its education spending as a share of GDP).
- The narrowing down and central control of the curriculum at the cost of the joy in creativity and self directed learning.
- The relentless recourse to testing, labeling and ranking of both pupils and their teachers. League tables have forced schools to concentrate on examination results or risk take-over or closure.
- The lifelong sense of failure engendered in children who are being asked to perform academically before they are developmentally ready.
- The exclusion of less academically able children because they will bring down the schools results in the national league tables. A disproportionate number of these permanent and fixed term exclusions, legal and illegal, are of disabled children, children with 'SEN', and those who are male and black.

- Remove age discrimination in benefits for under 25's
- Remove age discrimination for the under 35 in Housing Benefit (only entitled to Housing Benefit for shared accommodation)
- Reinstate Legal Aid for Social Security cases
- Reinstate the Independent Living Fund
- Reinstate Council tax Benefit
- Reinstate benefit entitlement to Jobseekers Allowance & Housing Benefit for European nationals.
- Remove the Housing Benefit caps and base Housing Benefit for private sector tenants (called the Local Housing Allowance) on average rents.

In the longer term we also need to have a more detailed discussion in Left Unity to include the following issues:

- Pensions
- Benefits and migrants
- Citizens' Income, is that a viable solution?
- Abolishing means testing
- How to support people into work, particularly chronically ill people, people with disabilities, and over 50s
- How the Living Wage and Rent Controls could reduce the Social Security expenditure?
- The role of 'Purple Jobs' in decreasing the cost of social security and provide more job opportunities?

B1. Amendment

Proposed by Brighton & Hove branch

Add the following to the phrase "Reinstate Council tax Benefit",
"ensuring that 100% council tax rebates are guaranteed in law for those on the lowest incomes. Also, add further council tax bands at the top of the valuation scale so that the rich pay a greater portion of council tax."

- Young people who excel at non-academic subjects being seen as second class, or 'failures', reinforcing classism.
- The undermining of hard won gains in good inclusive practice, including for children with high-level support needs who find they are being pushed back into segregated provision or even left with no provision at all.
- The social divisiveness of independent schools, or schools which are not part of mainstream Community provision including Academies, Free Schools, Special Schools and Faith Schools
- The privatization and centralization of educational provision leading to the loss of democratic planning and control through elected Local Authorities
- The loss of excellent Authority Wide Services and specialist support teams.

Left Unity Statement of Principles – One System for All

Education is a fundamental human right. It empowers and informs individuals and allows them to develop to their full potential. It is also a source of creativity, innovation, understanding, discovery and design that are of immeasurable value to society as a whole. It is therefore a prerequisite for any genuinely democratic society.

It is essential for the long term future of humanity and to some extent all of life on earth, that we raise young people who are in touch with their own humanity, that of other people, the natural world upon which we depend, and who are able to think for themselves, work cooperatively and direct their own learning. It is also a crucial element that any new education system must be based on promoting happiness and well being in students, as part of our fight for a better world.

We believe in the principle of a public, universal, transparent and locally accountable system of education, in which all young people are equally valued, regardless of social background or supposed potential. Education should no longer be dependent on money, class or influence and every family must have access to high-quality neighborhood schools. Therefore Left Unity proposes a radically different system of schooling - not simply a return to the comprehensive system of before, but a truly universal, democratic and inspirational education system that caters for the

needs of every learner.

Education should:

- Be provided free at the point of delivery.
- Be a place where all pupils feel welcomed and valued.
- Be an integral part of the local community, fostering shared cultural values and aspirations.
- Provide a range of learning challenges through a variety of teaching styles and learning experiences designed to help pupils of all abilities to become autonomous learners, who can arrive at their own view of the world, take control of their own lives and be active global citizens.
- Attend to the emotional development, well being and health of all children
- Ensure fair and open access to a good inclusive local school for all children regardless of their special needs and circumstances, using a transparent admissions process without recourse to testing or selection.
- Employ governance and management systems based on principles of local democratic accountability and a spirit of mutual respect, co-operation and partnership between parents, staff, governors and the elected representatives of the local community.
- Continue its benefits into adult life through free and accessible Further and Higher Education.

Left Unity Policy on Education

Funding

State Education needs to be adequately funded and free at the point of use up to and including university level. On this basis:

1. Left Unity will decide our funding policy in relation to our overall economic policy which would direct a far larger proportion of our common wealth to our common 'goods', including education.
2. All Academy and Free School Funding Agreements will be rescinded.
3. Academies and Free Schools, removed from the control of private organisations, will be fully integrated within a single, statutory model of school governance, and funded by Local Authorities according to a national formula.

4. LAs will act as the admissions authority and seek to establish a balanced intake in all schools

Faith Schools

About a third of state-funded schools are now "faith" establishments, and in some areas they are the only schools available. New "faith" schools are opening all the time, thanks mainly to the current Government's free schools programme, whilst up to two thirds of all young people in Britain do not follow any organized religion.

According to research by the British Humanist Association religious schools are the most racially segregated, suggesting that the majority of state-funded Sikh, Muslim and Hindu schools have no "white British" pupils.

Left Unity believes that this trend is exacerbating racism, and can only further dangerous divisions within society. The purpose of education is to help all young people develop their powers of critical thinking and that the education system should therefore be secular.

5. Left Unity would withdraw State Funding from schools or colleges which exclusively promote any one religious belief system, including Christianity, or require such establishments to have an open, secular enrollment.

At the same time Left Unity believes that Religious Education in an increasingly diverse school system serving a multi-cultural society is of great importance. 'Faith' is deeply connected to identity, culture and politics, as well as being a vehicle to contemplate moral and philosophical questions such as the meaning of life itself.

As such we would raise the status of the subject and its teachers within the education system and make RE part of the Core National Curriculum.

Private Schools

LU believes that private schools are divisive institutions, forming the bedrock of the British Class System, resulting in the elitism and privilege of a small minority of people at the cost of the majority. LU will therefore:

6. End the charitable status of fee-charging schools.

Staffing

Staff who work in the education sector have

chosen to employ their talents for the benefit of young people and in most cases, regard this as a vocation rather than just a job. We believe this dedication should be recognised by ensuring fair pay and good quality terms and conditions for all education staff. LU will ensure that:

8. Pay will be determined through national negotiations and not on a 'performance' basis. We support equal pay and conditions of service across the entire spectrum of teaching institutions including the chronically underpaid sector of Early Years,

9. We will preserve and improve the public-sector pension schemes which apply to permanent and supply teachers and Support Staff.

We will return to locally funded supply pools of teachers.

10. Professional training for teachers will be extended, with an emphasis on inclusive teaching.

11. The key leadership role of Higher Education Institutions will be established in initial and further teacher training.

Planning and Governance

12. All schools will operate under the local authority umbrella, which will be responsible for planning the overall provision in their area ranging from providing a sufficiency of school places and Admissions Policies to School Transport.

13. The LA would need to resource and engage with the following Forums established by LU:

- Local Education Forums
Bodies which brings together parents, local residents and community organisations with staff and school students in a local learning community.
- An Authority-Wide Education Forum
A place at the level of the local authority as a whole where representatives of parents, teachers, support staff, other professionals, school governors, and members of the local community can come together to discuss and take positions on key issues of education policy and practice. It would include elected representatives of the Local Education Forums.

Structure

Early Education

LU will listen to and learn from the many early years professionals who have come together in campaigns such as the 'Save Childhood Movement' motivated by the increasing concern about the developmentally inappropriate pressure put on young children by the drive to compete in the current economic system. In accord with our overarching statement LU will promote:

14. Children's centers providing family support, adult education, specialist services such as therapeutic play and health services from conception to school age.

15. Programmes that help children develop relationships and communication skills.

Nursery

16. Full or part time State Nursery School Education up to the age of 6 with emphasis on play-based learning and outdoor activities.

Primary

17. High ratios of adults to children, led by qualified teachers. Schools will be inclusive, and progressive pedagogies will be evaluated and encouraged.

Secondary

Much research and creativity needs to be directed by Left Unity as to the details of secondary and further education. For example we will explore the benefits of the work of the Human Scale Education Movement which has successfully created small, friendly schools within existing schools for secondary aged pupils. These help build community and empowerment amongst young people and better relationships with their teachers. Our policy will be built around the basic agreed framework of values outlined in our Statement of Principles:

18. We will not divide academic from 'non academic' study at any age, but rather aim to provide a broad and diverse curriculum with increasing opportunities for specialisms for those pupils who wish to develop a particular interest, aptitude or talent.

19. We will study and develop evaluation systems, including public examinations, which will reflect the achievements of all

20. All young people will be entitled to free, Inclusive Field Trips and School Journeys

Further and Higher (Life-Long) Education

Everyone will be entitled to:

21. A voluntary year of funded voluntary service, in the UK or overseas.

22. Up to six years free Further and Higher Education to include a living grant

Curriculum

Left Unity does not believe in an all encompassing, state controlled curriculum, but does however believe we need a core entitlement curriculum around which teachers can teach flexibly, and which has room for development and innovation. We will:

23. Replace the National Curriculum with an advisory Core Curriculum and consult widely amongst professionals, parents and pupils on a replacement curriculum.

24. End constant assessment, testing and grading of students and replace with a nationally agreed set of assessment tools that move beyond booklet examinations and give all students and teachers a range of ways to express their progress.

25. Reinstate and upgrade the Arts, recognising their crucial importance for the development of creativity and thinking skills, and for their therapeutic potential for children who are suffering trauma, loss or communication difficulties

*Pupils with Additional Needs *see Appendix 1*

The struggle for Inclusive education has been at the heart of the Disability Movement for over 25 years. It also goes to the heart of the values of comprehensive education and the socialist agenda.

Our policy in Left Unity towards this inherited dual system will be embedded within our wider policies, particularly the disbanding of the competitive National League Tables and associated Testing in favour of a collaborative system based on mutual support and planned provision for all. This will remove the pressure to exclude children who do not perform well enough.

We recognize that new and more effective

strategies need to be developed to help both pupils and staff with issues of violence or inappropriate behaviours in school regardless of whether they arise from impairment or distress.

We recognise also that many problems which lead to learning or behavioural difficulties at school are caused by social inequality, such as poverty and homelessness, which can only be addressed by better economic and social policies, not through education alone.

26. All schools will have an open admission policy towards any local child who wishes to attend, without prejudice or discrimination, and will be expected to operate with the guidelines of the Equalities Act, making 'reasonable adjustments' where necessary.

27. Mainstream schools will be funded to support the expected range of needs in any general population, and will be further funded to support children with high level support needs through a Statement, or the new Health and Social Care Plan. Any financial disincentives to admit pupils with Special Educational Needs will be removed.

28. Local Authorities will reinstate and develop their peripatetic support services, making specialist expert advice and support available to all schools free of charge. This will include the Educational Psychology Service, Behaviour Support Teams, the Visually Impaired and Hearing Impaired services, physiotherapists, speech and language therapists, technology advisors, and advisory teachers.

29. Teachers and children will be supported by well-trained Teaching Assistants who have job security and a career path if desired.

30. Statutory Teacher Training will take into account the expectation of inclusive classrooms, include modules on Disability History and Equality, and will promote and develop best practice in mixed-ability teaching.

31. We will plan a gradual but timetabled, phasing out of Special Schools and Colleges, taking into account the fact that many such placements are made for social rather than educational reasons, and will require much greater levels of family support to be put in place.

32. We will ratify the UN Convention of Rights of

Disabled Persons, Article 24, which guarantees the right to an inclusive education for all.

Accountability and Monitoring

33. Pupils, schools and teachers will not be ranked against each other but institutions as a whole will be evaluated against a nationally accepted framework of good practice and young people's rights.

34. Ofsted will be dissolved and replaced by a rigorous but constructive accountability framework

35. The new Inspection Service will be fully versed in good inclusive practice, able to monitor its quality and offer advice and support to help make improvements. The achievements of all children will be celebrated equally.

Careers Advice and Support

36. LU will build much more support for young school leavers of the kind once offered by the Youth Service, the Careers Advice Service and Connexions.

Supplementary Schools

We recognize that supplementary schools can play an important part in transmitting the traditions and cultures of specific communities within the wider secular culture of Britain and our policies would not preclude such schools, funded by religious bodies and parents, to co-exist outside of the school week. (e.g. Saturday Schools or Forest schools)

Supporting Current Campaigns

37. LU will support all current and future campaigns which are in accord with our Statement of Principles and will help move the Education System in the direction of our developing policy. This would include 'Unhurried Pathways' (Early Childhood Action) 'The Primary Charter', (NUT, (+) Socialist Teachers Association) 'Picking Up The Pieces' (CASE) and the 'Manifesto for Inclusive Education' (Alliance for Inclusive Education), Anti Academies Alliance

Appendix 1

Inclusive Education is a struggle founded on the belief that social relationships are at least as important as academic achievement for a future life of meaning and purpose. Segregated 'Special'

schools, inevitably break the relationships between disabled and so called 'normal' young people, to the impoverishment of all.

The roots of segregated provision are buried in the murky past of Eugenics. The working class were understood to be of inferior genetic stock to that of their rulers, leading to a weaker intellect, low and fixed IQ, weaker minds and bodies, and weaker morals with inherent criminal tendencies. It was a pseudo-scientific theory to support the elitism of the owning class, who invented it all. These false ideas still underpin the classism and elitism endemic in our current system.

One modern day incarnation of Eugenics is hidden behind a mask of respectability and 'kindness' called the Medical Model of Disability and Behaviour. This identifies the impairments themselves as the problem needing to be fixed, requiring an army of well paid and respected professionals to try and make such children more 'normal'. The underlying motive is financial – to make such people less dependent on the State as adults. This model leaves society itself unchanged – i.e. able to pursue its capitalist agenda.

Since 1981 and the Warnock Report which resulted in individual support being made available to disabled children in mainstream schools, enormous progress has been made in the field of inclusive education. Although best practice is still patchy and somewhat dependent on a committed Head Teacher to lead the way for her/his school, there is now much documented evidence that inclusion works. Many young disabled adults are living supported lives in the mainstream, of a quality which was deemed impossible in the past. The current generation of young non-disabled people are far less prejudiced towards disabled people who may now be their friends and colleagues.

Left Unity will explore the creation of a new position within schools and colleges called 'The Inclusion Assistant' who give individual support to children and young people with High Level Support Needs including those who are non-verbal or who depend on technology to live, learn and communicate. The skills involved in this role will be recognised and rewarded financially. Their training will involve the Disability Movement as well as individual families and the children themselves.

To be written and added for the pamphlet:
Appendix 2: Human Scale Education

Appendix 3: Learning Without Limits
Appendix 4 :The Finnish Experience + others
Appendix 5 :Research into School Exclusions – the Office of the Children's Commissioner, Community Empowerment Network and others
Appendix 6. School Democracy
Appendix 7. Collaboration for Improvement
Etc etc – to back up our policy with facts.

A1. Amendment

Proposed by Wandsworth and Merton branch

In the section headed, 'Faith Schools, sub-section 5

Replace

"At the same time Left Unity believes that Religious Education in an increasingly diverse school system serving a multi-cultural society is of great importance. 'Faith' is deeply connected to identity, culture and politics, as well as being a vehicle to contemplate moral and philosophical questions such as the meaning of life itself.

As such we would raise the status of the subject and its teachers within the education system and make RE part of the Core National Curriculum."

By

"At the same time Left Unity believes that education about religions in an increasingly diverse school system serving a multi-cultural society is of great importance. 'Faith' is sometimes deeply related to identity, culture and politics. As such we would include the study of diverse religious traditions as part of the appropriate curricula: History, Geography, Economics, Philosophy, etc".

A2. Amendment

Proposed by Loughborough branch

In the section entitled 'Faith Schools':

Replace "Religious Education" in penultimate paragraph and "RE" in final paragraph by "Education about religion"

In the section entitled 'Planning and Governance'

Insert "state-funded" between "all" and "schools"

In the section entitled 'Secondary', paragraph no. 19

Add at end "This study will include a re-examination of the principles of the 2004 Tomlinson Report which recommended an overarching and modular assessment system for ages 14-19"

A3. Amendment

Proposed by Sheffield branch

Amend point 12 to add "which will include trade union and teaching association representatives", so that it reads: "All schools will operate under the local authority umbrella, which will include trade union and teaching association representatives, and will be responsible for planning the overall provision in their area ranging from providing a sufficiency of school places and Admissions Policies to School Transport."

Amend point 34 to add "under the democratic authority of trade unions and teaching associations", so that it reads: "Ofsted will be dissolved and replaced by a rigorous but constructive accountability framework under the democratic authority of trade unions and teaching associations."

A4. Amendment

Proposed by Lambeth branch

1. Insert at end of Preamble section:
The "burnout" of teachers working up to 60 hours per week.

The loss of 2 in 5 qualified teachers within their first 5 years of qualifying.

2. In Preamble section,
Replace: "This driving force is a result of the competitive nature of capitalism itself i.e. the false notion that we must concentrate on the highest fliers in an academic sense or die a death in the struggle to survive in the global market."

By:
"This driving force is a result of the nature of

capitalism itself, in particular (a) the drive to turn every aspect of human life into a commodity to be bought and sold on the market place, including education, hence the opening up of state education to private companies who increasingly make a profit out of selling services that once were provided by the state according to some sort of plan, and (b) the market's need for a stratified workforce:

The highest fliers (in an academic sense), future captains of industry and of finance, and the next generation of political, military, civil service and judicial top ranks, who must be given the lion's share of resources at top private schools, selective grammar schools and academies, and Russell group universities;

Entrepreneurs, scientists, engineers and designers, supervisors and managers, again from fee-paying schools, grammar schools and selective academies, who are consciously groomed for university and often go on to second degrees; Skilled and semi-skilled workers, who attend the standard state schools system, where post-16 they specialise in job-oriented courses at FE college or Sixth Forms, maybe university;

Unskilled workers, prepared for life in precarious, minimum wage or just above employment, tomorrow's 'reserve army of labour', who are whipped into line, whose will to resist is broken by exclusions and periods in Pupil Referral Units or worse.

This brutal system of stratification has nothing to do with fulfilling potential, nor even a rational allocation of human resources to production, and everything to do with maintaining the class system and crushing the ambitions of the vast majority. As socialists, while we recognise and encourage the link between education and the world of work (though not exploitation), we believe this can and should be done by raising every student to and beyond their perceived potential throughout their lifetime."

3. Insert new point 10:

An urgent review will be conducted into teacher workload to ensure staff welfare and improve retention.

4. Insert new point 18:

A programme of career development will be launched for black and ethnic minority teaching assistants and teachers to redress the disproportionate number of white teachers in

schools with predominately black and ethnic minority pupils.

5. Insert new point 19:

A review will be conducted into the high numbers of pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL) in city primary schools and how teachers can be better supported with this.

6. Insert new point 23:

A qualified teacher will be in every FE classroom (reinstating the recently revoked Further Education Teacher's Qualifications (England) Regulations 2007).

7. Add to the penultimate bullet point of the Statement of Principles:

"and of course the students themselves, self-organised through independent school student and student unions".

8. Add to point 1 of Policy on Education:

"This will be paid for by taxing the rich."

9. Delete points 4-6 (Faith schools and fee-charging, i.e. independent schools) and add to point 2:

"All independent fee-charging schools and grammar schools should be brought into the non-selective state education system, without compensation, and their resources shared locally and regionally. All faith schools should also be placed under a fully secular state system; while we defend the rights of students (and educators) to observe their religious codes, religion itself has no place in the education system."

10. Add new point (12) under heading Staffing:

"All support staff should be paid for the full 12 months, not pro-rata, and trained and recognised as educators, with this reflected in their pay and conditions."

11. In first sentence under the heading of Authority-Wide Education Forum add:

"and school students".

12. In the preamble under the heading Structure [...] Secondary, replace "For example we will explore the benefits of the work of the Human Scale Education Movement which has successfully created small, friendly schools within existing schools for secondary aged pupils."

with:

"From the age of 13-14 onwards (KS3), secondary education needs to be far more closely related to the world of work, though without exploitation or knocking out the spirit of creativity or free enquiry, but rather by pacing school education in the context of purposeful social activity and mutual cooperation (labour). From the age of 16 onwards (KS5), real apprenticeships on trade union rates of pay, with paid time off to study in FE and technical colleges, and with the offer of real, permanent jobs at the end should be encouraged. Restore and upgrade EMA. Schools should be as large as the community will bear as these can offer wider choice. They need to be adequately resourced so that multi-teacher classes, limited to 20 students per class, small group work and one-to-one tutelage can be provided as required. Real families of schools should also be encouraged. All classes should be mixed ability and can be so with this resourcing. Schools should be truly part of the community, with their facilities and courses open to all local residents, including ESOL and ITC. Expand EAL provision. Families should be welcomed as equal partners in education."

13. Replace point 23 (National Curriculum) with:

"The National Curriculum is essential for providing equal opportunity and preventing bigots taking advantage and control of education in local schools or areas. Teachers, parents and school students should be in charge of drawing up and periodically upgrading the curriculum. There should be autonomy for educators and students in deciding how the curriculum is delivered and where necessary addressing problems of poor quality educators, in the first instance through advice and training."

14. Point 34, Accountability and Monitoring, insert after new Inspection Service "which should include elected representatives of educators, parents and students".

15. Delete the section on Supplementary Schools.

16. Delete Appendix 1

17. Delete reference to the Save Childhood movement and replace with "education campaigns"

Session 5: International

A. International Policy Commission report

History and Aim of the Report

This report has been revised since the March Policy Conference in consultation with the convenor of the Solidarity Commission and current members of the 'Foreign Policy Commission'. It is the product of criticisms of the original report, including the amendments proposed (but not discussed) in March.

In what follows we outline

1. the commitments that found our party in their international aspects
2. some shaping contexts of our policy making
3. the policies we recommend as priorities.

We Have a Vision: International-Socialist Aspects

There is a long tradition of left-wing engagements with the international emerging especially in the decades before and after World War 1. The keynotes of policy were identification with workers and workers' organisations abroad, opposition to autocratic government and imperial seizures and wars, and the defence of small nations. The same period saw the growth of anti-war and pro-peace movements in which women, many newly enfranchised, often played the key part. Both sides of this gender-related inheritance are recognised and developed here.

The socialist-internationalist aspects hinge on our critical analysis of global capitalism in its contemporary neo-liberal form. As our founding conference agreed 'there are no national solutions to the problems that humanity faces.' As capitalism is a global system, so our politics and solidarities must be international. The 1970s crisis of capital led to two main capitalist strategies. The first was the extension of market relations to social tasks previously provided through the national or local state. This involved a rolling programme of privatisation. Everything in theory could be turned into a commodity, bought and sold, by 'consumers' themselves or through contracts with commissioning bodies dispensing (our own) public funds. We are seeing the takeover of social and the destruction of the post-war

B. Educating for Equality

Proposed by Islington branch

Conference believes:

- That inclusive age-appropriate sex and relationship education should be delivered by specially trained teachers to children and young people throughout their time in schools and colleges. This needs to address the commercialisation of sex in pornography and the wider culture and the objectification of people particularly women and girls. It should provide opportunities for pupils to critically engage with these issues and to understand consent and the pitfalls of social media and trends such as sexting. This is vital in the context where young women in particular are being subjected to unprecedented levels of sexual bullying and where rape remains a live issue. These issues should also be an integral part of the mainstream curriculum where relevant (eg history, literature, the arts, science...).
- That all those working in education should be given regular training to enable them to respond appropriately to bullying including that based on racism, islamaphobia, misogyny, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and humiliation of those with physical or mental impairments.
- That it is also important that all those working in education are covered by policies protecting them from discrimination on the grounds above and that appropriate action is taken against perpetrators of such discrimination be they other workers, governors, students, parents or others
- That the celebration of events such Black History Month (<http://www.blackhistorymonth.org.uk/>), Roma Gypsy Traveller History Month (<http://grthm.natt.org.uk/>) Disability History Month (<http://ukdisabilityhistorymonth.com/>), LGBT History Month (<http://lgbthistorymonth.org.uk/>), Women's' History Month (<http://www.alternativearts.co.uk/womens-history-month/4581216304>), International Women's Day (<http://www.internationalwomensday.com/>) and International Workers' Day should be important parts of the education year in schools and colleges.

social-democratic settlement. The second strategy, often described as globalisation, is to remove all barriers to the movement of capital, whether in the form of labour, land, resources, or markets. The (disastrous) deregulation of finance was a key feature. Globalisation and the imposition of markets extend and deepen the wage system, so enlarge the working class and increase the precariousness of labour.

Neo-liberal policies are backed by most international agencies such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the European Commission (EC) and enforced through international agreements such as General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). When however it comes to paying for sovereign debt, which the failures of banks have forced on states, international agencies overrule the states, insisting on austerity measures that hit the working classes, and shunt aside democracy.

The United States established its position as the imperial guarantor of free market capitalism for its own corporations at the end of the Second World War. It still has this position through the US dollar as the international reserve currency and through the ambition of 'full spectrum (military) dominance' of the world. Increasingly NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) can be seen as being the military wing of neo-liberalism, and its expansion in Eastern Europe as major threat to peace.

This US led imperial hegemony is neither unchallenged nor complete. Since the end of the Cold War the world has become more multi-polar in 'great power' and 'intermediate power' terms, while opposition to the neo-liberal project is also becoming global: anti-war movements, movements for democracy and civil rights and struggles over capital's seizure and misuse of limited planetary resources. Unexpected checks confound imperial ambitions – in the Middle East for instance. Our own policies must not repeat the imperial delusion that 'the west' is the only agency that counts. We need to grasp local conditions too.

As Left Unity we have a vision of a world that is not dominated by global capital and its requirements, that does not systematically subordinate the 99%, nor ruin the biosphere. This has many detailed implications for international policies: for our relations to the USA, EU and NATO, for solidarity with working class

organisations and stateless peoples, for the radical reconstruction of international agencies, for stopping the UK being a tax and money laundering haven for big capital, for rethinking 'security' and 'defence' and so remodeling the army, aid and diplomatic corps, creating new forms of international connection.

The Contribution of Peace Movements

Contemporary anti-war movements have been the sharpest expression of popular dissent against Blairite, neo-Conservative and Coalition foreign policies and their imperialist character. They oppose the subordination of the British policy to US military dominance. They have assumed an unprecedented scale and taken many different forms: from huge street demonstrations (Iraq and Afghanistan) to smaller focussed protests against nuclear weapons, drone wars, American bases, NATO and the arms trade. Most recently they resisted the first threats of adding attacks from NATO to the sufferings of the Syrian people.

'Not in Our Name', however, has been part of a wider mood of war-weariness and of scepticism about costly military adventures, especially while people are made to go hungry and homeless at home. This wider anti-war consciousness is ambiguous and perhaps quite volatile. To be against war, even against imperialist war, is not a whole international policy. Recent months have also seen a sustained attempt to reverse anti-war feeling – through conservative commemoration of World War 1, through new NATO expansions and the heightened conflict with Russia, and through finding further 'demons' in the Islamic world. This is why we need to connect anti-war protests to a developed international policy.

This connection is important too for Left Unity. Peace has long been a focus for the political activity of women from all social classes and different political persuasions. Women consistently poll as more anti-war (and anti-nuclear) than men. Peace movements have been more innovative in their campaigning than most socialist groups (so far), alive to the importance of culture, symbol and meaning, and the subjective aspects of politics, including the importance of trust, person-to-person respect, and of the connections between war and violence and particular forms of masculinity. Anti-war campaigning has also been a way of bridging persistent ethnic gulfs in British politics. It has linked secular-minded campaigners with members of religious communities. Above all

peace movements recognise that war is peculiarly destructive of human life, the environment, homes and the means of making a living.

The influence of the UK's imperial past continues to act as a dead hand on state policies, people's consciousness and how the rest of the world views us. Despite the swing to peace, and differences in Scotland and Wales, the official nation-state, including the monarchy, remains militaristic and hierarchical, while society and culture themselves are deeply formed by empire and slavery.

Displacing this legacy is one of Left Unity's major tasks. It involves changes in culture, state institutions, and conceptions of national identity as well as what is usually called 'foreign policy'.

We must shift away from military alliances, imperial ambitions, preparations for war and the construction of enemies and towards cultural dialogue, cross-national solidarities, the critical recognition of our own imperial history and the development of more just international institutions. We oppose the military adventures of the British ruling class and seek to develop international policies that promote the interests of the working class internationally through diplomacy, peacemaking, human development, greener adaptations, protection of the planet and its species, and the struggle for economic justice.

International Priorities

1. Left Unity does not call, or campaign for, British withdrawal from the EU, particularly given the racist and xenophobic campaign against the EU being conducted by UKIP and the Tory right. We are pro-European internationalists and are therefore opposed to all nationalist solutions that set the peoples against one another. We recognise however, that the EU is bosses club, with the collective aim of increasing the exploitation of the European working class and attacking welfare provision within the framework of the global neoliberal agenda as enshrined in the Maastricht and Nice treaties. We continue to oppose TTIP and oppose joining the single currency. We will work with like-minded parties and movements for a different Europe based on solidarity

2. Start to build our international political connections by applying for observer membership of the Party of the European Left immediately following the close of this conference. An application in line with the constitution of the Party of the European Left (<http://european-left.org/>

propos-de-la-ge/documents) should be prepared and progress reported to the next meeting of the National Council. If the negotiations are complete in time, a proposal to accept and become an observer will be placed before the next National Conference.

3. Pursue independence from USA and its alliances, leaving NATO, cancelling the US/UK Mutual Defence Agreement and withdrawing from the US/NATO Missile Defence system.

4. Work with like-minded parties in Europe against imperialist war, drawing on the lessons of World War 1 and noting the alarming rise of tensions between the great powers today. Approach anti-war organisations and socialist parties in Europe, with a view to organising an international anti-war conference in 2016, drawing on the lessons of the Zimmerwald Conference of 1915.

