



Alliance
for
Green
Socialism

MANIFESTO
2005

Alliance for Green Socialism

GENERAL ELECTION MANIFESTO 2005

In this general election the Alliance for Green Socialism puts forward an alternative to the right-wing policies of privatisation, war and environmental destruction offered by all the major parties.

We believe that the New Labour party of Blair and Brown has deprived ordinary people of political representation. The AGS believes politics should be about the concerns and needs of all of us – not a cynical and profitable game for MPs.

The AGS is socialist. We believe that there is a fundamental contradiction between the needs of capital in an exploitative, profit-driven system, and the needs of the large majority of people in this country and throughout the world. We stand for a complete restructuring of the economy and society as a whole. It should be based on common ownership, under democratic control, of the major concentrations of productive wealth. As a first step in this direction, we propose a range of specific policies to help ordinary people now.

The AGS is environmentalist. Capitalist greed is destroying the world in which we live through global warming and environmental destruction. As a first step, we want specific changes including integrated, expanded and publicly-owned and run transport services, a planned conversion of the energy industries to sustainable technologies, and a ban on GM food.

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The Alliance for Green Socialism is part of a joint campaign in this general election against Blair's New Tories. This Socialist Green Unity Coalition is being mounted with several parties including Socialist Alliance Democracy Platform, Socialist Party, Alliance for Workers Liberty and Socialist Unity. We urge support for the candidates of these parties.

www.socialistgreen.org.uk

CLIMATE & ENERGY

Global warming may destroy our civilization. We must stop burning fossil fuel as though there were no tomorrow. Otherwise there may be no tomorrow.

Energy Crisis

Britain is running out of North Sea oil and gas. The world will run out of oil in the foreseeable future. New Labour's junior partnership with US aggression in the Middle East reflects this. Global oil and gas production has now peaked. However the growing super economies of China and India plus western consumerism mean demand for energy continues to rise. The oil situation can only get worse, making the world a more unstable place to live. And the oil and gas usage will continue to pump more carbon dioxide and other pollutants into the atmosphere increasing global warming.

It is not possible to tackle this crisis through "market forces". By 2010 over 70% of the UK's electricity will come from gas powered fuel stations. Most of this gas will be imported from the former countries of the Soviet Union and transported by pipeline through some of the most unstable areas of the world. New Labour's energy policy is "do nothing and hope".

The AGS will produce an integrated plan to address this crisis. This will include a massive increase in research into alternative green energy; an emphasis on energy conservation at work and at home; developing safe ways of extracting coal and clean ways of using it. Energy companies will be made democratically accountable.

Global warming

Our planet is threatened by global warming. Our industries and transport systems generate carbon dioxide and other gases that cause the whole climate to change, generating droughts, floods, hurricanes and rising sea levels. Carbon dioxide levels continue to rise. We will ensure that Britain meets and beats its targets under the Kyoto agreement and we will push for the US – the world's biggest polluter by far – to adopt Kyoto.

Greenhouse gases from aviation are not covered by Kyoto but are a huge cause of global warming. The AGS will seek a new treaty that includes them. We will end the anomaly by which aircraft fuel is exempt from fuel tax.

The AGS will massively increase research and grants for alternative forms of energy that do not depend on fossil fuels and do not produce greenhouse gases.

The AGS will reduce the need for travel – a major reason for greenhouse gas emission – by encouraging working locally or at home.

POLLUTION & CONSERVATION

Pollution threatens all of us, especially our children. The air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat are all at risk. Corporations damage our health and degrade our environment in pursuit of short-term profit.

Cut Pollution

The AGS will tighten standards on pollution of the environment and make breaches of those standards a criminal offence. Companies causing pollution will, in any case, be made to pay all the costs it causes, including health care costs.

Incinerator plants poison our air. They produce dioxins, among the most lethal known substances. We will close them all and build no more. Cars are choking our cities. A principal aim of our integrated transport policy will be to reduce the pollution transport generates. We will monitor local air, water and other pollution levels and publicise the results.

Cut Waste

The AGS will increase the recycling of waste, requiring local authorities to meet targets for recycling and funding research into re-use of waste materials.

