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Britain

The founding declaration of Respect - the Unity Coalition

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The greatest mass movement of our age has brought us together.

We have marched in unprecedented numbers against war, against racism, and in defence of democracy and civil liberties. Our views are shared by millions, often a majority of the people in this country. Yet no establishment politician, and very few elected representatives of any kind, will lend their voice to this movement.

The two most important statistics in contemporary politics highlight the growing chasm between ordinary working people and the political establishment-on the one hand we have participated in the greatest political demonstrations in modern history, and on the other hand the last general election saw the lowest turnout since universal suffrage was introduced.

This chasm is at its widest on the question of war and peace. Tony Blair's New Labour has taken us to war five times in the last six years, each time with calamitous consequences. The bloodshed, the waste of precious economic resources, the lying and hypocrisy that have accompanied the attack on Iraq have brought many to the conclusion that they must rethink their traditional political allegiance.

But the yearning for a political alternative is even wider than the anti-war movement. Pensioners, students, trade unionists, Muslims and other faith groups, socialists, ethnic minorities and many others have been deeply disappointed by the authoritarian social policies and pro. t-centred, neo-liberal economic strategy of the government.

There is a crisis of representation, a democratic deficit, at the heart of politics in Britain. We aim to offer a solution to this crisis.

We stand for:

- An end to the war and occupation in Iraq. We will not join any further imperialist wars.
- An end to all privatisation and the bringing back into democratic public ownership of the railways and other public services.
- An education system that is not dependent on the ability to pay, that is comprehensive and gives an equal chance in life to every child no matter how wealthy or poor their parents, from nursery to university.
- A publicly owned and funded, democratically controlled NHS, free to all users.
- Pensions that are linked to average earnings.
- Raising the minimum wage to the European Union Decency threshold of Â£7.40 an hour.
- Taxing the rich to fund welfare and to close the growing gap between the poor and the wealthy few.

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- The repeal of the Tory anti-union laws.
- Opposition to all forms of discrimination based on race, gender, ethnicity, religious beliefs (or lack of them), sexual orientation, disabilities, national origin or citizenship.
- The right to self-determination of every individual in relation to their religious (or non-religious) beliefs, as well as sexual choices.
- The defence of the rights of refugees and asylum seekers. Opposition to the European Union's 'Fortress Europe' policies.
- We will strongly oppose the anti-European xenophobic right wing in any Euro referendum. But we oppose the 'stability pact' that the European Union seeks to impose on all those who join the euro. This pact would outlaw government debt spending and reinforce the drive to privatise and deregulate the economy and we will therefore vote 'No' in any referendum on this issue.
- Support for the people of Palestine and opposition to the apartheid system that oppresses them.
- An end to the destruction of the environment by states and corporations for whom profit is more important than sustaining the natural world on which all life depends.

We want a world in which the democratic demands of the people are carried out; a world based on need not profit; a world where solidarity rather than self-interest is the spirit of the age.

Let this be the rebirth of hope for those who have become disillusioned.

Join us!