5. Endorse the Left Unity statement on Ukraine of the 3 March 2014 which concluded with the call "No foreign intervention in Ukraine whether political, economic or military - Democracy and equality for all the people of Ukraine.

6. Advocate the Scrapping of Trident, oppose its replacement in any form and support the complete and unilateral nuclear disarmament of the UK.

Link this to an initiating role in international negotiations towards a global ban. Fund alternative jobs for Trident-related workers. Work with CND and ICAN and the majority of states for a nuclear weapons free world. Affiliate to CND, Stop the War and the Drone Campaign Network.

7. Form a Commission or sub-committee with appropriate expertise, to plan the re-configuration of UK military and emergency forces around the redefinition of security needs, peacekeeping and international humanitarian aid work. Issue an alternative report to coincide with the official Security and Defence Review (2015).

8. Support the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and the human rights of Palestinians. Support the BDS campaign (Boycott, Disinvestment and Sanctions). Oppose anti-Semitism wherever it arises.

9. Support and affiliate to the campaigns opposing the TTIP negotiations (e.g. World Development Movement).

10. Challenge the arguments that immigration is a problem, support campaigns for asylum seekers to be welcome in the UK and apply our anti-racist policies to oppose the linking of specific people as an international threat. (See also 13)

11. Monitor and expose the tax avoidance, forms

of exploitation and domination of multinational corporations and financial institutions, for example the new wave of colonialism in Africa.

12. Advocate the use of a 'real security dividend' for green and social uses. If we end all military interventions in other countries and redefine Britain's international role in non-imperial, non-military ways, the need for extensive conventional armories, nuclear weapons and a massive arms industry disappears, releasing resources for social development and alternative green economic policies.

13. Develop detailed plans for the fundamental reform and restructuring of the UN and its agencies, the International Criminal Court and the International Court for Justice, ending victor's justice and the domination of imperialist states. Campaign for an end to the vetoes on the Security Council by the permanent members.

14. Recognise fully the cultural aspects of international relations e.g. the ways mainstream media and governments create international (or domestic) enemies stigmatize migrants, ethnic minorities, peoples without a state (e.g. Kurds or Palestinians) or supposedly enemy states and peoples like Russia and China.

15. Our party is committed to combating man-made climate change and protecting the environment and other species. We should work closely with environmental groups in putting these issues more firmly on the political agenda, contributing our own understanding of how it is capital's pursuit of profit that produces many aspects of environmental damage.

16. In many countries LGBT people face incredible prejudice and discrimination, backed by an array of repressive laws and in some countries fact the death penalty. Much of this reactionary and homophobic agenda has been driven by the actions of US evangelical churches in African countries. The recent actions of the Putin government in Russia by legalising anti-LGBT actions has led to huge attacks on the Russian LGBT population by introducing a form of the infamous Section 28. There also continue to be executions and imprisonment of LGBT people in countries such as Iran. We will campaign for the rights of LGBT people internationally and recognise that LGBT rights are human rights and should be supported. While not being supportive of any reactionary or imperialist campaigns to try and link human/LGBT rights campaigns internationally with issues such as

military interventions – we will campaign against homophobia and transphobia internationally and stand together with LGBT people across the world.

Working on Longer Term Policies

International Policy is a huge area. Within the terms of the constitution we need to establish a sub-committee or commission with access to appropriate expertise, which can report and make recommendations to the National Council. It should monitor struggles being undertaken by workers, resistance against oppression and climate change around the world. More specifically it should:

- A. Assess the potential for working with other international socialist parties and groupings
- B. Provide background briefings and analysis of international events.
- C. Provide briefings of international publications aiding our support of resistance and critique of international capitalism.
- D. Monitor and expose the tax avoidance, forms of exploitation and domination of multinational corporations and financial institutions.
- E. Prepare and make policy recommendations to National Conference, Council or the Executive Committee, as appropriate and publish these on the Left Unity website along with reports based on the other sections.
- F. Fund exchanges, especially for young people, with movements and institutions abroad that are working for popular emancipation, also using more effectively all the new forms of popular media.

A1. Amendment

Proposed by Haringey branch, Sarah Parker
Seconded by Mike Milne-Picken

In the section 'International Priorities' add point 15:

"15 a)

We support the right of the Kurdish people in all four parts of Kurdistan and in the diaspora to self-determination, and in the case of Syria, we support the democratic autonomy declared on 1 January 2013 by the three cantons of Rojava, Afrin, Kobane and Jazira, where the people are organising the society themselves on the basis of a social contract guaranteeing basic social security, where the rights of ethnic and religious

minorities are guaranteed, and gender equality is being implemented in various ways including through strong female participation in the People's Protection Units, and in civil life by quotas and the co-chair system where official posts have 2 office holders, one male and one female.

b) We believe that the people of Syria including the Kurds of Syria have the right to defend themselves against the Assad regime and against ISIS. We therefore at this critical juncture for Kobani and indeed for Syria support the demand of the PYD (Party of Democratic Unity) in Kobani, and of the Kurdish Peoples' Assembly, Roj Women's Assembly, and of the Free Youth Movement here in Britain, for advanced heavy weapons from the British government, without strings attached, to defeat the ISIS tanks and armoured cars.

c) We salute the heroic resistance of the YPG and YPJ in Kobani and their defence of the Yezidi people of Shingal since August, and of all those resisting ISIS sectarianism throughout Iraq and Syria.

d) Additionally we support the efforts of the defenders of Kobani and the Kurdish mass movement to make their own efforts to sustain the defence of Kobani, not only through the determination and bravery of the fighters in and around Kobani, but also through the protests throughout Kurdistan and Europe and beyond; locally with the struggle to control the border at Pirsus and elsewhere; by building on existing links with some components of the Syrian Free Army; by pushing to open their own corridor between Kobani and the third canton of Jazira, by driving out ISIS from some areas they presently control; by making links with the left and solidarity activists world-wide, such as with the Red-Green Alliance members from Denmark who publicly collected money for weapons and presented it to PYD co-chair Salih Muslim.

e) We support the demand of the PYD (Party of Democratic Unity) in Kobani, and of the Kurdish Peoples' Assembly, Roj Women's Assembly, and of the Free Youth Movement here in Britain for NATO members to act to restrain Turkey considering the overwhelming evidence of Turkish state support for ISIS, including through supply of weapons and aid for ISIS troop reinforcements .

f) We support the repeated calls of Kobani PYD co-chairs Asya Abdullah and Salih Muslim for

the opening of a corridor into Kobani to allow the free movement in and out of Kobani of material aid, weapons for the defenders, Kurdish fighters, and people of Kobani, - including those who are displaced or have become refugees, and are still at risk of massacre by ISIS.

g) We agree to support the struggle for self-determination of the Kurdish people generally and for Kobani in particular at the moment, by building Kurdish mobilisations in the labour movement, by encouraging comrades to donate money to Heyva Sor, the Kurdish Red Crescent, by working with the Women's alliance for Kurdistan Syria and Iraq, a new women's campaign in solidarity with all those suffering abuse and violence at the hands of ISIS, and by participating in other joint work with members of the Kurdish community in Britain, including if possible via a solidarity committee.

h) We call for the removal of the PKK from all the "terror lists".

A2. Amendment

Proposed by Lambeth branch

In the Section headed 'International Priorities' Paragraph 1 :

Delete and replace by : "We do not support an exit from the EU, but we do not support its current undemocratic and neoliberal structures. We will unite with working class and socialist movements across Europe to fight for EU refoundation, for the EU parliament to be sovereign and for a policy of social justice".

Paragraph 6 :

Delete (renumbering thereafter)

Paragraph 12 :

Delete the sentence, "Develop detailed plans for the fundamental reform and restructuring of the UN and its agencies, the International Criminal Court and the International Court for Justice, ending victor's justice and the domination of imperialist states"

A3. Amendment

Proposed by Liverpool branch

In final paragraph under the heading, 'The Contribution of Peace Movements':

Delete :

"We should not be known for military adventures, but for our role in" and replace by "We reject the military adventures of the British ruling class and seek to develop international policies that promote the interests of the working class internationally through"

Under the heading 'International Priorities':

After:

"1. Stay in the European Union, working with like-minded parties and movements for a fundamental democratic reform of its institutions and an end to its ideological commitment to neo-liberal policies",

Add :

"Support the right of democratically elected governments to stand up to the pressure of European banking interests by refusing to implement austerity and privatisation policies. Work to build organisations that promote the solidarity of the working class across Europe."

A4. Amendment

Proposed by Fred Leplat

Seconded by Bel Druce

In third Paragraph: after 'World Trade Organisation (WTO)', add 'the European Union (EU), European Central Bank'

Under International Priorities

Delete existing point no. 1 and replace with the following:

1. Working with like-minded parties and movements in the European Union for a fundamental democratic reform of its institutions and an end to its neo-liberal and austerity policies.

INSERT new point 2 and renumber accordingly:

2. In the event of a referendum being called on Britain's membership of the EU, Left Unity's position on how to vote and the campaign it should run will be decided at a policy conference.

A5. Amendment

Proposed by Ed Bober

Seconded by Brian Green

After:

"1. Stay in the European Union, working with like minded parties and movements for a fundamental democratic reform of its institutions and an end to its ideological commitment to neo-liberal policies"

Add:

"Support the right of democratically elected governments to stand up to the pressure of European banking interests by refusing to implement austerity and privatisation policies. Work to build organisations that promote the solidarity of the working class across Europe."

Ba. A socialist response to the actions of the "Islamic State" and subsequent Western intervention in Iraq (version a)

Proposed by Lambeth branch, Matt Hale

Seconded by Tom Armstrong

Conference notes:

1.1: That in 2014 the Islamic State (IS) seized control of large parts of northern Iraq and eastern Syria, taking advantage of a power vacuum created by a weak government in the former and the ongoing civil war in the latter.

1.2: The IS was formed as a splinter group from the official al-Qaeda organisation in the region, which rose to prominence after the 2003 invasion of Iraq and the subsequent fall of the Saddam Hussein regime. The IS split from al-Qaeda in order to establish their version of a new "Islamic Caliphate".

1.3: The IS has been supported both financially and materially (including provision of arms) by prominent people within several reactionary Arab dictatorships in the region, notably Saudi Arabia and Qatar. They have also been covertly backed by the Assad regime in Syria, even though they are officially enemies, and have ruthlessly suppressed other groups fighting the Assad regime.

1.4: This support is an attempt to undermine attempts to create a legitimately democratic space in the region, which would potentially threaten their own regimes from within.

1.5: The current hostility to the IS from the US and UK is in part due to several cases where US and UK citizens have been murdered at the hands of the IS, whilst the US and UK governments

hypocritically ignored the murder of Syrian, Iraqi and Kurdish people by the IS.

1.6: The IS has brutally oppressed anyone who does not support their virulently reactionary, fundamentalist interpretation of Sunni Islam. This includes Shia Muslims, Christians and Yazidis, among many others. When the IS takes control of an area all non-Sunni Muslims have been given a choice of forced conversion or death, and countless people have already been murdered at the hands of the IS.

1.7: The IS's actions have threatened the existence of the autonomous Kurdish region of Iraq, and have encroached on territory controlled by the Kurdistan Regional Government, which has been relatively stable in comparison with the rest of Iraq.

1.8: This has in turn resorted in a refugee crisis as persecuted groups flee from the IS.

1.9: The governments of the United States and the United Kingdom have committed to air strikes against the IS, citing humanitarian grounds and a supposed threat to people in their respective countries. This is part of coalition which includes other Western countries and also other reactionary regimes in neighbouring Arab countries, which themselves have appalling human rights records, including the government of Saudi Arabia.

Conference believes:

2.1: That the IS is a viciously reactionary organisation which needs to be prevented from carrying out its murderous and genocidal agenda.

2.2: The 2003 invasion of Iraq laid the foundations for the current crisis by destabilising the country and creating a power vacuum which the IS seeks to fill. Similarly, military action against the Gaddafi regime in Libya in 2011 ultimately served to destabilise that country. Therefore any further military intervention in Iraq from the UK or other Western countries will not be in the interests of the Iraqi people.

2.3: Airstrikes from the UK and other Western military do not provide the answer, since it has been proven that such action makes the situation worse for the people affected.

2.4: Military intervention from the UK, US and other Western countries, whilst done under the guise of humanitarianism, is always a cynical measure used to further the interests of their governments and their corporate backers.

2.5: The people of Kurdistan and anywhere that

is in the path of the IS have every right to resist IS incursion and use whatever means available in order to protect their homes and communities from them.

2.6: The people currently under IS control have every right to resist and attempt to overthrow the IS if and when such opportunities arise.

2.7: In order to defend themselves against the IS, the Kurdish forces need arms.

2.8: Even though the region is in a state of civil war, ultimately there can be no military solution to the crisis - the people of the region need to be able to determine for themselves the best solution.

Conference resolves:

3.1: To oppose UK military intervention in both Iraq and Syria.

3.2: To show solidarity with the people of Iraq and Syria (including the Kurds) and with organisations within Iraq and Syria which are fighting the IS and for the freedom of people. Such organisations include the Peshmerga (Kurdish Regional Government militia), the Kurdistan People's Party (PKK) and the Free Syrian Army - even though we as socialists may not 100% agree with their principles, since they are all that stand between the ordinary people of the region and the much more oppressive and reactionary forces of the IS, Assad and other Islamist organisations.

3.3: To demand that the government no longer considers the PKK a terrorist organisation.

3.4: To oppose entities that use the threat of the IS in order to further their own oppressive agenda. This includes the Assad regime in Syria, the theocratic regime in Iran, and any other rival reactionary Islamist groups.

3.5: To oppose attempts by the government to prosecute anyone from the UK for "terrorism" who decides to join the armed struggle against the IS.

3.6: To call for the building of a socialist and truly democratic society in Iraq, Syria and throughout the world.

Ba 1. Amendment

Proposed by John Penney
Seconded by Susan Pashkoff

Delete entire paragraph 2.2. Replace with:
"The 2003 invasion of Iraq was undoubtedly motivated by the desire of the USA and its Western subordinate allies to gain direct control

of the strategically vital oil supplies of Iraq. The historically naïve and endlessly arrogant NeoCon elite in the US who organised the 2003 invasion thought that after the invasion Iraq would settle down to be a stable, client state, bourgeoisie democracy. In reality the 2003 invasion opened up a "Pandora's Box" of unresolved sectarian conflict in Iraq, and eventually across the Middle East, after it destroyed the murderously oppressive Sunni-dominated Saddam Ba'athist dictatorship, which had both played off the deep seated ethnic/religious divisions in Iraq in a long term "divide and rule" strategy, and murdering hundreds of thousands of the Kurdish and Shia communities, in order to maintain Sunni dominance. With the fall off the Saddam dictatorship the Shia majority, particularly under the divisive Maliki government, and encouraged by the local imperialist Shia power, Iran, unfortunately sought to exclude the large Sunni minority from power and fair wealth sharing – using brutal Shia Militias to put down Sunni resistance to this exclusion. The long oppressed Iraqi Kurds also took advantage of the chaos of the post Saddam era to push for autonomy in their oil rich northern region. It is out of the deep past history of dictatorship and sectarian oppression in the Middle East, plus Western colonialism's dire legacy in exploiting these divisions, and the post 2003 invasion failures of the Iraqi's to construct a fair, democratic, society in which all citizens can prosper in security and peace, and the resultant outrage of the Sunni minority at their exclusion, that the brutal, sectarian, fundamentalist Sunni insurrectionary movement of Islamic State/ISIL has arisen"

Delete 2.3, 2.4, 2.8

Renumber : 2.5 becomes 2.3; 2.6 becomes 2.4; and 2.7 becomes 2.5

Insert a new 2.6:

"The Kurds and other oppressed minorities in Iraq and Syria, under imminent threat of genocide/mass killing/forced religious conversion/mass female sexual enslavement, have the absolute right to self defence, and as a component of this, the right to call for heavy weapons, training, and close air support for their fighting units, from whatever powers they deem appropriate. This is so even if this requires that weapons and close air support will have to come from the likes of

Britain/France/USA/Saudi Arabia, Turkey, etc. These powers are themselves undoubtedly a major cause of the current catastrophe in the Middle East, but in the face of an imminent genocidal threat from the barbarically reactionary forces of Islamic State, as with the many socialist and anti imperialist resistance movements fighting the fascist Axis powers during WWII who had to accept arms from the colonialist and imperialist Western allies, we recognise the tactical needs of the moment for the Kurdish People in particular.

Delete existing 3.1, and replace with:

"To campaign to support the long fought for demand of the Kurdish People across the artificial post 1918 French/British Imperialism imposed boundaries of the Middle East for a unitary, democratic, non-sectarian Kurdish nation state. We also solidarise with the current life and death struggle of the Kurds, and numerous other ethnic/religious minorities, and women facing enslavement in particular, in Iraq and Syria, against the murderously sectarian onslaught of the Islamic State/ISIL movement – by recognising the right of those combatting this brutal and merciless aggression to secure weapons and air support from whatever source those doing the fighting think tactically appropriate.

Ba2. Amendment

Proposed by John Tummon

Seconded by Mark Anthony France

Add to 1.1:

'We see this as the latest tragic chapter in the complex and divided resistance of the peoples of the Middle East against the imperialist intervention of the western capitalist powers. Despite the atrocities it has carried out and its attack on the Kurds, IS nevertheless represents an attempt to break fundamentally with the structure of religiously and ethnically divided nation states imposed on the region by Britain and France at the end of the First World War. It now controls a swath of land from western Syria to western Iraq, running religious schools, bakeries and power plants, exporting oil, levying taxes and organising parades of tanks, and is fighting a war on several fronts. Its call for a Caliphate holds out to Middle Eastern Muslims the promise of a return to something more like the Ottoman Caliphate that

preceded western domination and held sway over a vast, complex and diverse empire, home to many ethnicities and faiths. Unlike a continuation of the framework of western-imposed nation states, it therefore, theoretically, has progressive potential, although this is hard to see in the heat of a violent struggle and IS's terror tactics against other strands within Islam. Even so, this, together with the west's failure to confront Shi'a dominance in both Iraq and Syria, accounts for the mass support IS has gathered from among Sunnis in the region'.

Delete 1.2 and substitute:

'The IS was formed in Jordan in 2002. Although it was later re-named Tanzeem Qaedat al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Rafidayn, otherwise known as al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), it dropped this name (AQI) a decade ago and subsequently united several jihadist groups under the banner of the Mujahideen Shura Council; it has since been roundly condemned by what remains of Al-Qaeda. IS therefore is a different phenomenon from Al-Qaeda, with broader origins and a mass base, and there is no coordinated command relationship between the two groups. The confusion between the two comes from western propaganda, which is set on establishing 'guilt by association' with an infamous, established demon. Al-Qaeda's preferred partner in Syria is not IS, but Jabhat al-Nusra (JN). IS has managed to attract substantial support from among Sunni Muslims seeking an alternative to the Shi'a-dominated state imposed on Iraq by the USA and its allies'; Left Unity does not accept the claim that all or most of these people only tolerate IS rule because of extreme coercion'.

In 1.3, delete all after end of first sentence, ending 'notably Saudi Arabia and Qatar' and substitute: 'In Syria, Assad's response to the fragmented condition of the opposition to his regime has been to attempt divide and rule; at times, this has involved leaving IS and the Kurdish PKK alone while focusing his fire on the Free Syrian Army backed by the West, but the situation and alliances are too unstable and shifting to draw meaningful conclusions. Similarly, under the auspices of supporting moderates in Syria against the Assad regime, the UK and US have previously provided assistance to the IS, including providing training to their fighters. It would be wrong in this case, too, to draw analytical conclusions from

singling out particular stages in these shifting alliances that appear to show a meaningful collusion that is not present'.

Delete all in 1.4 and substitute:

'The funding support for IS from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states is part of the ongoing funds provided since at least the early 1990s to anti-western forces in the Middle East and arises because of the strength of Wahhabism in the Gulf states and the funders' close affinity with salafist jihadist views of the struggle; it long pre-dates the Arab Spring of 2011 and did not emerge as an attempt to undermine those recent democratic movements'.

Delete 1.5 and re-number existing 1.6 as the new 1.5.

In this new 1.5, add, after 'Iraqi and Kurdish people by the IS':

', as well as the broader picture of atrocities perpetrated by every other organised force operating in the Middle East, including the UK, EU and US. The selective view and portrayal of atrocities by the western media and western governments built a broad political consensus, but Left Unity does not accept the west's bombing campaign as a humanitarian intervention. Humanitarian war is imperialist war by another name and, as socialists, we, in any case, look beyond the means that social forces use to achieve their aims before we try to place them within the context of the international struggle'.

Re-number 1.7 as 1.6 and delete 'virulently reactionary, fundamentalist'; delete 'takes' and substitute 'has taken'.

In this new 1.6, add before the sentence ending "have already been murdered at the hands of the IS":

'Criticisms of the call for the Caliphate must be countered by knowledge and understanding. Painting it as inseparable from violence or empire building is a false association that lacks historical, political and intellectual credibility. The Caliphate represents an alternative political vision that is gathering support amongst Muslims across the Muslim world because, for its adherents, like Hizb ut-Tahrir, it stands for replacing the brutal regimes in which they live with a political system based on Islam that sets up an accountable executive, an organised judiciary, representative consultation,

the rule of law and citizenship; such a state could only be a stabilising force for the region and the European Left has to acknowledge and accept the widespread call for a Caliphate among Muslims as valid and an authentic expression of their emancipatory, anti-imperialist aspirations. The call for the Caliphate, however vague and malleable the concept is, reflects a strong internationalism among Muslims, reinforced and reproduced for hundreds of millions each year by the Haj (Pilgrimage to Mecca), which breaks down and demotes any attachments to nation states of origin.

At bottom the caliphate means one government for all Muslims, in which non-Muslims who accept its authority are also welcome. The idea of the caliphate has evolved throughout history but its political content has remained vague. There is no 'correct' interpretation of the Caliphate; the lowest common denominator among its Muslim adherents is that a representative and deliberative body – the Shura – should appoint the Caliph, or political executive, and, in so doing, be mindful of the need to represent the peoples' interests.

However, although the Islamic State's announcement is the first serious attempt at re-establishing the caliphate since the institution was abolished in 1924 by the Turkish republic, it has divided rather than united Islamist groups and the broader Muslim community and escalated the conflict and mistrust between Sunnis and Shiites. IS' call for a Caliphate is partly tactical; a means to win Muslims all over the world to supporting, but IS' jihad is also aimed at overturning the existing imperialist order and enabling the expansion of the boundaries of the caliphate to encompass all territory where Muslims live. It has, however, backfired, dividing political Islamists, many of whom have made it clear that a Caliphate cannot be accomplished, as IS are purporting to, through blood, charges of apostasy and explosions'.

In this new 1.6, also add after "have already been murdered at the hands of the IS":

'This repression is unlikely to result in a diverse Caliphate on the lines of the Ottoman Empire and is already alienating not only the Kurds, but many Sunni Muslims in the west, though the evidence on the response of Sunni Muslims in the Middle East is far less clear. Almost incomprehensible brutality is an integral element of the IS way of exercising power, terrorising opponents and attracting

supporters and providing them with security in a dangerous region; this strategy and its success has emerged out of the generalised brutalisation of conflict in the northern Syrian desert over a considerable time, which renders the selective western focus on atrocities irrelevant to side-taking in the northern Syrian desert. Ironically, IS tactics mirror the western bombing campaign, which creates at least as many new enemies as it destroys existing ones and Left Unity is clear that the brutalisation of the region that produced the IS terror strategy is due to the repeated attempts of imperialism to dominate the region and the continuing struggle against it'.

Renumber 1.8 as 1.7 and 1.9 as 1.8.

In the new 1.8, add after 'persecuted groups flee from the IS':

'but we are also aware that over 40% of Iraqi oil comes from Iraqi Kurdistan and that the west's humanitarian concern for refugees acts as convenient cover for schemes to maintain control over this oil, which remains the west's overriding strategic objective in the region. The Kurds have suffered as much as the Sunnis from imperialist interventions; after the First World War, France annexed some Kurdish provinces to include in its Syrian mandate, Kemal Attaturk's Turkey agreed with the Victorious western allies that it would annex most of Kurdistan and the oil-rich Kurdish province of Mosul was annexed by Britain for its Iraq mandate. That is why the Kurds are still divided between four states - Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria – and have as much to gain as the Sunnis from the break-up of the nation states imposed on the region; setting up semi-autonomous enclaves within the existing, ethnically-polarised, states is not a viable long-term strategy. These in-built divisions are also why the western alliance against IS is failing – it simultaneously depends on the Kurds to provide its ground troops and stands by while Turkey makes war on the PKK in Anatolia and turns away Kurdish refugees at its border'.

Renumber 1.10 as 1.9.

Add to the new 1.9:

'the west's major ally in the Middle East. This coalition cannot be long sustained, in view of the underlying hostilities between some of the partners, such as Turkey and the Kurds'.

Add new 1.10:

'The European Left has no overall analysis of the international situation in the Middle East and has, throughout the War on Terror, instead focused on anti-war initiatives and single-issue solidarity work with those peoples – the Palestinians and Kurds – whose current struggles are in the form of fighting to establish autonomous nation states of their own within the existing imperialist structure; this struggle nonetheless leads them into direct, asymmetric and unwinnable conflict with imperialism and its key regional allies – Turkey, the USA, the UK and Israel. We cannot, therefore, base an overall analysis or strategic view of the region on just these considerations without privileging Kurds and Palestinians over the struggles of others – mostly Sunni Muslims – who have been the most recent and sustained victims of brutalizing imperialist war. An overall analysis has to take into account the 21st century Iraq war, the growth of a Sunni Jihad against imperialism and the Arab Spring; it has also to accept that western secularism's assumptions about what is and is not progressive cannot be part of such an analysis, as they are Eurocentric. We are also clear that there are not and cannot be any partial solutions within the region for any one group of people – be they Kurds, Palestinians or Jews. Any more lasting victory requires a general coming to terms with imperialism and this cannot happen so long as the states set up by imperialism continue to exist'.

In 2.1, delete all and substitute:

'That the IS has committed atrocities but that these are not on a different moral plane to other atrocities committed over recent years in the region; they emerge out of it and the brutalised context resulting from imperialism and the struggle against it'.

In 2.2, delete all and substitute:

'That in wishing to establish a Caliphate, IS is directly challenging the Versailles Settlement following the First World War that constitutes the framework of national states with in-built religious and ethnic differences, for facilitating imperialist domination of Oil sources, and this, not humanitarian concerns, is why imperialism has moved against it. The 2003 invasion of Iraq and the Arab Spring constitute the latest chapters in the unraveling of this settlement and, in turn, laid the foundations for the current crisis by destabilising a structurally divided country and creating a

partial power vacuum which the IS seeks to fill. However, by attacking and executing Muslims and other people, ISIS is acting as if it wants merely an exclusivist Islamic State, not the religiously and ethnically diverse Caliphate that many Muslims look to as the alternative to the existing nation states. This is why the internationalist strand of Jihadism has roundly condemned ISIS. Left Unity condemns IS for a similar reason; because its sectarian attacks on other peoples undermine the potential for Sunnis, Kurds and others working together to overthrow the divisive structure of nation states which underpin imperialist domination of them all, in order to replace it by a new polity covering the entire region which provides for and protects diversity and autonomy for all'.

At start of 2.3, insert 'Military action against the Gadaffi regime in Libya in 2011 ultimately served to destabilise that country. Therefore any further military action in Iraq from the UK or other Western countries will not be in the interests of the Iraqi people'.

Then add at end of 2.3:

';due to the inevitability of widespread civilian casualties, as many new enemies are made as old ones are killed'.

Add all of 2.4 of the motion to the end of the amended 2.3

Delete 2.5, 2.6 and 2.7.

Renumber 2.8 as 2.4.

Amend 3.1 to read:

'To oppose UK, EU and US military intervention in both Iraq and Syria, as well as in any other part of the Middle East'.

Delete 3.2 and substitute:

'To show solidarity with the people of the Middle East by supporting the end of the structure of the divided nation states imposed by the Versailles settlement and their replacement by a Caliphate-type polity in which diversity and autonomy are protected and nurtured and the mass of people can effectively control executive authority'.

Delete 3.3, 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6 (the rest of the motion) and substitute a new 3.3:

'Left Unity recognises that the situation is too complex and changing too quickly for detailed side taking and analysis and that no force in the Middle East currently represents something we would clearly support without serious reservation. We reject the abstract and Eurocentric call for the building of a socialist and democratic society in Iraq and Syria, partly because these states, their borders and their in-built divisions, exist to facilitate imperialism and partly because socialism and democracy are simply nowhere near the agenda of any social forces in Iraq or Syria; socialism and secular nationalism, just like political islam, have been undermined there by late 20th century historical developments, leaving the current stark choice between, on the one hand, a Caliphate, based initially on salafist jihadist ideology and Sunni exclusionism, but which would break the imperialist settlement of Versailles and threaten western control of oil, and, on the other, the continuation of western domination through nation states based on religious and ethnic division. Left Unity certainly does not give up on the Arab working class supporting socialism, particularly in Egypt and other parts of the Maghreb, but the immediate prospect of this developing out of the tragic recent history of the northern Syrian desert is too slim to be anything other than a purely theoretical, abstract position, so our policy on developments here has to deal with a reality which excludes this for the time being.'