We will encourage suppliers to cut unnecessary packaging by charging them the cost of disposal. Similarly, suppliers of goods which are difficult to recycle will pay the cost of getting rid of these in an environmentally sound way.

We will require the public sector to follow green policies in procurement, disposal and contracting, and regulate the private sector similarly

No Nuclear Power

The AGS will close all nuclear power stations and build no more. Britain's nuclear expertise will be diverted to disposing of the mountain of radioactive waste we have already created, which will haunt us for 10,000 years.

Green Space

Local authorities will be required to bring green spaces woods, parks, open spaces, and school playing fields into a single conservation plan, in consultation with local communities. No more school playing fields will be sold off. Allotments will be expanded, aiming to make them available for all who want them.

There will be equal access to the countryside – the right to roam will be strengthened and actively supported.

FOOD

We are what we eat – but large corporations want to control our food supplies and sell us packaged garbage.

GM foods

Genetically modified crop technology is neither an ethical nor a sustainable contribution towards our food supply. It is rather a way for multi-national companies to gain control of food production. Its introduction to Britain would damage the growing organic farming sector and have unpredictable effects on the environment and on human health.

The AGS will ban completely any commercial production of GM crops and any field ‘research’, since this has already been proven to contaminate land and crops for miles around. There will be no importation into Britain or EU of GM plants, animals or produce.

Food Choice

We will require shops to label their products clearly with ingredients, origin and nutritional values - both good and bad.

The AGS will support local markets. We will encourage regular and accessible farmers' markets to provide cheap, wholesome, fresh food. We will

support small local shops to reduce the unhealthy dominance of the huge supermarket chains that try to control both shoppers and suppliers.

We will encourage and support the growth of organic farming. We will enforce the highest standards of animal welfare. We also recognize the moral repugnance that many have with the killing of animals for food. We will therefore ensure that the needs of vegetarians are met throughout our schools and health service.

We will stop subsidising wasteful over-production in Britain and similarly reform the European Union agricultural policy. We will stop harming third world producers by dumping subsidised food on their countries.

PRIVATISATION

Private firms only take over public services for one reason - to rake off some of our money into their pockets.

No Privatisation

The AGS opposes all forms of privatisation of public services. Privatised services are more expensive but poorer quality. Whether it is outright sell-off, "PFI" or a so-called "Public Private Partnership" the outcome of privatisation is always cuts in our services to fund profits for private shareholders.

The New Labour government has not merely failed to reverse Tory privatisations, but has extended privatisation well beyond areas attacked by the Tories. Councils run by New Labour, Tories, Liberal Democrats and Green Party all privatise with enthusiasm.

We recognise that public services are best publicly owned, publicly accountable and publicly delivered. The effect of privatisation is to reduce service levels, including safety, and to cut the pay and conditions of workers. The environmental effects of privatisation are adverse, particularly its effects on pollution.

The world-wide drive for privatisation is an attack on the living standards of ordinary people, seeking in Britain to reverse the gains of the last hundred years.

Public ownership

Our water, gas and electricity supplies were largely established by municipal socialists. These key utilities will be returned to public ownership. The AGS will immediately bring the railways back into public ownership.

There will be no profit made out the basic necessities of life. Public ownership is also most cost effective way of developing green polices for these services. We will explore with local authorities, communities and the workforce the most appropriate forms of public ownership.

DEMOCRACY

The Alliance for Green Socialism sees democracy as key. Governments must be accountable to the people they govern. We cannot progress towards an ecological and socialist society in any other way.

Monarchy & Lords

A hereditary monarchy has no place in a genuinely democratic society. The AGS will therefore abolish the monarchy and institute an elected presidency with limited powers, along the lines of the Irish presidency. We will also replace the House of Lords with an elected second chamber - not a set of appointed "Tony's cronies".

Proportional voting

The existing "first past the post" election system more or less forces people to vote for one of the big parties. We will bring in a truly proportional system of voting in elections for the House of Commons, the European Parliament, and local councils.

Local authorities

New Labour has made most councillors powerless. Only a tiny Executive has any say in decisions. Councillors are the representatives of their local communities. The AGS will reform councils to make them accountable, open and accessible, and support direct community involvement in decisions.

