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**Communist Party  
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(Marxist-Leninist)**



**Labour is still  
blocking our  
resistance;**

**Break the link!**

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## Brave words at the TUC

In a sign that the slumbering giant of organised labour might at last be stirring, the TUC has been instructed to coordinate union campaigns and industrial action against the coming cuts.

The motion which won an uneasy consensus at the 2010 TUC conference in Manchester was strong on pious aspirations but weak on specific commitments, however. After all, who could disagree that there should be “*a broad solidarity alliance of unions and communities under threat*”? The real question is what that should mean *in practice*.

Should the alliance really have as its main focus the organising of “*a national demonstration, lobby of parliament and national days of protest against the government austerity measures*”? Rather than signalling a serious response to the coming massive assault on the standard of life of millions of working people, who stand to lose jobs, homes, pensions, health care and more, such phrases suggest no more than a weary nod of assent to going through the motions of protest whilst waiting hopefully for better days.

The TUC set itself the goal of leading “*a coordinated campaign across the labour movement with other working-class organisations and local communities for progressive means of ensuring the recovery and improving the public finances*”.

Rather than tell workers the truth – that capitalism is entering an acute and prolonged crisis which will either see the proletariat standing up and taking the fight to the capitalists or eking out a miserable existence under ever-worsening conditions – the labour aristocrats of the TUC prefer to demobilise workers with the comforting lie that the “recovery” can be “ensured”, the “public finances” can be “improved”, the bankers can be tamed, the pumps can be primed and capitalism’s fatal crisis of overproduction can fade harmlessly back into the shadows.

It is on the basis of such delusions that TUC chief Brendan Barber is seeking to stifle the voices of those who have called for *coordinated industrial action* supplemented by *civil disobedience*. With not a shred of loyalty to the working class, this apologist for the imperialist Labour party went running off to the BBC to beat his breast, deploring talk of a “winter of discontent” and wailing that he had “certainly not called for civil disobedience – I don’t find the idea attractive and I think it is counterproductive”.

## Greek lessons

Yet the same TUC motion also urged solidarity with the wave of proletarian resistance sweeping Europe, with Greece rightly heading the list. Greek workers have made great progress in the struggle to build “*a broad solidarity alliance of unions and communities under threat*”, but not by kowtowing to the labour aristocracy and their political representatives in PASOK.

What has made the communist-influenced popular front movement of PAME so potent has been the clear political break it has made both with the PASOK social democrats and with the union bureaucracies that carry bourgeois influence into the working class. The strikes and demonstrations led by PAME have mobilised trade unionists on a cross-union basis, where necessary bypassing bureaucratic obstruction.

Here in Britain, with unions like the RMT, PCS and FBU already making it plain that they do not intend to take the cuts lying down, and with such groupings as the National Shop Stewards’ Network, local anti-cuts alliances and militant trades councils

preparing to make their own plans for demonstrating against the cutbacks in the absence of a timely and concrete lead from the TUC, it is clear that there are many who do *not* share Barber’s complacency and *do* understand the need and the opportunity for serious resistance to the attack upon their class.

In order not to fritter away this resurgent combative spirit amongst workers, it is essential that progress be made in the struggle to break the link with the Labour party and with the class-collaborationism Labour imposes upon the proletariat.

Again, we can learn from the Greeks. Instead of getting suckered into a phony debate about ‘fair, well-timed cuts’ versus ‘unfair, double-dip cuts’, or dreaming about how to ‘ensure the recovery’, advanced Greek workers are getting mobilised behind the line battled for by communists like Aleka Papatriga, who has told workers not to be duped into confusing their welfare with the welfare of capitalism, pointing out that the “*recovery of the economy*” which capitalism hopes to achieve by loans or by cuts (in practice, both) only really means “*recovery of the profit-making and the plutocracy*”.

## Fighting social democracy

Let us be in no doubt: if we do not put up serious resistance to cuts and privatisation *now*, British workers will be impoverished for generations to come. In order to fight, we need to be prepared to defy the law and act *en masse*, but most union leaderships are more interested in protecting their ‘assets’ and respectable career credentials than their members’ interests.

The fact is that British unions will not become fighting machines until they have broken with Labour. Instead, the unions will remain what they have become: a part of the system that oppresses workers, merely acting as a safety valve, while the leaderships work to limit the anger of their members, to divert it into safe channels and to encourage resignation to their fate.

We need to disaffiliate from Labour so we can launch a real, coordinated defence of public services, pay and pensions, which will of necessity include a mass campaign to defy the anti-union laws. If the present union leaderships won’t do this, we need a new leadership, or an alliance of reps from all the unions that can bypass these leaders until they get the message.

All through the prolonged post-war boom, it was the Labour party, in and out of power, which sought to reconcile workers to continued capitalist rule, pretending that the gains in social welfare won in the socialist countries through revolution could be secured in Britain through voting Labour at elections.

Whilst imperialism continued to loot the world’s resources and leech off the work of the world’s poor, crumbs from the super-exploitation table both kept the labour aristocracy on side and paid a significant part of the rent on the welfare state. With the post-boom demolition of Britain’s industrial base (Thatcher/Blair) and present descent into acute crisis, the real state of affairs is revealed. Under capitalism, all the working class can ever hope for is to stand still for a few years; only under socialism will we have job, housing, health and education security.

It was the Labour party that strove to keep the working class docile during the boom. It was the Labour party that later picked up the assault on the workers’ movement where the Tories left off. Now ousted from government, but still spreading posthumous confusion, the Labour party is still holding us back from fighting these cuts.

**Break the link with Labour!**