Substitute a new 3.4:

'Left Unity distances itself specifically from the use of intemperate, inaccurate and moralist language such as 'terrorism', 'evil', 'fundamentalist', 'viciously reactionary', 'murderous', 'genocidal', etc in discussion about the Middle East; these terms are deployed by people and forces seeking not to understand or analyse, but to demonise in order to dominate, and they have no place within socialist discourse. We are also aware that terms widely used by the western media in the same connection include 'extremism' and 'radicalisation' that can be used to expel socialist ideas from public discourse. We also distance ourselves from the Eurocentric brand of secularism that believes that the peoples of the Middle East must accept western terms of reference by consigning their religious faith to a separate part of their lives from their political aspirations, if they are to develop progressive societies. This fundamentally

misjudges the importance of religion in the Middle East and ignores the fact that Islam is a more politically explicit religion than most others, that Islam's aspiration for the unification of the Muslim world has great progressive and internationalist potential and that the Muslim vision of an authentic Islamic society is a powerful political resource that legitimises political struggle against tyranny. Left Unity believes that the failure of progressive forces in the west to accept the right of Muslims to struggle for a better world in their own terms, combined with our ignorance and prejudice around such concepts as 'Caliphate', 'Sharia' and 'Jihad', is part of the islamophobic cultural baggage we inherited and which is reproduced by our media, and we know that this cannot be squared with our support for the principle of the self-determination of peoples. As socialists, we know that human emancipation depends on the struggle for self-determination, at some stage, producing growing support among its activists for a materialist as opposed to a religious understanding of their exploitation, but, as internationalists, we are equally aware that we must support the right to self-determination on its own terms and with knowledge of and respect for the circumstances in which Middle Eastern people – Arabs, Kurds, Sunnis, Shi'a, Turks, Persians, Copts, Jews and atheists – find themselves.

Therefore, Left Unity neither supports the western alliance nor the Islamic State and we see the struggle of the Kurds, the Sunnis and other Middle Eastern peoples as dependent on their ability to work together to establish a geographically wide, inclusive polity as an alternative to the existing nation states in the region. Insofar as the call for a Caliphate means such an inclusive, diverse polity, we support the call for it among the peoples of the Middle East. We see any arming of the Kurds as divisive and contemplated only to reflect the long-term interests of the West, not to aid the liberation of Kurds from their oppression by the four nation states, the defence of which the West calls upon them to fight IS for.

It's one thing to hypothesise about what would be the ideal British foreign policy under a non-imperialist government, and it's another to establish what the position of the left should be under an imperialist government. Left Unity is committed to dismantling British imperialism in all its guises and this means we see the end of the geopolitical structure of imperialism in the Middle

East as a pre-condition of the emancipation of the people of that region.'

Bb. A socialist response to the actions of the "Islamic State" and Western intervention in Iraq (version b)

Proposed by Sheffield branch

Conference notes:

1.1: That in 2014 the Islamic State (IS) seized control of large parts of northern Iraq and eastern Syria, taking advantage of a power vacuum created by a weak government in the former and the ongoing civil war in the latter.

1.2: The IS was formed as a splinter group from the official al-Qaeda organisation in the region, which rose to prominence after the 2003 invasion of Iraq and the subsequent fall of the Ba'athist regime. The IS split from al-Qaeda in order to establish their version of a new "Islamic Caliphate".

1.3: The IS has been supported both financially and materially (including provision of arms) by prominent people within several reactionary Arab dictatorships in the region, notably Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

1.4: This support is an attempt to undermine attempts to create a legitimately democratic space in the region, which would potentially threaten their own regimes from within.

1.5: Under the auspices of supporting moderates in Syria against the Assad regime, the UK and US have actually provided assistance to the IS.

1.6: That ironically, only a year ago all the talk was of US military intervention on the side of the Syrian opposition – forces that were even then dominated by jihadists who have today evolved into Isis. Today the US and UK are waging an air war against them.

1.7: That with the rise of IS nothing has changed except the priorities of the imperialist powers – there is now an urgent need to maintain control over the country these powers ruined in another 'humanitarian' intervention in 2003: Iraq.

1.8: The IS has brutally oppressed anyone who does not support their virulently reactionary, fundamentalist interpretation of Sunni Islam. This includes Shia Muslims, Christians and Yazidis,

among many others. When the IS takes control of an area all non-Sunni Muslims have been given a choice of forced conversion or death, and countless people have already been murdered at the hands of the IS.

1.9: This has in turn resorted in a refugee crisis as persecuted groups flee from the IS.

1.10: The governments of the United States and the United Kingdom have committed to air strikes against the IS, citing humanitarian grounds and a supposed threat to people in their respective countries. This is part of coalition which includes other Western countries and also other reactionary regimes in neighbouring Arab countries, which themselves have appalling human rights records, including the government of Saudi Arabia, and which themselves have played no small part in the rise of IS.

1.11: Among the main defenders of the Kurds against the IS have been the Kurdistan People's Party (PKK) and its Syrian affiliate, the Democratic Union Party (PYD), even though many Western governments consider both "terrorist organisations".

1.12: The Turkish government has attempted to undermine efforts by the Kurds to defend themselves – notably by preventing Kurds from joining the defence of town of Kobane on the Syrian-Turkish border, until the IS had been successfully repelled.

Conference believes:

2.1: That the IS is a viciously reactionary organisation and in no way an ally of the international working-class movement, which needs to mobilise its forces against IS's murderous and genocidal agenda.

2.2: That the 2003 invasion of Iraq laid the foundations for the current crisis by destabilising the country and creating a power vacuum which the IS seeks to fill. Similarly, military action against the Gaddafi regime in Libya in 2011 ultimately served to destabilise that country. Therefore any further military intervention in Iraq from the UK or other Western countries will not be in the interests of the Iraqi people.

2.3: This underlines how the workers' movement in the imperialist countries must oppose 'their' governments' interventions, which will only further destabilise the region and boost the forces of reaction.

2.4: Military intervention from the UK, US and other Western countries, whilst carried out under

the guise of humanitarianism, is always a cynical measure used to further the interests of their governments and their corporate backers.

2.5: The people of Kurdistan and anywhere that is in the path of the IS have every right to resist IS incursion and use whatever means available in order to protect their homes and communities from them.

2.6: The people currently under IS control have every right to resist and attempt to overthrow the IS if and when such opportunities arise.

2.7: That the workers' movement in this country has a duty to establish material and political solidarity with working-class forces in Kurdistan, Syria and the region as a whole. There are no easy solutions to this mess, but it is essential that our movement develop its own foreign policy free from imperialist hypocrisy and reaction.

Conference resolves:

3.1: To oppose UK military intervention in both Iraq and Syria

3.2: To stand against lending any support, even supposedly 'critical' support to any regional dictator or Islamist group ('moderate' or otherwise) that oppresses the people living under its rule.

3.3: To stand alongside those sections of the working class movement that have not been tainted by either social-imperialism or false anti-imperialism.

3.4 To show solidarity with the people of Iraq and Syria (including the Kurds) and with organisations within Iraq and Syria which are fighting the IS and for the freedom of people, even if we as socialists may not 100% agree with the principles of certain groups, since they are all that stand between the ordinary people of the region and the much more oppressive and reactionary forces of the IS, Assad and other Islamist organisations.

3.5: To demand that the government no longer considers the PKK and PYD terrorist organisations.

3.6: To oppose entities that use the threat of the IS in order to further their own oppressive agenda. This includes the Assad regime in Syria, the theocratic regime in Iran, and any other rival reactionary Islamist groups.

3.7: To oppose attempts by the government to prosecute anyone from the UK for "terrorism" who decides to join the armed struggle against the IS.

Bb1. Amendment

Proposed by Manchester branch

Delete paragraph 3.3 and replace by:
"To call for the building of a socialist and truly democratic society in Iraq, Syria and throughout the world".

C. War and peace

Proposed by Sheffield branch, Moshe Machover
Seconded by Steve Cooke

War is the continuation of politics by other, violent, means. War is a sustained conflict on an extended scale. War is the product of class society. War, and the potential for war, will only end with the ending of class society itself.

Capitalism goes hand in hand with uneven development. Hence the constant pressure for a redivision of spoils. Rising 'have not' powers challenge the existing imperialist hierarchy and seek to offset their own problems at the expense of foreign rivals. When diplomacy and trade wars fail, military force decides. Trade blocs become military blocs. So imperialism means preparation for war. Peace is only a period of ceasefire. It is only the freezing of the division of spoils arrived at through war.

After 1945 imperialism normalised high levels of production of the means of destruction. Popular support for military Keynesianism was garnered through anti-communism and competition with the Soviet Union. The cold war became a system of social control east and west.

Capitalism now possesses weapons capable of destroying human life across the whole planet. The struggle to end the danger of war by the working class is therefore a struggle for the survival of the human species.

British imperialism has an unparalleled history of war and aggression in virtually every corner of the world. Though no longer the power it once was, large, well equipped armed forces are maintained in order to serve the interests of British capitalism abroad and at home.

British capitalism is one of the world's main weapons manufacturers and exporters. It has a vested interest in promoting militarism. Socialists stress, however, that the struggle against the military-industrial complex cannot be separated

from the struggle against the profit system as a whole.

Left Unity opposes all imperialist wars, military alliances and occupations. We also reject nuclear, biological and other such weapons of mass destruction as inherently inhuman.

With global socialism the word 'war' will become redundant. So will the word 'peace'. The absence of war will gradually render obsolete its opposite, as humanity leaves behind its pre-history.

Socialists are not pacifists. Everywhere we support just wars, above all revolutionary civil wars for socialism. Left Unity will therefore strive to expose the war preparations of the capitalist class, the lies of social imperialists and illusions fostered by social pacifism.

C1. Amendment

Proposed by Yassamine Mather

Seconded by Mike Macnair

After seventh paragraph, ending "... inherently inhuman

Insert new paragraph :

"Peace cannot come courtesy of bodies such as the United Nations – an assembly of exploiters and murderers. It is the duty of socialists to connect the popular desire for peace with the aim of revolution. Only by disarming the bourgeoisie and through the victory of international socialism can the danger of war be eliminated".

D. Support for Palestinian rights and BDS

Proposed by Waltham Forest branch

Left Unity stands in solidarity with the Palestinian people in their struggle against oppression and dispossession. We will work and campaign towards a just resolution of the Palestine conflict, and towards a future without violence and discrimination.

We recognise that the preconditions for such a resolution include complete and unconditional Israeli withdrawal from all territories occupied in the 1967 war, the implementation of a programme to enable the return of Palestinians exiled and dispersed since the establishment of

the state of Israel in 1948, and the negation of all discriminatory legislation.

Left Unity supports, and will work to promote, the call by scores of Palestinian organisations (including all Palestinian trade unions) for a campaign of boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel until it complies with its obligations under international law. We will work to support academic and cultural boycotts of Israel.

Left Unity will affiliate to and work with the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, and will support local solidarity and twinning groups. In trade unions, we will work towards establishing links with Palestinian trade unions and cutting links with Israeli trade unions, including the Histadrut, which do not act in support of Palestinian rights.

We will oppose propaganda efforts to present Israel as a model for human or democratic rights. In particular, we will support the campaign against Israeli "pinkwashing", which falsely presents Israel as an oasis of LGBTQ rights. We reject any attempt to smear opponents of Zionism and supporters of Palestinian rights as antisemites.

At the same time, Left Unity will resolutely oppose any expression of antisemitism, whether within the solidarity movement or elsewhere. We recognise that such racism is not only wrong in itself; it also gives a spurious credibility to Israeli propaganda. Our support for Palestinian rights is motivated by the principles of international solidarity and anti-racism.

E. Zionism, Israel and Palestine

Proposed by Moshe Machover

Seconded by Yassamine Mather

1. Democratic opinion throughout the world was rightly outraged by the Israeli onslaught on Gaza.
2. In that spirit the July resolution of Left Unity's executive committee correctly demanded "an immediate end to the air campaign and invasion" and an "immediate end" to Israel's siege of Gaza.
3. However, the EC resolution's call "for the end of the occupation of Palestine by Israel" is ambiguous. Is Palestine now limited to Gaza and the West Bank? Or is Palestine defined as the full pre-1948 British mandate territory? In the second sense, also expressed in the widely used slogan

“Palestine will be free from the river to the sea”, the idea risks being a call to reverse the poles of oppression, creating a new oppressed group and/or up to 6 million refugees.

4. Left Unity aims for “social, political and economic equality for all in the fullest sense”. As Marx put it we aim for “the emancipation of the productive class [as] that of all human beings without distinction of sex or race” (Programme of the Parti Ouvrier, 1880); in 2014 it is necessary to add: without distinction of nationality, religious belief, disabilities, gender identity, sexuality, etc.

5. Zionism is a colonial-settler project to create a ‘state for all the Jews in the world’, backed for geopolitical reasons by Britain from 1917, by France against Britain in the 1940s, by the USA since 1947 and most fully since 1966. The evolution of global politics since 1991 has resulted in deepened support from the USA for the Israeli state and the US’s subordinate allies Britain, France and Germany being pulled into line and away from earlier ambiguities. Settler-colonial projects inherently involve oppression and ‘ethnic cleansing’. Zionism is a continuing settler-colonial project, unlike the completed settler-colonial projects in North, Central and South America, Australia, New Zealand, etc, and is one backed by the British state.

Hence opposition to the Zionist project and to British support for the Israeli state is an essential element of the struggle in Britain for the emancipation of all human beings. Support for “the right of the Jews to a state” or “Israel’s right to exist” is to qualify or reject the general aims of “equality for all” or “the emancipation of all human beings”.

6. However, settler-colonial projects also inevitably create new nations: and a definite Israeli Hebrew nation has come into existence, of people born in Israel, growing up speaking modern Hebrew, with a common national culture and self-identification, and so on. This language and culture is not spoken/practised elsewhere, so that ‘Hebrews go home’ is a nonsense idea. To call for the abolition of this nation is now merely to call for reversing the poles of oppression; and such a proposal is also to qualify or reject the general aims of “equality for all” or “the emancipation of all human beings”.

7. Political democracy entails the right that politics and government in the territory where you live should be conducted in a language that you understand - including here not merely language in the simple sense, but also the cultural overtones of rhetorical references (like references to stories of the Maccabees or of King Alfred).

Since the London Congress of the Second Socialist International in 1896 the traditional position of the socialist movement has been that the way to achieve this democratic right is through the right to self-determination of nations. Here ‘nations’ means historically constituted language-culture groups which form the majority of the population of a definite territory; and ‘self-determination’ means the right, if this majority chooses, to form its own separate state.

Since Versailles 1919 and the foundation of the League of Nations, the right to self-determination of nations has been part of generally accepted public international law, albeit applied - from the outset - very inconsistently in the interests of the dominant capitalist states.

8. The left has traditionally, drawing on the work of Lenin, stood for the right of self-determination of nations - but also for unity between different nations, so that the working class can organise effectively at the level at which the capitalist class organises (for example, in Europe, the capitalists organise Europe-wide, so the workers need to do so too). This tradition stands therefore in general against full separation into separate national states, but for the maximum level of local self-government (so that for example, as in Switzerland, a single state can have cantons with different official languages).

9. We deny categorically that the world’s Jewish population constitutes a nation for the purpose of the right to national self-determination. They lack the attributes - common language and culture and geographical concentration - which make the demand for self-determination consistent with political democracy. What is involved is a common religion or religious background, which, like Catholicism or Islam, entails certain common cultural features, but consistent with full democratic participation in a variety of nations and nation-states. The idea that the world’s Jewish population constitutes a nation had a certain historical basis in relation to the Yiddish-speaking Jews of eastern and central Europe, but is today merely an

ideology of the Zionist settler-colonial project.

10. The right to self-determination is not only the right to separation, but also the right of the separated parts of a partitioned national group to unify: classically in the cases of Italy and Germany, unified or partially unified out of petty states in 19th century, and Poland, partitioned between 1791 and 1918 between Russia, Germany and Austria; in modern times, for example, in Kashmir.

This issue is immediately relevant to Palestine, because the Zionist settler-colonial project does not exist on its own but is part of an agreement between Britain and France in 1916-19 to partition the formerly unified territory of former Ottoman Syria into four parts, "Lebanon" as a Christian state, Syria, "Palestine" as a space for Jewish settlement, and "Transjordan" (modern Jordan). Indeed, even former Ottoman Syria is part of a larger common linguistic-cultural space, the Arab world, partitioned by colonialism on a larger scale.

The common character of this linguistic-cultural-political space was expressed in the 'Arab Spring' albeit this revolutionary movement has ended in defeat and reaction. The underlying aspiration of the Arabs to self-determination in the form of unification has been expressed in the past through secular pan-Arab nationalism, and is expressed today in the distorted and reactionary form of salafi jihadism.

There is, therefore, no possible democratic solution within the borders of 'Mandate Palestine'; because these borders are themselves an anti-democratic arrangement in the interests of imperialist domination of the region, and socialists must support the right of the Arabs to unify, whether at the level of former Ottoman Syria or more broadly.

11. Although the Israeli settler-colonial project was an act of robbery, and although the robbery is continuing today, the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the settlers have grown up speaking the revived Hebrew language and constitute a nation. It is wrong to deny the right of this Hebrew nation to self-determination. The right to self-determination is not a Marxist blessing exclusively bestowed upon the oppressed. It is fundamentally a demand for equality. All nations must have the equal right to determine their own fate - as long as that does not involve the

oppression of another people.

12. A democratic proposal to address the problem therefore implies (1) the right of the Arabs to unify, overthrowing the borders established by imperialism; (2) the overthrow of Israel's Zionist regime, and (3) within that framework, the right of the Hebrew nation to self-determination; in relation to which we urge local self-determination in language and culture, rather than full separation.

13. At the present, such a proposal is, of course, "unrealistic". But it is no more unrealistic than the alternative proposals on offer.

The old Arab nationalists between 1947 and 1979 hoped to destroy Israel by main force. This ignored the global relation of forces and the support for Israel of the imperialist powers (initially France and the US, by 1956 also Britain).

The salafi Islamists aim to unify the Arab east and Farsi-speaking, Azeri-speaking, Kurdish-speaking, Turkic-speaking, etc, areas - and perhaps even all the world's Muslims - under the banner of the restoration of a Sunni Caliphate. But the effect is - as has been seen in occupied Iraq and again in the Arab Spring in several countries, and currently with the 'Islamic state' - not to create unity, but to create or intensify sectarian religious divisions, playing into the hands of the imperialists (who, of course, in the 1980s to early 1990s sponsored the salafists for this purpose).

The old Palestinian nationalist and leftist idea of "democratic secular Palestine" ignores both the underlying issue of the imperialist partition of the Arab world, and the Hebrew nation question. It ignores the relationship of forces within Mandate Palestine and thereby condemns the Palestinians to mere 'resistance' to Israeli oppression, of the same character as Native American 'resistance' to the European settler-colonial expansionists. Because it ignores the Hebrew nation as a nation, treating it as merely a religious group, it implicitly concedes the Zionist identification of this nation with all the world's Jews; and it cannot offer any real compromise to the Hebrew population which might - possibly - win away sections of them from their support for the Zionist regime and project.

The more recent Palestine Liberation Organisation idea of "two states" within Mandate Palestine has become increasingly unrealistic as Israel has continued to seize land within the West Bank reducing, 'Palestinian controlled' territory

to little more than a series of Indian reservations; and as Israel, having initially raised up Hamas as a demon-antagonist to undermine the PLO and 'justify' its refusal to make a real deal with the PLO, continues to use Hamas control in Gaza for this purpose, 'demonstrating' the point by continued siege of Gaza and episodic military attacks. It is quite clear that the Zionist leadership will never accept the existence of any Arab state within the borders of Mandate Palestine; they have said so explicitly.

The policy of Arab unification, together with offering self-determination to the Hebrew-speaking population in Israel, is if anything more realistic in the middle to long term; since it offers the chance of both changing the regional relation of forces, if only slightly modifying the global relation of forces, and of offering some compromise for the Hebrew speaking population.

14. Beyond the question of national democratic rights is the further and more intractable land question. If the poles of oppression are not to be merely reversed, this will involve some compromise in implementation of the ordinary legal rights to have land seizures by the settlers and the Israeli state reversed, of refugees to return, etc. Since tackling the land question without simply reversing the poles of oppression can only be done by compromise, it can also only be done by a negotiation once the relation of forces has changed.

15. The primary job of socialists in an Israel-supporting imperialist country, like Britain, is to contribute what we can to a change in the global relation of forces in which the central imperialist powers support the Zionist settler-colonial project and the partition of the Arab east.

To this end, our immediate demands must be: an end to British support for the Israeli state; the complete withdrawal of Israel to its pre-1967 borders; an end to military interference in the West Bank and the perpetual siege of Gaza; and full democratic and civil rights for all Arabs in Israel, including the right to organise collectively as a national minority.

16. Only through the process of socialist Arab reunification can we expect the growth of an anti-Zionist 'enemy within' the Israeli-Jewish nation and the growth of trust and solidarity between the two peoples and their eventual merger.

E1. Amendment

Proposed by Wandsworth and Merton branch

Replace paragraphs numbered 10 to 16 inclusive by a new 10 :

"It is in the interests of US capitalism and international imperialism that the oil-rich Near East should be destabilized permanently. The USA's relationship with the reactionary Zionist state is predicated on this and this alone, though given cover by the powerful Zionist lobby in the USA.

Recognizing the real and emotional impact of the holocaust, Left Unity supports the existence of a homeland for the Jews in the Near East, but it must also be a homeland for the Palestinians. Without massive injections of aid and capital from overseas, chiefly the US, Israel is not a viable state economically; nor is a Palestinian state as currently constituted. Therefore, we believe in a one-state solution. Israel must be integrated with the West Bank and Gaza into a new secular state that guarantees the cultural and religious rights of both Jews and Arabs. Integration will include the removal of all restrictions on movement, pass laws and discrimination in employment and housing.

There should be a Truth and Reconciliation commission on South African lines during the transition. Fair compensation should be paid to the families who were expelled during the ethnic cleansing of the late 1940s. All Palestinian refugees should be included along with Jews in the Israeli right to return. The new state must be based on the principle of one-adult-one-vote. The new state should move immediately towards giving up its nuclear arsenal and establishing peaceful relations with its neighbours".

F. Nationalism

Proposed by Glasgow South branch,
Matthew Jones
Seconded by Chris Cassells

This Conference notes the divisive effect of nationalism in Scotland in the recent period. There has been a very real danger of the working class being split both by the possibility of an actual state border between Scotland and the rest of Britain and within Scotland itself as nationalist illusions

were being aggressively peddled to the working class in Scotland. In essence Scottish nationalism is a product of the economic, social and political decay of capitalism. The move to finance capital started after the collapse of the Bretton Woods system and cemented by the continued destruction of much of basic industry from the 1970's onwards has both broken up and disorientated the organised working class and the left plus large sections of society marginalised.

Under these conditions Scottish nationalism, always a right wing tendency has come to prominence essentially promising that local capitalists in Scotland can offer a better deal to workers and the unemployed than the current British ruling class. This is clearly untrue – there is little evident desire among capitalist operating in Scotland to hand out better living standards to the working class. In fact the SNP's significant promise in the referendum campaign was to make an independent Scotland "competitive" and to reduce corporation tax – this programme is effectively a Scottish version of the Irish Republic – based on low tax and cheap labour.

The key phenomenon of the referendum was the political collapse of the left with a whole series of organisations including the fragments of the SWP, the CWI, the SSP etc all promoting nationalism as an alternative to the hated austerity policies of all the main capitalist parties. This was clearly a lie and deception – nationalism is incapable of freeing itself from the policies of capitalist classes across the world, but the much of the left deceived both itself and sections of the working class, particularly the more marginalised sections who felt they had nothing to lose – hence the votes in Glasgow, Dundee, West Dunbartonshire and North Lanarkshire while the traditional heartlands of nationalism in rural Scotland voted heavily against independence.

We would take the position that as socialists it is clearly wrong to support nationalism in any way unless there is some form of national oppression involved as in Ireland, Palestine or Western Sahara While we are required as socialists to support the right to national liberation in such cases we also have a duty to point out the rotten, catastrophic dead end of nationalist politics demonstrated over and over again in the past century or more sometimes at the cost of millions of lives as in Indonesia and elsewhere.

Whether it is the ANC making a tiny coterie of their own organisation absurdly rich while driving

down the already awful living standards of the working class and shooting down striking miners in some terrible parody of their own history or Sinn Fein now committed to not only helping to run the sectarian statelet they once condemned, but also to implementing the most vicious austerity measures it is clear that nationalism cannot deliver because it cannot break free from the barbarism of capital. It was actually one of the lessons of the 1905 Russian Revolution that the capitalist class was no longer willing to deliver even on its own basic historical tasks and that the only force capable of abolishing national oppression, feudalism, and even forcing universal suffrage was the working class acting consciously in its own political interests.

We call for Left Unity to organise further debate and discussion on the attitudes of socialists to nationalism and the differences between socialism and nationalism. These to take place both online and in national meetings.

Left Unity has to maintain a British socialist party and fight to build a European socialist organisation by working to bring together the struggles against austerity and building a network of socialist organisations.

Against sectionalism – in this case the effort to define Scotland or Catalonia or Flanders as richer than other parts of a given country and therefore the population can try to keep its supposed good fortune to itself. This is the product of decline and can only be characterised as anti-social.

G. Ukraine

Proposed by Greenwich & Lewisham branch

This conference notes:

1. That the British, US and EU governments rushed to back the formation of a far right regime in Ukraine in February
2. That the new Kiev regime included outright fascists as ministers and security heads
3. That the far right regime alienated minorities in Ukraine by announcing its intention to downgrade the status of the Russian language and venerating war-time Nazi collaborator Stephan Bandera.
4. That NATO has conducted a large scale military build-up in central and eastern Europe this year and has held military exercises in Ukraine

This conference believes:

1. That the British government should not be backing the Ukrainian government
2. That national minorities in Ukraine, including Russian-speaking minorities in Donbass, have the right to self-determination, including the right to autonomy and to independence
3. That the Kiev government's so-called 'Anti-Terrorist operation' against rebels in the southeast of Ukraine is a brutal violation of the rights of the local people

This conference resolves:

1. To campaign against the UK government's backing for the Kiev regime and call for it to break all ties
2. To campaign against the NATO build up in central and eastern Europe
3. To work with Stop the War and CND to pursue the above goals

G1. Amendment

Proposed by Richard Brenner

Seconded by Kady Tait, Dave Stockton

In "This conference notes", paragraph 3:

Delete existing text and replace by:

"That the far right regime alienated minorities in Ukraine by announcing its intention to downgrade the status of the Russian language, venerating war-time Nazi collaborator Stepan Bandera and sanctioning the murder by neo-Nazis of 48 antifascist demonstrators in the Odessa House of Trade Unions on 2 May".

In "This conference believes", paragraph 2:

Replace "including the right to autonomy and to independence" by "including the right to self-rule"

At end of "This conference resolves", add new paragraph 4:

"To affiliate to the campaign Solidarity with the Antifascist Resistance alongside other labour movement bodies like the RMT".

H. Latin America

Proposed by Greenwich & Lewisham branch

Conference proposes that Left Unity should extend its solidarity to the struggles of the working class

in Latin America. Left Unity should also support the non-payment of the external debt of these countries. A large part of the international left has given its support to the new reformist governments in Latin America, ignoring the fact that these governments are attacking workers' jobs, wages and conditions. By doing this, the international left is abandoning the workers and the poor masses who are organising independently of these governments.

The governments of such countries as Bolivia, Argentina, Venezuela and Ecuador have been criticised from the left inside their own countries. There have been many struggles of the trade unions and poor masses that have gone unnoticed outside Latin America, some of them involving repressive use of state forces and the persecution and victimisation of activists.

There are many examples. First, the cruel repression in September 2014 in Ecuador of the large mobilisations against a new labour law that attacks the rights of workers to organise in trade unions.

Another example is the repression suffered by the workers of SIDOR, the largest Venezuelan steel manufacturer, during their struggle for a collective bargaining agreement in August-September 2014.

In Bolivia in 2012, protests by the indigenous people of the TIPNIS Reserve in the Amazon region against the building of a road through their land were repressed and confronted by pro-government demonstrations. In 2013, there was a wave of mobilisations for higher pensions which was repressed by the government.

In Brazil this year, there has been a four-month strike in Sao Paulo University against wage cuts, which was won through the power of strike action. Earlier in the year, there were big demonstrations against the millions of dollars spent on the World Cup, while poverty and exploitation are everywhere.

In Argentina, workers are turning their backs on the trade union bureaucracy and are voting for independent trade union delegates in multinational companies such as Kraft Foods, Lear car parts, and Donnelley Printing. In these companies there were struggles against sackings, which led to repression and the victimisation of trade union delegates and activists. These struggles are in the context of the growth of the Frente de Izquierda de los Trabajadores (FIT), which is an electoral coalition of three left parties

that in the last election gained 1.5 million votes. The FIT MPs are supporting the struggles on the streets and bringing the issues into regional and national parliaments.

There has been some criticism of struggles against the centre-left governments of Latin America on the grounds that they play into the hands of the right wing, and for this reason there has been a tendency to overlook them internationally. But the organisation and strength of the workers has resulted in several important victories. Therefore, I propose that Left Unity extend its solidarity to the working class struggles that are taking place in the region and condemn the anti-working class actions of the governments.

I. NATO

Proposed by Greenwich & Lewisham branch

Left Unity calls upon the British government to withdraw from NATO and NATO to be dissolved immediately

J. Internationalism and Solidarity

Proposed by Matt Hale

Seconded by Tom Armstrong

1. NO TO IMPERIALISM!

1.1 Under modern capitalism, the world is divided under the control of a handful of economically powerful and militarily superior robber nations and block of nations, like the UK, USA and EU in the West, and China and Russia in the East.

1.2 Whether conducted under the auspices of the United Nations or not, whether popularly deemed to be a humanitarian issue or not, Left Unity will oppose and campaign against all imperialist wars and interventions.