Successive Tory and New Labour central governments have cut back local

democracy in favour of control from Westminster. We will restore power to local councils.

MPs' wages

Far too many MPs are in parliament for profit, prestige and a personal career. AGS candidates stand to serve people, not for personal advantage. No AGS MP will increase her or his income to above the average wage of a skilled worker.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Our rights and liberties are precious – and under threat.

Civil liberties

Blair and Bush both seek to take away our liberties. Only an open democratic society can fight the evil of terrorism. We insist on keeping the right to trial by jury. The AGS will end the dreadful practice of internment without trial. We reject I.D. cards that undermine the right to privacy, strengthen unaccountable elements in the state apparatus and do nothing to make us safer.

Women's rights

The AGS will ensure full equal rights and opportunities for women. This will include legislation for real equal pay.

We support women's right to control of their own bodies, including the right to choose. The AGS is in favour of people being able to control their fertility free from poverty and political or religious interference. We will provide the facilities and support to ensure this happens in Britain and support UN and other agencies in promoting this internationally.

Diverse Communities

All the people of Britain should have equal rights and opportunities. The AGS will give positive support for disabled people, try to stamp out racism, oppose sexism, and encourage tolerance for different life styles, sexualities and cultures. Specific measures will be taken to combat race and religious hatred including anti-Islamic and anti-Jewish prejudice, discrimination

against Gypsies, and against lesbian and gay people.

We celebrate our diversity and appreciate the rich variety of cultures, races and beliefs in our country. We will welcome refugees and asylum seekers for their contribution to Britain, and defend their rights.

Communal Violence

The AGS will work to prevent the incidence of intolerance and violence between communities nominally divided by religion or ethnic origin, both abroad and in Britain. We believe such violence is not a natural consequence of diversity but is deliberately created for political ends.

We accept Britain's historical responsibility for many such communal tensions across the world and in Britain. We will provide resources to help lessen such tensions where Britain bears a responsibility for building them up.

In Britain we will treat all religions equally, reverse Blair's encouragement of divisive "faith" schools, and stop state support for separate schools for different religions and sects.

In the north of Ireland, we will aim for the elimination of separate schools based on religious sects. We will immediately set a short timetable for the removal all state support for separate schools for different religions and religious sects.

PEACE

International relations must be based on fairness and international law, not on Bush's rule of the gun.

Iraq

The invasion of Iraq was illegal, unjustified, immoral, and inhumane. It greatly increased the risk to us all from terrorism.

The AGS will hold a full judicial inquiry into the Blair government's lies that took us into the war on Iraq and we will vote for the impeachment of Blair. We will also support an international enquiry into the background to Saddam Hussein's regime, including the complicity of the west in his human rights abuses and weapons development.

Lawlessness and violence was unleashed in Iraq by the American/British invasion. We see no end to this situation while the coalition forces remain in Iraq as an army of occupation. We demand their immediate withdrawal.

The AGS does not forget that Afghanistan has similarly been on the receiving end of the so-called war on terrorism and we demand similar actions to those above for that country.

Palestine

Long-standing and murderous injustices have been inflicted on the Palestinian people by the state of Israel, with the active support of the USA and the acquiescence of British and other European governments. It is a major cause of instability and warfare in the Middle East. The actions of Israel flout both "international law" and United Nations resolutions.

We will implement the demands of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign to stop British sales of arms and military equipment to Israel and end to any preferential trade arrangements.

Cuba

The AGS supports the right of the people of Cuba to self-determination, free from pressure and intimidation. We oppose the unjustified US economic blockade of Cuba and will stop British collaboration in it.

Ireland

The "Irish problem" arises from British invasion and occupation. The territory called "Northern Ireland" was carved out of Ireland as an entirely artificial state by the British government. Its boundaries were drawn to create an artificial majority of Unionists within them and formalise the oppression of Catholic citizens in the north of Ireland. We will therefore support the reunification of Ireland as a single state under one government, with appropriate guarantees for minorities of faith, culture or ethnic origin.

