

respectparty.

peace, justice & equality

Peace, Justice & Equality

Respect is an acronym of Respect, Equality, Socialism, Peace, Environmentalism, Community and Trade Unionism. We are a British left-wing party committed to standing in defence of the values of Peace, Justice & Equality.

Abolish ATOS

The government's commitment to make poor people pay for the crimes of rich people has led to the scandal of ATOS. This is an organisation which drives wheelchair-bound and disabled people back to work in clamp down on the 'benefits culture', part of the lexicon which is so beloved of the Tories. This is unacceptable in 21st century Britain. The welfare state is perhaps Britain's greatest ever achievement; when Britain had achieved a sophistication such that those who were unable to work were looked after by the common good. The Tories, via the blunt instrument of ATOS, are slowly dragging us backwards via their destruction of the welfare state.



Respect stands against this crass attempt to paint people on benefits as the cause of our problems. We call for ATOS to be scrapped and for a comprehensive welfare system to be provided for those who need it.

Accountable Security Services

2013 was an extraordinary year for our security services. Brave whistle-blowers like Edward Snowden have revealed the extent to which our security services were complicit in supplying information to the US authorities. The extent to which our own security services were spying on its own people lays bare the disconnect that now exists between the state and its population. It has also been revealed that they have infiltrated into action groups such as animal rights NGOs and stirring extreme Muslim religious organisations. This cannot be allowed to continue.



Britain needs a foreign policy that acts in our own interests. This includes the security services, which are paid for by the taxpayer and therefore answerable to them too.

Against Austerity

We in Respect reject the iron-clad austerity policies of the three main political parties in Britain. We need a new economic system which isn't dependent on financial services and which is constantly in thrall to the banks. But more importantly, we reject the idea that the British people have to pay for the mess that was not caused by them.



We stand against the Tories as they deflect blame away from the people who caused the financial crisis and their attempts to make poor people pay for the crimes of rich people by their savage cuts to the welfare state and their crass and mendacious attempts to turn poor people against each other.

We stand against the role of the Liberal Democrats, who are keeping the Tories in government and who are therefore complicit in their dirty work.

We stand against the Labour Party, who no longer properly stand up for the rights of working people and who are complicit in developing Britain's over-reliance with the financial services sector in the first place.

Respect stands in defence of people who have nothing to sell but their labour; those who certainly shouldn't be paying our way out of the economic crisis.

End Economic Inequality

The gap between rich and poor in Britain is now wider than when Charles Dickens wrote about the workhouses and poverty of Victorian Britain. Television programmes and popular culture demonise the poorest in our society through lazy stereotyping, while the establishment seeks to encourage division among the poorest sections among society, the better to detract everybody's attention away from them.



It is unacceptable that Britain today is beset by such widespread poverty while the richest continually line their own pockets. Respect believes in progressive taxation, meaning that the more you earn, the more you should be expected to contribute to society. This is what we believe a fair society should look like.

While inequality may never be eradicated, the direction of travel must always be towards equality. We need to make people realise that the more they get out of life, the more they should be expected to put back in.

End to Tax Evasion and Avoidance

Britain's total annual bill for tax evasion and avoidance is estimated to be in excess of the entire budget deficit; that is to say that if everybody paid the right amount of tax, Britain would be deficit-free.



There is now an endemic culture of tax avoidance and evasion in the upper echelons of society and our political parties are either too weak or too venal to address it properly.

In line with our policies on progressive taxation to tackle economic inequality, Respect stands for a tougher policy on tax avoiders and evaders. We promise to be tough to those who seek to exploit Britain's soft-touch approach to taxation, and this particularly includes those working within the financial services sector.

End Tuition Fees

It is completely wrong and immoral that students should now be expected to pay £9,000 a year in tuition fees to obtain a further education. This is a fundamental betrayal by Britain's political leaders, particularly the Liberal Democrats, whose leaders benefited from a free education themselves and who have now kicked the ladder from underneath them so that others cannot benefit from the free education that they themselves enjoyed.



Students who leave university now will be saddled with this debt throughout much of their working life. This disproportionately affects many lower-income families, whose children in turn choose not to go, or who have to choose which of their children go to university.

Education should be a right, not a privilege reserved for those rich enough to pay the fees. Education is a core tenet of our society; it benefits all of us to have a workforce that is better educated.

Respect campaigns for an end to tuition fees. We stand up for the rights of students to campaign against cuts to their educational standards and for a free education from the cradle to the grave.

Equal Rights

Respect will always stand in defence of the marginalised and those who suffer from prejudice and discrimination. Our party is founded on the idea that people are equal, regardless of their faith, ethnicity, background, gender, sexuality, social class or any other characteristic.



