



An appeal to discuss preparing a workers' alternative for the next general election

Dear comrade,

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) is writing to invite your organisation to participate in drawing up plans for the next general election – with the aim of bringing together the widest range of trade unionists, socialists and working class community and social movement candidates prepared to stand up to the establishment politicians.

TUSC believes that what will be on offer at the next election from a Labour Party under Sir Keir Starmer will be a significant retreat from the radical policies that were presented in the 2017 and 2019 manifestoes under Jeremy Corbyn. The current leadership have been quite open about this, as they seek to reassure the ruling establishment that they will be a safe pair of hands by reviving Tony Blair-style 'New Labour' politics. There is no prospect that a Starmer-led Labour government would even begin to fight for the fundamental system change needed to end the cost of living and other crises that working class people face.

To meet this situation TUSC strongly hopes that, before the election, a new vehicle for working class political representation will have been established by more authoritative forces than those currently involved in our coalition or any other currently existing party or alliance – the trade unions organising the workers' fightback or potentially around Jeremy Corbyn himself standing independently of Labour.

However, recognising that the necessary steps for this might not be taken in time, we also believe that discussions should begin now between all those who might be considering standing in the general election against the establishment parties.

Organising an election challenge

The next general election must be held no later than December 2024 but, even if in the unlikely event it is not called before then, planning has to begin now. Agreeing that there should be an election challenge is only the first step.

In June the TUSC all-Britain steering committee discussed a briefing paper on some of the different issues involved, including questions of electoral law and the regulations for party election broadcasts, which is available on our website at <https://www.tusc.org.uk/txt/475.pdf>. Now we are writing to your organisation and others to hear your views on the matter.

In particular we would like to discuss with you:

- Is your organisation considering standing candidates, or supporting candidates standing against establishment politicians, in the next general election?
- If you are thinking of standing are you realistically planning to meet the threshold set by the broadcasting authorities for 'fair media coverage' – including a party election broadcast – of contesting 15% of the seats? (This is 98 for the UK as a whole which, at £500 per election deposit for each seat, means a minimum expenditure of £48,000).
- Would your organisation be prepared in principle – subject to discussion of course – for its candidates to use on the ballot paper one of the TUSC descriptions registered with the Electoral Commission, as a contribution to reaching the 'fair media coverage' threshold?
- TUSC is constituted to include candidates on its lists from a wide range of organisations provided the candidate accepts a minimum core policy platform for the relevant election (beyond that they are free to run their election campaign in whatever way they wish). We are in the process of formulating the policy platform for the next general election. Would your organisation wish to be formally involved in that discussion?

Join the discussion

To step up preparations for the general election the TUSC steering committee is hosting a series of public meetings this autumn under the heading, 'Enough is Enough! But what do we do at the ballot box?'. A copy of the standard flyer for these meetings is attached.

As well as discussing your plans with the TUSC steering committee, we would welcome the participation of your organisation in these local meetings.

None of us can be sure of the date of the next general election. But if a new authoritative working class party has not been formed by the time it is called, at the very least the discussions that we have now can hopefully ensure that there will be the most unified and effective alternative possible available on the ballot paper that defends the basic principles of trade unionism and socialism.

We look forward to your response.

In solidarity,

Dave Nellist, TUSC National Chairperson, former Labour MP 1983-1992

Clive Heemskerk, TUSC National Election Agent