No nuclear weapons

Britain signed the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty forty years ago but has been breaking it ever since. The AGS will fulfil Britain's legal obligations reduce by moving now to non-nuclear defence.

The US plans to put weapons in space and use it as a theatre of war, threatening the planet. We will oppose these plans and end all British collaboration with them.

Arms trade

We recognise that the arms trade has negative effects on human rights and security, as well as on global, regional and local economic development. In seeking to end it, our priorities are to:

- end all government subsidies and support for arms exports;
- end exports to oppressive regimes;
- end exports to countries involved in an armed conflict or in a region of tension;
- end exports to countries whose social welfare is threatened by military spending;
- support measures, both in the UK and internationally, which will regulate and reduce the trade and lead to its eventual end.

The AGS will cut British arms spending and use the money on public services. We believe that high military spending is unacceptable and only reinforces a militaristic approach to problems rather than their peaceful resolution. We will adopt positive policies to re-orientate the UK economy away from military industry towards civil production.

HEALTH

The National Health Service is one of Britain' s finest achievements, better and more efficient than any private health system in the world.

Free NHS

We will return to a National Health Service free to all at the point of need, bringing back free prescriptions, dentistry and eye tests. We will abolish means tested charges for all long term nursing and social care of the elderly.

Public NHS

New Labour is privatising the NHS piece by piece. With each ‘Private Finance Initiative’ hospital, the numbers of beds, doctors and nurses is cut to provide profit for private corporations. We will ensure the National Health Service is publicly provided and democratically controlled, with no privatisation. We will establish democratic control over local NHS services, with input from local people, including patients and staff.

Investment in health

We will increase investment to reduce waiting lists and dramatically improve mental and community health care. We will stop tax concessions and other state subsidies for private hospitals and private health insurance.

EDUCATION

Education should prepare our children for life and help them fulfil their potential, whatever that may be. It should be available throughout life to help us develop.

Schools

We will rebuild a proper school system to enable our children to become rounded human beings and active citizens with critical minds.

Our education system will be comprehensive, without selection, providing a full range of science, arts and sports. Our schools will be secular. A local education committee that will bring together councillors, staff, parents, trade unions and pupils will strategically lead schools.

The AGS will reduce class sizes instead of closing schools. We will provide practical help and encouragement to enable schools to play a larger role in their community. We will ensure proper funding for special needs education, mainstream and special schools, so that pupil’s needs are diagnosed and met within weeks, not months. We will abolish the charitable status and tax privileges that subsidise private education.

We will ensure our teachers and all school staff get decent wages and that staffing levels are right. We will not allow the introduction of teaching assistants into the classroom to be used to reduce teaching staff levels or to

undermine trained nursery workers.

Higher education

Education should be for life, not simply advanced training for a job but also for intellectual and social development. We will ensure that higher education is available to all who can benefit from it, both young and old. We will encourage universities and colleges to develop partnerships with schools, local authorities and community organizations.

Higher education will be free, with student fees abolished. Student loans will be replaced by a system of student grants. Colleges and universities will be democratically accountable, with creative partnerships between their staff and students. Local authorities and communities will be represented on the governing bodies.

HOUSING

Everyone should have access to decent, affordable, secure housing, whether rented or for sale.

Defend public housing

We will stop and reverse the removal of public housing from elected local authorities. We will seek to expand the numbers, the quality and variety of public housing. There will be direct and substantial representation of tenants associations on the housing committee and all local estate management committees.

New Labour has played an extremely cynical and nasty trick on council tenants that is going to cost those tenants many pounds a week in extra rent. New Labour Councils pretended that Arms Lengths Companies were the only alternative to outright privatization. The Arms Lengths Companies set up are packed with vested interests - housing “professionals”, building companies and private service companies. In ballots, tenants were told that by voting yes they would be able access hundreds of millions of pounds of Government money that would deliver the improvements they desperately needed. But the tenants ended up with rent increases way above inflation – and few or no repairs.

We reject “Private Finance Initiatives”, “Public Private Partnerships” and

“Arms Length Companies”, all of which are just names for siphoning off our money to profiteers. Instead, council housing will be under local democratic control, through local councils, with real involvement of tenants and workers. We will also explore the possibility of land trust schemes in which land assets provide long-term income to support housing.

