



Agenda items for the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition steering committee meeting

Wednesday 12th October 2016

Jeremy Corbyn's re-election and TUSC's role now

- a) Draft TUSC position statement from the Socialist Party – page three
- b) Amendment by Pete McLaren, on behalf of independent socialists in TUSC – page five
- c) Amendments to the draft statement from the SWP – page six
- d) Political strategy resolution agreed at the RMT Annual General Meeting, 2016 – page eight



Draft statement from the Socialist Party on Jeremy Corbyn's re-election

Jeremy Corbyn's re-election triumph – now let's build on the victory

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) national steering committee warmly welcomes Jeremy Corbyn's decisive re-election as Labour leader.

Despite Owen Smith's recently discovered verbal radicalism he was the candidate of the capitalist establishment, a political representative of the rich elite who dominate the economy, politics, and society. Prior to Jeremy Corbyn's election as leader, this elite had achieved unchallenged control of the Labour Party for 20 years, effectively disenfranchising working class voters. Owen Smith's defeat is therefore a victory for all trade unionists, anti-austerity campaigners, environmental activists, anti-racists, socialists, and the working class generally.

TUSC, a coalition of trade unionists, community campaigners and socialists co-founded by the late Bob Crow, was set up in 2010. Our aim, in the face of the prevailing pro-capitalist consensus of the establishment politicians – the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats and most Labour MPs too – was to push forward the process of re-establishing a vehicle for working class political representation.

In TUSC's founding statement we recognised that there were “different strategic views” about the way to advance this cause, “whether the Labour Party can be reclaimed by the labour movement, or whether a new workers' party needs to be established”.

Jeremy Corbyn's election as Labour leader in 2015, and the defeat of this first attempt to unseat him, shows that the Labour Party could become the left-wing alternative that is needed to the capitalist policies of public sector cuts, privatisation, anti-union restrictions, militarism and environmental degradation.

Consolidating the victory

To ensure this potential is realised, however, Jeremy Corbyn's re-election victory needs to be fully consolidated.

A first step would be to re-establish within the Labour Party a role for trade unions, the biggest voluntary organisations in Britain, commensurate with their importance as the collective voices of millions of workers. This would include restoring their rights of collective representation and proportionate weight in the formation of Labour Party policy; the selection and re-selection of Labour Party candidates; and the administration of the party locally and nationally.

Another important step would be to reinstate socialists who have been expelled or otherwise excluded from the Labour Party. The best way to achieve this – open, honest, and above board –

would be to allow affiliation to the Labour Party for socialist parties and organisations. This right should also be extended to anti-austerity, anti-racist, socialist feminist, and Green campaigners and organisations, in a modern version of the early federal structure of the Labour Party which encompassed trade unions, the co-operative movement, women suffrage campaigners, and a number of independent socialist parties.

An important advantage to opening up the Labour Party in this way is that it would enable the party to become the 'electoral umbrella' for these organisations, enhancing Labour's electoral position. This could include the Green Party, if it is prepared to sign up to a clear anti-austerity programme.

Elections

The Co-operative Party, an independent party separately registered with the Electoral Commission, has an affiliate status agreement with the Labour Party on the basis that it does not contest seats against Labour. TUSC would welcome the opportunity to discuss the possibilities of a similar arrangement for its constituent components.

Since Jeremy Corbyn's initial victory in September 2015, TUSC has already re-calibrated its electoral activity. In the May 2016 local elections, for example, no TUSC candidates were even considered to be run without local TUSC groups seeking a dialogue with the sitting Labour councillor or prospective candidate on the critical issue of their preparedness to resist cuts to local council jobs and services (see <http://www.tusc.org.uk/txt/380.pdf> for a full report of TUSC's participation in the 2016 elections).

TUSC will continue its campaign for Labour councils to join the resistance to the Tories' austerity agenda. Without exaggerating our impact, TUSC supporters have played an important role in winning backing for a fighting strategy to oppose cuts to local public services in the main local government unions, Unison, Unite, and the GMB, as well as this year's Wales TUC conference. This campaign will be resumed in the autumn, as councils begin preparing their 2017-18 budgets, with the added urgency of the need to co-ordinate an organised defiance of the new Housing and Planning Act.

However, while our anti-cuts campaigning will not cease, the responsibility for removing alleged 'Labour' representatives who implement Tory policies does not rest with TUSC alone. With Jeremy Corbyn's re-affirmed mandate it could also be accomplished from within if the will is there.

Consequently, the TUSC national steering committee has agreed to make no further preparations for contesting the May 2017 elections in England and Wales pending discussions with Jeremy Corbyn and his supporters on the new possibilities opening up following his re-election victory.

