



# 10 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD JOIN WORKERS' LIBERTY

**1.** We live in a capitalist world — meaning exploitation and poverty for the majority to guarantee profits and luxury for a few. In Britain the rich are getting massively richer; what the rest of us are getting is cuts, mass unemployment, the dismantling of the NHS and falling living standards. Worldwide, it's even worse. Society needs to be radically reorganised in the interests of the majority.

To do that will take a revolution against the entrenched wealth and power of the capitalists, who have many weapons at their disposal — not just the army, police, courts and prisons, but systems of ideas developed over centuries, ideas which dominate society and tell us that there is no alternative — that tinkering with the current system is the best we can do. To challenge the ruling class, we need to build a movement which can develop and act around alternative, anti-capitalist ideas. Workers' Liberty exists to build that movement.

**IF YOU WANT TO FIGHT AND OVERTHROW THE EXPLOITATION OF THE VAST MAJORITY BY A TINY MINORITY, YOU SHOULD JOIN WORKERS' LIBERTY.**

**2.** For us, socialism — a society in which workplaces and all the means of producing wealth are owned collectively and run democratically for the benefit of everyone — can only come about as a result of the working class — the people who produce the wealth — liberating ourselves from capitalist exploitation. The fundamental basis of our politics is class struggle.

Socialism is a word that can now be used to mean almost anything. But many different versions of 'socialism' see it as something handed down from above by a power that workers do not control, whether it's a Stalinist state (like Cuba or the old Soviet Union), a populist-nationalist regime (like post-Chavez Venezuela) or based on a parliament (like 'Old Labour' governments in Britain). Many socialists think that Stalinist 'communism' was, if not really socialist, at least a 'degenerated' or 'deformed' version of something better than capitalism.

We don't! For us, socialism will be brought about by workers' own efforts, our struggles in the workplace and society, the fight for workers' power, or it will not be socialism or anything like it, but a different name for some system of exploitation. As Karl Marx put it: "The emancipation of the working class must be the act of the workers themselves".

**IF YOU BELIEVE THAT SOCIALISM MEANS WORKING-CLASS SELF LIBERATION, YOU SHOULD JOIN WORKERS' LIBERTY**

**3.** Because we think only the working class can create real socialism, we are active in workplaces and in the basic organisations of the working class, trade unions and the Labour Party.



The election of Jeremy Corbyn, and the opening-up of the Labour Party as large numbers of socialists have joined or re-joined Labour has created an important opportunity for Marxists. Important debates have begun about what Labour should do in government. We are for Corbyn if he confronts Capital; we are critical when necessary, for example when Corbyn refuses to confront "left" anti-Semitism head-on, or refuses to oppose Brexit.

We want a Labour government which systematically opposes capitalism in the interests of the working class. We want a Labour government which fights as hard for the working class as the Tories have fought for the rich and the powerful. We want a Workers' Government.

We have 'fractions' in most of the big unions, with activists in sectors including the railways, the NHS, local government, schools, colleges, universities and the civil service.

Unions in Britain are much weaker than they used to be; and like in most countries, they are dominated by middle-class bureaucrats, on huge salaries and expenses, who see themselves as peacemakers between workers and bosses and are afraid of working-class struggle.

We fight to transform the unions into strong, democratic, fighting organisations, controlled by their members and mobilising workers for battle in the workplace and society, including strikes, occupations and other forms of militant action. As the fight against cuts deepens, this is crucial.

We argue for 'rank-and-file movements' in every union to challenge the bureaucrats and organise struggles when they won't, and we are active in organising such movements. Our members also produce workplace bulletins to help organise workers for class-struggle, socialist ideas within their workplace and industry, for instance the Tubeworker bulletin on London Underground. We fight for unions to 'organise the unorganised', reaching out to young, precarious, migrant and private sector workers.

We are fighting to transform the unions and the Labour Party into open, democratic, class-struggle organisations which fight for the interests of the working class.

**IF YOU BELIEVE YOU CAN FIGHT EXPLOITATION MOST EFFECTIVELY BY ORGANISING WHERE EXPLOITATION TAKES PLACE, YOU SHOULD JOIN WORKERS' LIBERTY.**

**4.** Workers all over the world have interests in common with each other, not with the bosses of 'their own' country. To fight effectively, workers in every country need to support the struggles of workers in every other country. That is what we mean by internationalism.

That is why we think that — in contrast to the nationalistic ideas of some on the British left — Brexit is a terrible, reactionary mistake. We want to end barriers between workers, not erect new borders.

We defend the rights of migrant workers. We argue for Europe-wide workers' struggle against austerity. We want a fight to resist cuts and level up wages, services and rights across Europe, and for a democratic and socialist united Europe.



