

The Socialist Party of Great Britain

Companion Party of the World Socialist Movement



Who We Are

The Socialist Party is like no other political party in Britain. It is made up of people who have joined together because we want to get rid of the profit system and establish real socialism.

Our aim is to persuade others to become socialist and act for themselves, organizing democratically and without leaders, to bring about the kind of society that we advocate.

We are solely concerned with building a movement of socialists for socialism. We are not a reformist party with a programme of policies to patch up capitalism.

What We Do

Our aim is to build a movement working towards a socialist society. We publish literature, we hold meetings and debates throughout the country, we write to the press and state our case wherever possible on the media. We run weekend educational conferences, we sell tapes and pamphlets, we hand out leaflets, we contest elections, and we discuss our ideas with people wherever we can.

We are unique

The Socialist Party has been unique in Britain throughout the twentieth century for:

- Consistently advocating world socialism - a fully democratic society based upon co-operation and production for use.
- Opposing every single war
- Opposing every single government
- Being a democratic and leaderless organization

General Election 2010

The Socialist Party of Great Britain election platform on which we will be contesting the forthcoming 2010 General Election.

Capitalism Must Go

These elections are taking place in the middle of the biggest economic and financial crisis since the 1930s. In a world that has the potential to produce enough food, clothes, housing and the other amenities of life for all, factories are closing down, workers are being laid off, unemployment is growing, houses are being repossessed and people are having to tighten their belts. And for once the main parties are being honest in offering more of the same, competing with each other as to which of them is going to impose the most "savage cuts".

Capitalism in relatively "good" times is bad enough, but capitalism in an economic crisis makes it plain for all to see that it is not a system geared to meeting people's needs. It's a system based on the pursuit of profits, where the harsh economic law of "no profit, no production" prevails. The headlong pursuit of profits has led to a situation where the owners can't make profits at the same rate as before. The class who own and control the places where wealth is produced have gone on strike – refusing to allow these workplaces to be used to produce what people need, some desperately. So, as in the 1930s, it's poverty in the midst of potential plenty again. Cutbacks in production and services alongside unmet needs. Why should we put up with this? There is an alternative.

But that's the way capitalism works, and must work. The politicians in charge of the governments don't really know what to do, not that they can do much to change the situation anyway. They are just hoping that the panic measures they have taken will work. But the slump won't end until conditions for profitable production have come about again, and that requires real wages to fall and unprofitable firms to go out of business. So, there's no way that bankruptcies, cut-backs and lay-offs are going to be avoided, whatever governments do or whichever party is in power.

What can be done? Nothing within the profit system. It can't be mended, so it must be ended. But this is something we must do ourselves.

The career politicians, with their empty promises and futile measures, can do nothing for us. We need to organise to bring in a new system where goods and services are produced to meet people's needs. But we can only produce what we need if we own and control the places where this is carried out. So these must be taken out of the hands of the rich individuals, private companies and states that now control them and become the common heritage of all, under our democratic control. In short, socialism in its original sense. This has nothing to do with the failed state capitalism that used to exist in Russia or with what still exists in China and Cuba.

Socialists are working for a different and better world

The Socialist Party is contesting both the general election and local elections in London.

This is a message to those who are fed up –

- Fed up with the failures of this dreary system
- Fed up with leaders and the false promises of career politicians
- Fed up with poor hospitals, poor schools, poor housing and an unhealthy environment
- Fed up with having to live on a wage that struggles to pay the endless bills
- Fed up with serving the profit system and seeing poverty amidst luxury

What happens in any local council depends mainly on what happens in the country and even in the world. That is why socialists are working for a different world. But it can't happen unless

you join us. The job of making a better world must be the work of all of us.

The world we want is a one where we all work together. We can all do this. Co-operation is in our own interests and this is how a socialist community would be organised – through democracy and through working with each other.

To co-operate we need democratic control not only in our own area but by people everywhere. This means that all places of industry and manufacture, all the land, transport, the shops and means of distribution, should be owned in common by the whole community. With common ownership we would not produce goods for profit. The profit system exploits us. Without it we could easily produce enough quality things for everyone. We could all enjoy free access to what we need without the barriers of buying and selling.

Most politicians blame our problems on lack of money, but this is not true. Money doesn't build hospitals, schools, decent housing and a healthy environment. The things that make a good community can only be created by the work of the people. We have an abundance of skills and energy. If we were free from having to work for the profits of employers we would be able to work for the needs of everyone.