Councils will be legally obliged to provide adequate sites and social provision for travellers.

Private Housing

We will develop a fair and transparent grant system for repairs in the private sector. We will require, by law, every rented residential property to be fit for habitation. There will be severe and effective remedies against any landlord who fails to meet the standard.

“Social landlords” such as housing associations will be brought under democratic control and be made fully publicly accountable.

New Houses

We will give local authorities a mandate to build good quality houses and flats for affordable rents. All new housing, both public and private, will have to conform to the highest energy and water conservation standards. We will set a target of five years for all non-apartment new building to be energy neutral. We will build houses on re-used sites, not on our diminishing countryside.

TRANSPORT

The key to fast, comfortable, affordable travel is the provision of excellent public transport. A good public transport system will itself carry very many people. By doing so it will leave the roads freer for those journeys more sensibly done by car.

Road Transport

Britain cannot simply continue to increase car use and build more roads. Increasing the capacity of roads just increases car use without reducing congestion. The AGS will bring in an integrated, affordable public transport system that fulfils as many journey needs as possible. We will give local

councils powers to run the whole of public transport - trams, buses and railways - in their area. We support the development of tramway and metro systems that connect town and city centres to the estates and suburbs.

To enable public transport to move freely, and cyclists and pedestrians to move safely, we will be prepared to restrict car traffic. However, any restrictions on cars will only come after the provision of good, regular, cheap public transport to provide a real alternative to car travel.

Cycle paths and footpaths will be given the same level of support currently given to roads. Each district needs a continuous network of footways and cycle ways, segregated from motor traffic. The dangerous patchwork of odd bits we now have is an invitation to accident and injury.

Railways

Privatised rail has provided a poor and dangerous service while milking the taxpayers of more subsidies than British Rail ever received. The AGS will bring the railways back into public ownership immediately. We will also bring the London Underground back into public ownership.

We will ensure that benefits of the cross channel rail links are available throughout Britain by suitable upgrade of the rail track and the development of direct trains to the continent from major British cities.

Air & Sea Travel

We recognize the environmental damage caused by exhaust emissions from planes. We therefore will tax planes according to their impact on the environment. The air traffic control system will be returned to public ownership, putting safety first.

A declining proportion of trade is carried by British ships, because ship owners find it cheaper to register their vessels under flags of convenience where they can avoid safety regulations and British employment equality legislation. We will ensure that all relevant legislation will apply to ships working for British interests.

SPORT & ARTS

Sport and culture should be available to all – especially to children.

Sport

We will support the development of sport and exercise for life, starting in our schools, involving everyone, not just a sporting elite. We will increase investment in sporting facilities that are based in local communities and are open at times when they can be used. There will be a concerted drive for equal access to sporting resources and facilities for women, ethnic minority communities and the disabled. We will stop the privatization of local authority leisure facilities and the sale of land used for sport.

Sporting organizations should be run by participants and fans, not by fat cats to make money. We will provide resources and support for fans who want to develop their football and rugby clubs into cooperatives. All major sporting events in Britain will be available on all main media channels, with no one company allowed a monopoly.

The AGS supports:

democratic control of football clubs by the fans

active measures against racism in sport

The arts

The arts have to be for all but must also reflect and challenge the diversity of culture. This balance is difficult to achieve. The present system of funding and management by a London based elite does not work. We will replace it with a mixture of staff, users and local authority elected representatives. We will ensure free access to all art galleries and museums. We will aim for all performing arts events to have seats available at prices which ordinary people can afford.

We will ensure that art – including music, literature and the visual arts - is properly provided in all schools.

ECONOMY

The gap between rich and poor has grown ever wider under New Labour. This trend must be reversed. A productive economy cannot be based on fat cats getting richer and ordinary people getting poorer.

Paying for public services

We will make taxation truly progressive, redistributing wealth and providing the necessary funds for good public services and welfare provision. Both the Tories and New Labour have shifted the burden of taxation from direct to indirect taxes, making the poor pay more. We will reverse this.

