

BRITAIN FOR THE PEOPLE NOT THE BANKERS

Make the Fat Cats Pay!



Communist Party 2010 General Election Manifesto

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Published by the Communist Party of Britain

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Summary: The fat cats must pay for the bailout

The Communist Party has an alternative to the plans of the Tories, New Labour and Liberal Democrats to make Britain's working people pay for the capitalist crisis. Those who profited must pay. The rich must pay for their crisis. The fat cats must pay for the bailout.

It's a capitalist crisis. Brought about by the blind drive to boost profits at the expense of wages, public services and the environment.

It's a particularly British crisis. Brought about by the parasitic growth of finance capital at the expense of jobs and manufacturing.

It's a global capitalist crisis. With Britain as the main imperialist partner to the US, this system means recurring crises, war, obscene contrasts of wealth and poverty and great dangers for our planet.

Capitalism as a system is morally, economically and politically bankrupt. The rule of big business and bankers must end.

Britain needs a left wing government programme that would take control of the economy away from big business and the bankers. That would build a productive economy, place public ownership and public services at the service of the people, compel business to reinvest in British industry, end the reliance on arms production, curb the bankers and clamp down on the export of capital.

Britain needs a left wing government programme that would wage war on poverty, protect our public services, strengthen the welfare state, end privilege in education, build houses again, restore democratic freedoms, end discrimination and strengthen democracy.

If the crisis is not to be solved at the expense of the working people it must be solved at the expense of the rich. The Communist Party proposes a bold programme that would ★ end tax avoidance by the rich ★ levy a windfall tax on super profits ★ tax speculative and finance transactions and big business profits ★ impose a wealth tax on the richest 10% ★ sweep out private consultants ★ tax vacant property ★ scrap the Trident missile system ★ cut military spending ★ bring the troops home and ★ abandon ID cards.

This would raise 'one-off' revenues of £86 billion and recurring revenues of around £96 billion each year, while making annual savings of more than £26 billion.

This would enrage the rich and their foreign friends. An independent foreign policy means a break with the European Union, the World Bank, the IMF and the system of military alliances.

To counter the big business offensive a left wing government would need to mobilise the working people and their unions and popular organisations.

The Communist Party is the party of the working class and fights to place our class at the centre of power, politics and government.

The bankruptcy of big business capitalism

On the campaign trail in this election, there lurks an elephant – the corrupt and bankrupt system of big business capitalism. The major parties are unwilling to acknowledge it, as this is the system to which they are committed. Indeed, the growing corruption of public and political life by monopoly capital is one of the hallmarks of modern society.

Now the big business elephant – having devoured unprecedented sums of public money – is on the rampage, trampling jobs, public services and people's livelihoods.

Less than two years ago, stock markets in London, New York and around the world went into meltdown. That was the greatest financial crash the world has ever seen and its consequences have yet to make their full impact. Banks and insurance companies went bust, and governments in Britain and elsewhere committed unprecedented sums of money to keep them afloat.

Why did the crash happen? Because of the 'neoliberal' agenda pursued over the last 30-odd years by the governments of Britain, the USA and other major capitalist countries.

It was an agenda to reduce the share of wages and salaries in the economy in order to boost profits, particularly for the major institutional shareholders. It involved intensifying the labour process, reducing the size of the workforce, exporting jobs to low-wage underdeveloped countries, privatising public services and – more recently – asset-stripping by hedge funds and other private equity companies.

As Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown claimed that he had abolished 'boom and bust' in the British economy. How wrong can you be?

Under capitalism, this cycle is inevitable because there is an imbalance between the drive to maximise market share and profit on the one side, while restricting the purchasing power of workers and their families on the other.

The boom-and-bust cycle cannot be abolished without abolishing capitalism.

However, the bust phase can be delayed by advancing credit – a policy particularly favoured by the major investment banks because of the need to find opportunities for making money out of the monopoly profits already accumulated.

That is the policy adopted internationally over the last few decades, with the active support of the Tory and New Labour governments in Britain. As a result, banks have been lending like there was no tomorrow and speculating in bundles of debt obligations

and credit default swaps instead of investing in productive industry.

The trouble is that all debts have to be repaid some time. As more and more money is taken out of retail markets in the form of debt repayments, there is less available for purchases within the productive economy, leading to redundancies, ‘toxic mortgages’ (ie. defaults) and a bursting of the speculative bubble. That is precisely what happened in 2008. The Great Financial Crash coincided with the beginning of a downturn in the productive economy, but the delay in the latter meant that it was much more severe when it arrived.

Already in Britain, over 1 million workers have lost their jobs, more than 100,000 homes have been repossessed and more than one-third of all workers have had their pay, hours or benefits cut since the start of the recession.