We are against imperialist adventures and bullying by powerful states like Britain and the US. But we reject the idea, promoted by some socialist groups, for instance the Socialist Workers' Party, that any force which opposes Britain, America and Israel should be supported on some level as 'anti-imperialist'.

We oppose, consistently and militantly, the right-wing political Islamists such as ISIS who have fought the Western powers in the name of totalitarian theocracy. We are secular, working-class democrats.

Events following the 'Arab Spring' have shown that the world cannot be simply and straightforwardly understood as 'imperialist' vs 'anti-imperialist'. We are pleased the Qaddafi regime in Libya is gone, despite Western intervention to help the Libyan rebels. And we are appalled by 'leftwing' apologising for the Iranian dictatorship, whose clashes with the US over who will dominate the Gulf do not make it any less expansionist or repressive to national minorities inside Iran, let alone any less hostile to women's and gay rights or brutal towards workers trying to organise.

We think anti-imperialism should be part of our democratic, anti-capitalist, working-class ideas, not something separate from and overriding them.

We oppose immigration controls: against the bosses' attempts to divide workers, we say 'No one is illegal', demand equal rights for all and insist that the labour movement organise all workers, no matter where they come from and what their immigration status is. The struggles of migrant workers, for instance cleaners in London, are crucial to rebuilding the labour movement.

We have links with like-minded revolutionary socialists in other countries, particularly in France, the US, Poland, Turkey, Iran and Australia.

**IF YOU BELIEVE IN WORKING-CLASS UNITY ACROSS BORDERS, YOU SHOULD JOIN WORKERS' LIBERTY.**

**5.** We are active in the student movement, and have played an important role in many student struggles. College or university is where many people first get involved in socialist politics, as students have traditionally had more time than others to think about and get involved in debate and activism (although this is less true than it once was due to fees, having to work etc). We organise regular meetings, debates and activity in a number of colleges and universities in order create a visible profile for working class socialist ideas among students. We are also active among school students.

We are part of grassroots student struggles against cuts and fees, and helped found the National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts — the activist network which led the big wave of student struggles in 2010/11. We are part of the new Student Left Network in NUS that fights the marketisation of education, demanding free education and an education system run to create critically thinking human beings — not docile material for capitalist exploitation.

We work in student unions and in the National Union of Students, fighting to transform them into member-led, campaigning organisations which build links with the workers' movement, starting with workers on campus.

We see the Student Left Network as a student rank-and-file movement which can help grassroots student activists take over and transform these official structures. We work in Labour Students and the NUS Women's and Trans' Students Campaigns with similar aims: to draw in large numbers of activists into thoughtful, considered and militant campaigning activity.



**IF YOU WANT A MILITANT, CAMPAIGNING STUDENT MOVEMENT WHICH LINKS UP WITH WORKERS IN STRUGGLE, YOU SHOULD JOIN WORKERS' LIBERTY.**

**6.** Oppression by race, gender, sexuality and so on is linked to, but not identical with, class oppression.

For instance, capitalists benefit from women's domestic labour — but working-class men also benefit to some degree from the subordination of women. Racism divides and weakens the working class and strengthens the hand of the bosses — but that does not mean class struggle will automatically solve the problem of racism.

Women, black people, LGBT people, disabled people and others who face specific forms of oppression under capitalism should not have to somehow suspend their struggles for equality until the labour movement takes up these issues in a more active way. At the same time, we have to ask: where does this oppression flow from? How do we begin to tackle all the oppression and misery which exist in the world?

We believe one of the big lessons of history is how complementary and interlinked the struggles of workers and oppressed groups can be. Again and again, big workers' struggles have thrown up questions of oppression and liberation not only of, but also within, the working class. We can support the struggles of the oppressed now and argue for them to be fought in alliance with organised workers.

For us, workers' revolution must be a 'festival of the oppressed', involving self-liberation by all oppressed and exploited people.

**IF YOU WANT A WORLD WITHOUT OPPRESSION BASED ON GENDER, RACE, CLASS OR ANY OTHER OPPRESSION, YOU SHOULD JOIN WORKERS' LIBERTY.**

**7.** One crucial element of internationalism is workers of different nationalities respecting each other's national rights. Only on this basis can national oppression be tackled, and workers divided by war and conflict unite to struggle effectively. Unfortunately some socialists — influenced, as on many questions, by the Stalinist tradition — see the world in terms of 'good' and 'bad' peoples: the Palestinians are good, for instance, and the Israeli Jews are bad. We say there are no bad peoples — and within every nation there are exploiters and exploited. We oppose Israel's oppression of the Palestinians, and believe that Israeli workers must fight against 'their' government's policy of continuing this oppression; but we don't accept this means opposing Israel's existence or boycotting everything Israeli, as some on the left do.