The profit system is oppressive; it dominates our lives. It plagues us with bills. The rent and mortgage payments, the food bills, the rates, gas, electricity, water and telephone bills. Money is used to screw us for the profits of business. If we don't pay, we don't get the goods. Without the capitalist system, a socialist community would easily provide for all of its members..

The challenge now is to build a world-wide movement whose job will be to break with the failures of the past. It won't be for power or money or careers. It will work for the things that matter to people everywhere – peace, material security and the enjoyment of life through cooperation.

This is the challenge that could link all people in a common cause without distinction of nationality, race or culture.

We in the Socialist Party reject the view that things will always stay the same. We can change the world. Nothing could stop a majority of socialists building a new society run for the benefit of everyone. We all have the ability to work together in each other's interests. All it takes is

How would you like your capitalism served?

That's the "choice" the main and minor parties are offering at the general election.

The basic global political, social and economic problems, such as inequality, poverty, homelessness, hunger, wars, and pollution have, as their root cause, capitalism. This system is founded upon production for profit to benefit only a very small, rich minority of the planet's population, at the expense of the majority.

In order to solve these problems, in the interests of the majority and in fact, ultimately in those of all the people, we need collectively and democratically to abolish capitalism and to replace it with the positive alternative of genuine socialism. That is to say, production for human need, with ownership and democratic control of the productive forces in the hands of the whole community.

At the General Election, the electorate will be confronted by a large number of political organisations seeking votes. Almost all of them will be the parties of capitalism's centre, right and left wings. These include the following: Labour, Conservative, Liberal Democrat, UKIP,

the Greens, BNP, Plaid Cymru, Scottish Nationalists, the Trade Union & so-called “Socialist” Coalition (TUSC).

Many other organisations will be fielding candidates, but this sample is large enough for our purposes here. The range of views of these parties is wide, but although they mostly do not realise it, more unites them than separates them. They all support the capitalist system. Some openly admit this while others, on the Left, usually deny this reality. Upon closer inspection, we see that all their policies amount to is a list of reforms, generally in a vain attempt to make the existing system function “more efficiently” and in a more socially responsible way.



Labour: At its inception, many of its members believed that they were working for a quite different type of society which some would have described as being “socialist”. Even now, despite the experience of past Labour governments and, especially this present one, there are still members who advocate what they describe as “socialism”, but which, in reality amounts to a form of nationalisation, government intervention, in other words, state capitalism. The people who matter within the Labour Party, the leadership, want nothing to do with this. Their desire is to continue to run capitalism, under the utterly false notion that it can be controlled and made to work in the interests of the majority. The experiences of the recent Credit Crunch and recession are the latest in a long list of examples of the falseness of Labour’s position.

What is Labour now offering? It proposes: “investing now so we are best placed to take advantage of the upturn.” This overlooks the deficit problem which the government faces. Private investment will only take place if a significant profit can be made. Like many apologists for the status quo, Labour talks of the “upturn”. What they never mention is the next downturn. The reality of the market system is a natural trade cycle of booms and slumps, which cannot be effectively controlled by governments of any political colour.

As regards the military, Labour wishes to “ensure that forces personnel receive state of the art medical care when they are injured on operations” and to “proceed with the construction of two new aircraft carriers”. Not surprisingly, Labour wishes to continue with its war mongering policies. Nearly a century ago, the Coalition government (mainly composed of Tories and Liberals) in Britain during the first World War, erroneously claimed that the war would be a “war to end all wars”. Now, in the 21st century, Labour which sometimes pretends to be “radical” to its own supporters, can offer nothing more than capitalism’s familiar cycle of warfare.



Liberal “Democrats”: The Liberal “Democrats” are rival warmongers to Labour and the Tories since they wish at least to “maintain the size of the UK's armed forces”. They claim that they would “put British values of decency and the rule of law back at the heart of our foreign policy”. Where were the British values of “decency” during the days of the British Empire and its slave trade, the bombing of thousands of civilians in Hamburg and Dresden in the second World War and, where was the “decency” in numerous other wars in which the U.K. has been involved, such as Suez, the Falklands, the Gulf War, as well as Afghanistan and Iraq? Such is

the naivety of the Liberal “Democrats” that they do not recognise that “decency” on the one hand and “maintaining armed forces” (inevitably involving preparedness for war), on the other, are incompatibles.