1.3 We do not believe that democracy, liberation or social rights can delivered from above or from outside, but must come from the struggles of the working classes and oppressed people themselves

1.4 The struggle against imperialism and for lasting peace is the consistent struggle for socialism.

1.5 Left Unity is for the defeat of all imperialism in all wars, whether from the East or West, and will strive to promote international working class

solidarity and oppressed interests.

2. SOLIDARITY WITH PALESTINE!

2.1 Recognising the historic betrayal of the Palestinians by the 'world community' and hypocritical Arab state leaders, the violation of international law by Israel and the apartheid basis of Israeli society, we reject any attempt to negotiate a solution unless it has the popular support of Palestinians.

2.2 For all the claims by supporters of Israel, that it is the only democracy in the Middle East, we believe that Zionism is a thoroughly racist ideology by its preference of one group of people over another.

2.3 We believe that there cannot be any lasting peace deal as long as Israel continues its discriminatory oppression of Palestinians, denying them of equal social and democratic rights.

2.4 We reject the Oslo Accords in that the creation of the Palestinian Authority has its primary purpose the policing of Palestinian resistance - while depriving refugees of both their democratic rights and right to return to their historic homeland.

2.5 Against claims that Hamas are a terrorist organisation, and counter-claims that they are the democratically elected government of Palestine, we believe that Hamas, like all Palestinians, have a right to resist Israeli oppression. Hamas are, nonetheless, a socially reactionary organisation that offers no long-term solutions to Palestinian suffering.

2.6 While Hamas narrowly won the 2006 Parliamentary elections with 44% of the vote, their mandate for governance has since expired. Should new elections be called, we believe that all Palestinians should be able to vote: regardless of whether they live in the Occupied Territories, the Israeli state, or the diaspora.

2.7 Ultimately, we believe that there can be no liberation while there is occupation.

2.8 Left Unity will support:

A) the call for the UK, EU states and US to stop arming Israel by sale of weapons and military hardware and by financial support.

B) calls for the immediate and unconditional end to the Israeli military occupation; and removal of all impediments preventing the exercise of Palestinian national self-determination

C) calls for Israel to end its construction of settlements in the Occupied Territories

D) all efforts that promote equal democratic and

social rights of those that live in, or wish to return to, historic Palestine.

E) The right of return for Palestinian refugees.

2.9 Left Unity further resolves to affiliate to the Palestine Solidarity Campaign.

3. SUPPORT THE RIGHT OF NATIONS TO SELF-DETERMINATION!

3.1 From Palestine to Kurdistan and beyond, self-determination is fundamental to our international politics.

3.2 Left Unity will support the right of all nations to establish an independent state - even if we believe that right should not be exercised.

3.3 Where a new state is established on the basis of a majority national, racial or religious people; the social and democratic rights of women and minorities should be respected, upheld and be equal to all other peoples.

4. NO TO NUCLEAR WEAPONS!

4.1 In a world plighted by war, nuclear weapons pose an increasingly dangerous threat to populations that lasts generations.

4.2 We believe that possession of nuclear weapons make war more, not less, likely.

4.3 We support the efforts of those that campaign for a nuclear free world.

4.4 As an environmentalist party, we recognise the danger that nuclear weapons use pose to the environment to which we depend as evidenced by previous use.

4.5 As a socialist party, we recognise that it is working-class and poor populations that primarily suffer from nuclear weapons use.

5. AGAINST SECTARIANISM!

5.1 We reject divisions based on nationality, race, religion or culture, and stand in solidarity with the struggles of working class people around the world.

5.2 It is evident from the rise of the Islamic State in territories covering Iraq and Syria that sectarianism plays a politically and socially reactionary role.

5.3 Where opportunities arise, we will support struggles against sectarian division.

J1. Amendment

Proposer by Anna Fisher

Seconded by Susan Pashkoff

Add at end the following:

6. INCLUSION OF WOMEN IN ALL PEACE PROCESSES

6.1 Women and children are prime targets whenever there is conflict and rape, forced impregnation, trafficking, and sexual slavery are used as weapons of war.

6.2 Women and children are more severely affected by the breakdown of civil order and the destruction of services and infrastructure that happen during and after armed conflict.

6.3 Women are essential to building and rebuilding stable societies.

6.4 Yet over the last 25 years, only 1 in 40 peace signatories have been women. When women are omitted from peace negotiations, their needs and the needs of their children are invariably overlooked.

6.5, Left Unity calls for the full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (<http://www.refworld.org/docid/3b00f4672e.html>) which recognises the devastating impact of conflict on women and states that women must be involved in building peace from the earliest stages.

Ka. Solidarity with the Kurdish resistance to IS

Proposed by Marcus Halaby

Seconded by Dave Stockton

Left Unity opposes the military action in Iraq and Syria, currently conducted by the USA and its Western and Middle Eastern allies under the pretext of fighting the Islamic State (IS).

The US-led coalition's claims that this action is necessary to defend the Kurds and other minorities from the potentially genocidal actions of IS's self-proclaimed "caliphate" are belied by their refusal to allow the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) and Women's Protection Units (YPJ) access to the weaponry needed to defend the Kurdish enclave of Kobanê, and also by their refusal to demand of their NATO ally Turkey that it open the border to allow Kurds in Turkey to go to the aid of their fellow Kurds in Syria.

No support should be given and no confidence should be placed in any US or allied intervention, whether conducted from the air or by "boots on the ground."

The US and its allies here are not legitimate global policeman or firefighters, but rather the

biggest thieves, housebreakers and arsonists on the planet, as events in the Balkans, Afghanistan, Somalia, and Iraq have repeatedly shown. Their bombings and invasions have killed far more people including civilians than IS have so far managed to "achieve", and they are acting in support of a Shia sectarian Iraqi state who own atrocities and discrimination against its Sunni citizens is partly responsible for the rise of sectarian forces like IS. They are also strengthening the Assad regime, whose war against its own country's population has allowed IS to consolidate.

The Turkish state under Erdogan and his predecessors, whether Islamist or Kemalist, has been the mortal enemy of its own Kurdish citizens' right to self-determination, and of all other Kurdish forces not subordinated to its strategic objective of blocking the very possibility of an independent Kurdish state. Its obstruction of any aid to the Syrian Kurds' defence against IS testifies to this, as does the covert support that Erdogan has given to the growth of IS.

If either Turkish or Western troops were to enter and occupy Rojava, the Kurdish autonomous region in Syria, then it would only be to disarm its militias and oppress its population as soon as the IS danger is removed.

Similarly, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the other Gulf states have for years fomented a bitter and destructive sectarian civil war in Iraq, one that the US tolerated if not fostered as a means of dividing its enemies. They have done all in their power to give the Syrian people's legitimate uprising for democracy a reactionary and religious character, using their money and arms to promote the most sectarian forces amongst the anti-Assad Syrian factions.

For socialists, democrats and anti-imperialists in the West to give any endorsement or support to the war being waged by these forces is criminal. While the Kurds and other minorities have every right to take advantage of whatever assistance is available from their less immediately deadly enemies to combat their more immediately deadly one, we should not paint the Western imperialists as their friends and allies in whom any confidence could be placed.

We hold that there is a progressive alternative to the imperialist intervention: solidarity with the Kurdish popular defence and the Syrian democratic opposition. That solidarity means calling for the lifting of the embargos that have so

far allowed Western governments to deny them access to arms, and that have criminalized the international volunteers willing to go and fight alongside them in their defence.

Nor should our opposition both to IS and to the imperialist intervention against it lead us to grant any "secular" or "anti-imperialist" credentials to the blood-soaked Assad regime, which has slaughtered hundreds of thousands of its own people and displaced millions.

Our solidarity also goes to the Kurdish movement in Turkey and its allies on the Turkish left, who have tried repeatedly to break the Turkish state's blockade on aid to Kobanê. We should argue for the labor movement in Britain and across Europe to campaign for material and military assistance to the Kurds and other progressive forces in Syria and Iraq without any political preconditions.

This includes demanding the repeal of the EU-wide ban on the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) as a "terrorist organization", especially now that the Turkey's blockade has caused the suspension of its "peace process" with the PKK, with pro-Kurdish demonstrations in many Turkish cities being met with violent action from the police, leading to several deaths.

A victory for IS would mean a disaster not only for the Kurdish people, for thousands of remaining residents and fighters facing a massacre, but also for the self-government structures which have been built up in Rojava, which would be destroyed and replaced by a totalitarian dictatorship for such of the population as remains. The subjugation of the Kurds in Rojava would be fatal blow to the remaining progressive, democratic forces of the Syrian revolution and to what is left of the "Arab Spring".

The resistance in Kobanê and Rojava therefore needs our urgent support. The heroism of their popular defence bears witness to the fact that the freedom struggle of oppressed peoples, workers and farmers is still alive even under most unfavourable conditions, the superior forces of the IS pogromists, and the cynical politics of the regional powers and of the great imperialist powers, above all the USA. Their resistance is an inspiration to us all.

Support the relief of the siege of Kobanê! Lift the blockade on volunteers, material aid and weapons for the Kurdish resistance! End the ban on the PKK! Open the EU borders for refugees! No to any imperialist intervention!

Kb. Solidarity with Kurdistan

Proposed by Adriano Nerola Marotta
Seconded by Alia Al Ghussain

Conference Notes:

Since 16th of September, the Kurdish city of Kobane in northern Syria have been defending themselves against the onslaught of ISIS
Those Kurdish areas captured by ISIS have seen mass executions and enslavement of female Kurdish civilians take place, indicating a potentially likely future if Kobane falls to the hands of ISIS
That Kobane, the home of the progressive "Rojava Revolution", is the political base of the Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD)
That the Kurdish Democratic Union Party, allied with the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party), is the key progressive Kurdish political force
That the Kurdish resistance fighters, which include the all-female defence unit YPJ (Women's Protection Unit) which make-up 30% of Kurdish militias, have been fighting ISIS with light weaponry and practically no international support against the more advanced military of ISIS
Turkey has not provided any military or monetary support for the Kurdish resistance to ISIS, despite the continuous calls for intervention by the Kurdish community in the legal borders of Turkey

Conference Believes:

That ISIS is a reactionary and gruesome organisation which has caused suffering and death to the civilian populations of large parts of Syria and Iraq
That the Kurdish resistance and progressive political establishment are worthy of international solidarity and support
The British Kurdish community have repeatedly demanded solidarity for the people of Syrian Kurdistan, with little support from the established British left
That internationalism is the cornerstone of socialist politics and is more needed today than ever before

Conference Resolves:

To coordinate a fundraising campaign for the (Syrian) Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) together with Kurdish community organisations and other supportive groups

To campaign for the de-criminalisation of the Kurdish PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party)
To campaign for the British government to grant asylum-seeker status to any and all Kurdish refugees seeking asylum in Britain

Kb1. Amendment

Proposed by Hackney branch

Add before 'Left Unity believes':
"That the Charter of the Social Contract (www.kurdishinstitute.be/charter-of-the-social-contract/) adopted in the Kurdish region (Rojava) of Syria includes commitments to the principles of democratic self-management, self-determination and opposition to discrimination on grounds of gender or race. It recognises the rights of all ethnic, cultural and religious groups in the region within a framework governed by the International Bill of Human Rights".

L. Solidarity with Venezuela

Proposed by Richard von Abendorff
Seconded by Kerry Abel

Since the election of Hugo Chavez in 1998, there has been concerted and violent attempts to overthrow the democratic government in Venezuela and continuous attempts create instability from sections of the right wing opposition despite their defeat at numerous elections.

These have intensified following the election in 2013 of Chavez's successor, former trade union leader and bus driver, President Nicolas Maduro, following the death of Chavez.

We further note Venezuela's progressive social and economic policies, including extending free education and health care for all, raising the living standards of the population, building 100,000s of new homes, extending public ownership in the economy, a revolutionary new Labour law and pursuing a policy of peace co-operation across the region and the world, as recently shown with Venezuela's tremendous solidarity with Gaza.
We reiterate our support for Venezuela's progressive social change and right to determine its own future, and pledge to support the Venezuela Solidarity Campaign to this end.

Session 6: Miscellaneous

A. The standing army and the people's militia

Proposed by Mark Lewis

Seconded by David Isaacson

Left Unity is against the standing army and for the armed people. This principle will never be realised voluntarily by the capitalist state. It has to be won, in the first place by the working class developing its own militia.

Such a body grows out of the class struggle itself: defending picket lines, mass demonstrations, workplace occupations, fending off fascists, etc.

As the class struggle intensifies, conditions are created for the workers to arm themselves and win over sections of the military forces of the capitalist state. Every opportunity must be used to take even tentative steps towards this goal. As circumstances allow, the working class must equip itself with all weaponry necessary to bring about revolution.

To facilitate this we demand:

1. Rank and file personnel in the state's armed bodies must be protected from bullying, humiliating treatment and being used against the working class.
2. There must be full trade union and democratic rights, including the right to form bodies such as soldiers' councils.
3. The privileges of the officer caste must be abolished. Officers must be elected. Workers in uniform must become the allies of the masses in struggle.
4. The people have the right to bear arms and defend themselves.
5. The dissolution of the standing army and the formation of a popular militia under democratic control.

B. 8 hour day

Proposed by Barnet branch

We are concerned that Left Unity nationally lacks focus and we spend far too much time supporting campaigns initiated and carried out by other

groups. There is nothing wrong with that but we need something distinctive.

The first successful, national, working class campaign was for the 8 hour day. It beggars belief that in 2014 we need another campaign:

Left Unity resolves that its major national campaign, to be supported by all branches, will be for an 8 hour day, 40 hour week, on a living wage for all workers.

Session 7: Safe Spaces and an alternative

A. Safe Spaces Policy

Composite

Proposed by Felicity Dowling, Terry Conway, Anna Fisher, Marianne Cramp-Jukes
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Left Unity Safe Spaces Policy: Promoting a Culture of Inclusion

Left Unity aims to be a safe and vibrant socialist, feminist, anti-racist and environmentalist organisation. Fighting for liberation and against oppression and discrimination is at the heart of all we do and we want to create a culture in which people from all backgrounds can work and organise together towards these common aims. Many different struggles will, we hope, come together in Left Unity to meet the political realities facing people in the age of austerity. People should be free to speak at and intervene in our meetings. People will come to our meetings angry at injustice and worried by personal circumstances. We want everyone to be welcome, to speak and to be listened to and heeded. We want free and open speech so that we can hear what people are experiencing in their own words and feelings. We do not want to set up a rigid set of rules about personal behaviour or to use these procedures for power plays.

1. Resisting oppressive ideas and behaviour

There is no room for violence, bullying, discrimination or oppressive behaviour of any kind in Left Unity. However, we recognise that oppression and violence are built into this society as such that these behaviours may not be conscious and may be unintentional, as well as intentional. We oppose the behaviours and not the person: "Respect the person; challenge their behaviour." Whilst a person's behaviour may be problematic, everyone deserves to be treated with dignity.

Left Unity is a collaboration of a wide diversity of people who have signed up to a common project of creating a new political party 'left

of Labour. We have been conditioned by our oppressive society to treat each other unequally, without full awareness of each other's needs. This sometimes leads to disrespectful behaviour. For example, racism is an issue when black and white people work together; sexism is an issue when men and woman come together in a common endeavour, as is ableism when those with impairments and those without try to work together. Snobbery and discrimination can occur when different sections of working people work together.

The matter is complicated by the fact that we occupy more than one role at a time, and those roles can be contradictory. For example, one person may be the victim of sexism, but that same person may be the perpetrator of racism, or snobbery.

One of the main tasks of our new party is moving our behaviours closer to our principles and beliefs, but this will not happen without 'struggle'. This involves not only engaging directly in campaigning politically and organisationally against the brutal neoliberal system but also an internal and emotional struggle. We need to support each other in this and to accept that we are at different points on our own personal journeys. We need to have patience with each other, but also to expect and demand that we engage with this struggle.

2. Background

Left Unity works for a society built to develop human communities based on the common good and for individual fulfilment in that common good. The media and education systems denigrate and dismiss the talents of working class people. It is our responsibility to reflect the power of working people and their communities, and to develop a vehicle for working people's struggles.

The great evils of racism, xenophobia, sexism, gender-based violence, ableism, homophobia, Transphobia, prejudice, hate crime, poverty and the profound and structural discrimination against working class communities are inherent and foundational to capitalist society and are increasing with its crisis.

2.1 Disabled people

Disabled people have borne the brunt of the horrifying attacks from neo-liberal governments. The oppression of, discrimination against, and neglect of the interests of, disabled people have always been a feature of capitalism but this

has intensified to a terrible level under austerity policies. Far too many lives have been ruined and there have been too many resultant deaths and suicides. We understand the need to be led by disabled people in efforts to erode all barriers to equal participation in party life and society, whether people have physical or sensory impairments, learning difficulties, or mental distress.

2.2 People with caring responsibilities

Discrimination against those with caring responsibilities is long standing but made much worse by this government where 75% of cuts hit single parent families. Many disabled people are losing benefits and the loss of DLA/PIP causes the loss of carers' allowance, which can plunge the whole family into poverty. Left Unity actively seeks to involve those with caring responsibilities and to learn from them about how to best facilitate their participation in Left Unity activities and the development of the party at all levels. Being in the role of carer makes it hard to participate in activities that others take for granted. Carers are often isolated, which can cause health problems. Left Unity campaigns for universal respect and recognition for carers and a wage that meets the needs of all genuine cases. Carers can have particular difficulties in organising, attending meetings and accessing resources for campaigning.

2.3 Violence against Women

Two men each week kill their partners or ex-partners (http://www.womensaid.org.uk/domestic_violence_topic.asp?section=0001000100220036§ionTitle=Statistics) and many more sexually, physically, psychologically and emotionally abuse women and girls. 100,000 named women are, by police records, at risk from named partners or ex-partners. Men and boys are also abused. This patriarchal violence damages our community solidarity, here and all over the world. The scale of violence against women is qualitatively and significantly different from that towards men. This is the world in which we operate.

Capitalism requires that our community solidarity is shattered so the wealth of the communities can be diverted to the market. The virus of misogyny and sexual violence affects all sections of society and our movement is not immune to it. Left Unity is implacable in its opposition to sexual violence and victim blaming.

Women are vital to our movement and by

vehemently proclaiming our stance on this we will keep women safer and effect real education on this matter. When necessary we will take physical steps to ensure the safety of women as happened during the Egyptian revolution.

2.4 Children

The poverty and sexual abuse inflicted on children are real and present issues. Power structures have supported and extended this abuse – scandal has followed scandal. Moreover, damage to children is built into the current benefits and low wage system, so that many of our children go hungry. As a party, we aim to defeat these great social ills. We will stand firmly against any government policies that make life worse for children and we will consider children's needs in all we do.

2.5 Religion

Left Unity is a secular party. People holding religious beliefs and those without religious beliefs are welcome. No one should attempt to proselytise while engaged in Left Unity activity. We will avoid organising major Left Unity events to coincide with significant religious festivals.

2.6 LGBTQ oppression

The oppression of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people, like the oppression of any other minority group, is real, not a 'middle class' or 'petit bourgeois' deviation. LGBTQ people are often discriminated against in the provision of services and historically they have been excluded from work and paid less than their straight colleagues. One in five has experienced a hate crime in the last three years. Homophobia and transphobia have been used as a means of dividing working people against each other. They are therefore very much working class issues. Homophobia and transphobia, like racism and sexism, are not 'victimless' crimes. They have no place within Left Unity and members are expected to share the party's commitment to LGBTQ rights.

2.7 Law

Left Unity recognises that within the capitalist system the law and the criminal justice system are often discriminatory and ineffective in defending the oppressed and some people are at particular risk from law enforcement officers and the system itself.

Good intentions alone cannot outweigh the force of oppression and discrimination in the society within which we operate. Institutions from the Catholic Church to left political parties have perpetuated or excused abuse and have exacerbated this by operating outside of the legal

system. When transgressions occur that are within the reach and scope of the criminal justice system, such issues may be referred to the legal system unless the victim decides otherwise.

3. Meeting places and procedures

Wherever possible we will:

- a) Hold meetings in accessible venues and cater for the access needs of members and supporters.
- b) Hold meetings at times that recognise members caring responsibilities.
- c) Use IT (streaming, Skype, etc) to facilitate the participation of those unable to attend.
- d) Provide childcare or assistance with child-minding fees.
- e) Provide a supervised quiet room at large events.
- f) Have regular access breaks at all meetings.
- g) Circulate agendas and motions well in advance.
- h) Avoid overcrowded agendas, which tend to inhibit discussions.

Conferences, training events and workshops are alcohol and illicit drug-free. There shall be no consumption of alcohol in the venue during the specified conference, training event or workshop hours.

4. Conduct

We aim for meetings to be well chaired so that all the different voices and opinions can be heard, business can be progressed, and everyone is safe. The chair must conduct the meeting in a democratic and inclusive way, ensuring that everyone has the chance to speak. Left Unity will provide training for chairing meetings inclusively. All members should:

- a) Respect the chair.
- b) Give each person the time and space to speak. Listen and don't prejudge.
- c) In large groups, use recognised hand signals to indicate you wish to speak. (The chair should clarify these hand signals at the start of each meeting.)
- d) Behave respectfully towards each other and try to consider other people's needs (as would be normal in a well-unionised workplace).
- e) Be tolerant of different habits and norms – for example, the youth and elders might make more noise!
- f) Accept that sometimes we must agree to disagree.
- g) Reserve venom for those who would destroy our organisation and political actions.

h) Respect each other's physical (and emotional) boundaries.

- i) Try to be aware of the positions and privileges you may be conveying, including racial, class and gender privilege. Be aware of the language you use in discussion and how you relate to others.
- j) If a member of an oppressed group requests that you change your use of language, be respectful and change it. Feel free to ask for clarification.

It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that meetings and actions are safe and inclusive, to challenge unacceptable or discriminatory behaviour and language, and to support each other in this. It is easy to trivialise the challenges faced by people in oppressed groups. For example, until you accompany someone in a wheelchair on a journey, you are unlikely to notice all the obstacles and disrespect that they face day after day. Similarly, it is easy for white people to underestimate the challenges faced by people of colour, for men to overlook the challenges faced by women, and for those more fortunate to not understand how difficult it can be for those who have been oppressed to have confidence and to speak up, and so on. Sometimes all it takes is a gentle touch on someone's sleeve or a shake of the head to indicate that something is unacceptable, although when it needs spelling out, we must do so. We should all strive to accept such challenges without undue defensiveness and to be open to learning from each other and firm in our commitment to grow and create a culture of cooperation, patience and mutual respect.

Left Unity does not tolerate violence, intimidation, stealing or abusive behaviour. Members who indulge in such behaviour may face suspension or expulsion from the party and referral to the police.

5. Sexual and Power Relationships

Regulating people's sexual and personal lives is not the business of the party, unless a member's position within the party is used to secure inappropriate or abusive relationships. We expect members to keep to rules on sexual conduct that are normal within the well-unionised working environment.

In particular it is unacceptable to use political position, power, resources or pressure to help secure relationships and responsibility must be shown towards young people. Young members will do as they choose, in time honoured fashion, but it is imperative that they are safe in Left Unity.

6. Bullying

Bullying can be distinguished from other forms of giving offence because it is part of a repeated or overall pattern and it often involves the abuse of power. This power may reside in position, status or in the imbalance between oppressing and oppressed groups.

Bullying can be physical, emotional or institutional (e.g. demoting someone without good reason), private or public, and can be conveyed obviously or subtly, especially when the bully has extensive knowledge of the victim. It can be inspired or exacerbated by oppressive stereotypes. Technology and social media are sometimes used to bully people and this can be as destructive to the person who is being bullied as any other form.

Bullying can occur within every relationship in which power is unequal. This means we need to examine oppressing/oppressed relationships when complaints are made.

Bullying can cause physical harm – including the physiological changes associated with repeated experience of threat – as well as emotional damage. If bullying is not dealt with quickly and effectively, it can destroy groups.

Whilst bullies have their own problems that may cause their behaviour, this must never be used to excuse or negate the fact of the bullying. Left Unity will not ask the victim to excuse the bully or accept their behaviour.

Whilst offering support to change, we should make sure the bully understands that they must never repeat the behaviour and that if they do, they will be suspended or excluded from Left Unity.

Some of those driven to bully, will seek to blame the victim, or suggest that in fact they themselves were being bullied. In these cases, we must ask:

a) Where is the evidence?

and

b) Who brought the original complaint?

Since evidence is crucial, we encourage anyone who witnesses what they believe to be bullying behaviour within Left Unity, to act on this and report it. The victim needs support from the organisation.

7. Online discussions

Our aim is to foster constructive and open conversation in which we can robustly disagree with each other in productive and mutually respectful ways. We aim to moderate comments with a light but firm touch.

Personal abuse or excessively abrasive posting can kill discussion and debate, creating a toxic space where many people are put off from commenting. Sexist, racist, discriminatory, oppressive or inappropriate comments and images may be deleted or edited. Those who are repeat offenders may be removed from participation.

8. Conciliation officers (COs)

Each branch should select a branch conciliation officer (BCO) to assist in the local conciliation of disputes and as a contact point for issues and matters of personal safety and the democratic workings of the party. For example, if a disabled person tells the BCO that a meeting place is inaccessible, the BCO is responsible for working with organisers to sort out an alternative venue. The onus is on the organisation and not the individual.

Similarly each regional council and the national council should select a conciliation officer (RCO and NCO, respectively). As with all other positions in Left Unity these positions will be open to job shares.

Left Unity will provide training for conciliation officers in informal dispute resolution and equality issues. Conciliation officers can also seek advice from the various caucuses, provided they make sure that they do not reveal any identifying details of the people concerned. For example, they can contact the LGBTQ caucus if they are uncertain whether remarks are homophobic.

9. What to do when things go wrong

What to do when things go wrong varies according to the circumstances. Our aim is for reconciliation whenever possible but we recognise that sometimes this might not be appropriate. We all have a responsibility to raise issues or criticism promptly and not to let issues fester.

Many problems are caused by all that separates us and can be resolved by talking to the person involved and explaining what you feel and why. If you wish, ask a more experienced member or the BCO officer to accompany you. It may be cleared up with a chat, a handshake, an explanation, or, if appropriate, a hug.

If you feel unable to talk to the person face-to-face, or if you have tried that without a successful resolution, ask your BCO to initiate the informal process. Some problems, however, may not be suitable for an informal process – for example, if you feel that you are in physical danger or face

serious emotional harm, or perhaps if branch, regional or national officers are involved. You should then approach the BCO with a view to initiating the formal procedure. If the BCO is themselves the subject of your concern, talk to another branch officer or contact the regional conciliation officer (RCO) – or the national conciliation officer (NCO) if a Regional Council is not functioning in your area. If the NCO is the subject of the complaint, contact the National Secretary. Details of the informal and formal processes follow.

If the complaint falls within the remit of the criminal justice system, it should normally be referred to the police, unless you decide otherwise. Ask the CO for advice and support. When COs consider whether a complaint should be referred to the police, the safety and wishes of the complainant must be paramount. For example, complainants of rape and sexual assault often report being deeply traumatised by their experiences at the hands of the criminal justice system. COs handling such cases should seek advice. Left Unity must draw up a list of suitable advisors.

9.1 Informal process

Generally the informal process will consist of the steps set out below. However, there may be occasions where a modified approach is more appropriate – for example, when the other person lives in a different region or you need someone to speak on your behalf. By agreement between yourself and the BCO, the process can be adjusted accordingly.

- a) You may want to prepare a brief written summary of your complaint and make sure you also keep copies of any relevant materials, such as e-mails and other documents.
- b) The BCO will meet with you to discuss your concerns and consider ground rules for the reconciliation meeting. The ground rules should cover the role of any supporters who will be present.
- c) The BCO will then meet with the other person to explain the nature of your concerns and ask for agreement with the ground rules.
- d) The BCO invites the parties to an informal reconciliation meeting. Both parties can, if they wish, bring a supporter to the meeting. The supporters must also agree in advance to the ground rules.
- e) At the meeting give your views respectfully and straight-forwardly. Explain how it has affected you

and what you want – for example, an apology and/or a commitment to change. Listen to the other person. Remember that it is the behaviour and not the person that is the problem and that people can and do change.

- f) If you are the subject of the complaint, listen openly and try not to be defensive; understand that we all make mistakes and have blind spots; remember that there is no shame in admitting a mistake, even if it was unwitting at the time. What to you may be a trivial gesture might for the other person be the straw that (together with all the other insults and oppressions they have experienced in their lives) breaks the camel's back and causes a sense of outrage. Understand that for an apology to be meaningful, we need to acknowledge the harm or distress that we caused, even if that harm or distress was not our intention.
- g) If appropriate, the BCO will draw up an agreement for moving forward and can arrange a follow up meeting after an agreed period to monitor progress.

9.2 Formal process

The formal process must be followed when more serious complaints are made or when the informal process has been attempted but failed.

- a) The CO handling the case will discuss the problem with you. If the CO considers the formal process to be appropriate, he or she will contact the CO at the next level – RCO or NCO. If the NCO is handling the case, he or she will contact the National Secretary. If the two COs (or CO and National Secretary) together agree that the formal process is appropriate, they will refer the matter to the Disputes Committee. In urgent matters, the matter should be with the Disputes Committee within 48 hours. If the two COs do not think the matter warrants referral to the Disputes Committee, you can ask your Regional Council (or the National Council if there is no functioning Regional Council) to refer it to the Disputes Committee.
- b) If you haven't already done so, prepare (and retain) a brief written summary of your complaint and make sure you also keep copies of any relevant materials, such as e-mails and other documents. If available, contact witnesses to the events that are the subject of a complaint. The CO can provide assistance if necessary.
- c) In very serious cases, the Disputes Committee can recommend temporary suspension of the person or people you are complaining about from the party and branch activities.

d) Once the matter is with the Disputes Committee, they will contact you and explain the process. If you need help with the process, the CO can assist you. The Disputes Committee can undertake a formal investigation and recommend solutions. If they find that someone has behaved improperly they can recommend sanctions, up to exclusion from the party.

e) If the Disputes Committee is unable to resolve a dispute to the satisfaction of all parties, the dispute may be submitted to the Appeals Committee for final adjudication of the matter if either one of the parties requests that this should occur.