The official unemployment figure is about 2.5 million – nearly 8 per cent of the labour force – but the real figure is much higher when non-claimants who would like full- or part-time work are included. There are in fact over 8 million inactive people of working age, many of whom would work if they could get jobs.

Furthermore, the recent very modest reduction in the official unemployment total has, in part, been achieved because new employees have accepted a lower rate of pay for the job.

But these and many other jobs are now in severe jeopardy, as the three main parties sharpen their knives to make the deepest cuts in our public services – and in the quality of life of millions of people – since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Who should pay for the bailout?

Less than two years after the Crash, all the major parties in Britain are united on one thing: public spending has to be slashed. The financial crisis has been turned into a crisis of public services. The only difference between the parties is that New Labour will cut more slowly than the Tories and LibDems, and are more likely to protect some ‘front-line’ services.

Whichever party forms the government, they all intend to make working people pay through butchered services, more privatisation, reduced pension and benefit entitlements and, especially in the public sector, pay cuts and mass redundancies.

Why is this happening? Because in bailing out the banks and money markets, the government borrowed enormous quantities of cash, pushing up Britain national debt to £850 billion. This is equivalent to around 62 per cent of GDP (the annual value of Britain’s economic output) although it is planned to reach 100 per cent in 2012.

While this is an historic high, it is lower as a proportion of GDP than in many other capitalist countries and is well below the peak of 250 per cent reached in Britain in 1950.

National Debt as a percentage of GDP

Japan	192%
Italy	115%
Greece	108%
USA	91%
France	80%
Germany	77%
UK	62%

[http:// www.economicshelp.org/blog/economics/list-of-national-debt-by-country/](http://www.economicshelp.org/blog/economics/list-of-national-debt-by-country/)

A high national debt means high interest payments as well as repaying the principal in due course. It can also lead the major credit analysis firms in the City to cut Britain’s credit rating, making it harder for the government to raise money without offering a higher interest rate on its bonds – again putting pressure on public spending – or cutting public spending to meet the demands of the financial markets.

Cutting spending, however, is a recipe for fresh disaster. Apart from its implications for public services, it will take more purchasing power out of the economy – at the very time when the reverse is needed to boost demand and hence employment. It will lead to more widespread

mass unemployment and a slump that will continue for years.

As public sector union UNISON has made clear in its 'Alternative Budget':

Every redundancy costs the public sector £16,000, on average, in statutory payments and lost revenues, as well as undermining morale and productivity. Most (92 per cent) of the cost of employing a public service worker is recouped by the state through increased tax revenues and reduced benefit payments. For every pound spent on local public services, 64 pence is re-spent in local economies.

http://www.unison.org.uk/million/resources/Alternative_Budget.pdf

The reality is that the very wealthy caused the crisis by their drive to maximise profits. They are getting away with their crimes, while working people are forced to pay the price.

That is why the Communist Party proposes an alternative manifesto to that of New Labour, the Tories and LibDems – one which seeks to use the wealth and monopoly profits of the super-rich to fund the policies needed by the workers and peoples of Britain.

At the same time, we urge working people not to rely on elections or parliaments to defend their interests. If they want to protect jobs, wages, services, pensions and their rights at work, they must also take action wherever and whenever necessary.

This is what workers in Greece, Spain and France and sections of the working class in Britain have already done. Over the past year and a half we have seen courageous strike actions from power station and refinery construction workers, postal workers, rail staff, bus workers, council staff, office cleaners, college and university lecturers, civil servants and cabin crew at British Airways – to name but a few.

The British working class movement has a proud history of resistance and revolt against injustice, and now is the time to rekindle that spirit. The Communist Party works to secure the widest unity in action by working people and will use the opportunity of this election to urge solidarity with those already taking action. No group of workers should have to stand alone. Trade unions need to coordinate their demands and activities in order to step up the struggle for their common interests.

Communists are contesting seats in this election in order to put the case for socialism, for a revolutionary transformation of society. But we also recognise that this requires a much higher level of working class consciousness, militancy and political understanding.

We are therefore putting forward a coherent, integrated programme of policies around which a fight can be waged now and after the election, and which challenge the destructive interests of finance capital.

A world in crisis

Britain is not alone in facing the capitalist onslaught on public services, jobs and living standards. In the United States and the European Union, official unemployment stands at 9.4 per cent on average – but reaching between 15 and 19 per cent in Lithuania, Latvia and Spain. In the poorest countries of Asia and Africa, it is above 40 per cent.

Even before the latest crisis, capitalism as a system had already displayed its bankruptcy in humanitarian as well as economic terms.

