



Workers' Liberty

for international working class solidarity and socialism

After “March for the Alternative”

Build strikes against the Tories

We are facing the most generalised attack on the working class for 20 years.

Where the Tory and Lib-Dem enemies of the working class movement are fighting the class war, what are our union leaders doing? They are sleep walking towards the abyss! The labour movement response is hugely inadequate.

Today's march will be very big. But it is not enough!

Without industrial direct action to stop their offensive in its tracks, hundreds of thousands of jobs will be lost, services devastated and millions of lives ruined.

Without a fight for a political alternative to the Tory-Lib Dem government we will not have an overall alternative to this government and its policies.

Without a labour movement capable of creating such an overall alternative, we will not be able to rally large sections of working-class people affected by the cuts in living standards around our banner.

The unions will be hugely weakened and undermined, if the Government has its way. A wave of cuts in union facility time, and union de-recognition across the public sector, will most likely follow. The government will press home its advantage with new anti-union, anti-strike laws.

Britain will become a grimmer place, with workers even more under the heel of the rich and the ruling class.

And yet union leaders do little more than speak, vaguely, of big mobilisations to come (sometime, maybe). They are not willing to organise union members to fight back now despite the latent strength of our movement. Now, when the Government can still be stopped in its tracks. What is the result of this action?

- The union leaders undermine working class confidence;
- It blocks any fightback on issues where a national mobilisation is the necessary response to the Government (pensions, sometimes jobs too).

PCS, NUT, UNISON, UCU

All the unions have been slow in their response. The attack on public sector pensions began almost a year ago and goes into effect in April; yet the union leaders are still waiting to see if they can negotiate something with the government. The government that has declared war on them. and on the working class!

For us it is an unavoidable war, forced on us by the Tories and Lib Dems. For the union leaders, like Serwotka (PCS), to talk of a

fight but do nothing to organise it is a species of throwing in the towel.

The National Union of Teachers now plans to ballot on pensions after their conference at Easter. That is good. But other unions — even the civil service union PCS, with a supposedly “left” leadership and big talk from Mark Serwotka — are, essentially, doing nothing to mount a fight on pensions.

In Unison there are many groups of workers who want to fight the cuts to jobs and services, but they are routinely being blocked. It is as if the union leaders don't quite know that they now live in a world where the government has targeted working class living standards, and is out to gut the labour movement.

As if they can't register the fact that this is the most anti-working class government since Thatcher's government in the early 1980s

Far from encouraging Labour councillors to defy cuts, Unison and Unite have put pressure on councillors who want to vote against cuts to vote for them!

Even the national leadership of the RMT, the most left-wing union in Britain, recently called off its members' fight against job cuts on London Underground.

One national union that has begun to fight is the college lecturers' union UCU. They held a national strike of workers across Higher and Further Education, on 24 March. UCU is right to begin fighting now, by itself, rather than waiting for slower unions to catch up.

BUILDING FROM THE GROUND UP

Can we win? Yes! There are plenty of small examples of cuts being stopped at a local level, by industrial action and political campaigning.

If the unions were willing to nurture, support and champion every spark of resistance, we would begin to push back the Tories and prepare for a situation where mass, generalised action is possible.

But the struggles, big and little and on their different levels, need to be tied together politically. The fight against the government is a political fight. Without being able to offer a political alternative, we fight with one hand tied behind our back. We need a workers' government. A government that serves the working class as the Tories and Lib Dems serve the ruling class.

Continued over

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or 0207 394 8923. Join our group on Facebook. Follow us: twitter.com/workersliberty

THE SHAPE OF OUR FIGHT

Politically...

• Ed Miliband's Labour Party is aligned with the unions against the Tory cuts. That is good. But it is nothing like enough either organisationally or politically.

• The union leaders need face up to their responsibilities and move urgently and vigorously; they should assert their strength in the Labour Party to restore democracy and reshape it.

• We need a mass trade union based party. The unions still finance the Labour Party. That party, which the Blair-Brown gang hijacked and reduced to its present shriveled state, can be rebuilt in the heat of the struggle against the worst Government since Margaret Thatcher's, thirty years ago.

• Demand that Labour councils refuse to implement the cuts, and instead join our fight against them.

• Demand that the Labour Party supports the resistance, drop their support for milder central government cuts and pledge themselves to reverse *all* cuts and repeal *all* anti-union laws when they come to office.