The roles of the Disputes Committee and Appeals Committee are defined in the constitution which is available on the Left Unity website (leftunity.org).

9.3 Notes

It is recommended that you do not spread your version of a dispute to other members of your branch or other members, including regional and national officers. Remember that when you communicate on social media, you may be communicating to the whole world.

A complaint made in bad faith or made to gain some political/personal advantage may itself result in a complaint being filed against the original complainant.

B. An alternative to “Safe Spaces” document: a short code of conduct

Proposed by Tina Becker

Seconded by Robert Eagleton

Conference considers that the method of the “Safer Spaces Policy” confuses a number of issues which ought to be kept separate. It therefore resolves to adopt the following

- (1) Code of Conduct for LU members
 - (2) Rules for Disputes Procedures
 - (3) Equalities Policy for LU internal procedures
- And

(4) Amendments to the LU Constitution to remove references to the “Safer Spaces policy” and create a simpler and more transparent allocation of responsibility for handling disputes

1. Code of conduct for LU members

Preamble

Left Unity aims as far as possible within the deeply

unequal society within which we live to combat all forms of oppression and discrimination, to develop all our members as leaders, and to develop a culture of free discussion accessible to all members. We recognise that this is most likely to be achieved by a political culture in which fully open debate, including accusations of sexism, racism, class prejudice, scabbing, etc, or saying that ‘the emperor has no clothes’, are possible; and in which members are free to communicate with each other and to organise themselves for common ends. This code of conduct therefore merely sets certain minimal limits which are necessary to LU’s ability to function and pursue these goals.

Members may not:

- violate this constitution;
- actively disrupt LU’s agreed common actions (eg, election campaigns);
- persistently actively disrupt LU internal meetings;
- intentionally assist Redwatch or similar far-right organisations which target leftists with violence and threats, employers’ blacklisting organisations or mass-media witch-hunts;
- ‘troll’ LU online forums;
- behave in a way which brings LU into disrepute: for example, by violence against other members, persistently oppressive conduct towards other members, or the exploitation of party office for private purposes.

LU recognises that we do not have the resources to properly investigate and handle complaints of serious crimes against other members: for example, rape or wounding/GBH; and that by attempting to do so we may contaminate evidence and thereby prevent justice being obtained.

2. Rules for Disputes procedure

A.Procedure

A body handling a complaint or disciplinary charges against a member must:

- act as promptly as possible (having regard to the following points);
- give the person complaining sufficient opportunity to formulate their complaint, and the person complained against sufficient notice of the nature of the complaint and sufficient opportunity to formulate their answer to it;
- allow both the person complaining and the person complained against to have the unpaid assistance of another person;
- where facts are disputed, allow both

the person complaining and the person complained against to call witnesses and to ask questions of witnesses they have called and of witnesses called against them, and to offer other evidence (such as documents, emails, medical reports, etc);

- conduct any hearing with fairness to both sides;
- where the complaint is not dealt with in a branch, publish to the region (if dealt with in a regional committee) or to LU generally (if dealt with in the National Council, Disputes Committee or Appeals Committee) a summary of the decision and the body's findings and reasons.

These procedural obligations do not prohibit dealing with complaints by voluntary negotiation, mediation or reconciliation procedures, whether before or at any stage of formal complaints procedures.

B. Sanctions

Where a complaint is upheld or a disciplinary charge found proved, the sanctions imposed may range from censure of the member complained against, through other penalties, up to suspension or expulsion from membership of LU.

In deciding on sanctions, account should be taken of the seriousness of the complaint, the extent to which a persistent course of conduct is involved, and of the level of political experience of the person complained against.

A vote to expel a member does not take effect until ratified by the National Council or Disputes Committee on the basis of a report from the body hearing the complaint.

3. Equalities policy for LU internal procedures

Left Unity recognises that we live in a society characterised by profound systematic inequality, not just on the basis of class, but also of the oppression of women, discrimination against members of ethnic and religious minority groups, and LGBT people and of age hierarchies, as well as both direct discrimination and the inherent bias of market society against people with disabilities.

We aim for a party in which all people can fully participate.

We also recognise, however, that there are serious limits on the extent to which the life of the party can overcome the inequalities of capitalist society or 'prefigure' the future, and the complete and disastrous failure of previous

attempts to create party 'liberated zones' or 'prefigurative politics'. In addition, a number of forms of discrimination and inequality, particularly around caring responsibilities and disabilities, immediately engage the questions of material resources and time; and the recent evolution of capitalism has been to reduce the resources in both space and time available to workers generally and to workers' organisations. For instance, we may and should aim to meet in accessible rooms, but such rooms may simply be unavailable or not available at a price which small LU branches can afford.

What follows is therefore an incomplete list of recommendations for LU's organisations for good practice in combating the effects of inequalities and discrimination on our decision-making. Most of these recommendations are hence subject to 'as far as possible' (generally, more will be possible for national meetings than for local meetings).

- Meetings should be held in accessible spaces and with hearing loops, and so on.
- Scheduling of meetings should take account of members' or potential members' caring responsibilities (for children, for people with disabilities, etc). Childcare arrangements should be provided. IT (streaming, Skype, etc) should be used to facilitate participation of those unable to attend.
- Agendas and motions should be circulated well in advance.
- Every effort should be made to avoid overcrowded agendas, which tend to cramp participation in discussions (and hence set up conflicts between open discussion of debated issues, on the one hand, and prioritising the contributions of oppressed groups, on the other).
- Chairing should be sensitive to the need to draw in contributions from those who might not 'normally' speak, as well as to the need to clarify differences and allow full debate. On the other hand, some rotation of chairing is desirable to allow other comrades to gain experience of that duty.
- Meetings of any length should include appropriate access breaks.
- Left Unity needs to actively promote workers' education and similar initiatives to empower those who have had less access to formal education. The party as a whole, and branches, need to develop party education for the same purpose.

4. Amendments to Left Unity constitution

Clause 3, Membership, subhead (f): "abides by the principles and guidelines of behaviour set out in the safer spaces policy (appendix 1)" - Delete.

Clause 10, Direct democratic participation ...subhead (d): "All discussion and debate will be expected to be respectful and adhere to the standards of behaviour set out in the safer spaces policy (appendix 1)" - Delete.

Clauses 18, Disputes Committee, and 19, Appeals Committee:

Rewrite as follows:

(18-19) DISPUTES AND APPEALS

A. Disputes Committee

(i) A Disputes Committee shall be elected annually by national ballot. This committee will consist of seven people, but shall include no members of the National Council. Its role will be to investigate disputes and complaints about the behaviour of individual party members in appropriate cases.

(ii) The Disputes Committee may form a sub-committee of at least three members to consider any one case.

(iii) The Disputes Committee shall adopt its own procedures and standing orders, subject to approval and amendment from time to time by national conference.

B. Appeals committee

(i) An Appeals Committee shall be elected annually by national ballot. This committee is the last stage in any disputes resolution procedure and its decisions are final.

(ii) The Appeals Committee will consist of seven people, but shall include no members of the national council or disputes committee. Its role will be to hear appeals from members against disciplinary action taken against them. The Appeals Committee may form a sub-committee of at least three members to consider any one case.

(iii) The Appeals Committee shall adopt its own procedures and standing orders, subject to approval and amendment from time to time by national conference.

C. Disputes and disciplinary action

(i) Individual members have the right to make complaint against other members, or LU officers or organisations, complaining of violations of this constitution or of the code of conduct (appendix

1).

(ii) The National Council may refuse any applicant for membership or take disciplinary action against an individual member. The individual concerned has a right to appeal to the appeals committee. Such action must be explained in writing to the member or potential member concerned, and such explanation must include a statement that the member or applicant is entitled to appeal to the appeals committee.

(iii) Complaints should, subject to (iv) below, be dealt with at the most local possible level. Individual members' complaints against other members of the same branch should be dealt with in that branch. Complaints between members of different branches within a region may be appropriately dealt with by the relevant regional committee. Complaints against national officers or LU organisations must be dealt with by the National Council or the Disputes Committee.

(iv) A complaint or disciplinary proceeding shall be transferred from a branch to a regional committee or to the Disputes Committee, or from a regional committee to the Disputes Committee, on the request of the person complaining or complained against on the ground that the circumstances make a fair handling of the complaint in the branch or regional committee impossible. A branch or regional committee, or the National Council, may refer any complaint or disciplinary action which is to be dealt with before them to the Disputes Committee if it appears to them that this is required by the seriousness of the matter or if it appears to them that circumstances within the referring body make fair handling of the complaint impossible.

(v) People aggrieved by a decision, disciplinary action, or refusal to act on a complaint, by a branch, regional committee, the National Council or the Disputes Committee have the right to appeal to the Appeals Committee.

(vi) Bodies handling complaints or disciplinary actions must act in accordance with the disputes procedure (appendix 4).

Session 8: Disputes Committee Standing Orders & Procedures

Aa. Standing Orders of Left Unity Disputes Committee

Functions and Powers: The function of the Disputes Committee are laid out in the constitution. The committee shall endeavour to find solutions to disputes between members or groups of members. Where situations are grave or there is evidence of grave breaches of the constitution or evidence of intimidation or behaviour judged prejudicial under any of the equality strands (age, sexuality, gender, race, religion, pregnancy, religion, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership) shall have the power to recommend suspension or termination of membership. The committee will ensure that all criminal allegations are referred to the relevant authorities.

Exceptional Circumstances: The Disputes Committee may suspend a member from membership of the party for a period of up to 28 days, with the provision that this shall be reviewed and may be extended to a maximum of 84 days. Such a serious step may occur when the Disputes Committee believes that this is necessary in order to deal with a serious situation in a branch, which could prevent the branch from functioning or believes that the actions of a member are bringing the branch into disrepute. Any such suspension shall be ratified by the national Executive Committee at its meeting following the imposition of the suspension. Such a suspension overrules the provisions of a branch's Standing Orders. None of this shall impinge on the right of any member to lodge an appeal to the Appeals Committee.

Meetings: A face to face meeting of the committee shall ordinarily be called within one month of the election of a new committee.

Meetings shall normally be held, by phone or otherwise, thereafter on a quarterly basis. Meetings will be held in a venue which is accessible. In accordance with the constitution, the committee shall meet at least 3 times per annum. At least two of these meetings will be face to face.

The Convenor shall give at least two weeks notice of the convening of a meeting.

Emergency meetings may be called as an addition to the quarterly meetings should the Convenor believe this to be necessary. In this event at least one week's notice should be given to members of the committee.

Chairing the meetings: Two co-convenors will normally be elected at the first meeting of the committee. The Co-Convenors will normally chair meetings of the committee unless the committee decides otherwise by a majority vote. There shall be one male and one female Co-Convenor.

Quorum: A quorum will usually consist of four members of the committee.

Voting: A vote will usually be taken by a show of hands. The vote of each committee member shall be recorded in the minutes.

Admission to meetings: Normally only committee members may attend meetings. However, a member of Left Unity may attend the meeting if there is a majority vote of the committee in favour.

Confidentiality: All business discussed at the committee, relating to specific disputes, shall be confidential unless there is agreement by majority vote to release details of the discussion to other organs of the party or to party members.

Reports: An Annual Report of the committee shall be presented to the party conference for approval. It shall send a quarterly report to the National Council.'

Ab. Statement of our overall approach

The Disputes Committee will make a decision about whether or not a member is considered to have flouted accepted Left Unity standards as per the Constitution.

If there is a clear issue that may lead to suspension, the Disputes Committee will make a recommendation about this action to the National Council.

If the Disputes Committee considers that a complaint does not reach the threshold of such

a recommendation, there will not be a forensic examination of the issues. The Disputes Committee will take a dispute-resolution approach to these matters, to facilitate discussion that may then ease the difficulties. Responsibility for taking the proposed resolution forward lies with the members involved.

The Disputes Committee will offer suggestions that may go beyond the individuals concerned. The individuals involved have responsibility for accepting or declining suggestions made.

The Disputes Committee will send a report to the National Council outlining general themes and issues arising, at regular intervals.

Ac. The resolution of LU Disputes – guidance notes

This set of brief guidance notes was prepared by the Left Unity Disputes Committee (DC) in July 2014. A copy of these notes will be given to all participants in the LU disputes resolution process.

1) At the commencement of the dispute resolution process, all parties to that dispute will be given an explanation of the process.

2) The DC reserves the right not to intervene in a dispute if it considers such intervention is not in the best interests of Left Unity. The DC will give its reason(s) for non-intervention in writing to the parties.

3) The DC aims to intervene and resolve disputes in a timely manner and as its resources are available.

4) A serious and sincere initial effort at reconciliation must be initially attempted by all parties to a dispute. Failure to do so may be one reason why the DC may refuse to intervene in a dispute.

5) We recognise that the pathways to engaging the Disputes Committee are not always fully functioning, for example Regional Councils. A dispute in those circumstances can be referred through the National Secretary, or as per. the Constitution - through the Executive Committee or the National Committee.

6) Any person or LU committee who/which is the subject of a complaint will be given a written copy of the complaint by a named complainant in a timely manner. Once this has been submitted, further additions cannot be made

to a complaint. Additional complaints should be included in a separate complaint. All parties to a dispute will be given a form to complete to help to clarify the issues that are being brought and to indicate possible solutions.

7) The DC will use all appropriate means, including e-mail, phone calls, Skype and face-to-face discussions where possible, in an effort to resolve disputes.

8) The DC will conduct as complete an investigation of each dispute as it decides is necessary.

9) If one or more parties to a dispute refuses to act in a co-operative manner with the DC, the DC reserves the right to withdraw from the attempted resolution of a dispute.

10) All parties in a dispute will be given a written copy of DC recommendations.

11) In recommending a particular resolution, the DC will take into account both the rights of a member as contained in the Left Unity Constitution, and the overall needs and best interests of Left Unity as a party.

12) The DC will only recommend the termination or suspension of Left Unity membership when no other solution is available.

13) Members of the DC who face a conflict of interest in dealing with a dispute will declare that conflict and will withdraw from that particular DC panel.

14) The Dispute Committee works to The Constitution, Standing Orders, and documents outlining the overall aims and guidelines, and begins the process with a Progress form to set the scene. All these documents will be regularly reviewed at least once a year. We suggest that this should be half way through the life of the Committee, when Committee members have some experience of working to them.

Ad. Process Form

It would be helpful to know the three things you feel are most important to you in this dispute in three short sentences?

1/
2/
3/

What three things would you most like to see in resolution of this dispute?

1/

2/
3/

What three things are you prepared to do to aid resolution?

1/
2/
3/

Have you attempted the above? If not, what has been done so far to resolve the dispute?

A1. Amendment

Amendment to Standing Orders of Left Unity Disputes Committee [Aa.]

Proposed by Sheffield branch

Delete penultimate paragraph beginning "Confidentiality:" and replace by :
"The accused must be informed of all charges and evidence submitted against him/her. If a complaint is not thrown out straight away, the accused has the right to question the complainant and any witnesses in a hearing. The disputes committee has a duty of care and therefore needs to regularly inform the accused about the state of the proceedings."

A2. Amendment

Proposed by Phil Pope
Seconded by Mike Thomas

In the document entitled 'Standing Orders' [Aa.]

In second paragraph:
Delete 'The committee will ensure that all criminal allegations are referred to the relevant authorities.' and replace by 'The committee will never discourage or impede any member who is a potential victim of a crime in referring their allegations to an external authority.'

In the fourth paragraph:
Delete entire paragraph beginning 'Exceptional circumstances'

Delete paragraph beginning 'Admission to meetings:' and replace by 'Admission to meetings:

Any member has the right to attend meetings as an observer without speaking rights. They may be excluded by unanimous decision of those members present, in which case the committee must write to the National Council explaining and asking for verification of its decision.'

Delete paragraph beginning 'Confidentiality:' and replace by 'Confidentiality: The committee may by unanimous decision decide to redact highly sensitive passages in its minutes, in which case the committee must write to the National Council explaining and asking for verification of its decision.'

h) Delete paragraph beginning 'Reports:' and replace by 'Reports: An Annual Report of the committee shall be presented to the party conference for approval. It shall send a quarterly report to the National Council.'

In the document entitled 'The resolution of LU Disputes – guidance notes' [Ac.]

Delete '5) We recognise that the pathways to engaging the Disputes Committee are not always fully functioning, for example Regional Councils. A dispute in those circumstances can be referred through the National Secretary, or as per. the Constitution - through the Executive Committee or the National Committee.' (as this contradicts both 18a and 18c of the constitution (note 18a and 18c also contradict each other)) and renumber accordingly.

A3. Amendment

Proposed by Anna Fisher
Seconded by Brigitte Lechner

In the document, 'Left Unity Disputes Committee: Statement of our overall approach' [Ab.]

Delete the second paragraph (starting "If there is a clear...")

Replace with:

"The Disputes Committee will recommend suspension of members only in the most serious cases – for example, to ensure the physical and emotional safety of the complainant."

Delete the third paragraph (that starts: "If the

Disputes Committee considers ...")

Replace with:

"The Disputes Committee will consider the appropriate approach on a case by case basis. For serious matters where the facts are in dispute, an investigation will be conducted."

Session 9: Constitution & democracy

A. Constitution Policy Commission report

Preamble

The purpose of the preamble is to set the scene. It is background and will not form part of any document to be voted on by Left Unity. This document is a draft. It is submitted as a result of a recent decision of the national council on September 21 after the Scottish referendum. It is driven by a very tight timetable in which we face a general election in 2015, a national conference on 15 November and the need to circulate branches by October 9th.

These deadlines make it difficult to involve members through their local branches. This first draft should go to branches before 15 November. If the first draft is approved, with any amendments, at conference it should become an approved or official Draft policy. We would then have a policy to guide our work. At the same time a Draft policy implies that further discussion and development is expected. After 15 November discussion and debate should go back to the branches for further and wider consultation and to the national council.

This first draft has three sections.

- Introduction
- The Commonwealth of England
- The Case for Democracy

Given the tight timetable one approach is simply to put forward a set of bullet points or short statements. The proposal here is that the conference concentrates on the middle section on the Commonwealth of England. At this stage the Case for Democracy can be treated as an Appendix which provides an argument for radical democratic change. This last section describes the present political system and its origins, considers the democratic deficit, the impact of neoliberal policies, the crisis of democracy and the need for a democratic revolution. Finally it references Tony Benn's 'Commonwealth of Britain Bill' and the Scottish National Party Government's 2014 'Scottish Independence Bill'.

DRAFT Constitution Commission

1. Introduction

The Scottish referendum provided an opportunity for the largest constitutional change in the UK since 1922 when the Irish Free State was created. The Act of Union (1707) is one of the pillars of the British constitution and its abolition would have had major and unpredictable consequences for the rest of the UK. A majority of Scottish voters rejected this at least in part because of the promise of greater powers. This has heightened the imbalance in the UK constitution and the contradictions of having a semi-federal system as highlighted by the 'West Lothian' question in which Scottish MPs vote on matters which affect England and not Scotland (e.g. NHS).

The 'no' majority has not resolved the constitutional problems. It put Cameron in the driving seat and UKIP not far behind in appealing to English nationalism. The Tories have called for 'English votes for English laws'. This has raised other issues including demands for an English parliament, regional assemblies and federalism. The Scottish referendum changed left politics in Scotland by showing how alienated working people are from the 'Westminster' system and how people can be mobilised for political change.

2. A Republican Constitution

2.1 The Commonwealth of England

2.11 The Commonwealth is a democratic and social republic.

2.12 The Commonwealth guarantees the democratic rights and civil liberties of the people

2.13 The Commonwealth guarantees the welfare of the people before the rights of property.

2.14 All land and natural resources are vested in the Commonwealth

2.2 Sovereignty

2.21 The people of England are sovereign.

2.22 All State power and authority accordingly derives from, and is subject to, the sovereign will of the people, and those exercising State power and authority are accountable for it to the people.

2.3 Self determination

2.31 The Acts of Union between England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales are abolished. Future relations between sovereign peoples or nations of Britain and Ireland are

voluntary whether as independent republics or as a federal republic. In the latter case the right of nations to self determination must be included in the constitution.

2.32 The people of England have the sovereign right to self-determination. This includes the right to referendum to determine freely whether they want to form or withdraw from union state with other nations.

[Note further discussion required on the position of Cornwall]

2.4 A secular republic

There is no official or state religion. All religions have equal status and citizens have the right to practice their religion as they choose. These rights apply to atheists. All state institutions, including educational establishments, are secular.

2.5 Civil liberties and social rights

2.51 Democratic and social rights and the liberties of citizens are set out in the Constitution.

2.52 These include: [Equals rights for all people, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age. Right to work, right to minimum income, right to a secure home with minimum standards, right to health and safety, right to join a trade union, right to strike, rights of free speech, freedom of information, assembly, demonstrate, association, religion – This clause if agreed in principle as amended will need to be redrafted]

2.6 Democratic Government

2.61 The principle of the Commonwealth is that the government of the people is conducted by the people for the people.

2.62 Citizens have the right to participate directly in governance and decision making through 'people's assemblies' at local or community level and in workplace assemblies.

2.63 Citizens have the right to stand for any elected office and to vote in the election of representatives.

2.64 All officials and representatives will be elected, accountable and subject to recall and paid no more than the national average income.

2.7 Parliament

2.71 A single chamber (Unicameral) parliament or national assembly will be elected annually by universal suffrage.

2.72 Between elections parliament will represent the sovereign will of the people of England

2.73 All legislative authority will be vested in parliament.

2.74 All citizens aged sixteen or over will be eligible to vote

2.75 Parliament will be elected by proportional representation and have equal representation of men and women.

2.76 Each parliament will elect one of its members to act as its Speaker or Chair and to uphold the constitution of the Commonwealth in parliament.

2.8 Executive

The Government, or executive, is elected by and accountable to the Parliament and to the people through regular election.

2.9 Law

2.91 All judges and magistrates are elected to uphold the law and apply it fairly and justly to all citizens.

2.92 Citizens have a right to trial by jury. [The scope of a written constitution can be wider. This is illustrated by reference to the Scottish Independence Bill]

3. The Case for Democracy

3.1 The present constitution - Crown, Parliament and People

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is a protestant constitutional monarchy. Government depends on the relationship between the Crown, Parliament (Commons and Lords) and People. The Church of England is the established church and the Bishops sit the House of Lords. The central principle of the UK's 'unwritten' (i.e. uncodified) constitution is the sovereignty of the Crown-in-Parliament.

The United Kingdom is a multi-nation state built on the Union of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. England has been and remains the dominant nation. The Acts of Union with Wales in 1536, with Scotland in 1707 and with Ireland in 1801 are part of the foundations of the UK state, until the latter was amended by the Government of Ireland Act 1920 and the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1922. The UK is not a voluntary union. There is no right to self determination in the constitution.

The Crown represents the state and the sum total of governmental powers. The monarch is head of state. The business of government is

conducted by Ministers of the Crown, Whitehall mandarins, chiefs of Her Majesty's armed forces, heads of the security services, police, judiciary and prison service. The powers of the Crown are concentrated in Whitehall and make the UK one of the most centralised governments in Western Europe. The culture and practice of secrecy is embedded in the state making many decisions and actions unaccountable.

Her Majesty's Treasury is at the centre of state power controlling the 'purse strings' through taxation, spending and borrowing. Today the axis of the Treasury and the Bank of England are central to economic policy. The Crown represents the primacy of financial interests in domestic and international affairs. The City of London has maintained its dominant position at home and abroad since the foundation of the present state over three hundred years ago.

3.2 The 'Glorious Revolution'

The UK state and constitution has its origins in the 'Glorious Revolution' which began in 1688. James II was ousted and power was seized by William of Orange. The absolute power of monarchy was overthrown. The Crown would now be constrained by a parliament of landowners, merchants and bankers. In 1694 the Bank of England was established to provide finance for the new state, its armies and Royal Navy. The interests of the City were now at the heart of government, were soon embedded in the fabric of the new state.

The 'Glorious Revolution' did not create a popular democracy. The Whig aristocracy were the main beneficiaries. As power shifted, a new oligarchy began to emerge and establish its central position in the state. There has been major economic and social change over the last three hundred years. The industrial revolution created a working class. By the early 20th century political struggles has established universal suffrage. The working class won a political voice in parliament through the Labour Party. Yet the oligarchy, modern heirs of the Glorious Revolution, are still running the country in the name of the Crown.

3.3 The democratic deficit

Radicals have long accepted the idea of a 'democratic deficit'. This is the view that democracy is not fully developed in the UK. The existence of hereditary institutions such as the monarchy and the House of Lords were taken to symbolise the lack of democracy within the

British constitution. Therefore there is still room to improve, reform, or perfect the system we have. Various organisations such as Charter 88 have campaigned for democratic reform. The Liberal Democrats have promoted proportional representation and reform of the House of Lords.

In the 1980's the Tory peer, Lord Hailsham, described the political system as an 'elected dictatorship'. There is some merit in this. Important freedoms and civil liberties exist. There is universal suffrage. People elect MPs to parliament. Yet elections are a fleeting moment before the central power resumes its domination of politics. This is no democracy. It is more like the kind of workers participation scheme run by German business. It gives the appearance of some form of 'democracy' whilst keeping real power in the hands of the shareholders.

The UK is a liberal state not a 'democracy'. The people are not sovereign. Power does not derive from the people but from an historic compromise between the Crown and the City of London. A few people hold power and govern in their own interests whilst claiming to act on our behalf. The myth of 'democracy' is assiduously promoted. In reality the system of government is top-down. Parliament is largely ineffectual and unable to control the executive. Civil rights and liberties are not secure. There is a constant struggle to defend them against further encroachments.

3.4 Neoliberal revolution

During and after the crisis of the Second World War the Crown, first as the wartime coalition and then as the 1945 Labour government, adopted under popular pressure the policy of a 'welfare state'. Under the new 'social monarchy' the NHS was created and the public sector increased. This expanded the scope of public accountability and public scrutiny. This war-time social contract remained largely in place until the defeat of the miners in 1984-5.

The Thatcher government began the process of dismantling the welfare state. This 'revolution' included privatisation, deregulation of the labour market, anti-union laws, restricting local government, cutting public expenditure, outsourcing public services to private business. These policies began removing public services from, albeit limited, public accountability and parliamentary scrutiny. The impact of neoliberal policies has been to replace a culture of citizenship and social values with the private

interests of individuals as consumers.

The neoliberal revolution has strangled UK 'democracy' for all its limitations. Parliament and local government has been hollowed out and become like an empty shell. More and more decisions are taken by private businesses, Quangoes, an independent Bank of England, the European Commission, the World Trade Organisation and the International Monetary Fund. Vital services such as housing, higher education, and care in older age are in the hands of private profiteers. The 'democratic deficit' has widened significantly.

3.5 The crisis of democracy

The impact of the neoliberal revolution and the economic crash of 2008 have left growing numbers of people alienated from politics. Government austerity measures have widened the gap between rich and poor. Incomes and living conditions for working people are in decline. What people need and what the broken political system can deliver continues to undermine the credibility of 'Westminster' politicians.

The crisis of 'democracy' is the growing recognition that the existing politics cannot deliver. The rise in support for UKIP is one manifestation of this. UKIP recognises that 'Westminster' politics has failed. But they blame it on the European Union and 'too many' immigrants. The crisis of democracy will not automatically shift politics to the left. The authoritarian right is well placed to make gains. However in Scotland a different politics has emerged in response to the growing alienation from Westminster. Forty five percent of people voted to leave the UK.

Russell Brand summed up a widespread feeling. "Like most people I am utterly disenchanted by politics. Like most people I regard politicians as frauds and liars and the current political system as nothing more than a bureaucratic means for furthering the augmentation and advantages of economic elites". He says "Apathy is a rational reaction to a system that no longer represents, hears or addresses the vast majority of people. A system that is apathetic, in fact, to the needs of the people it was designed to serve". He protests that "Along with the absolute, all-encompassing total corruption of our political agencies by big business, this apathy is the biggest obstacle to change".

3.6 The Commonwealth of Britain Bill (CBB)

In 1991 Tony Benn produced a 'Commonwealth of Britain Bill' which he presented to parliament. Whilst we should not simply copy this bill, it provides us with a useful marker to improve upon. It proposed "abolishing the British monarchy, with the United Kingdom becoming a "democratic, federal and secular commonwealth", in effect, a republic with a codified constitution. It was read in Parliament a number of times until his retirement in 2001, but never achieved a second reading. Under the bill:

- The constitutional status of the Crown would be ended;
- The Church of England would be disestablished;
- The head of state would be the President, elected by a joint sitting of both Houses of the Commonwealth Parliament;
- Many functions of the Royal Prerogative would not be transferred to the President, but instead to Parliament;
- The Privy Council would be abolished, and replaced by a Council of State;
- The House of Lords would be replaced by an elected House of the People, with equal representation of men and women;
- The House of Commons would similarly have equal representation of men and women;
- England, Scotland and Wales would have their own National Parliaments;
- County Court judges and magistrates would be elected; and
- British jurisdiction over Northern Ireland would be ended". [Wikipedia accessed 4 October 2014].

3.7 The Scottish Independence Bill (SIB)

In June 2014 the SNP government produced a draft Scottish Independence Bill. Had there been a majority in the referendum this would have been an interim constitution for Scotland. It "provided for establishment of a Constitutional Convention to draw up a permanent constitution for Scotland". Over one million six hundred thousand people voted to go down this route. Below are subheadings which indicate the scope of the constitution.