Our approach is consistent democracy: every nation should have the right to decide its own future, up to and including independence, in so far as this does not conflict with the rights of others. We are also in favour of full equality for minorities within a nation, and of local and regional autonomy. By fighting for this workers of different nationalities can begin to unite against their common enemy, the bosses.

National questions, like Israel-Palestine, are one area where we have tried to rethink some of the 'common sense' of the left, and develop a more coherent viewpoint. In fact that is our approach more generally: thinking things through, clarifying ideas, constantly attempting to update and renew the socialist tradition.



**IF YOU BELIEVE IN A RATIONAL, CONSISTENTLY DEMOCRATIC APPROACH TO NATIONAL CONFLICTS, AND OTHER DEBATES ON THE LEFT, YOU SHOULD JOIN WORKERS' LIBERTY.**

**8.** In a world where the capitalist drive for profit threatens to destroy the whole basis of life on earth, we take ecology and environmental politics seriously. We were active in the Climate Camp movement, and helped found Workers' Climate Action, an organisation seeking to build links between the workers' and environmental movements, to fight dangerous climate change and environmental degradation on a working-class, anti-capitalist basis. WCA activists, led by Workers' Liberty members, sparked the 2009 struggle by Vestas wind turbine workers, who occupied their factory to stop its closure.

## **IF YOU AGREE ‘CLIMATE CHANGE IS A CLASS ISSUE’, YOU SHOULD JOIN WORKERS’ LIBERTY.**

**9.** At the moment, the socialist left is divided into a number of different organisations. It’s easy (and right) to say “Why can’t they unite?” — but there are many real differences about how best to fight for socialism, and even about what socialism means.

Rather than pretending those differences don’t exist — or that other organisations don’t exist! — we believe in debating them openly in a civilised way. But there is plenty of room for greater unity at the same time. In fact, the two things — united struggle and debate — can and should go together. We can start by more working together in struggles and campaigns, by holding more debates about issues and ideas, and by uniting to create a higher-profile socialist voice in politics.

Workers’ Liberty fights to build an alliance of socialists and socialist groups as a first step towards a united working-class socialist party.

But for that to happen, the left will have to develop a culture of free debate, democracy and rights for minorities. Debate, discussion and democracy are not optional extras. Without them, we will never be able to unite the left, let alone bring into being a movement of educated and competent activists capable of helping our class overthrow capitalism.

Not every member of Workers’ Liberty agrees with every other member of Workers’ Liberty on every issue. Look at our website or read our newspaper *Solidarity*, and you’ll see that we debate differences and disagreements openly. We don’t think enforced homogeneity, hiding disagreements for the sake of ‘unity’, is helpful.

Workers’ Liberty’s perspectives and actions are democratically debated and agreed upon by the whole organisation, but we don’t expect members who disagree to pretend to hold opinions they don’t.

## **IF YOU WANT AN EFFECTIVE, UNITED, HONEST LEFT THAT WORKS TOGETHER AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE WHILE DEBATING ITS DIFFERENCES OPENLY, YOU SHOULD JOIN WORKERS’ LIBERTY.**

**10.** We believe that the working class and oppressed can only liberate themselves as a conscious project, based on ideas which are debated, tested in reality and constantly reviewed and improved. The working class, as a class, can only learn from history — including past workers’ struggles, victorious or defeated, all around the world — through a conscious political movement which preserves, develops and applies these lessons.

In Britain, struggle is at a low level. But here too, it is necessary for workers who have already adopted revolutionary ideas, together with

their allies from other classes, to organise together in a political organisation. That kind of party does not yet exist. Instead we have a variety of small groups, of various sizes, some of which call themselves parties (or even ‘the party’ or ‘the socialists’) but aren’t really (Socialist Workers’ Party, Socialist Party).

Workers’ Liberty doesn’t pretend to be ‘the party’. We are honest about and proud of what we are: a tendency of activists organised around shared ideas, making a distinctive and invaluable contribution to building a real socialist party on the foundation of consistent working-class politics.

If you meet different socialist groups, the key question to ask is not “Which group is the biggest in my town?” or “Which did I meet first?” The key questions are “Which group has the best ideas?”, and “Which group plays the best, most effective role in class struggle?”

## **IF YOU WANT TO BUILD A MOVEMENT UP TO THE JOB OF OVERTHROWING CAPITALISM AND WINNING SOCIALISM, YOU SHOULD JOIN WORKERS’ LIBERTY.**

**WORKERS’ LIBERTY**   
www.workersliberty.org

**MAKE CAPITALISM  
HISTORY**

**FIGHT FOR  
SOCIALISM**

Our members and supporters in the trade unions, on the Labour left, in the student movement, the women’s movement and many other struggles organise together, on the basis of common ideas, as part of a concerted fight against capitalism and for workers’ liberty.

If you agree with our basic ideas, get in touch to discuss joining us. If you’re not sure, work with us, debate with us and continue the discussion!

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