Unity against the establishment politicians

Many other organisational and political steps would need to be taken for the Labour Party to be fully consolidated as a working class, socialist, anti-austerity mass movement. This would include measures to defeat the opposition that will continue to Jeremy Corbyn's leadership from the Labour right-wing, if they try and remain in the party.

TUSC's constituent components themselves will have different views on how best a movement can be built that is capable of defeating the pro-capitalist consensus upheld by the establishment politicians, their media, and other institutions.

But in welcoming Jeremy Corbyn's re-election triumph we are clear that we want to fully participate in that struggle.



SUGGESTED AMENDMENT TO DRAFT STATEMENT ON JEREMY CORBYN'S RE-ELECTION VICTORY

Submitted by Pete McLaren, on behalf of independent socialists in TUSC.

Replace the final paragraph under 'Elections', which reads as follows:

“Consequently, the TUSC national steering committee has agreed to make no further preparations for contesting the May 2017 local elections in England and Wales pending discussions with Jeremy Corbyn and his supporters on the new possibilities opening up following his re-election victory.”

With:

“Consequently, the TUSC national steering committee needs to carefully consider whether or not to stand candidates in the May 2017 local elections in England and Wales.

It will take into account:

- The result of discussions with Jeremy Corbyn and his supporters on the new possibilities which may open up following his re-election victory;
- The situation Council-by-Council regarding the clear commitment of Labour Groups or councillors to oppose cuts;
- The outcome of the January TUSC conference”.



Amendments to the draft statement on Jeremy Corbyn's victory from Charlie Kimber, SWP

1. Delete

Jeremy Corbyn's election as Labour leader in 2015, and the defeat of this first attempt to unseat him, shows that the Labour Party could become the left-wing alternative that is needed to the capitalist policies of public sector cuts, privatisation, anti-union restrictions, militarism and environmental degradation.

To ensure this potential is realised, however, Jeremy Corbyn's re-election victory needs to be fully consolidated.

Replace with:

Jeremy Corbyn's election as Labour leader in 2015, and the defeat of this first attempt to unseat him, shows that there is a strong mood in Britain against public sector cuts, privatisation, anti-union restrictions, racism, militarism and environmental degradation.

This mood needs to be built on by joint activity and discussion by socialists inside and outside the Labour Party.

2. Delete:

A first step would be to re-establish within the Labour Party a role for trade unions, the biggest voluntary organisations in Britain, commensurate with their importance as the collective voices of millions of workers. This would include restoring their rights of collective representation and proportionate weight in the formation of Labour Party policy; the selection and re-selection of Labour Party candidates; and the administration of the party locally and nationally.

Replace with:

We support those in the Labour Party who are pressing for a greater role for ordinary members and trade unionists, and for the MPs to be fully accountable to members and trade unionists.

We support calls for trade unions to regain the rights of collective representation and proportionate weight in the formation of Labour Party policy; the selection and re-selection of Labour Party candidates; and the administration of the party locally and nationally.

3. Delete (without replacement):

This could include the Green Party, if it is prepared to sign up to a clear anti-austerity programme.

4. Delete:

Many other organisational and political steps would need to be taken for the Labour Party to be fully consolidated as a working class, socialist, anti-austerity mass movement. This would include measures to defeat the opposition that will continue to Jeremy Corbyn's leadership from the Labour right-wing, if they try and remain in the party.

Replace with:

Many other organisational and political steps would need to be taken to consolidate Corbyn's victory. These would include measures to defeat the opposition that will continue to his leadership from the Labour right-wing.

ends



RMT Political Strategy – agreed at the 2016 AGM

We note the survey returns regarding the political strategy of our union. The results show that, apart from one branch, there is no mood to re-affiliate to the Labour Party. The results show that by the measure of branch and regional membership it is neck and neck to keep the status quo ie to stick by the political strategy document agreed at the 2015 AGM.

Thus we agree that the union should not change its political strategy and that we should therefore re-affirm Rule 23 Clause 25 and be guided by the four point criteria when considering supporting candidates:

1. That the candidate supports the union's key policies;
2. That support for the candidate is in the interests of the union and its members, either because the candidate supports key union policies or the election of an opposing candidate would be clearly more harmful to the interests of the union and its members.
3. Requests should not be supported where the Council of Executives (NEC) have already agreed that the union is supporting another candidate or where there is a candidate in the same election who, on the basis of the evidence available at the time, clearly has a better chance of winning who supports the union's key policy objectives.
4. Whether support for a candidate would make it more likely there would be the election of another candidate whose election would be clearly more harmful to the interests of the union and its members.

We further add the caveat that we will only support candidates who support the Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn. We also re-affirm paragraph 10 of the document and will continue with our support of TUSC including representation on the steering committee, with the right to veto.

It is clear that there is support for Jeremy Corbyn and his leadership of the Labour Party and we reiterate our support for him and will continue giving him our support.