Conservatives

Conservative Party: The Conservatives have never made any secret of their support for the market system. More recently, they have been adopting slogans emphasising “change”, such as “vote for change” and “year for change”. The fact that being conservative and wanting change is a contradiction in terms, appears lost on them. That is until you realise that the only significant change that they really want is the opportunity to take over the running of capitalism, to their own advantage and that of their business friends. They advocate familiar policies of cutbacks in social expenditure, which will inevitably hit the working class hardest. All in the cause of reducing the economic deficit, much of which was caused by bailing out the banks, which will continue to profiteer out the demand for credit, fuelled by the relative poverty of the working class.



The Left: The TUSC has the following policy: “Bringing privatised public services and utilities back into public ownership under democratic control.”.

This is a typical illusion of the left-wing of capitalism that services or industries owned and run by the government or local councils are supposedly “owned by the public”. The reality is that this is state and municipal capitalism. Pricing policies in order to raise revenue, and expenditure cutbacks, restrict access to these services, particularly for the poor. The people do not own these services, as they find out when they have not got enough money to pay for them. They also discover this when the employees in them, face reductions in the real value of their wages/salaries, a deterioration in their employment conditions and/or are made redundant, just as in private industry.

“Affordable housing” is a familiar slogan of the Left. However, it does not appear to realise that housing, just like other products under the market system, is produced for profit. Since demand for housing is high in many parts of the U.K., the idea of low priced housing on any significant scale is a pipe dream. For example, in a fairly ordinary London suburb, like Palmers Green, the average price of a modest two bedroom property is now around £273,000, nearly ten times the average annual wage/salary in outer London of about £29,000, (bearing in mind the fact that many people, who are employed, receive a lot less). Incidentally, by way of comparison, in the early 1960’s, a similar type of property would have cost £3,250, with an average annual wage/salary of around £1,000. Capitalism has brought people even further away from “affordable housing” than 50 years ago.

The TUSC defines “socialism” in the following way: “A society run in the interests of the people not the millionaires. For democratic public ownership of the major companies and banks that dominate the economy”.

For them apparently, there would still be millionaires and banks in their so-called “socialist” society. This is not socialism at all, it is state capitalism, which has been tried on many occasions before by governments of differing political colours, and adopted on a larger scale

in the former Soviet Union. In the end, it failed. Thus, the re-emergence of widespread privatisation.

The Left should remind themselves of the thousands of workers in the past, in the nationalised coal, steel and railway industries who had to go on strike in an attempt to protect their living standards, and indeed of the thousands of these workers who were eventually sacked, just as would have happened under private ownership. That is the way capitalism works, whether it is run privately or by the state.



UKIP: UKIP stands on the right wing of capitalism and advocates a form of British nationalism. Like all the nationalist parties, such as the BNP, Plaid Cymru, the Scottish Nationalists, Ulster Unionists and Sinn Féin, it is out of touch with the trends in modern, globalised capitalism, which has spread way beyond the boundaries of nation states into much larger political and economic power blocs.

According to UKIP, Britishness can be defined by “belief in fair play, as well as traits such as politeness.” So, if we are to believe these clowns, “fair play and politeness” begin at Dover and end in Calais. What nonsense! UKIP asserts that it believes in democracy and yet goes on to say that also supports the monarchy. The reality is that any type of genuine democracy is totally incompatible with monarchy.



Green Party: As regards the Green Party, it supports a market economy and would continue with the military, if the Greens ever participated in government. Their naivety is exposed by advocacy of a British military “only to be used in self defence”, and by their support of “binding global agreements against all weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons.” This cannot be achieved under the present system which engenders political, economic and military rivalries.

The Greens fail to recognise that since the economy is based primarily on profit making, then the needs of the environment, just as those of the majority of people, always come in a very poor second place.



Abolish Capitalism

Capitalism, with its anti-environmental and anti-social policies, is what needs to be replaced. None of the mainstream parties is aware of this very basic fact. Limited sections of the Left have a partial awareness of it but are thoroughly committed to the idea of reforming the system and not to creating a genuine alternative. All the Left can offer are the old failed policies of state capitalism.

There are the three options facing the people at all political elections.

- 1). To continue to vote for one of the numerous parties whose policies are limited by the narrow parameters of capitalism, the very system responsible for the vast majority of society's problems.
- 2). Not to vote at all and to become politically apathetic, which contributes to the continuation of capitalism.
- 3). In complete contrast to the above two, to support the World Socialist Movement which proposes the genuine, democratic sharing of resources amongst all the people, with production of goods and services for human need. In such a society, each individual would be of equal value and status, and would be able to make their own contribution, voluntarily towards producing the wealth of the new society. The people would then have free access to goods and services. In real socialism, since profit making and money will be abolished, it is all the people and the environment which will come first. the right ideas and a willingness to make it happen.