Scotland's Constitution (part 2)

2. *Sovereignty of the people*
3. *The nature of the people's sovereignty*
 - (1) *In Scotland, the people have the sovereign right to self-determination and to choose*

freely the form in which their State is to be constituted and how they are to be governed.

- (2) *All State power and authority accordingly derives from, and is subject to, the sovereign will of the people, and those exercising State power and authority are accountable for it to the people.*

4. *Interim constitution for Scotland*

5. *Name of the State*

6. *The territory of Scotland*

7. *Form of State and government*

(1) *Scotland is an independent, constitutional monarchy.*

(2) *The form of government in Scotland is a parliamentary democracy.*

8. *National flag and anthem*

9. *Head of State*

(1) *Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth is to be Head of State, as Queen.*

10. *Legislature*

(1) *Legislative power to make and modify the law continues to be vested in the Scottish Parliament.*

11. *Executive*

12. *State accountability to the people*

13. *Independence of the judiciary*

14. *Supreme Court*

15. *The rule of law*

16. *The Scottish civil service*

17. *Local government.*

18. *Scottish citizenship*

19. *International relations and foreign policy*

20. *International organisations*

21. *Ratification of international agreements*

22. *Incorporation of international agreements*

23. *Nuclear disarmament*

24. *Incorporation of European law*

25. *European citizenship*

26. *Respect for human rights*

(1) *Every person has the rights and fundamental freedoms set out in the European.*

27. *References to the European Convention on Human Rights*

28. *Equality*

29. *Children's wellbeing*

30. *Island communities*

31. *The environment*

32. *Natural resources*

33. *Provision for a permanent constitution*

35. *Repeal of the Act of Union*

The Union with England Act 1707 is repealed.

The CBB and SIB are relevant documents to

inform our thinking. Both agree with a written constitution. The CBB demands a republic and the SIB is for a constitutional monarchy. The CBB wants to reform the House of Lords whereas SBI is unicameral without a House of Lords. The CBB is silent of the EU whereas the SIB is pro-EU. The CBB is the product of socialist thinking, whereas the SIB is a product of the national democratic movement and the SNP in particular.

3.8 Democratic revolution

It is useful and necessary to distinguish between democratic reform and democratic revolution. The former aims to improve the old constitution. The latter seeks to abolish it. The UK's unwritten constitution will be abolished along with undemocratic institutions and laws:

- Monarchy
 - House of Lords
 - Privy Council
 - Acts of Union
 - Official Secrecy laws
 - Disestablishment of the Church of England
- Democratic revolution is the mobilisation of the mass of people acting politically to democratise society. The process of democratic revolution is not an event but a process taking place over months and years. It involves the abolition of the old constitution and the establishment of a democratic constituent assembly to discuss and decide a new constitution to be proposed to the people for endorsement.

A1. Amendment

Proposed by Camden branch, Islington Branch

1. Delete preamble
2. Delete section 2 and reinsert as section 6 with the following statement at the beginning "The constitution commission will continue to function beyond this conference among other things to organize a discussion around the following ideas"
3. At end, add new part 4 as follows:

Democratic steps forward in Scotland

4.1 Left Unity notes that people in Scotland demonstrated very clearly that when offered the chance to do politics differently, interest in

politics is high. 97% of those eligible to vote in the referendum registered to do so. Turnout was 84.6%

4.2 Left Unity notes that the Scottish referendum was the first time that 16 and 17 year olds have been given voting rights in the United Kingdom and that it was clear that the engagement of these young people in the political process makes it very difficult for anyone to cogently argue that the franchise should not be so extended in other elections

4.3 Left Unity believes that the Yes campaign in the referendum and particularly the Radical Independence campaign reinvigorated politics across Scotland through mass canvasses of working class housing schemes and public meetings across the country as well as creative use of social media, combining the old with the new.

4.4 Left Unity notes that the Yes campaign was strengthened by its diversity with groups like Women for Independence and Scots Asians for Yes. We also note that many Palestinian flags were flown alongside saltires at Yes gatherings and that many young Catalans travelled to Scotland to support the Yes campaign

4.5 Left Unity notes that the No victory resulted in the Orange order celebrating in St George's Square Glasgow chanting its completely reactionary slogan 'No Surrender'

4.6 Left Unity notes the statement of the Radical Independence campaign agreed on September 27 as follows:

"The Radical Independence Campaign has played an important role in the referendum. The engagement with communities all over Scotland inspired a democratic revival of historic proportions. We are proud to have been a part of that process.

We believe that process continues to broaden. As the austerity agenda intensifies and the march to another war starts, the need for a broad, radical social movement of the left continues.

We were set up as something more than an independence campaign.

We stand for a Scotland that is:

- *For a social alternative to austerity and privatisation*
- *Green and environmentally sustainable*
- *A modern republic for real democracy*
- *Committed to equality and opposition to discrimination on grounds of gender, race, disability or sexuality*
- *Internationalist and opposed to war, NATO*

and Trident

We will support existing anti-war movements, and the anti-austerity movement as well as initiating campaigns promoting social justice and democracy. We will go to the communities who voted for a better future and re-engage. We will act as a broad movement for change that continues to promote the idea that another Scotland is possible.

We will endeavour to keep raising ambitions and expectations of what is possible. We demand a better standard of living for working people. We will campaign for an end to poverty wages, an end to oppressive sanctions and to poor housing. We will campaign to end the scourge of unemployment. We will continue to develop a people's movement where we speak up for the millions who want change. We will work to make sure the voices of our communities are heard.

We will continue to work with the independence movement, and will raise the need for Scotland to be an independent nation, free from the British State. We re-assert that our campaign is based on social justice and peace.

Our branches will be discussing and debating how best to advance this cause in their local areas. We invite the whole of the movement to our conference in November where we will debate the way forward.

We started with big ideas, we engaged with communities. Our ideas will stay radical and our movement rooted in the idea that people make change. We will continue to link with our international partners to build another world. We commit to an agenda for change in Scotland and beyond.

We endorse the core of the statement from We stand for... social justice and peace".

4.7 Left Unity notes that amongst those who voted No on September 21 many did so on the basis that they believed the 'vow' that devo max would be forthcoming if a no vote was successful. We note that the Unionist parties are completely predictably not putting forward such proposals and will work with other forces demanding the greatest possible devolution for Scotland.

4. Insert new part 5

5.1 Left Unity will campaign for proportional representation to be introduced in all elections

5.2 Left Unity will campaign for the extension of the franchise to 16 and 17 year olds

5.3 Left Unity will campaign for the abolition of

the House of Lords

5.4 Left Unity will campaign for the abolition of the monarchy

5.5 Left Unity will campaign for the disestablishment of the Churches of England and Scotland and the separation of church and state

5.6 Left Unity will campaign for votes for prisoners

5.7 Left Unity will campaign for a written constitution

5.8 Left Unity will campaign for the return of powers to local government

5.9 Left Unity will badge these demands above as a campaign for radical democracy. We will make discussion on these questions a central part of the event the national council is organizing next spring

5.10 Left Unity will through its constitution commission continue to discuss other radical democratic demands and to further flesh out those agreed by this conference. The commission will report further to the December and March NCs – and beyond as appropriate

A2. Amendment

Proposed by Liverpool branch

In paragraph 2.64:

After 'recall' insert "by their constituents, for whatever reason, and without requiring any other trigger, e.g. censure by the Commons in the case of MPs"

B. Devolution

Proposed by Wales Committee

This conference fully supports Left Unity Wales in seeking to:

1. Promote greater control over Welsh affairs, equal to that of Scotland, by the people of Wales as decided by them.
2. Develop a Left Unity manifesto for Wales based upon the founding statements and policies of Left Unity.
3. Work in conjunction with other parties in Wales that share these aims.

Conference accepts that Left Unity Wales will participate in the Left Unity constitutional commission on this basis.

Explanatory note

At the Left Unity National Council meeting held 20 September the following resolution was agreed:

“This meeting recognises the historic significance of the Scottish referendum for the democratic political future of the UK

We resolve to encourage and promote a party wide discussion on the future of democracy throughout the UK”

It was then agreed to establish a commission on the UK constitution and Steve F was elected as convenor. It was also agreed to send three observers to the RIC conference in Scotland.

C. Winning the battle for democracy

Proposed by Sheffield branch

Capitalism creates the necessity amongst workers to engage in constant struggle. Even without the leadership of socialists class battles will occur, albeit at an elemental level. However, to liberate themselves workers must fight for the positive resolution of all social contradictions, first and foremost by winning the battle for democracy.

Under capitalism democracy exhibits two sides. There is mystification, whereby the masses are reconciled to their exploitation and fooled into imagining themselves to be the sovereign power in society. On the other hand, there is the struggle to give democratic forms a new, substantive, content. This can only be achieved by the working class taking the lead in the fight to ensure popular control over all aspects of society.

Hence, Left Unity does not counterpose democracy to socialism. Democracy is much more than voting every four or five years. Democracy is the rule of the people, for the people, by the people. To make that aspiration real necessarily means removing all judicial, structural and socio-economic restraints on, or distortions of, popular control from below.

As the September 18 referendum has shown, there is also an ongoing democratic deficit when it comes to the national question.

The British nation evolved from the gradual bonding of the English, Welsh and Scottish. Drawn together over centuries by common political and economic experience, they now in the main possess a common language, culture and psychology. The birth of the British nation was a

progressive development objectively. Nevertheless, because it was carried out under the aegis of a brutal absolutism it was accompanied by countless acts of violence and discrimination.

While socialists defend the right of Scotland and Wales to secede, we do not want separation. We want the closest union circumstances allow and will argue against any form of nationalism and chauvinism. Ideas of exclusiveness or superiority, national oppression itself, obscure the fundamental antagonism between labour and capital, and divert attention from the need to unite against the common enemy - the British capitalist state.

Left Unity stands for republican democracy. We therefore demand:

- Abolition of the monarchy and the House of Lords, and a single-chamber parliament with proportional representation, annual elections and MPs’ salaries set at the level of a skilled worker.
- For a federal republic of England, Scotland and Wales.
- No to the presidential prime minister. End prime ministerial appointment of ministers and all other forms of prime ministerial patronage.
- Disband MI5, MI6, special branch and the entire secret state apparatus.
- For local democracy. Service provision, planning, tax raising, law enforcement and funding allocation to be radically devolved downwards as far as possible and appropriate: to ward, borough, city and county levels.
-

C1. Amendment

Proposed by Southwark branch

In the fourth paragraph:

After “As the September 18 referendum has shown, there is also an ongoing democratic deficit when it comes to the national question” add: “not least because the UK constitution denies (does not recognise) the right of nations to self determination for Ireland, Scotland and Wales.”

In the fifth paragraph:

Delete: “The British nation evolved from the gradual bonding of the English, Welsh and Scottish. Drawn together over centuries by common political and economic experience, they

now in the main possess a common language, culture and psychology. The birth of the British nation was a progressive development objectively. Nevertheless, because it was carried out under the aegis of a brutal absolutism it was accompanied by countless acts of violence and discrimination."

In the sixth paragraph:

Delete: "While" and substitute "Hence" Put full stop after "secede" and delete: "we do not want separation".

Before "We want the closest union" add: "As internationalists we recognise that relations between all nations must be governed entirely and exclusively by voluntary democratic means. Consequently the Acts of Union between England and Scotland and Wales must be abolished immediately so that each sovereign nation is free to decide its future constitutional relations, whether as independent nations or in some form of federal republic."

After "the fundamental antagonism between labour and capital", delete comma and replace with full stop and then delete "and divert attention from the need to unite against the common enemy - the British capitalist state".

In final paragraph beginning, "Left Unity stands for republican democracy. We therefore demand:"

After "** Abolition of the monarchy and the House of Lords", add: "and the Acts of Union".

After "For and a single-chamber parliament with proportional representation, annual elections and MPs' salaries set at the" delete: "level of a skilled worker." And replace by "national average wage".

After "** For a federal republic of England, Scotland and Wales" add "by voluntary agreement"

therefore demand:

- The abolition of the monarchy and the House of Lords, a single-chamber parliament with proportional representation, the right to recall our elected representatives, and MPs' salaries set at the level of a skilled worker.
- An end to the prime ministerial appointment of ministers and all other forms of prime ministerial patronage.
- To give the public the right to call referendums:
- to propose a law if 800,000 people sign a proposal within 18 months
- to oppose a law passed by parliament, if 400,000 signatures against the law are gathered within 100 days

C2. Amendment

Proposed by Hackney and Tower Hamlets branches

Delete all preamble.

Delete all from 'Left Unity stands for...' to end.

Replace with:

Left Unity stands for republican democracy. We

Session 10: Equality

A. Oppression of disabled people

Proposed by Disabled People's caucus

Left Unity acknowledges that disability is the result of the social oppression of people with physical and/or intellectual impairments, and people with severe emotional distress. In a capitalist system this oppression takes the primary form of disregarding the value, and needs of people who are considered incapable of economic activity (labourism) because of such impairments. It is more than individual acts of discrimination because the mistreatment of people with impairments in society are enshrined in our laws and institutions. Such mistreatment is bolstered by ancient religious and cultural beliefs.

Fighting this oppression is complicated in practice because every group of humans includes people with impairments, so many disabled people suffer the impact of more than one oppression e.g. being black and disabled and female. Which oppressions are involved will to some degree shape the form of the mistreatment, so we need to learn a great deal about the many different experiences within the broad group.

Left Unity commits itself to acting to counter this oppression both internally and in all its policies so that we do not unthinkingly repeat the oppressive values and practices endemic in the system we are trying to change.

To do this we need to maximise the inclusion of disabled people in the party at all levels and in all ways, allowing ourselves to be educated and led by our disabled members. The perspective of disabled people needs to be sought not just on this issue but on all issues.

B. Recognition of carers

Proposed by Liverpool branch

Conference resolves to campaign and challenge all political parties to recognise/respect Carers that are currently classed as unemployed. Carers get paid less than current unemployed levels. Carers work 24/7 without recognition. Carers save the Government over £100billion a year.

Carers at a minimum need to receive the same amount of Benefits as the unemployed including free eye tests and prescriptions. Government should refine their roles as employed with all rights. Care payments are also taxable so they should be given the same rights as the unemployed including free eye tests and prescriptions. Government should refine their roles as employed with all rights. Care payments are also taxable so they should be given the same rights as anyone that is working and the same support regardless of their ability to have another Job along with being a care giver. For many caring for someone that has a disability that is working and the same support regardless of their ability to have another Job along with being a care giver. For many caring for someone that has a disability is a 24/7 Job with no holiday pay and no other way of gaining an income.

C. Work Capability Assessment

Proposed by Tom Armstrong
Seconded by Alison Treacher

Conference notes:

1. The Work Capability Assessment, as run by ATOS until they withdrew from the contract in 2014, became notorious for passing those living with impairments as "fit for work" even though in reality these people would face extreme difficulties returning to work at best - and it would be impossible for many.
2. Amid mass protests against the WCA in February 2014, ATOS withdrew from their contract due to the increasing negative PR, but the WCA itself has not been scrapped.
3. Since the introduction of the WCA, many claimants have died due to the increased stress or from suicide.
4. The WCA is politically motivated. Whistleblowers within the DWP have disclosed a "targets culture" with aims to remove people from benefits.
5. Other sanctions and taxes (including the Bedroom Tax) on benefits and the removal of crisis loans disproportionately affect those living with impairments and their carers, and the Tory government are now proposing taxes on disability benefits should it be re-elected next year.

Conference believes:

1. The WCA is unfit for purpose and must be scrapped - the results will be same whether ATOS run it or any other contractor such as Capita, G4S, Serco etc. Even if it was taken in house or done by the NHS, the tickbox nature of the WCA treats people unfairly and without dignity.
2. The media and politicians need to be held accountable for what they say and the attacks on those with physical and mental impairments in society. This exacerbates stigma and discrimination and must stop.
3. Health professionals should be held responsible for providing appropriate support and necessary paperwork, free of charge, to aid and assist the applicant's claim for benefits.
4. We condemn the appalling state of provision for people with mental health impairments. The entire health and social care system must be reworked and properly funded. This would allow it to provide the necessary services to prevent mental health problems and provide proper and adequate support for people when they do occur.

Conference resolves:

1. To abolish the WCA and other cruel measures against disability benefits claimants, and ensure that all those living with disabilities in the UK get the support they need in order to live a full and happy life.
2. That the role of any therapeutic intervention should be with the goal of personal wellbeing as opposed to employability.
3. To ensure that any person living with physical or mental impairments who wishes to return to work is helped to find a job suitable for them and that they get support to ensure they can remain in that job. We will also ensure that those with long-term/permanent impairments are able to return to the same level of disability benefits they were on before, should they relapse or feel overly pressured to an extent that they can no longer manage in that role.
4. That employers should see people with impairments as assets, and be required to make much greater efforts to create accessible jobs. They should then work with those people with impairments to be positive about what they can offer in their role.
5. Employers should be trained to understand that those with lived experience have often developed strategies for working and managing their needs. This training should enable employers to pass on

that experience to other members of the workforce and these strategies can be used in order to develop best practice for ensuring an accessible work environment.

6. To establish an independent appeals process involving the claimant, any carer, advocate, and/or anyone else responsible for the wellbeing for that person to formulate an agreed appropriate decision/package to continue with that person's journey to recovery.
7. To re-instate the Independent Living Fund.
8. If in government, we will appoint a Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing who would be responsible for the wellbeing of the members of the public and for the prevention of mental ill health.
9. To condemn and to counter-argue against attacks on benefit claimants in the press, whilst actively raising awareness of the reality of the lives of benefit claimants.
10. To actively engage with carers groups, disability charities, mental health lobbyists, whilst keeping disabled people themselves at the centre of all decision making.
11. We commit to a carers' caucus group. The role of carers in supporting those with impairments is largely unrecognised and more unsupported than ever.
12. We must redefine work as making a positive contribution to society, including unpaid caring and voluntary work.

Session 1 1: Fighting austerity

A. Welfare not Warfare

Proposed by Crouch End branch

The British government continues its brutal cuts programme, claiming that there is no money to adequately fund public services and benefits, whilst at the same time pouring vast sums into war and nuclear weapons.

The latest attacks on Iraq have been announced as costing £3 billion but will doubtless cost much more. The cost of maintaining the current Trident nuclear weapons system is around £3 billion a year and the lifetime cost of the planned replacement is in excess of £100 billion.

This conference agrees to step up its 'welfare not warfare' campaigning, opposing spending on war and nuclear weapons and backing investment in public services and meeting people's needs.

B. NHS Reinstatement Bill 2015

Proposed by Nottingham branch

Left Unity Shall with immediate effect, endorse and join as a Supporter of the Campaign for NHS Reinstatement Bill 2015 launched on the 4th of October and co-ordinate with other organisations that are supporters such as Keep Our NHS Public (KONP), London Health Emergency, Open Democracy (Our NHS), Green Party England and Wales and the Politics of Health Group (plus any other organisations that come out in support of this campaign) to launch a Large Scale Campaign in England to highlight the damage being done to the NHS England that will push NHS England into the history books and also to help change the narrative on health throughout the whole of the UK so that "NHS Wales" and "Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland" are protected from further squeezing by the Westminster Central Government where cuts are being enforced via restriction of those nations Assembly budgets and NHS Scotland which is better protected by the general political climate in Scotland and the powers of the Scottish Parliament.

Website: <http://www.nhsbill2015.org/>

(Background information - summary of the NHS Reinstatement Bill 2015:

In short, the Bill proposes to reverse 25 years of marketisation in the NHS by abolishing the purchaser-provider split, re-establishing public bodies and fully restoring the NHS in England as an accountable public service. It draws on some of the best examples of NHS administration over its history, retains some features of the 2012 reforms and would be implemented on a timescale determined by the Secretary of State.

It would:

- Reinstatement of the government's duty to provide the NHS in England, re-establish NHS England as a special health authority with regional committees and modified functions,
- Re-establish District Health Authorities, with Family Health Services Committees to administer arrangements with GPs, dentists and others,
- Abolish marketised bodies such as NHS trusts, NHS foundation trusts and clinical commissioning groups, as well as Monitor, the regulator of NHS foundation trusts and commercial companies
- End virtually all commissioning and allow commercial companies to provide services only if the NHS could not do so and otherwise patients would suffer,
- Abolish competition,
- Re-establish Community Health Councils to represent the interest of the public in the NHS, stop licence conditions taking effect which have been imposed by Monitor on NHS foundation trusts and that will have the effect of reducing by April 2016 the number of services that they currently have to provide, bring the terms and conditions of staff employed in providing NHS services under the NHS Staff Council, prohibit ratification of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership and other international treaties without the approval of Parliament (and the devolved bodies) if they would cover the NHS.)

C. The fight against Austerity and a Social Republic

Proposed by Steve Freeman

Seconded by Mark Anthony France, John

Tummon, Joseph Healy, Phil Vellender

Refers to section 2 in the Founding Statement no. 1 of Left Unity:

After:

“Our immediate tasks are to oppose austerity policies designed to destroy the social and economic gains working people have made over many decades; to oppose the scapegoating which accompanies them; to defend the welfare state and those worst affected by the onslaught;

Delete the rest and add:

“to resist every attempt to restrict democratic rights and civil liberties.

Our aim is to expose the bankruptcy of the present constitution, the absence of popular sovereignty and lack of real democracy. We will link the resistance to austerity and opposition to neoliberal policies with the political struggle for democracy and a social republic.

The social republic represents a radical shift in political power, providing the people with the opportunity and the means to widen public ownership, extend democracy in the public sector, restore workers’ rights and redistribute wealth to the working class”.

D. Libraries

Proposed by Liverpool branch

Conference believes libraries are an essential part of community life and crucial for self-education and growing the love of reading in the next generation.

Conference condemns the wholesale closure of publically funded libraries, cuts in qualified staff and trade union recognised rates of pay.

Session 1 2: Electoral strategy

A. Left Unity and the National Health Action Party

Proposed by Nottingham LU Branch

Conference resolves that Left Unity shall approach the NHA party (National Health Action Party) to seek an arrangement where members who are both Left Unity and NHA party members can run on a joint election platform as Left Unity – NHA candidates or NHA – Left Unity candidates. Left Unity and the NHA both have strong views to protect the Universal Health system throughout the whole of the UK and should seek to work together and run joint candidates based on these mutual agreements where a person is a member of both parties. This arrangement should not be binding in the same way as Labour – Co-op party relations are, i.e. the Co-op party does not run its own candidates nor operate as an independent party.

B. Electoral Unity, Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition

Proposed by Glasgow South branch, Loughborough branch, Pete McLaren
Seconded by Ed Potts, Mike Thomas

Conference recalls the resolution on electoral co-operation which was passed at our Policy Conference on 29 March 2014, viz: ‘Left Unity should open discussions with other left groups, coalitions and parties to avoid electoral clashes and move towards electoral pacts – with the initial aim of creating the largest ever left challenge in the 2015 General Election’.

Conference notes with regret that the National Council, at its meeting on 20 September 2014 rejected motions from Rugby and Coventry branches which made proposals for the implementation of the Policy Conference resolution.

Conference overturns the National Council’s rejection of the Rugby and Coventry motions and, in line with the latter motion:

Conference notes that:

Left Unity has got off to a promising start, with over 2000 members;

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) stood 561 candidates in the May 22nd 2014 local elections, an achievement not seen in left-of-Labour politics since the end of the Second World War;

TUSC has written previously to Left Unity, offering temporary co-operation on the limited basis of support for an anti-cuts platform fully compatible with our party's current policy;

As a party the time is approaching when we must decide which seats we wish to contest in 2015; as yet there has been no wide-ranging discussion as to how this may fit in with other socialist activists;

In several key areas, Left Unity and TUSC activists have been involved in supporting each other's campaigns, electoral and otherwise.

Conference instructs the National Council as well as the party's elected officers to facilitate a thorough going debate on the potential for intensive and structured collaboration (as opposed merely to non-aggression) between serious forces on the left at the 2015 General Election and the local elections held on the same day. This could include becoming part of an electoral coalition with TUSC and others as long as Left Unity would still be able to produce its own material in election campaigns; stand candidates, if it wished, under its registered electoral name (but stating they are part of the TUSC campaign, for example, for negotiating purposes with the broadcasting authorities); and generally be responsible for its candidates' campaigns, subject to candidates endorsing agreed TUSC core policy statements. Furthermore, Conference proposes to TUSC and other forces on the left a conference of the left to be held before the General Election to discuss a united socialist challenge during and beyond the 2015 election.'

Conference asks that the records of this and relevant communication to be promptly minuted and circulated to branch co-ordinators, as well as the general membership via the website

Conference affirms that while talks should be held at the highest level and take priority given the tight timeframe at hand, local activists in communities and branches are best placed to take the lead in determining the nature of co-operation far in advance, in order to present the most united and strongest possible socialist challenge at the 2015 elections.

Conference notes that a meeting between LU and TUSC has now been held on the 27th

October. This meeting produced a number of positive proposals for limited co-operation between the two organisations.

Conference instructs the National Elections Sub-Committee to make a proposal to TUSC that in addition to the registered name 'Left Unity' we also organise the registration of 'Left Unity - Trade Unions and Socialists'. This would give left unity branches the option to run candidates under this name and contribute to the TUSC target of running enough candidates to secure an election broadcast.

Conference authorises LU branches to use section 75 notices to enable them to support and campaign for TUSC candidates where LU is not standing and vice-versa

Conference re-affirms that branches are free to issue joint publicity with TUSC if they agree to do so locally.

Conference instructs all party bodies to give full support to any branch wishing to take up any of the above options

B1. Amendment

Proposed by John Tummon
Seconded by Alison Treacher

In the tenth paragraph :

Add after "Left Unity and TUSC activists have been involved in supporting each other's campaigns, electoral and otherwise":

"Conference believes that the long-term decline in western democracy at the national level provides an unprecedented opportunity to hammer the capitalist system hard on its big weak point - the palpable decline of democratic accountability - and to make a lot of headway towards winning a working class consensus for a new constitutional settlement based on thoroughgoing democratic principles".

And then the further new paragraph:

"Conference believes that root and branch reform of the British political system is necessary to break both the barely-differentiated elitist politics that lies behind the mainstream consensus on the need for austerity and the centralisation of political power".

In the eleventh paragraph :

Delete from "This could include becoming part of an electoral coalition with TUSC" in the third paragraph, to the end of that paragraph.

Replace this text with new paragraphs as follows:

“In view of the Green Party’s proposal in their publication ‘Democracy for Everyone’ (http://greenparty.org.uk/assets/files/democracy_for_everyone.pdf) for “a People’s Constitutional Convention to agree radical changes to the governance of the UK” that includes

- Greater powers for local and regional government.
- Electoral reform.
- ‘Total’ recall for all elected politicians.
- Local referenda and citizen’s initiatives.
- Replacing the House of Lords with a fully elected Upper House.
- The extension of the right to vote to all 16 year olds.
- A written constitution,

Conference resolves that Left Unity will make formal approaches not only to TUSC but to TUSC and the Greens to negotiate a one-off General Election alliance called something like ‘Peoples Democracy’ which puts constitutional reform and the democratic deficit alongside austerity & our alternative to the deficit at the heart of a joint General Election push.

Conference believes that such an alliance will:

- Contextualise the argument over the EU that is probably going to part-dominate the General Election and do so in a way that avoids the hypocrisy of UKIP and others on the Right that only point to the ‘national’ democratic deficit arising from the European Community.
- Give forces on the Left a way of countering the English xenophobia that will be the Conservative and UKIP way of arguing the need for a wider constitutional settlement, in the light of the Scottish referendum.
- Provide forces on the Left with our own way of talking about the ‘establishment parties’ that has more depth & authenticity to it than the UKIP populist ‘anti-establishment’ approach.
- Put flesh on Leftist thinking about what socialist democracy would be like and enable us to go to people and organisations with the outline of a radical alternative to capitalist oligarchy”.

This conference therefore commits the executive leadership of Left Unity to open national level negotiations immediately with TUSC and the Green Party to take this proposal forwards as a joint platform for the 2015 General Election.

B2. Amendment

Proposed by Pete Green

Seconded by Phil Pope

Delete all from the opening “Conference recalls...” up to and including in the fourth paragraph “...in line with the latter motion”

Delete the whole eleventh paragraph beginning “Conference instructs the National Council...”

C. Left Unity manifesto

Proposed by Leeds branch, Lambeth branch

LU should only stand candidates if we can democratically agree a manifesto through a policy conference and delegate conference on the final manifesto. If this proves impossible, then we should not stand.

C1. Amendment

Proposed by Tom Walker

Seconded by Pete Green

Delete:

‘through a policy conference and delegate conference on the final manifesto’

Replace with:

‘through Left Unity’s National Council on the basis that the manifesto will contain policies democratically agreed by this conference and previous Left Unity conferences, as there is not time for an additional conference before the general election’.

D. Against the endorsement of abusers as electoral candidates

Proposed by Alison Lord

Seconded by Joana Ramiro

Conference notes:

1) The number of cases of domestic and sexual violence that have recently come to prominence in

the socialist and trade union movement;

2) The inadequacy of, and damage caused by, the response of the relevant organisations in dealing with these cases;

3) The popular demand for the socialist and trade union movement to develop a comprehensive platform against Men's Violence Against Women (MVAW);

4) That it is widely acknowledged that there is only a 2% chance of women making false allegations of domestic and sexual violence; a statistic backed by Keir Starmer, former Director of Public Prosecutions.