The dominant threat in the world today is not international terrorism but war by the major imperialist powers – the USA and Britain in particular. Wars, such as those in Iraq and Afghanistan, are being fought for control over mineral resources – oil and gas in particular – and to extend imperialist political and military domination across strategic regions of the world. Even ‘minor’ conflicts, such as that in the Democratic Republic of Congo, are proxy wars for resources on behalf of the major capitalist powers. And with the massive nuclear stockpiles of the imperialist powers, there remains the ever-present danger of nuclear conflict.

Through war, the capitalist system destroys countless human lives and sets back human development for decades.

The second major threat of environmental catastrophe comes from global warming, which is leading to melting of the polar ice-caps, rising sea levels and changed weather patterns.

Despite recent media speculation, global warming is real and is clearly connected to the profligate burning of fossil fuels, which is pumping over 30 billion tonnes of heat-trapping carbon dioxide into the atmosphere each year. Unless this is checked, the consequences will be dire for millions of people: loss of homeland, destruction of agriculture, deaths from hunger, and migration on a massive scale.

Yet the big energy monopolies and their major industrial consumers are unwilling to accept any regulatory measures which would limit their profits. **Capitalism is threatening the life-support system of humanity on the planet.**

Hunger and disease are already stalking the developing world. Over 1 billion people are under-nourished – more than at any time since 1970. High food prices are driving millions into food insecurity. Nearly 2 people in every 5 lack access to basic sanitation, and 1.5 million children die each year from diarrhoeal diseases spread through the lack of adequate and hygiene. Three million people die each year from HIV/AIDS and 1 million from malaria, mostly in Africa.

The world has the technical ability to tackle these issues, but they are not priorities because they don’t make profit. Capitalism is a selfish and inhuman system.

There are enormous contrasts of wealth in the world. At least 80 per cent of humanity lives on less than \$10 (about £6.50) per day. The poorest 40 per cent of the people receive just 5 per cent of global income, while the richest 20 per cent take three-quarters of it.

Even in Britain, the National Statistics Office report *Wealth in Great Britain* (2009) confirms the grossly unequal distribution of all kinds of wealth between different sections of the population.

Does this matter? Yes, because the vast accumulation of wealth by a narrow sector of society means the dispossession, impoverishment and even death of the poorest. Such extremes are a barrier to human progress. Enormous wealth buys enormous influence and control, in the interests of the few. The unfettered pursuit of those interests over decades led directly to the Great Crash of 2008. And workers and their families across the world will be made to pay, unless they are able to resist.

Capitalism as a system is morally as well as economically and politically bankrupt.

A Left-Wing Programme for Britain

The question for Communists, socialists and all who care about our society and the quality of people lives – about the millions rather than just the millionaires – is: what policies can overcome the current crisis? How can we ensure that in Britain – with the world’s sixth biggest economy – the burden is borne by those who can best afford it?

The Communist Party believes not only that this financial and economic crisis can be resolved in the interests of the mass of working people and their families. We are also sure that the necessary policies should lay the basis for creating a different kind of society altogether, a socialist society in which the people themselves can exercise real economic, social and political power – rather than the capitalist monopolies and their hired politicians.

That is why Communist candidates propose a Left-Wing Programme to take control of Britain’s economy, invest in productive industry and public services, make war on poverty, extend democratic freedoms instead of curtailing them, challenge the European Union and pursue an independent foreign policy based on peaceful cooperation and solidarity.

Taking control of Britain's economy

Britain needs a strategy to defend and rebuild manufacturing, infrastructure and services and provide quality jobs. Some of the most powerful sections of the British capitalist class have no interest in pursuing such a strategy, putting their operations in the City of London and their huge overseas investments before the needs of the people of Britain.

The following policies put the working class and peoples of Britain first, and would enable the development of a modern, diverse and productive domestic economy:

- ★ Outlaw mass redundancies in profitable companies.
- ★ Take a public shareholding in return for subsidies to failing private companies, including full public ownership of strategically important ones such as Redcar steelworks.
- ★ Restrict the export of jobs to super-exploited labour markets abroad by enforcing international labour standards and penalising imports.
- ★ Support strategic industries and enterprises including by import tariffs and quotas where necessary.
- ★ Take the privatised utilities, telecoms and public transport back into public ownership to ensure that their pricing and investment policies are planned to meet the needs of users, workers, the economy and the environment – not those of big corporate shareholders.
- ★ Expand mutually beneficial trade relations with the People's Republic of China and other developing and less developed countries.
- ★ Use public ownership to invest in renewable energy resources such as tidal, solar and offshore wind power, and to revive the deep-mined coal industry utilising clean coal technology with carbon capture and storage.
- ★ Compel large and profitable companies to reinvest in British industry and take steps towards a 35-hour week with no loss of pay.
- ★ Give the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly the necessary legislative and financial powers to ensure that balanced economic development takes place to meet the needs of their respective peoples.
- ★ Introduce public sector procurement policies to protect and extend skilled employment, including in research and development, and the productive capacity necessary for a diverse industrial economy.
- ★ Take the major arms manufacturers into public ownership and shift production, research and development to socially useful products.
- ★ Take the banking, insurance and mortgage monopolies fully into democratic public ownership and direct their operations towards investment in productive industry, small and co-operative enterprises and first-time home ownership.
- ★ Restore government control of the Bank of England and use it to maintain low interest rates.