Islamophobia is the last ‘acceptable’ form of racism in Britain and is a critical danger to our communities. We stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Muslims who oppose this, who stand for equality, respect between religious groups and peace & community cohesion.

Respect has a proud history of moving people from every different background behind our cause. People of all faiths and none, young and old, men and women; their one common characteristic is a belief in peace, equality and justice.

Immigration

Respect is in favour of a balanced and fair immigration policy. We are in favour of an EU Referendum, in which we would campaign to remain a part of Europe. Until then, we wholeheartedly welcome all EU migrants who seek to work hard in Britain, just as many British people work abroad.



Respect is in favour of a colour-blind points-based immigration system which is weighted in favour of those coming from Commonwealth countries to which we owe a historic debt.

Industrial Future

Britain was once the ‘workshop of the world’ – thirty years on from Margaret Thatcher’s savage and wilful destruction of much of our manufacturing capability, the result is clear for all to see. Entire communities which relied on local industry have been ruined. These communities, which were once close-knit and virtually crime free, have in turn become dens of social problems. Whereas once Britain was able to provide for itself, we are now reliant on raw materials from elsewhere, and we often have to invade and occupy other countries in order to secure them.

Respect rejects the notion that Britain has to be solely reliant on a future based on financial services; the playing-about of numbers on screens which generate wealth for only a tiny percentage. We support the idea of a balanced economy with industry as a key part of it – an industry where the workers are properly treated and where they are guaranteed a job for life.

Respect believes in Labour values – the kind of values that were abandoned under New Labour. Britain needs a Labour party, one which stands up for those whose interests are entire and separate to

those of the people who employ labour. If Labour are not up to the job, Respect will stand for these values.

National Living Wage

In Britain, a land where poverty and social problems sweep the country, it is not sufficient that people have to accept a minimum wage. In times of high unemployment, a labour force which is not united will inevitably slide into a race to the bottom. It is too easy for companies taking on people who are desperate to work to pay them the minimum amount.



We support a policy of progressive taxation, not least because providing economic relief for those in most need of it will benefit our economy in the long run. Our workers need the basic dignity of a living wage; not just the minimum but something which assures the basic living requirements of everyone in the country.

Parliament

Our parliament, with its 600+ members, is far too large and far too expensive to sustain.



Following the expenses scandal and other instances of malfeasance in public office, it is high time we fundamentally changed our parliamentary system. Along with our support for proportional representation, we support a large reduction in the number of members of parliament. India, with a population 20 times as large as Britain, has a parliament which is considerably smaller.

We are calling for a parliament that is half its present size, where MPs are paid a wage in line with careers of equivalent responsibility. Their staff should be employed by the state and not by the MP themselves.

Police & Justice System

The police, like many other institutions in Britain, have been uncovered to be institutionally corrupt. From the cover-ups of Hillsborough and Orgreave, the malpractice of the Metropolitan Police to the institutional racism of many forces, the credibility of the police force has been dealt a huge blow and many sectors of society now share a feeling of 'no confidence' towards the police in Britain.

In the lifetime of many of us, the police in Britain have gone from a Dixon of Dock Green characterisation, a trusted and reliable pillar of the community, to a nest of malfeasance and corruption. A police force that can be trusted by the public is an important part of every society.

We believe the police need to do more to rid itself of the institutional racism that is inherent within the police so that the police and communities can begin working together on issues of collective security.

Proportional Representation

Respect campaigns for a fairer system of government; one that will more accurately represent the views of the British people. There is a broad left-wing consensus among people in Britain, but they have been locked out of the three party Westminster system which maintains an iron-clad consensus over the key issues of the day.



The country is crying out for an alternative platform and for a party which will speak out for them. Many people, especially young people, are getting increasingly disillusioned with the main parties and are in danger of falling out of politics altogether – many already have.

We can look towards Europe as an example of how a fairer electoral system could be implemented; many of our European neighbours have introduced systems of proportional representation and the benefits are obvious; many left-wing parties, coalitions and policies are flourishing such as in the Netherlands, where both the 50PLUS party and the Party for the Animals have seen electoral success.

Protection of Children

George Galloway has tabled a parliament motion on shared parenting rights and family courts.