Conference believes:

1) MVAW is a weapon used in the control of women in society, exercised by men, and condoned by prevailing ideology. MVAW is far more prevalent than is commonly acknowledged, as one in four women are victims of domestic violence, according to Women's Aid via the British Crime Survey;

2) That given the extremely low incidence of women making false accusations of domestic and sexual violence, any progressive organisation such as Left Unity should always start from a position of belief and the subsequent process should be supportive and commensurate with that view. While it is never appropriate for organisations to attempt to substitute for due legal process (no matter how inadequate they are shown to be in relation to men's violence against women) we must act with regard to our feminist socialist politics and have the safety of women at the forefront of our actions.

3) That trade unions and socialist organisations should adopt policies to address MVAW as a broad social and political issue, and; develop procedures to deal with cases of abuse within our own ranks, that creates an inclusive environment and culture that is unaccommodating to abusers;

4) That selecting identified abusers as electoral candidates is unacceptable to a growing movement on the left.

Conference resolves:

1) Not to select, or support the selection of abusers as electoral candidates;

2) To refrain from making electoral pacts or coalitions which include abusers as electoral candidates;

3) To call on all socialist and labour movement organisations to repudiate the endorsement of

abusers as electoral candidates;

E. Electoral tactics where Left Unity is not standing

Proposed by Richard Brenner

Seconded by Joy Mac

In the 2015 UK General Election, in every constituency where we do not stand Left Unity candidates, or where there are no explicitly working class and socialist candidates with real roots in local struggles which LU has decided to support, Left Unity will call for a vote for Labour.

This is because of the party's continued connections to the six million-strong trade unions and the organised labour movement in Britain, and the feeling that millions of working class people still hope that by supporting the party they will get a better life and protection from the Tories.

We will not call for a vote for capitalist parties like the SNP, or for the middle class Greens, who do not have these structural connections to organised workers.

We will continue to criticise sharply the neoliberal and pro-capitalist policy of the Labour leaders and to campaign for an alternative mass party of the working class on socialist policies. We can express this negatively, by attacking reactionary Labour policies on benefits, privatisation, pay, immigration and war. And we can express it positively, by calling on Labour to break with Miliband and neoliberalism and instead to campaign for the following basic measures in the interests of the working class:

- Stop the cuts
- Restore public spending by taxing the rich
- Nationalise the banks and merge them into a single state investment bank
- Scrap privatisation and PFI/PPP schemes in the NHS, bringing the entire service from the GPs into state ownership and employment under the democratic control of workers and users.
- Bring the utilities and commanding heights of the economy into public hands, without compensation and under workers' control
- End the break-up of public education, end Academies and free schools, nationalise the public and private schools, combining them all into a fully comprehensive state system under democratic management, including local

Session 13: Party & organisation

A. Communication with Left Unity members having no internet access

Proposed by Glasgow South branch

Conference notes:

- Almost one fifth of households in Britain do not have access to basic internet services
- Many of those households are amongst the poorest in Britain
- The vast majority of information about Left Unity including material relating to conferences, National Council and Executive meetings, and general campaigns and events is only available online
- With over 2000 members, there is undoubtedly a significant minority within Left Unity who are effectively excluded from the day-to-day activities of the party through a lack of internet access.

Conference calls on the National Council:

- To make important documentation available by post to those members without regular internet access
- To regularly produce and distribute to the branches campaign and organisational updates in hard-copy which can be distributed to the wider public and engage those without regular internet access.
-

B. Left Unity Social Media Strategy

Proposed by Hackney branch, Tower Hamlets branch, Crouch End branch, Alison Treacher
Seconded by Tom Armstrong

We Note

1. Eight out of ten people in the UK had access to the internet in the first quarter of 2012.
2. Facebook remains by far the most popular social networking site, with a unique audience of 35.1 million, in March 2014.
3. In the UK 47% of adults use social networking sites.

- councils, education workers, parents and pupils representatives. Free public nursery provision for all pre-school age children
- Solve the housing crisis by a huge building programme of socially owned accommodation, taking over unused or underused premises and repairing or refurbishing run-down council properties. This can be paid for by a steeply progressive tax on property, business and incomes - levied locally and nationally.
 - Create full employment by a programme of socially useful public projects like building houses hospitals, nurseries, schools, improving flood defences, extending provision of free health, education and childcare
 - Legislate for a £10 an hour minimum wage immediately
 - A maximum 30 hour working week with no loss of pay
 - Work or full pay: benefits at the level of the minimum age or previous wage, whichever is higher
 - Reinstate the earnings link to the state pensions, final salary pension schemes
 - Scrap the bedroom tax, reinstate disability benefits, end benefit sanctions, raise housing benefit, introduce rent controls
 - Scrap tuition fees and bring back maintenance grants for students including those in FE
 - Free abortion and contraception on demand. State funded local women's refuges under users and workers management
 - Freedom of movement and an end to immigration controls
 - Abolition of all remaining discriminatory laws against lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgendered people
 - Not a penny, not a person for the defence of this exploitative system
 - Bring racist police to justice
 - Stop all wars and withdraw all troops from overseas, from Afghanistan, Iraq, Central and eastern Europe, and Ireland
 - Break all ties with Israel
 - Repeal the anti-trade union laws
 - Votes at 16 – proportional- representation, restore the powers of local councils
 - Abolish the House of Lords and the Monarchy.

4. In 2013 71% of adult online users are signed up to Facebook. We also note that Facebook is ageing as 45% of internet users aged 65+ use Facebook.
5. Social networking sites are increasingly being used to navigate online; Facebook generates almost a quarter of all referred traffic to YouTube (23.7%) in contrast to Google's 32.3%.
6. 61% of adults in the UK have a smartphone and 71% of users access social media from a mobile device

We Believe

1. We believe as demonstrated by other left parties in Europe social media can be used to full effect. We believe Left Unity needs to use social media effectively and it should be considered central to our efforts to reach new audiences, as a more dynamic and cost effective tool than traditional means.
2. We believe that the use of social media was a contributing factor to the success of Podemos (however acknowledge this was far from the sole reason for their success) – we believe this approach is replicable in the UK and that if Left Unity were to learn from Podemos' example in this regard that it would significantly increase our impact and improve our engagement with the UK public.

We Resolve

1. Left Unity should have a social media strategy with a set of simple priorities including increasing membership, increasing participation and building for events and demonstrations which will unite the left.
2. A Social Media Strategy Team should be set up comprising the Media Officer and paid Social Media Coordinator(s) to discuss and coordinate a professional social media strategy, generating guidelines of how to use and moderate the official Left Unity social media channels and a quarterly plan of possible campaigns and content.
3. The Social Media Strategy Team will also discuss online branding and how to distribute relevant templates to branches making it easier to construct FB events, memes, leaflets etc., and will coordinate voluntary social media work sourced from the membership as the team deems appropriate.
4. The Social Media Strategy Team should organise the provision of the sharing of skills and knowledge regarding social media with activists in

the party, and the best way to engage audiences i.e. the use of hashtags or the livestreaming.

5. The Social Media Coordinator will be responsible for any moderation if any post or meme is reported to be offensive or contrary to party principles.
6. The Social Media Strategy Team will report to the National Council who has the right of veto if any actions are deemed to be controversial.
7. The committee and Media Officer will receive the full support of the National Council to ensure that Left Unity social media is used for advancing party policies, political mobilisation, discussion and debate and not personal attacks or personally intrusive posting of any sort.

C. Slogan

Proposed by Philip Clayton
 Seconded by Kieran Crowe

Conference agrees that we need something to indicate what we stand for that is pithy and not a meaningless PR slogan. We suggest a question to be emblazoned on all banners and publicity:

How rich to we have to be before there is no poverty?

To have a country this rich plastered with food banks is a national disgrace. To have people unable to find an affordable home is shameful. To have people in full-time work on benefits is repugnant.

Session 14: Constitutional amendments

A. Strengthening Regional Committees

Proposed by Stockport branch

Left Unity believes that it is important to move on from the simplistic truism that “the interests of the working class are basically the same everywhere”, in view of: -

- a) the significant inter-regional differences in house prices, unemployment rates, the incidence of poverty, type of jobs, ethnic and religious composition, and
- b) the differences across all regions in political geography between most cities and their nearby towns

and that LU therefore needs to pursue an intelligence-led political activity that ensures that the balance of our internal structure enables us to become as well adapted to it as we can to this diversity.

In line with clause 8 d) (Regional Structures) of our Constitution, which sets out the role of regional committees, Left Unity pledges to ensure that its resourcing of the 3 layers of our internal structure reflects their importance, in view of our need to achieve a balance which reflects regional diversity.

Section 17 c) (Finance) of the Constitution is therefore amended to change from “Income will be divided between the national organisation and local / regional activities according to the following formula, subject to review and agreement of national conference from time to time: national office 75%; region 5%; branch 20%”, to

“Income will be divided between the national organisation and local / regional activities according to the following formula, subject to review and agreement of national conference from time to time: national office 60%; region 20%; branch 20%”.

B. Constitution tidying

Proposed by Phil Pope
Seconded by Sam Williams

a) re-letter section 7
should be lettered a,b,c,d

b) re-letter section 12
‘National Office holders and spokespeople’ at the end of section 12 should be lettered q,r,s rather than a,b,c.

c) re-letter section 14
should be lettered a,b,c,d,e,f

d) term of office
in 12g replace ‘1 year’ with ‘no longer than 13 months. This would give some flexibility in timing as we do with national conference in 9a.

e) remove reference to ‘annual’ or ‘special’ conference.
throughout the constitution there are references to ‘National Conference’, ‘Annual Conference’, ‘Special Conference’, and simply ‘conference’. There does not seem to be any constitutional difference between these and the different terms simply confuse. The powers under 9b would remain.
remove ‘annual’ from
7,10a,12k,12p,14c,17h,20a,21
remove ‘special’ from 9b,9b(again),12q

f) Move section 4
section 4 (STRUCTURE AND GENERAL PRINCIPLES) consists of points that are relevant to other sections of the constitution. 4c contradicts another part of the constitution and does not reflect practice (that elections will be held annually and not necessarily at the same time as conference). It would be better if all the points were moved to their relevant sections and section 4 abolished.
4a) move to section 10e
4b) move to section 14f
4c) delete first sentence. move second sentence to 14g
4d) move to 14h
4e) move to 9j
4f) delete as duplicated by 3f
re-number sections 5 onward

g) delete appendix 3

this dealt with transitional arrangements after the founding conference. it should be deleted from the current constitution as it is no longer relevant.

B1. Amendment

Proposed by Tom Walker

Seconded by Guy Harper

Add:

h) 14. NATIONAL ELECTIONS FOR INTERNAL POSITIONS WITHIN LU section f (previously e).

Insert before section begins: Gender representation in elected bodies will be upheld by withdrawing male candidates who appear on the least number of ballot papers until sufficient women candidates are represented, in accordance with the 'at least 50% women' rule in 4d. For these purposes, the collection of non-gender-specific officer positions (ie. the officer positions excepting the principal speakers) is considered as one body.

Insert after following sentence (If insufficient... to come forward): Where the elected body is that of the non-gender-specific officer positions, nominations are only re-opened for the position or positions that are vacated due to gender representation as above, rather than all positions.

B2. Amendment

Proposed by Christopher O'Neill

Seconded by Mike Thomas

ADD

h) amend 18c as it contradicts 18a replace both references to 'Executive Committee' in 18c with 'National Council' so that 18c agrees with 18a.

C. Composition of the National Council

Proposed by Rugby branch

Add new Point ii to 12, and re-number accordingly

"One representative per branch"

Item 12 of the Constitution would then read:

12) NATIONAL COUNCIL

a) Left Unity will be led and organisational/ financial issues managed in between national conferences by the National Council (NC). The National Council will comprise the following members, or such number as may be decided from time to time by National Conference:"

- i. 40 regional representatives "
- ii. 1 representative per branch
- iii. 1 representative from each of the following Sections: Youth/students, LGBT, BME, disabled members, women "
- iv. 4 nationally elected principal speakers"
- v. 5 nationally elected office holders"
- vi. 15 nationally elected council members"

D. Composition of Conference, National Council and Executive Committee

Proposed by Brighton & Hove branch

Amendment to Section 9 (National Conferences)
Amend section 9(c) to read (amended part in bold):

All members can attend and vote at a National Conference on the basis of One Member One Vote (OMOV), except that when Left Unity reaches 2000 members, **and no sooner than November 2015**, the provisions in 9(d) will come into force.

Amendment to Section 13 (Executive Committee):
Delete section (b) and replace with:

The composition of the Executive Committee will be the national office holders/spokespeople, and 12 members elected from the National Council. At least half of these members elected from the National Council must be from the Sections, regional or branch representatives.

Amendment to Section 12 (Executive Committee):
Replace

a) i) "40 regional representatives"
with:

a) i) Branch delegates with branches entitled to 1 delegate per 50 members or part thereof e.g. a branch with 49 members gets 1 delegate, a branch with 51 members gets 2 delegates.

E. Freedom of speech and public reporting of Left Unity affairs

Proposed by Mike MacNair
Seconded by Jack Conrad

In clause 15, add after sub-clause b) new sub-clause c)

“c) LU members have the right to freedom of speech and criticism and to open public reporting and discussion of the affairs of LU, so long as this does not amount to campaigning against a public action in which LU is currently engaged (such as campaigning against the LU candidate in an election campaign after the election has been formally called).”

Re-number (more exactly, re-letter) the remaining sub-clauses.

F. Composition of Conference

Proposed by Nottingham branch

Delete the Following from Section 9 of the Constitution “National Conferences”

c) All members can attend and vote at National Conferences on the basis of One Member One Vote (OMOV), except that when Left Unity reaches 2,000 members the provisions in 7 (d) will come into force.

d) National delegate conference

i. Conference shall be organised on a delegate basis from branches, with the size of delegations based on two delegates per ten members or part thereof, at least one of whom must be a woman, or on such other proportion of branch membership as shall be decided from time to time by Conference.

ii. The party's national youth caucus and student sections shall be entitled to send delegates to National Conference on a basis that shall be determined from time to time by Conference.

iii. All party members are entitled to attend National Conference as visitors. Party visitors can participate in debates but will not have voting rights.

Replace with:

c) All members can attend and vote at National Conferences on the basis of One Member One Vote (OMOV). Left Unity shall maintain a policy

of One Member One Vote (OMOV) but should membership exceed 10,000 the following shall come into force to maintain OMOV: 7 (d)
d) Online Direct Democratic Conferences
i. Left Unity shall investigate existing systems and if necessary invest in (be it via crowd funding, internal party finance or joint finance with other parties (or combinations of the previous)) into creating an online voting system that can be used by members along with watching a livestream of conferences to vote in real-time on motions. Such system if ready for implementation can at the discretion of the party via a vote be implemented at any time before 10,000 members have joined the party as such a system would allow greater participation of members with policy making decisions especially for disabled people or those with temporary/long term illness who may be unable to travel to conferences and those who are unable to afford travel expenses or for other commitments cannot travel on the day but still have access to the internet.

ii. Left Unity shall have policy and annual conferences put on rotation using the European Parliament Constituencies as locations in which conferences will occur, i.e: London, South West England, South East England, East of England, West Midlands, East Midlands, North West England, North East England, Yorkshire and the Humber, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland. (NOTE: As Left Unity does not organise in Northern Ireland it shall be void from this list until such a time as Left Unity decides to allow organisation there).

iii. How physical places at conferences will be allocated will be: within the region of the UK the conference is occurring tickets will be allocated as equally as is possible so that all branches in that region are given equal number of tickets per member with a set number put aside for members within those regions, but who do not belong to a local branch or a local branch does not exist convenient to them (this shall include members of the Left Unity Online Branch). After this any leftover tickets shall be reallocated on a first come first serve basis to individuals in that region and if any then remain the remainder shall be made available on a first come first serve basis to the rest of the branches UK wide.

F1. Amendment

Proposed by Tom Walker
Seconded by David Stoker

Policy crowdsourcing

In section commencing 'Replace with:'

c)

Delete:

'but should membership exceed 10,000 the following shall come into force to maintain OMOV'

Replace with:

'as it grows by implementing the following online system by or before January 2015'

d) i.

Delete:

'along with watching a livestream of conferences to vote in real-time on motions'

Replace with:

'all year round to propose and democratically vote upon policy proposals. This system will work as follows:

1. Any Left Unity member can propose a policy on our open policy voting platform. The only requirements these policies must meet are:
 - a. The policy cannot contradict the party's fundamental principles – for example it cannot be discriminatory or oppressive, or attempt to overturn any part of our founding statements.
 - b. They must be policy questions and not structural questions about the party – so constitutional amendments are not eligible, and nor can they instruct the party to take a particular action (for example, to support or not support a particular candidate in an election).
 - c. There will be a 500 word limit. This is intended to make it clear that we are voting on individual policies rather than more detailed position papers.
2. Anyone (including non-members) can sign up to say they agree with the policy. (The format for doing so will resemble e-petitions, 38 Degrees etc.) We will put in place reasonable checks to make sure these signatures correspond to real people and avoid artificial inflation of the numbers.
3. Each month the policy that has the highest total of supporters at 12noon on the last day of the

month is put to an online yes/no ballot of all Left Unity members. This is done in the same way as National Council elections, through email ballots with provisions for a postal ballot where it has been requested. The ballot will last two weeks to allow discussion on the website and in branches.

4. Policy proposals that are not successful in getting into the monthly ballot will be removed from the website after one year, but may be proposed again at any time. Policy proposals that do get into the monthly ballot but receive a 'no' vote in the ballot may not be proposed again in the same form, though may be submitted to Left Unity conference.

5. Conference remains sovereign and can vote to overturn any policy made according to this procedure.'

Delete from 'Such system if ready for implementation...' to end of motion.

G. Minutes of national Committees

Proposed by Nottingham branch

Delete from Section 15 part b)

All minutes of national committees and working groups will be published within a week. A record of the votes cast by each delegate or official shall also be circulated internally.

Replace with:

All minutes of national committees and working groups will be published within a 7 days (7 working days). A record of the votes cast by each delegate or official shall be included within the minutes. In addition all national committees and executive committees meetings will be audio-visual recorded and posted online on the Left Unity Website and on a relevant website such as Youtube for members to view, this shall be done within 7 days (7 working days).

G1. Amendment

Proposed by Crouch End branch

In section headed 'Replace with'

Delete the third sentence and insert: 'In addition all national council and executive committee meetings will be audio-visually recorded and posted on a password protected members' section of the Left Unity website within 7 working days. Confidential matters relating to disputes and/or personal matters will not be posted. Council/committee members may opt not to be filmed if there are workplace, safety or security concerns or restrictions.'

H. Left Unity membership in Northern Ireland and Gibraltar

Proposed by Nottingham branch

In Section 8:

Add e)

Left Unity will organise in Northern Ireland should twenty people who are resident in Northern Ireland step forward and the constitution shall be amended to allow a Northern Ireland National Committee the same rights as the Scottish and Welsh National Committees, with one difference. On the issue of Northern Irish and Irish Unity Left Unity UK shall not take a position on this issue and shall allow the Left Unity members of Northern Ireland to decide the position of Left Unity Northern Ireland on any potential vote to unify Northern Ireland and Ireland into one nation.

Add f)

i. Left Unity shall be open to any peoples living in the British Oversea Territories or Crown Dependencies that wish to set up Left Unity in those locations and shall provide support to them. Discussion and potential amendments will need to be had at a later date about how these prospective groups would be integrated into Left Unity UK.

ii. Left Unity in the case of Gibraltar (which is technically part of the mainland UK being part of the South West of England for purposes of the EU elections) shall organise to have a branch there should residents come forward to found it. Left Unity will stand in elections in Gibraltar as if it were physically part of South West England on an interim basis until such a time as a Gibraltar Branch wanted to change this arrangement.

I. Composition of National Council and Executive Council

Proposed by Hackney and Tower Hamlets branches

National Office holders and spokespeople, section b:

Add: viii Disability Officer

(note: this will raise the number of national office holders to 11)

Section 13 part b) The Composition of the Executive Committee

Delete all and replace with:

The composition of the Executive Committee will be the National Office holders/spokespeople plus ten representatives to be elected for a period of one year by the National Council from within its own ranks of whom at least five must be women and at least seven from outside London.

II. Amendment

Proposed by Crouch End branch

Amend title to read Executive Committee

Amend 'Disability Officer' to read 'Access Officer'

At end of final sentence delete full stop and insert 'plus one representative from each caucus'.

Ja. Model Standing Orders for branches quorum

Proposed by Brighton & Hove branch

APPENDIX 2 – MODEL STANDING ORDERS

4. Delete all and replace by:

The quorum for business meetings of [name of local party] shall be 15% of those members entitled to vote in attendance, or a fixed number agreed with the Regional Committee. If no Regional Committee is in place, a fixed number can be agreed within the branch, provided it is agreed by a 15% quorum. The proceedings and

resolutions of any quorate meeting shall not be held to be invalid simply through the accidental failure to give notice of the meeting to, or the non receipt of such notice by, any person entitled to attend.

Jb. Model Standing Orders for branches quorum

Proposed by Ed Huxley
Seconded by Ian Llewellyn

APPENDIX 2 – MODEL STANDING ORDERS
4. replace “or a fixed number agreed with the Regional Committee” by “or a fixed percentage agreed within the local branch, provided it is agreed by 25% quorum, and is never less than 10% of those entitled to vote in attendance”.

K. Powers of Appeals Committee

Proposed by Camden branch, Islington branch

Add to end of paragraph of point 19d of Left Unity’s constitution :
“A sub-committee’s role is to investigate the case and formulate proposals for the committee. If the sub-committee proposes to overturn the Disputes Committee decision, then a full vote of the Appeals Committee is required (how such a vote is undertaken, at a face-to-face meeting or teleconference, etc, is at the discretion of the Appeals Committee).”

L. Unruly or disruptive behaviour

Proposed by Anthony Sweeney
Seconded by Ruth Phelps

In Appendix 2, Model Standing Orders, clause 16 replace both occurrences of the words ‘the chair’ by ‘any member present’.

M. National conferences

Proposed by Crouch End Branch

In paragraph 9 (c), delete ‘2,000’ and insert ‘5,000’

N. Length of motions

Proposed by Terry Conway
Seconded by Merry Cross

Add New point 9 i) and renumber :
“All motions submitted to national conference will be not more than 500 words long”

O. National conferences

Proposed by Lambeth branch

In 9 (f):
Delete “Individual members of LU will have the right to submit motions, so long they are seconded” and replace by “Motions can be submitted to the conference as long as they are signed by 10 members”.

P. Deadline for motions

Proposed by Lambeth branch

Insert new 9 (f) renumbering thereafter:
“Deadline for motions to conference (with the exception of emergency motions) will be 10 weeks prior to conference. Composites will be released 5 weeks before the conference and amendments 2 weeks before the conference date”.

Q. Disputes and appeals

Proposed by Liverpool branch

Clauses 18, Disputes Committee, and 19, Appeals Committee:

Rewrite as follows:

(18-19) DISPUTES AND APPEALS

A. Disputes Committee

(i) A Disputes Committee shall be elected annually by national ballot. This committee will consist of seven people, but shall include no members of the National Council. Its role will be to investigate disputes and complaints about the behaviour of individual party members in

appropriate cases.

(ii) The Disputes Committee may form a sub-committee of at least three members to consider any one case.

Add to the rewrite as new 1 "all disputes and appeals members will receive training in equalities, in child protection and basic awareness of trade union procedures."

Session 15: Housing

Current Housing policy

(NB This policy was passed by Left Unity's national conference on 29 March 2014. Motion A below proposes to replace this policy in its entirety. Motion B proposes amendments to it)

Housing crisis

There are many aspects to the housing crisis in Britain:

- the bedroom tax,
- relentless attacks on and removal from democratic control of social/council housing,
- the virtual end to the concept of housing based on social need,
- the cost and insecurity of private rental,
- the prevalence of short term, insecure lets which damage the construction of viable communities and impact on children's schooling,
- the enforced movement of people from their local areas to wherever available housing is cheapest, thus breaking the links with the community and support,
- the consequent human misery and disruption to Social Services and Educational requirements arising from forced movements of vulnerable people, the shortage of mortgages and the lack of affordable housing,
- the unequal demands for income between Buy to Let and home ownership mortgages,
- the scandal of viable housing standing empty,
- the movement of right-to-buy houses into the private rental sector
- the use of housing as speculative capital once again,
- the rise in homelessness
- and the slowdown in the house building industry.

These all make housing a key policy issue for Left Unity.

House building

A publicly-owned building corporation should be established, to ensure that planned targets for house-building are reached and to provide permanent trade union recognised employment and ongoing training for building workers. The capacity of local planning authorities must be supported and increased, including investment in training and education programmes for the

planning sector.

Campaign issues

Conference resolves that Left Unity should campaign for:

- Dignity in housing for all.
- The right to accommodation for all.
- The immediate end to the bedroom tax and support for campaigns (including direct action and organisation in the communities) to see the bedroom tax abolished.
- A publically owned and democratically controlled council house building programme funded by central government at minimal interest rates.

Conference therefore resolves to campaign on, and instructs future elected representatives to implement, the following:

- To increase the building and renovation of council, and truly affordable, housing to at least 250,000 units a year.
- Planning for housing to be within an overall town or city plan to ensure full access to social and recreational facilities for residents.
- Planning of housing to be linked to plans for schools and health care and to integrated provision for elders and to provision of outside play areas for children close to family housing.
- Vacant accommodation should be brought into use, by compulsory purchase if necessary.
- Accommodation to be allocated on the basis of need, with right to life-long tenure and rents set at an affordable level within the living wage.
- The rights of short-term tenants in both public and private sector housing be protected with respect to length of rental contract and termination of tenancy.
- Housing design to be aesthetically pleasing and to take account of existing designs of properties in the local area, with most social housing built to Parker Morris standards, with back and front gardens.
- Housing design to be eco-friendly and sustainably sourced and run, reducing the carbon footprint of all housing stock and improving energy efficiency. Heating for all houses to be included within a neighbourhood plan to aim for the most efficient use of fuel, including utilisation of solar, wind and ground source energy wherever possible, and to promote use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems.
- Planning to recognise the need to build

accessible homes and provision to remodel older homes where needed to meet access issues.

- To pilot the return of local authority building and renovation teams.
- To work to develop effective housing plans for flood prone areas.
- Every home to be equipped with fire alarms and sprinklers.
- Rent control to be introduced on private landlords with rent increases only where necessary, in the context of repairing and refitting the rented property, can be demonstrated.
- Housing rights and benefits for under-25 year olds to be respected and previous caps reversed.
- The legal right to rent strikes to be reintroduced and tenants organisations to be facilitated.
- To work with co-ops within an overall local housing strategy.
- To provide housing for workers in the area in which they work.
- To protect the communities and allow people to live near family or friends.
- Local Authorities to be given the responsibility to safeguard standards in the private sector and to intervene where required.
- Local Authorities to be responsible for regular inspection and approval of all rented properties with a grading given in relation to provided facilities, state of repairs and heat insulation.
- To provide legal aid for housing cases.
- To legalise squatting for emergency housing need or to bring vacant property back into use.
- To reverse cuts in emergency accommodation with the creation of a diversity of units that meet all needs. To at least equalise income requirements between buy to let and homeowner mortgages and to reverse all discrimination in favour of buy to let mortgages.
- To use idle industrial capital to build sustainable and high quality prefabricated housing as part of an integrated plan to address housing shortage.
- Any private housing development to be obliged to provide some affordable housing in the development.

Left Unity calls for a radical reform of the planning system, nationalisation of development rights, the introduction of mandatory housing standards, a new National Spatial Plan to provide a coherent and holistic strategic approach to planning for major housing and infrastructure investment and a large scale state construction programme, in partnership with local authorities and local

communities, focusing on the regeneration of urban areas. All surplus public sector land put to use in order to support the programme.

Left Unity's housing policies will respect the needs and struggles of LGBTQ people, many of whom are estranged from their families, and have been hit by cuts and will be forced on to the street if the Conservatives scrap housing benefit for the under 25s. Left Unity notes increasing homelessness and 'sofa surfing' by LGBTQ youth because of cuts in emergency accommodation and refuges. No one should ever have to sleep on the streets or sofa surf. To ensure that the needs of LGBTQ, the elderly from all communities, and other minority groups are respected in housing and to build at least one LGBTQ shelter-extra care units in every major conurbation.

In the short run we want a crash course in house building and appropriation and renovation of empty properties, which will revive communities.

In the longer term, a determined program of building good houses for cheap rents will bring us up against the heart of the property relations of capital, mainly the private ownership of land and the commodification of property

Left Unity recognises that there is much more than house building needed to humanise and truly civilise our cities and wishes to work with international political campaign 'The Right to the City'.

To this end, we invite supporters of Left Unity and all campaigning for dignity in housing and our other demands to attend a meeting on this matter in Liverpool, the first city to develop social housing, but now one of the cities most damaged by the government's policies

A. Replacement of Housing policy

Proposed by Somerset and West Wilts branch

Housing Policy Considerations

This Housing Policy has been kept purposefully simple and it refers to a number of other specific Policy documents. These documents will need to be developed individually in detail by separate Left Unity Groups. They include issues that are at the core of Left Unity beliefs needing careful consideration. We need a clear policy rather than vague promises.

Housing has been historically used as a financial commodity by financiers, banks and individuals. The value of a house is currently based on market forces and not it's real value. The main reason that social housing has become so expensive is because not enough social houses have been built. This has been as a direct choice of successive Labour and Tory governments. As a consequence the state has been paying an ever increasing amount of housing benefit from public funds to private landlords.

Council/Social housing must be considered as a basic human right and the number of houses needed to be built yearly should not be reduced to allow the housing market to continually rise. The demand for social housing must be linked to council housing waiting lists not to a vague number chosen by politicians.

The only realistic way to stop homes being used purely as a financial commodity is to ensure that there are sufficient Council homes for all who wish to live in them. The price of housing will find a level that relates to the actual value of the construction. The price of housing land must also be set by councils at a realistic rate.