- ★ Stop City speculation in commodities and derivatives, hostile takeovers, asset-stripping and pension fund theft.
- ★ Control and tax movements of capital, especially capital for speculative purposes, through national as well as international action.
- ★ Take decisive action against tax avoidance and evasion by monopolies and the super-rich, including the closure of all tax havens under British jurisdiction.
- ★ Compel employers to help fund high-quality vocational training for young people and the long-term unemployed.

The environment and sustainable development

The Copenhagen Summit on climate change demonstrated the inability and unwillingness of capitalism to tackle global warming. The major monopolies of the advanced capitalist countries do not wish to cut back on their profligate use of energy, because it will hurt their profits.

Far from solving the problem, the market in carbon emission credits pioneered by the EU has provided yet another avenue for speculation and profit, moving the production of greenhouse gases around the world without really cutting emissions. In fact the whole of Britain reduction in emissions since 1990 is an illusion, because it has arisen from exporting our industry to developing countries. If we include ‘embedded’ emissions in our consumption, then British emissions have actually risen by 19 per cent since 1990.

Consumption rather than production is the key issue. Britain ecological footprint is about 5.5 hectares per capita, while the USA is 9.5, China is about 2 and India less than 1.

For sustainable development, 2.1 is a fair share. To reduce the impact on the planet – whether from global warming or exploitation of resources – the take by advanced capitalist countries must come down. Britain can lead the way on this, but it will not be achieved by market mechanisms. Resources need to be mobilised and directed.

The New Labour government expresses commitment to tackling global warming, but in practice does very little. It is not prepared to tackle the emissions from road and air transport, except by pricing – which hurts working class people hardest. The sale of licences to exploit offshore wind and tidal power remains just that – sale of licences, and thereby an opportunity for the purchasers to make profits without Britain really tackling the root cause.

Similar concerns apply to the proposed mega-barrage across the Severn Estuary. Without investment in energy storage and transmission systems in particular, the emissions savings from these schemes will be limited since conventional power stations will be needed for frequent back-up. Moreover, it may be possible to utilise alternatives to a strip barrage – such as lagoons or underwater tidal stream turbines – which

would be cheaper, more effective and far less damaging to the local eco-system.

In any event, any such project should be publicly owned and publicly funded, with full involvement of the Welsh Assembly and local councils in the planning and decision-making processes.

A dramatic reduction in Britain's global footprint (including carbon dioxide emissions) requires planning, and planning needs public ownership under democratic control. That is why public transport and energy – which must include the big oil monopolies – should be brought back into public ownership. Britain must plan for greater comfort at lower consumption by integrating and improving public transport, shifting freight from air and road to rail and sea, funding conservation of domestic heating, producing locally rather than half way across the world, and investing in energy-saving technology.

The Communist Party is opposed to the development of new nuclear power stations, not only because of safety concerns, but also because of the connection with nuclear weapons and the fact that, over its whole life-cycle, nuclear power is far from carbon-neutral.

Until new 'green' energy-producing technologies can be developed and implemented, we support the combustion of British deep-mined coal in conventional power stations with capture of carbon dioxide and its storage in depleted oil wells.

Housing and public services for all

The immediate priority must be to oppose and halt cuts in public services. Communists are working in their trade unions and local communities to build broad alliances to defend our public services together with the pay and entitlements of public sector workers.

Far from reducing the powers and resources of local government still further, what is needed is a massive expansion of public sector housing under proper democratic control. Local government should be given the power and money to build and renovate affordable quality homes and buy empty ones. At a time when there are 1.8 million households and 5 million people on council house waiting lists, council house building has collapsed, while the private sector concentrates on building luxury, leisure and commercial developments for the wealthy and big business.

For a fraction of the £1,350 billion made available to the banks and money markets in capital, loans and guarantees, or for less than the £76 billion earmarked for a new generation of British nuclear weapons, local councils could fund the building of one million new homes and create 500,000 new jobs.