The EDM reads:

“That this House notes that many fathers convicted of no criminal offence have very limited access to their children as a result of decisions made by the family courts following separation or divorce; further notes that the family courts operate in conditions of secrecy in which there is a lack of public accountability for the decisions they make; believes that mothers, children and fathers all have rights in relation to family contact and access where there has been family breakdown; further believes there should not be a presumption that family breakdown is the primary responsibility of either parent; further believes that where there is palpably no threat to children from their father in the context of family breakdown, the courts should try to maximise reasonable access in the interests of the children; and calls on the Government to review the operation of the family courts in general and their decision-making in relation to fathers’ access to children in the context of family breakdown in particular, taking into account the testimony of the many thousands of fathers who feel their rights are being ignored or abused in relation to their children and in particular the organisation Fathers4Justice and the 36,000 families it represents.”

Scotland

Respect officially passed a motion at its 2014 AGM backing a ‘No’ vote in Scotland’s Independence Referendum in September. This is because we believe that independence is bad for working people in both Scotland and the rest of the UK. Firstly, the break-up of the country would be catastrophic for the rest of the UK who would be effectively condemned to decades of Tory rule, but this would have a very negative effect on Scotland, who would never be truly independent because of their attachment to the UK (the currency union and so on). And, as the history of partition tells us, the break-up of countries always ends in a rise in sectional division when the dream of a better future hits the rocks.



This is not a position shared by all on the left in the rest of the UK. The Scottish Green Party are **in favour of independence** and other left parties have deliberately vague views. Through George Galloway MP’s lengthy **Just Say Naw** speaking tour, we are arguing that what we need is a *real* labour government on both sides of the border, and this would not be achieved by voting to break up the country.

Scrap Trident

Respect stands against the idea that it is acceptable to savagely cut public services whilst simultaneously renewing a gigantic but ultimately useless nuclear weapons project. Britain cannot afford to keep subsidising a £25 billion behemoth off our northern coast while our pensioners shiver their way through our inclement winters.



In keeping with our foreign policy that seeks to strike a more balanced foreign policy; we should stop seeking to violate the terms of the non-proliferation treaty and encourage other countries to do the same. There are not too few nuclear weapons in the world, but too many and there are many much more important ways to spend £25 billion.

Scrap the Bedroom Tax

The ‘bedroom tax’ could and should have been David Cameron’s Poll Tax. This was yet another attack on the poor and marginalised within society, whereby a ‘subsidy’ was lost if the claimant was found to have a spare room, thereby effectively cutting their housing benefit.

Respect unequivocally rejects the notion that people should have to suffer such cuts to their housing benefits whilst bank bosses are paying themselves million pound bonuses.

Trade Union Freedom

Respect supports trade unions.

Votes for 16 year olds

“No Taxation without Representation” We support the idea that 16 year olds should get the vote. They can get married, join the army and the taxes of many 16 year olds help to provide benefits for all of us. It is only right that they receive the right to vote to choose how those taxes should be spent.



Africa

Respect supports Pan-African Unity advocated by the great Patrice Lumumba and Kwame Nkrumah. We believe that only through united economic, social and political cooperation, can the whole of Africa rise and finally become a land of prosperity and opportunity.

Africa has long suffered from exploitation by external forces, whether it be States or Multi-National Corporations; both have prioritised their own greed and self-interests over the needs and interests of the African people. The Respect Party understands that the predatory nature of modern imperialism is not likely to change any time soon; thus, we stress the need for African collective self-reliance, for the empowerment of Africans to work towards a situation where Africans are actually the primary beneficiaries of Africa’s natural resources.



Respect aspires for Africa to become a continent that, collectively, possesses the power to negotiate the terms of a fair and just relationship with external State and non-State actors – as opposed to the centuries of power and domination, which at every level has resulted in the subjugation and exploitation of African people and their land.

Arab World

Just as the Latin American countries have successfully extricated themselves from the tangled web of American hegemony and have begun the march towards unity, we support the idea that the Arab world should strive to do the same. The Arab World is one of the most important regions on the earth, 350 million people, where East meets West and under which is located the most important mine of natural resources like oil in the world.



Respects supports the idea of Arabs working towards unity, so they are not subject to the divide-and-rule policies of the imperial powers.

Respect also supports the struggle towards a democratic system the Middle East, believing that this will bring in an era of governance that is more answerable to the people who elect those governments and less answerable to the big powers who were using the collaborating dictatorships to rule the region by proxy. But we do not support the idea that the big powers can continue to rule by proxy by funding the revolutionary causes to replace regimes that they don't like. It is up to the Arab people to decide who they want to rule them.

The biggest problem facing the Middle East is the unresolved Palestine question. There will be no peace without justice in Palestine. Respect supports the idea of a democratic bi-national solution of one state from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea in which all people, Jews, Muslims and Christians live equally; one man, one woman, one vote. In the meantime, we believe that part of Britain's foreign policy should be to strike a more balanced approach to the Israel/Palestine issue, reflecting the interests of our own people and recognising that Britain holds partial responsibility for the problem by their participation in the creation of the state of Israel.