Because the current financial system is based on property (85% of banks assets being in property) pension funds will be adversely effected by the fall in house prices to a realistic level. Increased funds will be required to cover state pensions for those who may lose some or all of their private pensions. This could be facilitated by the introduction of higher rates of tax for those who earn over a certain level. By providing adequate council housing for all who want it the number of private landlords will decrease and house prices will fall to represent their real value as a home and not just a market created investment. Historically Council's Housing Revenue accounts have made huge profits from tenants. The rent of a typical tenant would pay for the value of their home 3 or 4 times over during a lifetimes tenancy. Government has previously taken this profit and the income from the sale of Council houses away from housing. There is a clear need now to set rent levels at as lower level as possible and to ensure that if there is any profit it is used for housing. Lower rents and readily available council housing are realistic way to assist the creation of a fair socialist economy.

Clearly the housing policy has to be able to cater fairly for all categories of individuals taking into consideration ethnicity, age, sexual

orientation, disability etc. and the specific needs of these categories should be discussed in depth in a Community Development and other Policies. The campaigning issues relating to housing should also be included in the Community Development Policy which would include guidelines for other government departments to ensure that the dignity and rights of all individuals are considered in respect of all government functions. Our policy needs to be fully inclusive for all sectors of society and a number of areas need thought and specialist discussion.

If Left Unity is to become a real political force for change we need to consider how we can start to make changes in housing now. We can start by helping facilitate the formation of tenants groups. By campaigning against rogue landlords and by making the public aware of the injustices that are rife in the current housing system.

Left Unity Housing Policy Draft 1.1

(1) Housing Rights

Council Housing would be considered a basic human right and not be based on social need. Council Housing will be provided that will offer dignity for all and a home suitable for the tenant's lifestyle and circumstances.

(2) Housing Location Rights

An individual or group of individuals that would comprise a household would be entitled to have their name(s) added to the council list in one council area. That district would be the choice of the individual(s) with entitlement being based on having a direct connection through birth, work, schooling or existing residency in the area. There would be a national database of council Housing lists. No tenant would ever be forced to move to an area without their consent and agreement.

(3) Transfer of Housing Stock to Housing Associations

No further council owned housing stock would be transferred to private or charitable ownership.

(4) Council/Housing Association Building Targets
Targets for the number of homes produced within a district would be produced by the Local Council's Housing Committee. The annual targets would be based on a formula designed to reduce the local council housing list to zero within 5 years and to ensure that in subsequent years the maximum time anyone would wait on the housing list would be 12 months.

(5) Publicly owned Housing Corporations Publicly-owned Social house building corporations

should be established locally, to facilitate a housing programme based on targets issued by the Local Council's Housing Committee. The Housing Corporation would be set up using Model Employment Guidelines. The guidelines covering all employment issues including wages and conditions etc. would be produced in consultation with building Trade Unions to ensure that model employment practices are followed. The housing corporation may through necessity need to employ the services of outside companies. Only companies that have adopted the Model Employment Guidelines, in line with the Corporations own policy would be considered.

(6) Planning considerations for Social Housing
All social housing must be built to standards outlined in the local planning guidelines. The guidelines would include space requirements, housing specifications, access to local amenities and infrastructure including schools, health care, children's play facilities etc. To build the required number of homes there will be a requirement in some cases to build on new sites. Where building is required on green field sites adequate provision must be made to counter any adverse effects on the environment.

(7) Registration of Private Landlords

Private Landlords would be required to register all rented accommodation with the local authority and be able to confirm that they would adhere to the local planning Guidelines.

(8) Regulation of Private tenancies

New regulations will be drafted to ensure that private landlords provide facilities at least equal to those enjoyed by council tenants. The council housing department will be responsible for monitoring all private rented properties in the area. Monitoring will include initial assessment of all newly registered properties and regular inspection visits.

(9) Repair and Maintenance of private rented properties

Private Landlords would be responsible to maintain their properties to a standard at least equivalent The Local Council's Housing standards. In the event that a Private Landlord does not carry out necessary works or repairs within the contracted time the tenant will have the right to approach the Local Council. Where the Landlord is outside the contracted period with completion of repairs the Council would undertake the work and charge the landlord accordingly. Tenants would be compensated by the landlord with partial rent

repayment (amount decided by the Local Council) for the period that the repairs/works were outside the agreed time scale.

(10) Multiple homes taxation

Second and subsequent homes would be subject to tax.

(11) Vacant properties in the Private sector
Vacant properties would be taxed to such a level to ensure that they are kept in occupation. The local council would have the discretionary power to compulsory purchase properties that are left in a vacant state of disrepair.

(12) Tenancy Agreements

Tenancy agreements will be either single or joint based on the household as decided by the tenants. Tenancies would be lifelong and would include tenancy succession rights as outlined below.

(13) Tenancy succession rights in Council/Housing Association Properties.

Social Housing would be considered as homes and not just houses. Joint tenancies would pass automatically to the surviving partner or joint tenant. The policy will include succession rights for dependants and individuals who have lived in the property for a minimum of 12 months.

(14) House Building Standards

A Housing Standards Policy will be developed based on the Parker Morris and Cooper standards updated to cater for modern requirements for space, facilities, disability etc.. (This policy would negate the existing Spare rooms tax). The standards would include sections on Health and safety issues such as fire alarms etc. Also ECO friendly considerations such as Carbon footprint, solar panels, insulation standards, heating methods and sustainable urban drainage systems etc. would be included in the standards.

(15) Housing list allocation policy

The housing priority points system would be revised and updated to include all modern considerations. This would include nearness of property to work, nearness of other family members and any other factor that should give an applicant priority.

(16) Housing Revenue Accounts

Each Local Council Housing Revenue account would be ring fenced so that any profits would be used for local housing need.

(17) Council Housing Rent Levels

Council rents will be adjusted to the minimal level required to cover the outgoings of the Housing Revenue Account.

(18) Private rent level Regulation

Private rent levels for properties equivalent to council owned properties would have their rent adjusted to be in line with council rents by the end of 2 years. Private rent levels for properties in higher value bands to council housing would not be regulated. Landlords experiencing difficulties due to adjusted rent levels could approach the council who would buy the property at it's new value.

(19) Buy to Let Mortgages

New Buy To Let mortgages would be discontinued

(20) Funding the Social Housing Building programme.

The money to cover Local Housing Development costs would be provided by central government. The capital would be repaid from a percentage of the receipts of the Housing Revenue account.

(21) Right to Buy

The right to buy would be frozen locally until the local housing waiting list has been catered for. The right to buy scheme would be extended to include private tenancies. Discounts to buyers would be calculated based on the profit that the Housing Revenue Account, Housing Association or private Landlord is making and has made from the property. Income from right to buy sales would be allocated within the Housing Revenue account for the provision of new housing.

(22) Tenants organisations

Tenants would be assisted in the setting up of Tenants Organisations that would operate independently on the behalf of the tenants. To ensure the condition of rented properties is adequate and in compliance with guidelines the tenants organisation would have the legal right to agree rent strikes. These strikes would be agreed in the event of contractual failures by landlords whether council or private. A landlord would have to comply with a Tenants Organisation ruling regarding conditions that had initiated the withholding of rent. Compensation would be payable to the tenant by the Landlord for any period that works relating to a ruling of the Tenants Organisation are not completed.

(23) Accessibility

All new homes would conform to new accessibility standards to cater for elderly and disabled tenants and visitors. There would be a fund established for the refurbishment of homes to allow tenants to remain in their homes in the event of changing mobility.

(24) Progressive Housing Policy

The Housing policy would be continually

upgraded in conjunction with the Community Development Department to ensure that there is genuine equal opportunity for all tenants based on society's changing conditions.

(25) Homelessness

A homelessness policy needs to be developed to cover accommodation, outreach and ongoing support within the framework of the equal opportunities policy.

Further Policy Documents required to complete the Housing Policy

- (1) Community Development
- (2) Equality of Opportunity
- (2) Housing Accessibility and Design.
- (3) Right to Buy
- (4) Housing Allocation and Priority Points system
- (5) Homelessness
- (6) Tenants Associations
- (7) Regulation of Private Landlords and Private Tenancies
- (8) Housing Development Policy

A1. Amendment

Proposed by Bristol branch

In section entitled: Left Unity Housing Policy Draft 1.1:

Clause (1) Housing Rights

At the end add: "This would include units for communal living, and units with a mix of self-contained and shared facilities."

Clause (13) Tenancy Succession Rights

Delete "surviving partner or joint tenant" and replace by "surviving tenant(s)"

Clause (21) The Right to Buy

Delete and replace by "The Right to Buy scheme would be discontinued."

Clause (22) Tenants' Organisations

At the end add "The handing over of the management of council and other publicly-funded housing to Tenants Management Organisations (TMOs) would be ended."

Add Clause (26)

"Encouragement and financial support would be provided for housing coops and other collectively

managed housing projects, including self-build projects."

Add clause (27)

"Council and housing association property awaiting renovation would be licensed for use by non-profit housing groups at minimal or no rent"

B. Amendment(s) to Housing Policy

Proposed by Bristol branch

Bristol branch endorses Left Unity's decision to focus on housing as one of our core campaigning issues. We fully support the existing housing policy but we think that there are some important principles and policies that are missing from the policy as it stands and which we would like to see included. We therefore urge conference to amend the policy as follows:

In the "Campaign Issues" section,

(a) Existing bullet point 4, beginning: 'A publicly owned and democratically controlled ...'. At the end, delete 'at minimal interest rates'.

In the sub-section beginning "Conference therefore resolves ...implement the following"

(b) As the first bullet point add:

To end the right to buy

(c) As the second bullet point add:

To end the handing over the management of council and other publicly-funded housing to Tenants Management Organisations (TMOs)

(d) After existing bullet point 3 add:

Provision of housing to cater for a variety of household compositions, such as units for communal living and single-person/ small-household units with some shared facilities.

(e) After existing bullet point 5 add:

Second homes to be subject to increased taxation

(f) Rewrite existing bullet point 16 to read:

To encourage and support housing coops and collectively managed self-build projects within an overall local housing strategy.

(g) After existing bullet point 22 add:

To license the use of council and housing association property awaiting renovation to non-profit housing groups at minimal or no rent.

The itemised list in the Campaign section of the policy will then read as follows: (additions/ amendments in bold type)

Campaign issues

Conference resolves that Left Unity should campaign for:

- Dignity in housing for all.
- The right to accommodation for all.
- The immediate end to the bedroom tax and support for campaigns (including direct action and organisation in the communities) to see the bedroom tax abolished.
- A publically owned and democratically controlled council house building programme funded by central government.

Conference therefore resolves to campaign on, and instructs future elected representatives to implement, the following:

- **To end the right to buy**
- **To end the handing over the management of council and other publicly-funded housing to Tenants Management Organisations (TMOs)**
- To increase the building and renovation of council, and truly affordable, housing to at least 250,000 units a year.
- Planning for housing to be within an overall town or city plan to ensure full access to social and recreational facilities for residents.
- Planning of housing to be linked to plans for schools and health care and to integrated provision for elders and to provision of outside play areas for children close to family housing.
- **Provision of housing to cater for a variety of household compositions, such as units for communal living and single-person/ small-household units with some shared facilities.**
- Vacant accommodation should be brought into use, by compulsory purchase if necessary.
- Accommodation to be allocated on the basis of need, with right to life-long tenure and rents set at an affordable level within the living wage.
- **Second homes to be subject to increased taxation**
- The rights of short-term tenants in both public and private sector housing be protected with respect to length of rental contract and termination of tenancy.
- Housing design to be aesthetically pleasing and to take account of existing designs of properties in the local area, with most social housing built to Parker Morris standards, with back and front gardens.
- Housing design to be eco-friendly and

sustainably sourced and run, reducing the carbon footprint of all housing stock and improving energy efficiency. Heating for all houses to be included within a neighbourhood plan to aim for the most efficient use of fuel, including utilisation of solar, wind and ground source energy wherever possible, and to promote use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems.

- Planning to recognise the need to build accessible homes and provision to remodel older homes where needed to meet access issues.
- To pilot the return of local authority building and renovation teams.
- To work to develop effective housing plans for flood prone areas.
- Every home to be equipped with fire alarms and sprinklers.
- Rent control to be introduced on private landlords with rent increases only where necessity, in the context of repairing and refitting the rented property, can be demonstrated.
- Housing rights and benefits for under-25 year olds to be respected and previous caps reversed.
- The legal right to rent strikes to be reintroduced and tenants organisations to be facilitated.
- **To encourage and support housing coops and collectively managed self-build projects** within an overall local housing strategy.
- To provide housing for workers in the area in which they work.
- To protect the communities and allow people to live near family or friends.
- Local Authorities to be given the responsibility to safeguard standards in the private sector and to intervene where required.
- Local Authorities to be responsible for regular inspection and approval of all rented properties with a grading given in relation to provided facilities, state of repairs and heat insulation.
- To provide legal aid for housing cases.
- To legalise squatting for emergency housing need or to bring vacant property back into use.
- **To license the use of council and housing association property awaiting renovation to non-profit housing groups at minimal or no**

rent.

- To reverse cuts in emergency accommodation with the creation of a diversity of units that meet all needs. To at least equalise income requirements between buy to let and homeowner mortgages and to reverse all discrimination in favour of buy to let mortgages.
- To use idle industrial capital to build sustainable and high quality prefabricated housing as part of an integrated plan to address housing shortage.
- Any private housing development to be obliged to provide some affordable housing in the development.

Appendix 1: Disallowed motions and amendments

Motions and amendments in this section have been disallowed by the Standing Orders Committee – this means it is recommending that Conference should not admit them to the agenda.

A. Amendment to “Safe Spaces Policy”

Proposed by Tony Aldis
Seconded by Gioia Coppola

{The Standing Orders Committee is recommending Conference not to admit this item to the agenda as it is a ‘Delete all’ and hence not a proper amendment}

1. Delete All
2. Insert

C. Left Unity *Brief Guide to Party Solidarity*

A) INTRODUCTION

In order to build the future that we all want – socialist, environmentalist, feminist and one that is overcoming all forms of discrimination and oppression --- we need to use the talents and the time, the energies and the enthusiasm of ALL members and supporters of our party; that is, members of all genders, of all ages, of all sexual orientations, of all abilities and disabilities, and of all races and nationalities. To learn from the failed post-war history of the Left and to be successful as a party, we require democratic and open political debate, we must have transparent functioning and accountability, we need respect for each other, we need to appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of all party members, and we must learn both how to agree and to disagree...with mutual respect and solidarity. And we all must pull together. This does not guarantee we will end this oppressive capitalist system, but without bonds of solidarity and collective respect between us and among us, we will surely fail.

Yet we also recognise that the current economic and political order both oppresses those who belong to some groups in society ... and gives privileges to members of other strata; this occurs, for example, on the basis of class, race and

gender. Members of LU are not free from either this oppression or this privilege; both will influence how we act towards other LU members. Some people will be accustomed to acting in bossy, authoritarian and individualist/selfish ways, or alternatively, being passive pack followers who lack confidence. Some LU members will face a great deal of stress, insecurity and pressure --- economic and otherwise --- in their daily lives. Others will struggle with mental and/or physical health issues. Moreover, whilst the best features of a culture of struggle and collective resistance can provide us all with many 'survival' benefits and strengths, we appreciate that many so-called 'left wing groups' and their failed histories provide us with far too many negative examples of internal party life and what it means to be an activist and a resister.

Hence, a brief guide to party solidarity within the ranks of Left Unity party members and its supporters.

B) HOW WE WILL OPERATE AS A PARTY

1) Organising to rid our society of the scourge of capitalism is difficult and often discouraging work.

We encourage our members and supporters to show a positive, patient and co-operative spirit.

2) Members who do not abide by the LU constitution may, following fair and transparent internal LU procedures, face suspension and/or termination of their membership.

3) Members who bring LU into disrepute e.g. by subjecting other LU members or supporters to violence or intimidation or who steal party property, will be subject to suspension and / or termination of their membership. Any police agents, racists, fascists, misogynists, or homophobes discovered in our ranks face automatic termination of their LU membership. We take seriously the security and the protection of LU and all of its members.

4) All LU meetings will be properly notified. Agendas and motions will be circulated well in advance. The chairing of such meetings will allow the fullest possible debate, including candid and respectful discussion of both political agreements and disagreements. Those who might not 'normally' speak should be encouraged to do so. Our meetings should be safe spaces of debate and decision-making.

5) It is expected that LU members will, on occasion, disagree. If properly handled, disagreements can lead to a deeper unity...and

fuller agreement. The key points: a) Listen to and don't prejudge the views of other members; b) Bullying will be challenged and confronted; c) Personal abuse or ridicule or online trolling are serious offenses in our party's life and work; d) Respect other members and their views, even whilst perhaps disagreeing with those views; e) Work together even if you disagree on secondary issues.

6) Discrimination or oppression on any grounds (race, national origin, ethnicity, gender, ability, sexual orientation or age) will not be tolerated. Indeed, such views and behaviours should be --- and will be --- challenged. So too will class snobbery and superiority. Inadvertently offensive behaviour or language will be dealt with locally and treated proportionately.

7) We are a party that supports the fullest participation and political leadership of women. Within LU, women must be and will be safe to play their full role. Everyone has a key role to play in challenging sexist behaviour and comments.

8) We are against all forms of sexual coercion and sexual violence. People's sexual preferences/practices and their personal lives are, however, nothing to do with LU unless a person has used his/her position within LU to secure or perpetuate abusive relationships. If a LU member (A) has been the victim of violence committed by another LU member (B), then A can request that B join a different branch from that of A.

9) We will work to erode all barriers to equal participation in party life (and in society) by disabled members and supporters. Whenever possible, all meeting rooms we use should be fully accessible. Access breaks will be scheduled. Discrimination against disabled people should be -- and will be -- challenged. For more, see <http://leftunity.org/guides-to-access-and-inclusion/>

10) Children and young people are free to attend our meetings. At all larger LU events, we will set up a well-operated crèche whenever practical. Meetings will, whenever possible, be scheduled at times that conflict as little as possible with members' caring responsibilities.

11) LU is a secular party. Members holding religious beliefs and those without religious beliefs are both welcome. Members with religious beliefs should not attempt to proselytise others while engaged in LU activity. Nor should members without religious beliefs denigrate those who do have such beliefs.

12) Leaders and those holding official positions

in our party should consider it a privilege to serve. Proven political careerists and opportunists are not welcome in our ranks. Nor are people who use their power or position to secure sexual relationships or to attain financial advantage.

13) No alcohol or illicit drugs will be consumed at LU meetings. Meetings will not be held in pubs or other licensed establishments if it is anticipated that people might attend who do not wish to be associated with the consumption of alcohol.

14) Each branch should select a branch conciliation officer (BCO) to assist in the local conciliation of disputes; see C) below. BCO's require training in informal dispute resolution.

15) Although this guide is primarily directed at relations between and among LU members, the same philosophy and guidelines should govern relations between LU members and party supporters.

C) WHAT TO DO IF YOU THINK SOMEONE HAS BROKEN THE SOLIDARITY GUIDELINES

1) Informal stage - Whenever possible, first talk to that person face-to-face. Give your views respectfully and straight-forwardly. If you wish, ask a more experienced LU member or the BCO officer to accompany you. At the same time, remember: the dispute may be a simple misunderstanding and can perhaps be cleared up with a handshake, an explanation, or, if appropriate, a hug.

2) Raise the issue/ your criticism promptly with the person and attempt informal resolution of the dispute. Do not let issues fester.

3) Whenever possible, the BCO should also attempt informal dispute resolution. Our main aim is reconciliation. We recognise, however, that this is not always possible.

4) It is recommended that you do not spread your version of a dispute to other members of your branch or other LU members, including regional or national LU officers. Note: when you communicate on social media, you may be communicating to the whole world.

5) Prepare (and retain) a brief written summary of your complaint and make sure you also keep copies of any relevant materials, such as e-mails and other documents. If available, contact witnesses to the events that are the subject of a complaint.

6) If you feel that you are in physical danger or face serious emotional harm from an LU member or supporter, contact your branch officers or

committee leadership. Such an alleged perpetrator can be excluded from a branch meeting or digital communications system for a fixed (and likely brief) period of time. Such persons are also liable to be referred to the Regional Committee and the national Disputes Committee.

7) A complaint made in bad faith or made to gain some political/personal advantage may itself result in a complaint being filed against the original complainant.

8) BCO's, LU branches, or branch officers are not authorised to suspend or terminate LU membership.

9) If the above informal resolution process at the local level is not successful, you should promptly contact your branch chair or secretary. That person should, in turn, contact the Regional Committee (if it is functioning) and/or National Council; they, in turn, should refer the matter to the national Disputes Committee. All decisions made during the informal stage of attempted dispute resolution can be taken to the formal stage; see 11) and 12) below.

10) An LU branch or an LU Committee can also pass a motion that a LU member (or members) or another LU branch or LU committee has broken the provisions of this solidarity guide or the LU Constitution. This motion should be promptly forwarded to the Regional Committee and/or National Council who are authorised to forward the motion to the national Disputes Committee.

11) The formal stage 1 - The role of the national LU Disputes Committee (disputescommittee@leftunity.org) and how it operates is found in Article 18 of the LU Constitution. The standing orders of the Disputes Committee and other documents explaining how it functions can be found here: (xxxx – add later). At the start of the attempted dispute resolution process, all parties will receive a full explanation of this process.

12) The formal stage 2 - If the Disputes Committee is unable to resolve a dispute to the satisfaction of all parties, the dispute may be submitted to the Appeals Committee for final adjudication of the matter if either one of the parties requests that this should occur. The role of the Appeals Committee is found in Article 19 of the LU Constitution. The standing orders of the Appeals Committee can be found here: (xxxxx- link add later)

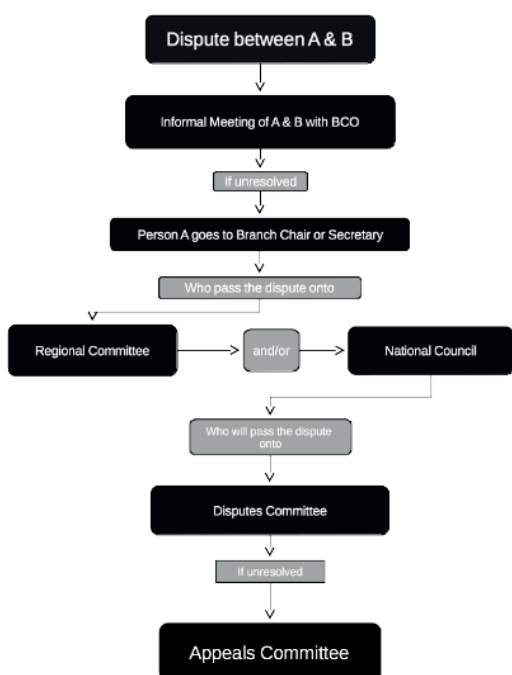
13) LU will establish training courses in public speaking, chairing meetings, organising events etc. to increase the skills and self-confidence of members who are less sure of themselves in these

areas. This will help strengthen members' abilities to participate in LU and enhance their capacity to challenge threatening behaviour.

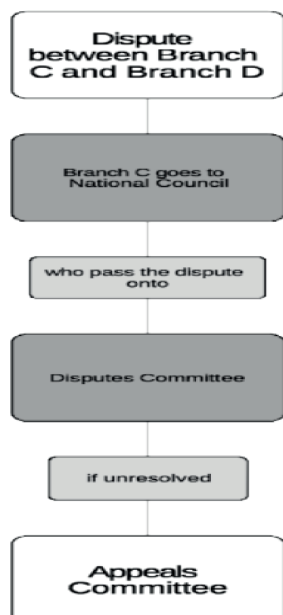
14) Prompt and transparent justice for all parties is our aim throughout the entire process. Overly slow processing of a dispute or a lack of transparency are themselves grounds for a complaint.

D) FLOW CHART OF LU DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Example One: A member (A) alleges that another member (B) has made a series of racist outbursts at their Left Unity branch meeting.
BCO = Branch conciliation officer.



Example Two: A Left Unity branch (C) in one region alleges that a leaflet produced by LU branch (D) located in another region contains sexist content and conflicts with Left Unity policy.



B. Constitutional amendments for Solidarity Guide

In the event that the Left Unity Brief Guide to Party Solidarity becomes an official Left Unity document at the 15-16 November conference (and hence the proposed Safer Space document is superseded), the following changes will be needed to the LU Constitution:

A) DELETE the following words and article sections:

- 1) Article 3, Section f)
- 2) Article 4, Section f)
- 3) Article 10, Section d)
- 4) Article 18, Section b)
- 5) Article 18 c).

6) APPENDICES TO THE RULES –

DELETE: APPENDIX 1 – SAFER SPACE POLICY - STILL IN THE PROCESS OF DRAFTING

B) ADD the following words and article sections:

- 1) Article 3, f): "agrees to follow the principles and procedures of the Left Unity Brief Guide to Party Solidarity as found in Appendix 1."
 - 2) Article 4, Section f): "Members are expected to adhere to the principles of the Left Unity Brief Guide to Party Solidarity."
 - 3) Article 18, b): "If an individual member, or group of members, have a complaint against another member, allege that another member did not follow the constitution or has breached the Left Unity Brief Guide to Party Solidarity, the member or group of members should first attempt informal dispute resolution as set down in Section C 1) to C 8) of the Solidarity Guide. Disputes that cannot be solved at the informal stage should proceed to the formal stages as set down in Sections C 9) to C 12) of the Solidarity Guide, namely to the Disputes and Appeals Committee. Disputes between branches and national committees or between branches in different regions should be passed to the National Council who should pass them to the Disputes Committee and, if unresolved, to the Appeals Committee."
- 3) APPENDIX 1 - THE LEFT UNITY BRIEF GUIDE TO PARTY SOLIDARITY

C. Amendment to motion on "Social Media strategy"

Proposed by Sheffield branch

{The Standing Orders Committee is

recommending Conference not to admit this item to the agenda as it is a 'Delete all' and hence not a proper amendment}

Delete all and replace with:

"Left Unity needs a Forum for discussion and a Facebook Group can provide such a facility. The group will only be open to members of Left Unity. This FB Group will require an administrator who can approve new members by checking the identity and email address of those wanting to join the FB Group against the party's membership list. Such precautions are necessary for ensuring serious political debate amongst party members, to avoid misuse of the group's FB Group by users with anonymous IDs and to avoid trolling by fascist and others hiding their identity. Those abusing the group's pages will face party discipline as indicated in the constitution."

D. Amendment to motion "Composition of National Council and Executive Committee"

Proposed by Hackney and Tower Hamlets branches

{The branches have submitted an amendment to their own motion. SOC does not regard self-amendments to be valid amendments and recommends Conference not to admit it to the agenda}

1. National Office holders and spokespeople, section b:

Delete: i. Principal Spokespeople – two male, two female

Replace with: i. Principal Spokespeople – one male, one female

Delete: iii. National Membership and Communications (with responsibility for membership, data protection and internal communications)

Replace with: iii. Organisational Secretary

Add: viii. Access Officer

Add: ix. Campaigns Officer

2. Section 13 part b) The Composition of the Executive Committee

Delete all and replace with:

The composition of the Executive Committee will be the National Office holders/spokespeople plus ten representatives to be elected for a period of one year by the National Council from within its own ranks of whom at least five must be women and at least seven from outside London.

E. Amendments to motion on "Safe Spaces"

Proposed by Liverpool branch

{Liverpool branch is seconding the Safe Spaces motion. It has submitted an amendment to its own motion. SOC does not regard self-amendments to be valid amendments and recommends Conference not to admit it to the agenda}

Para 1 delete sentence 2 and replace with Fighting oppression and discrimination is at the heart of our organisation

Para 16 delete and replace with
16. The great evils of racism, xenophobia, sexism, gender based violence, disability hate crime, homophobia, Transphobia, prejudice, poverty and profound and structural discrimination against working class communities are inherent and foundational to patriarchal societies and are increasing with the current crisis of capitalism.

Para 17 delete and replace with
17. Those with physical and invisible impairments have borne the horrifying brunt of the attacks from the Coalition government. Discrimination against and neglect of the interests of people with visible and invisible impairments have always been a feature of capitalism but this has intensified to a terrible level by this government's policies.

Add

18 Disabled people are especially demonised. They are impoverished by cuts to welfare and to public services. The possibilities of employment have also retreated further into the distance.

19 Government policies particularly Austerity have increasingly targeted, demonised and

impoverished those already suffering the impact of capitalism. As a result hate crimes of every type, by those in oppressive groups against those in oppressed groups are rising sharply

Para 21 delete and replace with

21. Left Unity understands that carers are also at the sharp end of welfare cuts and that they need to be involved in campaigns. Left Unity commits itself to learn from Carers and to understand the complexities of Caring. Carers may have difficulty in participating in, or be unable to participate in, the things we would otherwise enjoy as part of a normal life, because of prioritising the needs of the child or adult for whom they are responsible. Carers often become isolated, creating unintentional health problems. Left Unity will campaign for universal respect and recognition for carers as well as living wage that meets the needs of all genuine cases. However Carers can have particular difficulties in organising, in attending meetings and or attending regularly and in accessing resources for campaigning.

Para 38

add We intend to find ways using technology to make it possible for every member to be included even if they cannot get to meetings

Para 40

add We will endeavour to recognise all aspects of access and travel needs

Para 76

Representation

Exchange word "buddy" for "rep" and continue through document.

Para 92

A national safe spaces tem will be elected to hear cases that cannot be resolved locally

Paras 127 and 128

Replace with

127. The offended person should be given good care. We will address how we keep people involved safe and make them aware that Left Unity is working with them on this matter.

128. It is useful to check if anyone needs any kind of emergency care. Little things matter in such circumstances. Are they so shaken up they need a lift home?