The whole trend under New Labour and the Tories before them has

been to privatise and marketise public services, opening the door wide to the corporate profiteers. That is why the Communist Party also calls for:

- ★ Keeping in public ownership the Royal Mail, the Channel Tunnel rail link and other services threatened with privatisation.
- ★ Scrapping the ‘foundation trust’ status for hospitals and restoring co-operation rather than competition as the ethos of the NHS.
- ★ Halting the City Academy programme and integrating all religious, private, trust and city academy schools into a unified secular education system under democratic local control, providing all with the current level of public funding that the academies currently enjoy.
- ★ Ending council house sales and reversing housing stock transfers.
- ★ Stopping all Private Finance Initiative and Public-Private Partnership schemes and restoring full ownership and control to the public sector.
- ★ Expanding rather than contracting Further and Higher Education rather than their contraction.
- ★ Investing more in affordable community recreational facilities and adequate lighting in all urban streets and parks.
- ★ Encouraging closer liaison between local councils, community groups and the police to tackle anti-social and self-destructive behaviour.

Waging war on poverty

This New Labour government has presided over a redistribution of wealth from the poor to the better off and the rich since 1997.

According to the government’s own report *Wealth in Great Britain* (2009), the poorer half of the population own just 1 per cent of personal wealth between them, down from 7 per cent in 1996. The richest 10 per cent own 44 per cent and the richest 20 per cent almost two-thirds (62 per cent), although these figures exclude hidden assets at home or in tax havens abroad.

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_economy/wealth-assets-2006-2008/Wealth_in_GB_2006_2008.pdf

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_economy/wealth-assets-2006-2008/02_02.xls

More than 3 million children – at least one in four – in Britain live in poverty (ie. in families on less than 60 per cent median income after housing costs). This is among the worst records in western Europe. By Chancellor Darling’s own admission, the government is likely to miss its 1999 target to halve child poverty by 2010 to the detriment of 600,000 children.

The chief causes of poverty are unemployment, low wages or inadequate benefits. In recent years, too, huge rises in gas and

electricity prices have more than doubled the number of households in ‘fuel poverty’ (ie. spending more than 10 per cent of income on fuel bills) to 4.5 million, as the energy monopolies reap super-profits.

The main impact of poverty is on health, educational achievement and social participation.

The remedies are straightforward, as the Child Poverty Action Group confirms. Single and women parents need higher benefits, higher wages and better access to employment, training and childcare facilities. Together with pensioners, they would benefit substantially from decent housing, better public services and a move away from means-testing of benefits and pensions.

But with its proposals to increase the retirement age, the New Labour government has swallowed whole the ageist, anti-pensioner agenda – that Britain has too many old people and we cannot afford to pay for their comfort and dignity in retirement. Pensioners are not a drag on the economy. For decades, governments have built up a £51 billion pension surplus in the National Insurance fund by taking workers’ contributions and then paying them low pensions after they retire. That money should be given back to yesterday’s workers, not used to fund armaments and war.

Extending the compulsory working age also denies jobs to young and first-time workers at a time when unemployment has already reached 8 per cent (and 20 per cent among 16-24 year olds).

The Communist Party endorses the Pensioner Manifesto from the National Pensioner Convention, which demands:

- ★ A basic state pension set above the official poverty level (estimated at £165 a week in 2009), linked to rises in earnings or prices, whichever is higher.
- ★ Free long-term and social care for pensioners, funded from general taxation and provided to the highest standards.
- ★ Free Britain-wide travel for pensioners on public transport
- ★ A winter fuel allowance of £500 per pensioner household.

But the Communist Party would go further on all the fronts which need to be opened up in a war on poverty, including:

- ★ An immediate increase in the national minimum wage to the level of half median male earnings, irrespective of age, rising to two-thirds.
- ★ Restoration of the value of unemployment benefits and greater access to benefits for carers, the long-term sick and people with disabilities.
- ★ The imposition of pay audits to enforce genuinely equal pay for women.
- ★ Abolition of student tuition fees and the phasing in of student grants alongside interest-free loans along the lines being pioneered by the Scottish Parliament and Welsh National Assembly.
- ★ Deep cuts in household fuel prices, a reduction in VAT on essential

goods and services and the imposition of selective price controls on basic foods.

- ★ Provision of a second state pension for all workers, with compulsory employer as well as state contributions.
- ★ Public funding for security measures in pensioners' homes.

Real equality for women

Despite legislation and policies proclaiming equal rights for women, equality has yet to be achieved in many aspects of economic, social and political life.

That is why the Communist Party launched the Charter for Women in 2005, which now has the support of more than 12 national trade unions. In order to achieve equality for women in society, at work and in the labour movement, its policies include:

- ★ Greater support for lone mothers, carers and women subjected to domestic violence.
- ★ Improved rights and access to abortion.
- ★ Equal state pensions and pension rights for all women.
- ★ Reducing the gender pay gap, including through statutory pay audits and more trade union equal value claims.
- ★ Ending job segregation by improving training and opportunities for women.
- ★ Full-time rights for part-time workers and an end to casualisation and zero-hours contracts.
- ★ Ending the oppression of lesbian, bisexual and transexual women.
- ★ Rooting out bullying and sexual harassment.
- ★ Affordable childcare including pre-school, after-school and holiday provision.

