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**Communist Party
of Great Britain
(Marxist-Leninist)**



**Labour, Tory
same old story
Fight ALL
capitalist cuts!**

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Since Chancellor Osborne's October 2010 spending review was announced, the imposition of austerity measures has crept ahead like a car crash in slow motion. This concerted attack on the living standards of the majority, so necessary for the tiny minority whose wealth, power and status depend on exploiting the labour of others, threatens to heap ever more intolerable burdens onto the backs of working people.

Everything is coming under the hammer: jobs, pensions, benefits, the NHS. Yet most unions – organisations that are supposed to defend the rights of workers against capitalist exploitation – have stood by as if mesmerised. Whilst it *talked* of coordinating a fight-back, the only *action* coordinated by the TUC in the next six months was a single demo. Now, with another half year gone, the TUC is going through the motions of coordinating a one-day public-sector pensions strike.

The positive response from workers balloted to strike on 30 November stands in marked contrast to the foot-dragging reluctance of the TUC leadership. But then Brendan Barber takes his cue from the Labour party, whose leader *denounced* the strike *in advance* at the TUC conference.

Fight ALL the cuts

The decision of the NSSN's January conference to establish a national anti-cuts campaign aimed at opposing ALL cuts, emphatically *including* those being implemented by Labour councils all over the country, was a small step forward. But in order to build on this progress the unions need to break the shackles that keep them bound to the Labour party.

The scale of the 26 March demo disturbed the TUC no less than it did the government, making it clear that the head of steam building up in favour of a real fight against the cuts could not much longer be vented harmlessly in once-in-a-blue-moon symbolic parades. TUC nerves were further jangled by the huge response to June's one-day strike in defence of pensions led by PCS and NUT, unions not affiliated to Labour.

Meanwhile, in the absence of a serious lead from the supposed general staff of the labour movement, other forms of resistance have carved their own way, including the student revolt, the picketing and occupation tactics of UK Uncut, the August youth uprisings and now the Occupy movement.

Yet these movements, possessed of a resourcefulness and courage that put to shame the do-nothing TUC, can make little progress in isolation from the working class. Conversely, the working class will be immeasurably strengthened when 'organised labour' no longer means just the small minority of employed workers currently organised in trade unions but ALL workers, be they employed or unemployed, active or retired, 'indigenous' or migrant, in or out of the TUC.

On a recent day when electricians (marching against 35 per cent pay cuts) and students (marching against tuition fees and EMA cuts) wanted to make one big march on the streets of London, the state deployed hundreds of police and TSG

thugs to keep them apart. That is how rattled our rulers get when we start to clamber over the barriers that social democracy helps capitalism build between us.

30 November and after

Communists warmly support the public-sector strikes and recognise the efforts made by the NSSN and other militant forces to push the TUC to fight. But no amount of democratic pressure from below is *in itself* going to uproot the opportunism that infests our movement, debilitating unions and preventing them from serving the real interests of workers.

Opportunism does not pop up from nowhere: it is founded in the bribes paid to the layer of relatively privileged workers who Lenin called the "*labour aristocracy*". These better-off workers, whose pay and conditions depend upon the continued flow of imperialist loot from abroad, infect our whole movement with a spirit of class collaboration. It is only through a root-and-branch ideological struggle against social democracy, and especially against its main outlet in the Labour party ('New' and 'Old' alike), that a new leadership can be built behind which the working class can take on capitalism and win.

A major cause of disorganisation amongst workers has been the confusion spread by social democrats over the real nature of the capitalist crisis, which they present as a temporary blip to be sorted out by the next Labour government via 'sensible' cuts and some economic pump-priming. But nobody should doubt the scale of the crisis we are entering, or believe that it is just being 'talked up' by the Tories to scare us.

Behind the debt crisis that is undermining the US economy and tearing Europe apart lies a deep-seated *overproduction* crisis that has been brewing for over three decades. More commodities have been produced globally than can be sold at a profit on the market – not because the world's needs have been met, but because people just cannot afford to buy them. The problem is further aggravated when capitalists, desperate to beat the competition, slash wages and reduce the workforce, thereby further reducing the masses' spending power and adding another twist to the spiralling crisis.

Break the link

The good news is that the same capitalist crisis is also chipping away at the material basis for opportunism, since the ruling class can no longer afford to spend so much on buying off its opponents. The time is ripe for the working class to move from cynical mistrust of the Labour traitors to a confident assault upon their stranglehold over organised labour.

While our unions are tied to the imperialist-affiliated Labour party, we will not be able even to fight the cuts, never mind organising to overthrow the whole rotten system that brings poverty and war in its train. Therefore, there is one abiding slogan that should be embraced by every class-conscious worker:

Break the link with Labour!

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