

## **Deliberative over digital democracy in the new left party**

*Motion agreed at an All Member Assembly on 21 September 2025.*

In July, we voted to get involved in the new left party ('Your Party'). We agreed several core principles for how we should do that, which we stand by, but we believe the commitment to 'One Member One Vote' (OMOV) needs to be revisited.

There is a common-sense claim that making sure everyone gets to vote in a decision directly means you have the 'most democratic' approach. In some contexts, OMOV can be more meaningfully democratic than delegate-style and other systems and may make particular sense for the election of public-facing leaders. But when OMOV means digital voting in particular, it can grant undue power to those in charge of framing the questions. Figures with large platforms can use them to mobilise large numbers of inactive members to vote for their preferred outcome.

In Podemos, such digital democracy enabled Pablo Iglesias to become a 'hyperleader' and concede to the ruling class. Putting key decisions in Podemos directly to individual digital vote enabled the leadership to go over the heads of the activist layer, of those engaged in in-person deliberative democratic processes. In organisations such as Momentum and UCU we have seen how online voting has been used to undermine the democratic life of the organisation, advance conservative union strategies and give authority to those with the biggest platforms.

Fostering socialist organisation and leadership within the class from the ground up means ensuring real power lies at the local level. For a Party to articulate together the different experiences, interests and passions of the class, meaningful collective deliberation must be at the heart of its democratic decision-making processes. Not least when the class is so atomised, this means bringing people together in the same physical space to discuss, debate and decide in each other's company. We want a democratic structure where members are able to submit proposals, prioritise them and debate them prior to any voting, and a democratic culture where people are able to put forward their arguments and listen to counter-arguments, which challenge and encourage them to reconsider, refine or expand their arguments or views or change their minds.

Whilst digital methods of engagement can be important ways of ensuring everyone can participate, they can also detract from accessibility or serve as excuses for failing to make physical meetings accessible. We should strive to make in-person engagement accessible for people who are marginalised and time-poor because of oppression and exploitation rather than simply jumping to online votes, which simply cannot offer the same opportunities for deliberation, even if done via Zoom or other platforms.

We should join in with struggles to make sure the new left party is really democratic and fight against it becoming a stitched-up digital party. We will take a flexible approach to the specifics of what exact structures this might mean, and always combine these with the political and cultural questions of what makes a party really member-led and rooted in the working class. Regardless of the democratic model used at the founding conference, in the long term we believe that delegate models requiring in-person discussion and election are preferable for deciding party policy, strategy and rules, and we should advocate for them over the use of digital democratic mechanisms to participate in or select participants for the sovereign decision-making body of Your Party.

We will work to come to a collective understanding of this with the many activists already doing this work in the lead-up to the founding conference and beyond.