



**YOUNG
EUROPEAN
SOCIALISTS**

Rue Guimard, 10-12
1040 Brussels, Belgium
www.youngsocialists.eu
office@youngsocialists.eu

SOCIAL DEMOCRACY OF THE MANY, FOR THE MANY, BY THE MANY

Submitted by SJÖ Austria, CHP Youth Turkey, Labour Youth Ireland, MJS France.

Introductory Part: Seldom have there been moments of more clarity than this first weeks of June. While the elections in France have been a disaster for leftwing politics on almost every level, the snap election result in the United Kingdom is one of hope. In France we have seen bitter divisions in the left, accompanied by an unwillingness to let go of the failed austerity politics and neoliberal views that have been at the center of the policies and actions of the Parti Socialiste government of the last five years. Not only has the PS's vote share dropped to just 7,44% in the first parliamentary round, but also the general voter participation has declined to just 49%, and youth participation fell to a shocking 37%. The elections in the UK showed a different picture. While the leader of the Labour Party was under constant attack by his own Parliamentary group over the last years, they had an election campaign that is unequalled in contemporary European politics. The vote share increased by 9,5%, the general voter participation rose by 2,6%, but even more astonishing the youth participation rose increased by up to 30%. Polling indicates that over two-thirds of people between 18-24 voted Labour, as well as over 50% between 25-34.

The identity crisis of the social-democratic movement is evident in Europe. Torn between the third way neoliberal approach, old bureaucratic structures and power-hungry leaders social-democratic parties have hardly managed to put forward a progressive message, that resonated with voters. A lot of parties faced a crushing defeat, reducing the vote share to single digits. Others have had major splits in their movements, propelling parties to the left and the right to new highs. Others are able to manage and limit the decline, and stabilise their situation. The European left is weakened in almost every country.

Our evaluation is that this is also a responsibility to take on our own party politics as well. It has been proven with the elections in Britain that the politics of sincerity wins the hearts and minds of the people. Labour party under the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn had proven that a sincere, coherent and consistent production and discourse of policies are embraced by people, especially the young generation. In the light of this, the policies for the many approach requires us to analyze this example well and implement into our parties in order to survive the identity crisis in European Left right now. Therefore, we commit to stick with the consistency of our political discourses and show to young generations that "not all are the same". As policies for the many also requires to take brave steps and continue on to our struggle even when we are ridiculed, we also commit that we will be working for the people, with the people and not just focus on winning elections but also listening to the real problems of the societies. This also requires our mother parties to take a step back from entering to grand coalition agreements with the right wing political parties as it destroys the very concept of policies of sincerity.

Some parties have shown positive developments in rebuilding public services on a progressive agenda and overcoming austerity policies. In part this was achieved by joining forces with the left and overcoming divisions.

We, Young European Socialists, therefore demand a renewal of the understanding of social-democracy in Europe starting from our own parties and organisations. We demand a social-



**YOUNG
EUROPEAN
SOCIALISTS**

Rue Guimard, 10-12
1040 Brussels, Belgium
www.youngsocialists.eu
office@youngsocialists.eu

democracy of the 21st century! A social-democracy of the many, for the many and by the many. A social democracy that works sincerely, consistently and coherently for the people, with the people!

Policies for the Many

At the center of our vision is a society that is built on solidarity, fraternity and mutual care. We need public health care systems, that put patients and health care workers first. We need housing, that is affordable, transportation systems that reflect the needs of rural and urban areas, and contribute to the protection of the environment. We need energy production that is affordable and not profit-driven, that enables warm homes in winter, guarantees electricity as a basic human need and boosts renewable, climate-friendly energy sources. We need education systems, that support learning for all children from kindergarten to professional schools and universities, and gives all the necessary resources to child-care workers, teachers and academics. We need public administrations that are transparent and accessible. We need food, product and workplace safety that is ensured by public agencies. We need a pensions system, that will allow the elderly to retire with dignity and the young not to fear growing old. These are public duties, that are not to be submitted to the greed of the markets and the ideology of profit-maximization. Instead of ever privatising these public services, we need to keep those services under public authority so that they can be run in public interest. Wherever they already have been privatised, we need re-nationalisation.

A decent society invests in our youngest, in our social services and in our cultural life, to protect our weakest and our most vulnerable, to ensure a life in dignity and prosperity for everyone.

Creating an economy that works for all

We demand, that economic success should not be measured by the number of billionaires, but by the ability of our people. We understand that the wealth of a country belongs to everyone and must be shared equally and justly among the society, crushing poverty for the most vulnerable and accommodating not only to the richer people but to every single member of the society. While everyone contributes to the society, it should be the ones who earn the most to be contributing most to the society for a fair treatment of all and crushing the class difference in favor of the working class people. In the current situation the potential of tens of million of people in Europe is not tapped to the full - quite the opposite is the case. It is crucial that the wealth of the society creates equality of opportunity for everyone and gives equal pay for equal labour regardless of gender or sexual orientation. European workers work more hours on average than they did in the 1980s. Mass unemployment has become a normalized feature of our societies and wage increases have been minimal. In the same period of time the rich classes have increased their incomes year by year, ever increasing their share of the cake. The working classes, the wage-earners, the self-employed, small business-owners and public workers, pensioners, students and pupils had to tighten their belts. But this majority of our societies is our social basis, and we stand for a vision of an economy that serves everyone not just the rich at the top. We demand, that the richest of the rich, the multi-national corporations and their shareholders start paying for all their responsibilities without any subsidies or exceptions. Therefore, we need not only higher taxes on wealth and large property ownership, but also a consequent fight against tax fraud and an end of tax competition.

Parties of the Many

In order to realize those policies we need parties that do not reflect a playground of a political cast,



but the social base the parties represent. Political parties are the fundamental movements that produce political, economic and social change. In a representative democracy, political parties should maintain that capacity and should be seen as the motors and the main actors of political change. Therefore, we need democratic structures that allow participation on all levels from members and an outreach and openness to non-members and civil society. The history of socialist parties is also the history of an emancipatory movement that used education as a mean of self-liberation and hegemony building. Our parties must reflect that tradition and be means of political education far beyond electoral politics. Continuous education and critical reflection are our strongest weapon and best safeguards against hostile media outlets, controlled by big money interest and neoliberal and conservative ideology.

Politics by the Many

A party of the many understands politics as beyond the arena of parliaments, councils and traditional media, but a struggle for the very soul of our societies, its spirit and its direction, even for more social change and a fairer society. Social democracy is a political project that goes beyond the parties that represent it in parliament, but is a project that has the aim to transform all parts of society and the practiced cultures within it. We need the engagement of the many, in order to bring the change our society needs. We live in a class society, and the working classes, the wage-earners, the self-employed, small business-owners and public workers, pensioners, students and pupils have been marginalized for far too long. The richest of the rich can no longer be and must never be the basis of economic policy on this continent or anywhere else in the world for the sake of a more progressive, more equal and a more just system that humankind desires. A whole generation has lived their youth and young adulthood in the shadow of the crisis. Many have seen their potentials disregarded, their hopes shuttered and their perspectives neglected. It is this generation, our generation, that needs politics of hope, politics of change, politics of sincerity, in fact it needs a politics of the many. It is upon our generation to rebuild and restructure our economies, so that it finally serves the many and not just the richest of the rich. It is our task to renew our public services, return every single publicly strategic means of production, goods and services back to our hands and not let the greed of the few and profit maximization lead the way. Democracy can only be vibrant and alive if everyone and be a part of and participate in it.