Industrially...

• Encourage and champion every spark of resistance, local, industry-wide or national. Every group of workers or union ready to fight should start fighting, trying to pull others in. And we must fight to win, not just sabre-rattle in the hope of winning some token concessions. Fight every cut!

• Ditch, completely and finally, the notion of social partnership, of a common interest between employers and workers. There never was, and there never will be. There is a class struggle — in industry, in politics, and on the level of ideas. There is no such thing as a national "we": there is only "them and us". There is class war. Face that fact, and fight for the victory of the working class in that class war.

• Rebuild the unions! Build rank-and-file movements. Our unions are not in a good state to fight. We need to renew them from top to bottom, fighting for democracy, bringing the bureaucrats under control and rebuilding workplace and industrial organisation.

• That in turn requires a serious campaign against the anti-trade union laws and for the right to organise and strike.

The wider class struggle...

• Resist attacks on the Health Service, pensions, housing provision, pay, and other broad social issues. The labour movement can win the active support of large sections of the population if it takes the lead in this fight,

• Broader demands will allow us to build strong links between the unions and community campaigners and service-users. It will allow us to build support for a workers' government.

• The consciousness of the movement will, if socialists do their job, grow as we take action.

• Build strong, democratic local anti-cuts committees.

• Everyone on the demo on 26 March should get involved in their local committee. The best anti-cuts committees have mobilised hundreds on the streets, storming council meetings, etc. We need united, open committees in every area, instead of national anti-cuts groups controlled by different left organisations (Right to Work, Coalition of Resistance) trying to create local fronts they can control.

• Work to unite the serious left.

A workers' plan for the crisis

The bosses' offensive against the working class is accelerating. We need to act to stop it! The workers' movements should fight for:

1. No cuts to jobs and services! The student revolt shows the way. We need a massive campaign of industrial and political action against the cuts, starting now. The unions should fight to win, not just to protest. Build rank-and-file movements across the unions to hold the leaders — including the "left" ones — to account and organise the fight when they won't. For workers' unity across Europe.

2. Tax the rich! VAT should be cut back, not raised. Last year the thousand richest people in Britain increased their wealth by £77 billion. Bank profits were £28 billion. These resources could pay for the jobs and services we need. Start by fighting to seize the huge wealth of the banks!

3. Wages that match the cost of living! The unions should calculate their own, realistic inflation figure and demand that wages, pensions and benefits are inflation-proofed. No to benefit "reforms" and "workfare" — for benefits you can live on.

4. Jobs for all! Share out the work by reducing the working week to 35 hours — cut profits, not pay. Nationalise firms declaring mass lay offs.

5. Free education for all! Fight the fee increase, scrap fees, no graduate tax — a living grant for every student. For student-work unity in action. Fight the NUS leaders, build the National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts.

6. Decent homes for all! Fight the attacks on council housing and Housing Benefit. Demand a mass council house building program.

7. Free the unions! Defend democratic rights! Defy and campaign to abolish the anti-union laws, so we can fight without our hands tied behind our backs. Defend the right to organise and protest, against police violence and intimidation. Fight for a ban on "kettling".

8. Open the books! Workers need access to all company accounts so we can challenge the bosses' version of what is and is not "affordable" and determine how to solve the crisis on our terms.

9. Fight racism and the causes of racism! Unless we fight, it will be the far right that reaps the political benefit from the Tories' attacks. Stop the anti-migrant drive — no one is illegal! Drive the BNP and EDL off the streets! Black and white, British-born and migrant, all religions and none — unite and fight for jobs, homes and services for all.

10. Make Labour fight! The unions should fight to make Labour pledge to reverse the cuts and scrap the anti-union laws, and support workers' and students' fightback. Fight for democracy in the Labour Party, including a sovereign party conference. Defend unions' right to fund political parties — no to state funding. Demand that Labour councillors refuse to implement the cuts and join the campaign against them.

A workers' government

To fight effectively we need to make our guiding aim a struggle to bring down the Coalition and win a workers' government — a government won and sustained through mass working-class struggle and accountable to workers' organisations, serving the working class as the Tories and Lib Dems, and New Labour before them, served the bosses and the rich.

LIBYA: MARXISTS, "HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION" AND IMPERIALISM

7.30pm, Wednesday 30 March

The Lucas Arms, 245a Grays Inn Road,
Kings Cross, London

All welcome