Taxes are necessary to provide decent services and should be paid mostly by those who can best afford to pay: the rich and large corporations. Simple progressive taxation removes the need for complex and unfair means testing of benefits, since richer people contribute more in tax anyway,

Common ownership

We will take steps towards common ownership of the major concentrations of productive wealth. This will not be a return to the old nationalised industry model. Instead we will introduce democratic control, plus involvement of all those directly concerned as workers or customers.

WELFARE

If we are a civilised society then we must provide for our old people and those in need.

Pensioners

The state pension is not a benefit but a right for all pensioners. The state pension will be linked to the increase in wages with its value restored accordingly. It will be paid as a universal pension to all those of pensionable age, free of means testing.

If by doing this those on high incomes benefit, then the tax system is used to redistribute excessive wealth. We will reverse the Labour approach that increasingly turns older citizens into paupers.

We support the demands of the National Pensioners Convention.

We will abolish the artificial distinction between residential and nursing care for the elderly and disabled, and provide free care for all who need it.

No means testing

We will stop the means testing of rights and benefits. We will use progressive taxation to ensure that the rich pay their share instead of complicated and humiliating tests of income and savings.

Gordon Brown's attempt to wind the clock back to Victorian idea of "the deserving and undeserving poor" will be replaced by entitlements.

Welfare

We will stop loading charges onto disabled and elderly people; restore benefit rights to 16 and 17 year olds and students; provide full benefits for single parents; restore unemployment pay; restore adequately funded special needs grants.

CORPORATE POWER

Huge multinational corporations have become more powerful than many governments, including our own. In pursuit of profit, they ruthlessly exploit both people and the environment.

Multinationals v democracy

Global firms such as Esso, News International, McDonald's, Nike and GE Capita affect the life of every voter. These huge unregulated monsters move their bases from city to city, from country to country. They generate massive untaxed profits, often using near slave labour, and are unaccountable to anyone. They exploit everyone, but especially women, the young and the underdeveloped world. We will fight to restore the sovereignty of elected governments over multinational corporations.

International capital is using such bodies as the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and such measures as the new General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), to force through wholesale privatisation across the globe, even of core public

services. The AGS will insist international trade treaties and organisations put the interests of people before those of US and multinational capital.

Cuts & Privatisation

New Labour has presided over cuts in schools, cuts in services, and the mortgaging of our children' s future by privatisation. This agenda is driven by multinationals eager to make money out of our public services. All of our opponents - New Labour, Tory, Liberal Democrats and the Green Party - ignore these fundamental questions. But globalisation affects every decision made in our towns and cities, whether it is closing a school, charging for a day centre, or failing to provide a decent bus service.

The AGS will refuse to sacrifice the welfare of British citizens to multinationals' rapacious desire for profit.

Imperialism

Britain must stop being the sidekick of an imperialist USA. Our economy, our democratic systems and our foreign policy has to cease to be a junior partner to the United States serving the interests of the unaccountable multinationals. Instead, all these must serve the British people.

Our new economy will start from sustainability, democracy and serving the needs of the people. Our armed forces will become part of European Union or United Nations forces if they had to serve abroad. We will close down all our overseas bases and kick out all American forces currently occupying any of our territory. This will mean their removal from Diego Garcia and Menwith Hill. The billions of pounds freed up will help us finance much of we have proposed in our manifesto. The Iraq occupation alone is costing us one million pounds a day.

Our vision is that the British economy becomes more like Norway or the Netherlands than the US. This will not be socialism but it will be a giant stride towards it.

EMPLOYMENT

The AGS believes the opportunity for everyone to work and have a fair income must be the main aim of economic policy.

Minimum wage

We will immediately increase the minimum wage to half median male earnings - £5.55 an hour – and progressively increase it towards a realistic figure for a decent life - £7.00.

Rights at work

The AGS will repeal the anti trade union laws brought in by Thatcher and others. We will establish workers' rights to join a trade union and have their union recognised. We will restore the right for all employees to take industrial action, including solidarity action, without legal intimidation. We will give full employment rights to all employees from the first day of employment.

