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Britain

Left Unity statement on election results

- News from around the world -

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This statement was issued by Left Unity after the results of the General Election in the United Kingdom on 7 May 2015.

No one was expecting this election result. Against all predictions the Tories are set to return to government - and the fight is on to stop five more years of austerity and the destruction of the welfare state and attacks on migrants.

A significant factor in this defeat was the Labour leadership's capitulation to Tory economic policies and their failure to offer a much needed alternative. But already the Labour leadership are finding other factors to blame.

They are lashing out at the SNP and Greens, who were able to attract voters opposed to austerity away from Labour. Yet at the same time Ed Miliband will be blamed for being 'too left wing', and there will be moves to replace him with a figure from the hard right of the party. Labour's position is now likely to shift from 'austerity lite' to simply austerity.

That is why the project of building a broad left party as an alternative to Labour is as urgent as ever. Left Unity's general election results mark the first step on that long road.

All our campaigners worked hard and we thank them for that. We can see potential in votes such as the 949 (1.8%) for Glyn Robbins in Bethnal Green and 542 (1.2%) for Stephen Hall in Leigh. We also hope for some good showings in the local election results, which are mostly not yet announced.

But we recognise that the final votes did not generally reflect the effort put into the election campaigns. The election system puts huge pressure on people to vote for the 'lesser evil' of Labour, and many voters were reluctant to support smaller parties even in safe Labour seats.

The election results show the voting system is not fair. Most people did not vote Tory: their share of seats is out of all proportion to their percentage share of the vote. Meanwhile a million Green voters are only represented by a single MP. We believe a key demand now should be proportional representation, so that future elections give parties a fair share of seats according to their real support.

As the Tories prepare another round of brutal austerity cuts, we have a long battle ahead. We must all be part of building the alternative that Labour has failed to provide. The anti-austerity, radical left can grow - but support will only come if we continue to do consistent work within local communities, shoulder to shoulder with all resisting austerity.

Left Unity is a party of activists who will campaign as hard on the streets as we campaigned in the elections. We will be right there alongside all those fighting to defend the welfare state, defend migrants, save the NHS and build a better world.

This statement was agreed by Left Unity's executive committee.

May 8th, 2015