Restoring democratic freedoms

In its first term of office, the 1997-2001 New Labour government fulfilled manifesto commitments to establish a Scottish Parliament and a Welsh Assembly, re-establish an elected authority for Greater London and expand trade union rights. But the powers and resources granted to the new devolved bodies were kept to a minimum, in order to limit their potential to enact policies that could challenge the interests of monopoly capital.

Similarly, proposals for regional government in England were drained of any real democratic content and turned into measures for bureaucratic reorganisation, threatening the already meagre powers of local councils.

Trade union rights have been blocked and undermined by the use of injunctions and the courts by employers to overturn democratic

ballots for industrial action, while a series of judgements at the European Court of Justice threaten negotiated agreements and national legislation which protect workers' terms and conditions.

Increasingly, the New Labour regime has introduced repressive new laws to target the scapegoats being made responsible for social problems and to suppress growing opposition to government policies.

Asylum seekers and refugees have been blamed unfairly for government failures to invest fully in health, education and housing, while Muslims are demonised as part of a bogus 'war on terror' launched at the behest of US imperialism.

Moreover, huge holes have been punched in our longstanding civil liberties including rights to peaceful protest and freedom from detention without charge or trial. The powers of the police, intelligence and immigration services were increased to unprecedented levels.

It is against this background that the Communist Party calls in this election for:

- ★ Repeal of the Tory anti-trade union laws by a Trade Union Freedom Act which guarantees positive rights and free collective bargaining.
- ★ An end to prolonged detention without charge, house arrest and plans for ID cards and full restoration of the rights of assembly, protest and free speech.
- ★ An extension of democratic control over Britain police and intelligence services.
- ★ The break-up of the millionaire media monopolies in Britain, with measures to ensure genuinely free, diverse and inclusive mass media.
- ★ Restoration of powers and resources to local government, unfreezing the business rate for big corporations and linking local taxation more closely to the ability to pay.
- ★ Maximum devolution of economic, legislative and financial powers to the Scottish Parliament and Welsh National Assembly.

Where would the money come from?

Despite the credit crunch, economic crisis and the loss of manufacturing industry, Britain remains a wealthy country. But the wealth is in the wrong hands. By taking control of it, Britain could easily afford the programme outlined above. Here are some of the ways in which revenue can be raised without hitting vital public services or working people and their families:

- ★ Close 'tax avoidance' loop-holes for the wealthy and corporations.

Revenue: at least £70 billion.

- ★ Levy a 20 per cent windfall tax on the super-profits of British-based banks, oil corporations, energy utilities and retail monopolies.

Revenue: about £16 billion.

- ★ Impose a 'Robin Hood' tax on major transactions (including

speculation) by British financial institutions. **Revenue: £30 billion a year.**

★ Levy a 1 per cent Wealth Tax on the richest 10 per cent of the population. **Revenue: around £39 billion a year.**

★ Increase corporation tax on big business profits, especially those made from overseas operations. **Revenue: £10 billion a year.**

★ Impose an empty property tax on long-term vacant premises. **Revenue: at least £3 billion a year.**

★ End the central government obsession with using private sector consultants. **Savings: £3 billion a year.**

★ Replace PFI schemes by public funding and management. **Savings: at least £3 billion a year.**

★ Abandon the repressive proposal for ID cards. **Savings: at least £6 billion over 10 years.**

★ Scrap plans to follow Trident with a new nuclear weapons system. **Savings: at least £76 billion over 30 years.**

★ Reduce military expenditure as a proportion of GDP to average European levels. **Savings: £13 billion a year.**

★ Withdraw British troops from Afghanistan. **Savings: more than £4 billion a year.**

★ Halve the local government bill for bringing in outside agencies from the private sector. **Savings: £1 billion a year.**

These measures would raise ‘one-off’ revenues of £86 billion and recurring revenues of around £96 billion each year, while making annual savings of more than £26 billion.

They show that there is a positive alternative to slashing public services and public sector jobs, pay and pensions in order to help cut government borrowing by £93 billion between now and 2015.

Furthermore, with political will, additional resources could be mobilised by taking steps to repatriate the assets of the super-rich from offshore bank accounts, sell some of the overseas assets of British-based transnational corporations and finance a programme of public ownership by issuing government bonds.

Those who added to their super-profits through involvement in the 2008 Financial Crash deserve to have their assets seized. Their speculation which resulted in so much misery was nothing other than legalised theft.

Fighting racism and fascism

The government’s failure to solve deep-rooted economic and social problems has combined with the search for scapegoats and the bogus ‘war on terror’ in a toxic mix. The revival of racist ideas encouraged by New Labour and Tory politicians and the mass media has enabled the fascist BNP to fester and flourish.