The EU

Respect is in favour of a referendum on EU membership. The EU is an undemocratic plutocracy, a bankers' Europe. It has gone on for too long and the issue is too important to neglect any longer.

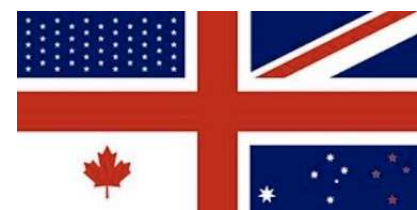


Respect is a pro-Europe party, but not of the EU in its present form. It is untenable to continue pretending to be a part of a union whilst pretending we would rather go it alone. There is no point in continuing to be a part of a union of 27 countries where 26 of the members are on one side and Britain places itself on the other side. The question needs to be put to the British public; are we a full member of the EU or are we going to choose to be in blissful isolation?

Respect will campaign to be a central part of Europe. However, we will campaign, along with our sister left-wing parties around Europe, for the EU to be a more inclusive and democratic union. The EU can be a flag around which the people of Europe can rally.

Imperialism

Respect believes that the conquest and exploitation that defined the colonial period has persisted. It has plagued the contemporary age through the process of imperialism. We see this in the manner imperial powers such as United States and Great Britain have invaded and occupied countries (like Iraq and Afghanistan) but also the method in which multinational corporations have soon followed the tanks and F-16 fighter jets. Respect believes that the natural resources of a nation belong to the citizens of that country and not to foreign oil tycoons or investment bankers based in the U.K and the U.S. We believe our governments should stop working in the interests of the likes of Halliburton and BAE systems, and start working in the interests of the British and American public, who are evidently tired of over 10 years of war.



We have seen that the wars launched by Blair and Bush have actually made the world a more dangerous place. Since they began, the U.K alone has witnessed deplorable acts of terrorism on the homeland; it has wasted billions of the taxpayers money on two unsuccessful wars and it has needlessly sacrificed the lives hundreds of British soldiers. Respect is determined to cast British imperialism to the confines of history and it appears we are moving in the right direction. The failure of the coalition government to manipulate the Houses of Parliament into engaging in a disastrous conflict in Syria is testament to this change of attitude.

Foreign Occupation

The Respect Party was born out of the anti-war movement, which opposed the invasion and occupation of both Afghanistan and Iraq. It is clear for all to see, that both wars have proven to be a disaster for all parties involved. It has become undeniable that Iraq is now a more dangerous place than it was prior to the invasion. Revealingly, according to 'Iraq Body Count; over 186,000 violent deaths have occurred in Iraq since the 2003 invasion, with 134,000 of those being civilian casualties. It is important to note that the figure only accounts for reported deaths and it is fair to assume that many more deaths are likely to remain unreported in Iraq. In fact, the '2006 Lancet Report' has put the figure as high as 654,965 total casualties, and that was just between March 2003 and July 2006. Both figures show a shocking amount of human casualties over what has revealed itself to be an unsubstantiated pack of lies. Furthermore, despite the occupation ending in December 2011, Iraq has become a hotly divided country; where sectarian violence is rife, car bombs and suicide bombers are a frequent feature of everyday life and Islamic extremist have become influential actors in Iraqi society.



The Respect Party firmly believes that if the U.K is to truly promote peace, democracy and stability throughout the world, then it should do so through diplomatic and peaceful means. It cannot come through the policy of invading and occupying foreign lands; Afghanistan and Iraq have proven to be tragic illustrations of how neo-colonial invasions cannot possibly promote peace. Hence, 12 years after we waged war on Afghanistan, our brave British soldiers are still dying needlessly in what has presented itself to be an unwinnable war. Afghanistan remains one of the poorest countries in the world, with 42% of the population living on less than 61p a day. Furthermore, rural regions of Afghanistan are under constant threat from drone strikes, which appear suddenly from the sky, indiscriminately killing innocent civilians, many of whom are women and children. Consequently, rather than tackling the issue of Islamic terrorism, the war has actually inflamed it, spreading it across neighbouring Pakistan and throughout the region.

The occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan have proven to be complete failures, and costly failures at that. They have tarnished our image across the world and made our islands a bigger target for Islamic extremism. The Respect Party has dedicated itself to the struggle of deterring our political elite from, ever again, deciding to invade and occupy other people's land.

