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monthly review of the Revolutionary Communist Party

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Break out of the grey

Election manifesto of the Revolutionary Communist Party

Break out of the grey

The soap opera election

Never before has there been such a divergence between a general election campaign and the reality of people's lives. People are worried about whether they will have a job next week, about whether they will be able to pay their mortgage next month and about what the future holds. Meanwhile the general election campaign resembles a soap opera, with starring roles for politicians acting out one gimmick after another.

The fact that the general election campaign is irrelevant to most people makes it all the more important for us to enter the electoral fray. The Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) may not be part of the televised election circus, but what we have to say is far more relevant to people's concerns in the real world than anything that is said by the grey politicians in the world of party press conferences.

Our aim is to break the vicious circle of disillusionment and cynicism by presenting a real alternative at the polls.

Break out of the grey

After 13 years of Tory rule, many people are ready to vote for something different, anything different—whether Labour, Scottish Nationalist or Liberal Democrat—to get the Tories out. But what is the point in voting for a similar set of policies under a different party label?

Whichever party wins the 1992 general election it marks the end of an era in British politics. The collapse of the Soviet Union has speeded up the decline of the old labour movement and the left. At the same time the slump has exposed the exhaustion of the Conservative policies of the 1980s.

Labour has abandoned socialism, the unions and the working class in an attempt to become just another mainstream party. This shift has not only left millions without a political voice, but it has disoriented the other parties too. The Tories can no longer rally much support by banging the anti-socialist drum and the Liberals are no longer defined by being in the middle.

Though all the major parties now agree on the basics, none has any new ideas about how to tackle the problems of the 1990s. It is not surprising that they have all failed to reach beyond their party loyalists to inspire wider support. The result is a campaign that puts trivia before substance and turns non-issues into matters of fierce controversy.

For a real change

We offer different policies and a different approach to politics. On every issue from the Asylum Bill to the Aids panic we are prepared to take on the establishment view and challenge conventional prejudices.

The autocratic leadership style of the mainstream parties reveals a profound contempt for ordinary members. Their bureaucratic mode of organisation is designed to ensure tight central control, moderate policies and safe candidates.

By contrast, our approach aims to maximise initiative and experimentation and to encourage an openness to criticism and debate. While the old parties discourage activism, we aim to build on our record of campaigning—against racism, for women's rights, against British imperialism from Iraq to Ireland.

Only the best

All the old parties agree that, though the capitalist system may not be perfect, it is the best available. We look around at Britain and at the world and say—surely we can do better than this! Capitalism can survive only by undergoing periodic recessions, creating mass unemployment and homelessness in the West, starvation and poverty in the third world, and a renewed drive towards war on a global scale.

Human beings developed capitalism and human beings are capable of creating a better world. We believe in the possibility of a system that frees people from exploitation by others and allows everybody the opportunity to develop their talents. We refuse to accept the inevitability of scarcity and inequality. Nobody should be denied access to the best and everybody—women, black people, lesbians and gay men—should be entitled to equal treatment.

The issue that we want to talk about in this election is control. Not who controls parliament, but who controls society and our lives. Whichever party wins the election will not make the slightest difference to the vast majority of people. As long as we live under an anarchic market system—a system which cannot even guarantee our jobs from one week to the next—we will never be able to control what happens in the workplace, in the environment or in any sphere of life.

There has been a lot of talk in this election about constitutional change—from proportional representation and a bill of rights to devolution or independence for Scotland—giving people a chance to have more of a say. But no form of constitutional tinkering is going to transform the reality of people's lives. A few pieces of paper or a new parliament are not going to do away with the real source of all our problems: a market system that is out of control.

No promises

We make no promises to our voters. The question is not what can we do for you, but what can we all do together, not merely in the election campaign, but in the wider context of British society.

While a vote for the mainstream parties is a wasted vote, a vote for the RCP is a way to hit back. It is also a positive statement of faith in the future, a declaration of confidence in yourself and in the potential of collective action. It indicates a willingness to fight back against the system, and a willingness too to take the imaginative leap from the dull conformism of the present to the awareness required to build the movement we need to win the future.

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Revolutionary

Your Revolutionary

Communist

Communist Party ca

Bristol West

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Vauxhall

Susannah, printsetter

Ox

Ho

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