In this 65th anniversary year of the defeat of Nazi Germany in World War Two, the Communist Party calls for a renewed popular struggle against racism and fascism.

We believe that every person should be entitled to equal treatment regardless of race, culture, religion or national origin. We call for immediate measures to root out racism, including:

★ The repeal of all racist asylum, immigration and nationality laws and their replacement by measures which reflect our international and humanitarian commitments – including the right for asylum seekers to work.

★ An amnesty for all illegal immigrants and overstayers and their integration into the economy, employment rights and the tax and national insurance system.

★ The closure of repressive prison-like facilities for asylum seekers and an end to callous and failed policy of dispersal.

★ No platform for fascists to peddle their poison, whether on public platforms or in the mass media.

We make no apology for arguing that Britain should be an ‘anti-fascist state’, with no pretence at political neutrality in such matters. Popular campaigning and official action are both necessary to rid our society of organised fascists, in the interests of community peace and solidarity – and in tribute to those who died in the last world war against fascism.

An independent foreign policy for Britain

The foreign policy of successive British governments has long reflected the predominant interests of British finance capital. These are to protect and promote its extensive investments and operations around the world, especially through the use of British state power.

The subservient political and military alliance with US imperialism reflects this approach, as does Britain’s qualified involvement in the European Union. But while British-owned oil, minerals, armaments and financial monopolies have benefited from these alliances, the peoples of Britain and the Third World are paying a heavy price.

An endless series of wars and occupations, from the former Yugoslavia to Iraq and Afghanistan, have brought death and disaster in their wake on a massive scale. Millions of people have been forced to flee their homeland, hundreds of thousands have been killed – many by the Western forces supposedly sent to ‘liberate’ them – and their communities devastated.

Anti-Western corrupt and despotic regimes have been replaced by pro-Western corrupt and despotic regimes. And the profits have rolled

in for British and US armaments, construction, oil and banking corporations.

New US and NATO military facilities have been extended into eastern Europe, former Soviet republics, the Middle East and southern Asia, ideally placed to exert control over vital energy supplies and to confront India, Russia or China in the event of future conflicts.

A dangerous strategy is unfolding in accordance with the Project for a New American Century – and Britain is deeply implicated in it. Even to the point of British governments shamefully conniving in the use of an intercontinental network of torture centres, where kidnapped ‘detainees’ are held in breach of all the requirements of international and humanitarian law.

Yet once the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact disintegrated, the entire specious case for the existence of NATO and nuclear weapons also collapsed. The promised ‘peace dividend’ should then have been devoted to solving dire problems of malnutrition, preventable disease, illiteracy, unlawful occupation and global warming.

The Communist Party still believes that solving humanity’s fundamental problems is more important than squandering precious resources on militarism and war.

That is why, while accepting the case for conventional defence forces, we continue to argue for:

- ★ The unilateral abolition of Britain’s nuclear weapons, with no replacement for the Trident missile system.
- ★ The reduction of British military expenditure to the average European share of GDP.
- ★ Major restrictions on British arms exports, especially to reactionary and repressive regimes.
- ★ The redirection of arms production capacity to research and production of socially useful products for domestic use and export.
- ★ Immediate withdrawal of British troops from Afghanistan.
- ★ British withdrawal from NATO and the closure of all US military bases in Britain.
- ★ Opposition to any further development of the European Union’s military dimension, including any participation in the European Defence Agency.
- ★ No cooperation with the US and its other allies in the use of kidnapping (‘extraordinary rendition’) and torture.
- ★ An end to military support for the Colombian regime in its US-sponsored plans to confront progressive and left-wing governments in Latin America.
- ★ Support for a genuine ‘peace with justice’ process to create a sovereign Palestinian state alongside a secure Israel, in accordance with UN resolutions and backed by sanctions against Israel if no immediate progress is made.

Challenging the European Union

The European Commission and the European Central Bank are seeking to enforce a programme of privatisation and deep cuts in public spending on Member States, in response to the economic and financial crisis. It is a big business agenda fully in keeping with the origins and subsequent development of the European Union.

Membership of the euro-zone would have made Britain even more vulnerable to such pressure, underlining the necessity to maintain sterling as an independent currency.

But the EU also poses a threat to workers and their families on many other levels, because it:

- Removes democratic control over national economies and places them in the hands of the unelected European Commission.
- Enshrines ‘free market’ competition in EU law, effectively outlawing public ownership.
- Obliges governments to cut public spending to minimise the budget deficit, but prevents them from taxing the export of capital.
- Gives transnational companies in any EU country the right under the Posted Workers Directive to bring in workers from other EU countries at lower pay rates and on worse conditions than those which trade unions have won locally – a situation which provoked the Lindsey power station disputes of 2008 and 2009.