Foreign Policy

Respect grew from the largest mass-demonstrations that Britain has ever seen. The *Stop the War* marches in February 2003 were an extraordinary display of unity from people from every conceivable background who all took the streets to voice their opposition to Britain joining in another imperial war. We are proud to say that we are still closely associated with the *Stop the War Coalition*, with whom we continue to oppose foreign invasion and occupation of other people's countries.



While we did not prevent the war, the legacy to *Stop the War* and Respect's activity back in 2003 is clear for all to see. The spectre of the Iraq War loomed large over the prospect of Britain being involved in a war in Syria. Britain comprehensively rejects the idea that we can continue invading foreign countries in perpetuity. Respect is that voice.

We want Britain to move away from the foreign wars of the Coalition of the Killing and strike a policy which acts in our own national interest. We have always argued that if you make war against Muslims abroad, you will inevitably make war with them at home and this is precisely what we have done.

It is time to end the war in Afghanistan, which will end on precisely the terms that it could have ended at any point during the last 10 years.

It is time to end the calamitous occupation of Iraq, which has engendered many problems for us and the world for decades ahead. We were right about Iraq; everybody in Britain now knows it.

It is time for Britain to stop acting as the 51st state of the United States, to stop acquiescing to the demands of NATO, which is dominated by the USA in any case, and to become a country which prefers Peace above War.

Stop The War Coalition website: <http://www.stopwar.org.uk/>

Latin America

The 'pink tide' movement for cooperation and unity across Latin America and South America is one of the most important and encouraging geopolitical developments of our time. The Latin American quest for financial and political independence from American hegemony and neo-imperial rule is exactly the standpoint that needs to be followed in other places around the world. We believe that the position being taken by this movement, which follows in the footsteps of Che Guevara and Fidel Castro and was most powerfully represented by Hugo Chavez in Venezuela, is the model by which others will later follow. It is our hope that the Arab world will finally realise the power of its own potential, free from the diktat of big powers, who through their imperialism seek only to divide and rule them.



We support the idea that Britain should be looking 'south of the border' for a more balanced geopolitical stance; towards Latin America as opposed to the United States of America, and we would welcome the opportunity to cultivate closer links with our sister parties in the Latin American region.

Military Bases

In line with our foreign policy, Respect is for the closure of all extra-continental military bases.



Multipolar World

Respect believes that the world is a safer place in a multipolar world where there are several large superpowers. The last twenty years have shown how dangerous a unipolar world can be. Respect believes therefore that a British foreign policy that looked more towards our own place in the world rather than focusing solely on our relationship with the old unipolar power, the USA, would be a much more sensible option.



NATO

NATO has become, *de facto*, the United States' second military arm. The organisation in no way represents a pact to secure the North Atlantic area; indeed, countries far away from the North Atlantic zone are pressured into participation whilst NATO embarks on foreign crusades in areas stretching far beyond the North Atlantic. These 'missions', as they are called, are almost always flagrantly imperialistic in their character, affording the US a degree of legitimacy in conducting its own foreign policy.

We support the idea that Britain should leave NATO. Furthermore, NATO should be disbanded and replaced with a European Union defence organisation which does not involve the United States and which reflects the interests of its own member states. This organisation would be responsible for securing Europe's borders and for security issues in or on the borders of the European zone only.

Reunification

Respect supports the reunification of Ireland, Cyprus, Sudan and Korea, as well as in other places which have been artificially partitioned.



Space War

Respects supports an end to the militarisation of the space race. However, we are very much in favour of a collaboration between different space programmes so that we can continue to explore outer space



Trade in Arms

Respect supports the abolition of the arms trade and the terms of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, campaigning for international nuclear disarmament.



United Nations

The United Nations is an absurd excuse for an international organisation. The US dominates the UN, arrogating to itself the right to withhold visas for international politicians that it doesn't like. The Security Council is similarly ludicrous. The qualification for membership of this elite club is possession of nuclear weapons, although this is but a necessary but not sufficient condition. Germany, Europe's most important country, is not a member and carries no hope of ever being one. Britain is guaranteed a seat at the top table by virtue of finishing on the winning side in World War II and possessing a large number of nuclear weapons.



The idea that one country can veto a proposal that may be supported by every other country in the world is similarly perverse, and has contributed to the worldwide perception that the UN's lacklustre and powerless.

Respect supports the idea that the UN should be based in Switzerland, declared extra-territorial and guarded and maintained by the UN itself, paid for by increased cost for participation. Membership of it would carry extra responsibility to adhere to the conditions set by the UN, not as at present where countries are endlessly rewarded for ignoring or transgressing resolutions. Voting power should be more reflective of population size, and no one country can have a veto over a resolution. The UN would be committed to ensuring peace around the world, with a politically neutral peacekeeping force that would not be dominated by one or more single countries.