

Britain's Two Major Parties Collapse in Popularity



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2025-08-30

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Both of the UK's largest parties are rapidly losing popularity. Who are the current two major rivals?

Details. Labour has Dropped to 22% in voting intention polls, falling behind Reform UK and hitting historic lows.

- ▶ The Conservatives have fallen to 17%, recording one of their worst-ever results in local elections, losing control of all 18 councils they previously led. Lacking a clear program, they have resorted to right-wing populism, with Leader Kemi Badenoch pledging to deport “women and children,” after Reform UK backpedaled on a similar promise.
- ▶ Reform UK, a right-wing party, has capitalised on an anti-migration platform. Its manifesto calls for a freeze on “non-essential” immigration, mass deportations, and a 20% tax on foreign workers.
- ▶ Jeremy Corbyn’s new party, still without a name or formal leadership, has already attracted 800,000 sign-ups. One polls showed that 20% of Britons would consider voting for it.
- ▶ Other smaller parties have also made gains. The Greens have significantly increased its council seats and are polling nationally around 10%. Liberal Democrats continue to surge, polling at 14% nationally and strengthening their position in regional councils. Regionalist parties like the SNP in Scotland and Plaid Cymru in Wales have maintained and modestly strengthened their influence in their respective areas.

Context. Labour’s 2024 “landslide” was less a surge of enthusiasm than the collapse of the Conservatives after 14 years of austerity and decline. With just 33.8% of the vote — only 20% of eligible voters once abstentions are counted — Labour won 63% of seats. Polls showed nearly half its voters backed it “to get rid of the Conservatives.”

- ▶ Since taking office, Labour has deepened austerity, pushing £8.4 billion in welfare cuts, including £5 billion from disability benefits. Nearly three million people were set to be affected, with 250,000 at risk of poverty. Following mass protests and 120 Labour MPs who threatened to vote it down, the government was forced to back down, dropping the harshest disability cuts.
- ▶ Despite this, poverty remains at historic highs. 14.3 million people (21% of the population) now live in poverty, including 4.5 million children — the worst levels this century.
- ▶ Britain has not seen a new party displace the two main ones since Labour replaced the Liberals in the 1918 general election, a shift that occurred amidst the profound economic and political turmoil of the post-WWI era.

Important to Know. Neither Labour nor the Conservatives have addressed the political and economic crisis, as both serve finance capital. The profit needs of this class drive capitalist states to reduce social wealth once granted to workers.

- ▶ New parties like Reform UK and Corbyn's initiative reflect growing anger but channel this into nationalism or failed reformism, with defections such as Lee Anderson (Conservative) and Zarah Sultana (Labour) showing these parties are merely extensions of the old ones.
- ▶ As Lenin noted in *Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution*, capitalist governments maintain control by two methods: first, violence; second, the "Anglo-French method" of "deception, flattery, fine phrases, promises by the million, petty sops, and concessions of the unessential while retaining the essential." Today, Britain's ruling class still relies on this second method, particularly through the creation of new political parties.
- ▶ Britain's communist movement remains fragmented and weak, largely dominated by opportunists and revisionists. The Communist Party of Britain, the successor to the Comintern-affiliated CPGB, previously endorsed Jeremy Corbyn during his leadership of the Labour Party and even refrained from running candidates in elections.
- ▶ Communists, based on a firm understanding of Marxism-Leninism, must work tirelessly to train cadres and build an independent party that genuinely represents the objective interests of the British working class. Without this, Britain risks repeating history, with mass discontent either co-opted by reformists or crushed by fascism.

Original article