

Why the Spartacist League supports TUSC And why other groups should do the same

Below is a transcript of the presentation by Eibhlin McColgan of the SL to the 3 February 2024 TUSC Convention in Birmingham, edited for publication.

Thank you comrades, I appreciate being given the time to explain why the Spartacist League has applied to participate in TUSC's election campaign. We think it is a good initiative. We agree with TUSC comrades—it absolutely is in the interests of the working class to have a socialist opposition to Starmer's Labour in the election. We welcome TUSC's campaign because it draws a class line against Starmer. We are prepared to build that campaign and to make it successful. We would like to stand a candidate under the TUSC banner; we are prepared to campaign for and vote for TUSC candidates where possible.

We agree that TUSC's core policies are a minimum that voters would expect from a socialist campaign. We have two amendments to be debated under the next agenda point: we think we should only vote for left MPs who oppose a Starmer government and we're opposed to supporting prison guards. But, to answer Comrade Nellist's question, even if our amendments are voted down we are still prepared to run as TUSC candidates and support TUSC's initiative.

We very much appreciate that TUSC gives participating organisations the autonomy to run their own independent campaigns. The turnout here

today is disappointing: we think all the other left groups should join forces in a united electoral opposition to Starmer, fight together for the things that we agree on, while presenting their own independent views.

I want to explain our independent campaign and show how it's different from TUSC's. At the same time I will show that adding our programme to the TUSC campaign will build up TUSC and *strengthen* it as a working-class opposition to Starmer.

Our difference with TUSC is simple. TUSC has dozens of good and supportable demands. But taken together the programme becomes a laundry list that tries to satisfy everyone and offend no-one. In trying to appease left MPs and union leaders, it promises everything that Corbyn promised—including in his 2019 manifesto—but which he *could not deliver*. The question is *why*? That's because Corbyn was not prepared to engage in a serious confrontation with the capitalist rulers. We think TUSC's programme has the same problem.

Our programme offers *five* bold, sharp demands that throw down the gauntlet to the capitalist class. The theme is:

Workers must run the country!

1. Liberate Palestine!
2. Down with NATO!
3. Expropriate the banks!
4. Citizenship rights for immigrants!
5. Down with the monarchy!

I'm sure every socialist organisation in the country—and everyone in this room—agrees with these demands. They are intended to give a voice to the visceral class hatred of the millions of people who despise Starmer, especially over his support to the genocide of the Palestinians. They will drive the likes of Starmer and Blair hysterical. And they put it squarely to the left Labour and trade union leaders: *what side are you on?*

Down with NATO: This is a red line for the British ruling class that takes its marching orders from Washington. It also drives a wedge against the likes of Sharon Graham and John McDonnell who are warmongers over Ukraine.

Expropriate the banks: The only way to reindustrialise the so-called Red Wall working-class areas of England, as well as Scotland and Wales, is to seize the capital in the City of London.

Citizenship rights for immigrants: This demand is to cut through the obscene racist squabbling over how to get rid of refugees that are rotting in prison camps.

Down with the monarchy: We've had enough of Labour and trade union leaders bowing and scraping before the Crown as we saw when the Queen croaked. We developed a saying at that time—"A leadership that's too spineless to

oppose the monarchy will never have the backbone to confront the British ruling class."

We're not promising the moon. We are promising a serious confrontation with the ruling class. Our aim is to give a taste of what an actual workers government would look like. It's not a parliamentary body where you elect a majority of socialist MPs. The model for TUSC is the same "broad church" that led to disaster for Corbyn. Corbyn's programme did touch on some of the bourgeoisie's red lines, including his opposition to Trident and to the European Union. But when he became Labour leader, Corbyn was faced with a choice. He could either organise a serious confrontation with the ruling class or cave in. He caved in, because Corbyn's programme did not politically equip him for a serious confrontation with the capitalist order.

To conclude: our perspective will strengthen TUSC as a working-class opposition to Starmer. Our approach to TUSC is a small step in our overall goal, which is to build a socialist movement in this country in opposition to Labour by totally breaking the mould that has paralysed the left for decades. We aim to unite under one banner all the forces that are committed to waging the kind of uncompromising class battles that it will take to bring down the rotten British ruling class. ■

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