



## **An invitation to co-host ‘A Convention to Organise a Working Class Challenge at the General Election’**

Dear comrades,

We are writing to ask your organisation to co-host, with the participating organisations of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), a convention to organise a working class challenge at the forthcoming general election.

We have written to you previously, along with more than twenty other campaign groups and socialist organisations, to discuss with TUSC your thoughts about the general election. But we believe it is now necessary to move beyond broad discussion to practical organisation.

It is possible, although unlikely, that the government will delay calling the election until the very last moment, dissolving parliament on 17th December 2024 for a 30th January 2025 polling day. It could also be called as early as May 2nd, the same day as local, mayoral and police and crime commissioner elections, with parliament dissolved in mid-March. But whatever the exact date, if a united election challenge is possible to achieve, details must be agreed urgently.

And to TUSC, a broad convention of *all* the various campaigns and socialist groups who are standing candidates, seems the best way to co-ordinate our efforts and overcome problems.

### **Proposals for an agenda**

An invitation to co-host a convention is also an invitation to co-decide its agenda, so our proposals below are just suggestions for what we think a convention should try and resolve.

Nevertheless we put them forward as concrete proposals for consideration, if only as the basis for counter-proposals or amendments to be made:

#### **1. Attitude to left-wing Labour candidates**

From its inception in 2010 TUSC has always had a policy of not standing against left-wing Labour candidates and, while they are an ever-diminishing number, we would propose maintaining that broad approach for 2024.

#### **2. The ‘fair media coverage’ threshold**

Even with the above qualification there will be enough possible seats to contest to reach the broadcasting authorities threshold for ‘fair media coverage’ – including but not limited to a party election broadcast – of one-sixth of the seats (98 candidates). We would propose setting that as a target for a joint election challenge.

### **3. A common name, or variants of it, on the ballot paper**

To get 'fair media coverage' the candidates must appear on the ballot paper under the name of a party registered with the Electoral Commission (or with one of its registered 'descriptions', which can include a joint description of two registered parties). TUSC, naturally, would propose using the TUSC name – and is prepared to register joint descriptions as we have done before – but, of course, would listen to alternative suggestions.

### **4. A minimum set of policies**

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, and we propose the same approach this time. We would suggest the core policy platform that TUSC has agreed for the general election as a basis (see <https://www.tusc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/TUSC-draft-GE-platform-for-2024.pdf>) but are open to other proposals.

### **5. The right to campaign independently**

While prospective candidates must accept the minimum core policy platform, we would propose that they would retain responsibility for their own campaign, including the right to promote their own organisation if they so wish and policies that go beyond the core platform.

### **6. Decision-making by consensus**

There will be potentially contentious decisions to be made by the participants in a joint election challenge, from candidate selection to dealing with the national media if the 'fair coverage' threshold is reached. We propose that decision-making be done on a consensus basis, which doesn't eliminate disagreements but does create a dynamic towards looking for solutions.

With the trajectory so clear of what is almost certain to be a Starmer-led government coming out of the general election, we believe that a working class electoral challenge is urgently needed – and that all of us must take seriously the task of bringing it about.

We look forward to receiving your earliest possible response to our invitation – and at least an initial indication on whether you wish to co-host the convention **before November 22nd**, when the TUSC all-Britain steering committee next meets.

In solidarity,

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

**Clive Heemskerk**, TUSC National Election Agent