Through the Lisbon Treaty (the renamed European Union Constitution), the EU has taken substantial further steps along the road to a monopoly capitalist, militarist United States of Europe.

Its chief purpose is to promote the common interests of monopoly capitalists across Europe to maximise profit and suppress collective action by workers and their trade unions. Its supreme court, the European Court of Justice, can be relied on to find against trade unions as it did in the Laval, Viking, Ruffert and Luxemburg cases.

EU propaganda about the ‘Social Chapter’, a ‘Social Europe’ and ‘social partnership’ is part of a strategy to get workers to place their confidence in supposedly benevolent supra-national European institutions, while their collective rights are progressively eroded.

Communists argue that the EU cannot be reformed from within because its treaties and institutions have been designed and entrenched to prevent real democratisation and progressive policies.

The peoples of Britain should exert their popular sovereignty against EU monopoly capitalist policies and prepare to withdraw from the EU in favour of free and equal relations with all nations around the globe.

The Communist Party and the General Election

Whichever party wins this election, there will have to be determined resistance to the massive public spending cuts proposed by all three main parties. Trade unions, community organisations and a wide range of left-wing and progressive organisations will need to unite to defend our public services and trade union and other democratic rights. The campaign to combat global warming and to secure an independent foreign policy will be more necessary than ever.

The People's Charter for Change can provide the basis for drawing together many of these issues in united action. Its policies for a fairer economy, improved public services, more and better jobs, decent homes for all, social justice and sustainable development set out a clear alternative to monopoly profiteering.

Communist Party candidates join the TUC and national trade unions in endorsing the People's Charter, and we believe all candidates in this election should be challenged to do likewise.

But we also recognise that this election will broadly decide composition of the next government of Britain. Given the limited choice on offer, the Communist Party expresses its clear and unambiguous preference for the election of a Labour government rather than a Tory one.

This is based in part on our estimation that a Tory government is more likely to:

- ★ Impose quicker and deeper cuts in public services.
- ★ Bring forward the compulsory extension of people working lives.
- ★ Hive off social, youth and other public services to voluntary and business organisations, especially in urban and inner-city areas.
- ★ Attack trade union rights and facilities, including the right to take action in 'essential' services and through the imposition of repeat ballots during strikes.
- ★ Support employers to breach employment rights and standards of health and safety at work.
- ★ Undermine funding arrangements for its main opposition party – the Labour Party – by further restricting the use of trade union political funds.
- ★ Create conditions for the escalation of racism through the introduction of even tighter immigration controls.

If the trade unions can be won to fight harder for their own policies, on the other hand, a Labour government could be more susceptible to progressive and popular pressure. This is part of the wider struggle for the labour movement to regain control of the Labour Party from the New Labour faction and its policies of privatisation,

public spending cuts, a police state, militarism and war.

The Communist Party fights for socialism. We are fundamentally opposed to this immoral and bankrupt capitalist system which allows enormous wealth to be made by the few at the expense of the many.

Communist MPs would work full-time for their electors, supporting them in their struggles – and not taking any paid positions outside Parliament or embezzling non-incurred expenses while carrying out their political duties.

Our aim is to achieve a socialist Britain in which the means of production, distribution and exchange will be socially owned, to be utilised in a democratic planned way for the benefit of all.

In this Manifesto, the Communist Party puts forward the policies that would advance the real interests of the working class and peoples of Britain. It is a Manifesto for a real alternative to a Britain dominated by big business and the bankers. It is a Manifesto for a socialist Britain as part of the world-wide struggle to save our planet.



Communist Party candidates

Steve Andrew	<i>Sheffield South East</i>
Robert Griffiths	<i>Cardiff South & Penarth</i>
Martin Levy	<i>Newcastle East</i>
Marc Livingstone	<i>Glasgow North West</i>
Gerry Sables	<i>North Devon</i>
Ben Stevenson	<i>Croydon North</i>



www.communist-party.org.uk
www.ycl.org.uk
www.thepeoplescharter.com
www.manifestopress.org.uk

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- ☐ I would like to join the Communist Party
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- ☐ Please send me copies of this Election Manifesto

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Elections are not free

Help fund the Communist Party's election campaign. Send donations to CPB, Ruskin House, Coombe Road, Croydon, CR0 1BD, making cheques out to 'CPB Election Fund'.
[Note: under election law, registered political parties must check that individual donors of £200 or more are registered donors and must declare the names of such donors to the Electoral Commission. The same applies to a donation of £50 or more, if you would like it to go to a specific constituency campaign.]
Return to CPB, Ruskin House, Coombe Road, Croydon, CR0 1BD



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