We will bring in legislation to hold corporations and their managers criminally responsible for deaths at work. We will provide protection for whistle-blowers and ban victimization of trade unionists or health and safety representatives. Employment tribunals will be given the power to reinstate victimised workers. We will increase funds to the Health and Safety Executive and ensure its complete independence. We will set up a commission on democracy in the work place.

We will give Employment Tribunals the power to order and enforce reinstatement of those unfairly dismissed.

LAW

The keys to a safe and lawful society are making sure all our people have a stake in society, making our environment lived-in, open and unfriendly to crime, and making the police a natural part of the community.

Security not Fear

New Labour is creating a climate of fear in Britain - fear of crime and of terrorism. They increase expenditure on the secret services and prisons, but cut back on legal aid and attack the rights of defendants. They have carried on the Tories policy of more and more jails, even using the first prison ship since Victorian times! None of these measures have made Britain a securer

and safer place.

Reducing Crime

Many areas have problems with street crime and burglary. But the best way to reduce street crime is not just fast-response police cars. It is not even just having more police foot patrols. It is having well-lit, clean, comfortable streets with plenty of ordinary, law-abiding people around.

We support the establishment of more Home Zones putting local residents before traffic and other outside use. Home Zones provide a more pleasant environment with less danger from traffic and more freedom for children and adults to use the streets.

Policing

We oppose any attempts to centralize the police service. Currently local police forces are not sufficiently accountable to local people. We will support local police committees and neighbourhood watches with a much stronger role in overseeing the police and in advising on the best approaches to making our neighbourhoods friendly places for their people and unfriendly places for criminals. Unelected magistrates and business people will be removed from police committees.

We will review the secret services and make them fully accountable to parliament.

Justice

Blair & Blunkett have systematically attacked the basics of our legal system, including the presumption of innocence”, trial by jury, and refusing to use torture.

The AGS will restore the right to trial by jury. We will stop internment without trial and reject the use of information obtained under torture. No one will be extradited without proof before a British court. Legal aid will be made available to all who need it.

We will hold an inquiry into the way judges and magistrates are appointed, seeking a more open system.

All new legislation will be clearly drafted in understandable English.

Drugs and Crime

Drugs themselves do not cause crime. What causes crime is making drugs illegal, putting their supply in the hands of criminals, driving up their price, and creating an “Al Capone” gang-based industry to import and distribute them. The “war on drugs” fuels a vast international criminal enterprise.

The AGS will therefore decriminalise cannabis immediately. We will hold an urgent public enquiry into the status of all other drugs - including alcohol and tobacco. – to consider what policy will be most in the public interest. All drugs have significant dangers to those who use them and it is vital that people, most especially the young, are made fully aware of these. However this is primarily a matter of public health and education policy, not of the criminal law.

INTERNATIONAL

Britain should deal fairly with other countries. We should not be a “client state” of the US or anyone else, nor should we impose our will on others.

Rich and Poor

The gap between the richer and the poorer nations is growing wider every day. This mirrors the widening of inequality in Britain itself. The AGS acknowledges the links between these inequalities and will fight to reverse both.

The European Union

The AGS is internationalist, rejecting any ‘Little England’ approach to Europe or the wider world. We will not take the UK out of the European Union.

Any major constitutional change will be subject to approval by a referendum of the people of the United Kingdom.

The proposed draft EU constitution not only fails to remedy the lack of democracy in the EU but would make EU structures and processes even more complex and obscure, and even less democratic and accountable, than at present. We will oppose it.

The financial system on which the Euro common currency is based is undemocratic and unaccountable, promotes capital at the expense of people, and pursues solely low inflation rather than full employment and public services. Therefore we will not support the adoption by the UK of the Euro common currency as presently constituted.

Britain and the USA

We will end Britain's lapdog approach to the USA. The AGS will ensure that the Britain and the European Union stop providing hidden subsidies to the dollar.

Cancel debt

The gap between rich and poor countries is getting wider. We will take action to the wealth gap between developed and under-developed countries. In particular we will support fair terms of trade instead of the current exploitation of the poor by the rich. We will cancel all debt owed by the poorest countries.



To find out more about the AGS,
email info@greensocialist.org.uk
see www.greensocialist.org.uk
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