



LRC National Committee Statement 2009

Representation and Resistance

Facing up to the Real World

Even if it is claimed that statistically the recession will soon be drawing to an end, a recession is likely to continue for some time for all those unemployed or facing redundancy and for all those having their benefits or wages cut, their jobs and services privatised and their civil liberties curtailed if they resist. Except for a small super rich minority, nobody is secure and nobody is able to avoid the social and economic consequences of this crisis.

There is a political consensus across the main political parties that the crisis must be paid for by cutting public expenditure, privatising public services, cutting jobs and freezing or reducing wages and pensions. The living standards and life chances of the majority are to be reduced to fund the restoration of the profligate lifestyles of a privileged wealthy minority. The wheels of this casino economy are spinning again.

Unless there is a sharp awakening within Labour, this refusal to materially differentiate a Labour from a Conservative government on the question of who pays for the crisis holds out the prospect once again of large numbers of Labour supporters staying at home in the election in 8 months time, and the installation of a Tory government capable of a more effective and sophisticated onslaught on our community than seen even under Thatcherite governments of the past, also opening up unprecedented opportunities for fascist advance.

Time is Running Out

The only hope of Labour retaining office is a demonstrable, radical change in political direction in government and in its manifesto for the future. Setting out on a new course of large scale public investment, ending privatisation, creating and protecting jobs, increasing the minimum wage, state benefits and pensions, building the homes we need, really committing to tackling climate change and promoting peace in the world with withdrawal from Iraq and Afghanistan, and confronting the corporate tax evasion scandals and tax injustices and the waste of public resources on Trident and ID cards to pay for our programme, could even at this late stage save a Labour government. The reality though is that there is little hope of such a change and time is rapidly running out.

Salvaging What We Can

The Left must work therefore to salvage what we can of Labour representation at the next general election and support the resistance to the cuts and control agenda to be pursued by whoever is in power in the coming period.

In practice this means in the run up to the general election the LRC setting out and using every medium to advocate and publicise the change policies Labour supporters can rally to in support of Left Labour candidates. People need to know that there are some who still represent our movement's values and do not accept the re-emerged cross-party neoliberal consensus. On the ground LRC members and affiliates will need to make hard tactical decisions on where their campaigning resources are best devoted to maintain socialist voices in Parliament and in local government. The LRC is committed to mobilising support for Labour Party candidates who support and promote LRC policies.

Resistance to cuts, job losses and privatisations has already started and has the potential to grow as these policies are forced through irrespective of whichever party is in office. LRC members have



a responsibility to actively support the resistance struggles as they occur, urging wherever possible the linking in solidarity of individual actions, trade union disputes and social movement campaigns.

A Left Rooted in Practical Struggles

New Labour has brought a Labour government to the edge of defeat and the Labour Party to the brink of extinction. The corrupt behaviour of some MPs has also brought the political system into disrepute and alienated many from politics altogether, whilst the economic crisis has created a deep seated atmosphere of insecurity and anxiety. The obvious danger is a sharp turn to the right, even as far as to the BNP.

However, failed economic and political policies and structures also provide an opportunity for the Left. If we can work determinedly on a practical agenda of action we have the potential of giving hope to those who look for a renewal of a Left rooted in the real world struggles of our class.

The LRC has become the largest Left rank and file organisation of socialists within the Labour Party and with membership and affiliations that have created an alliance on the Left well beyond the Party. It has been instrumental in setting up the various bodies like the Left Economic Advisory Panel (LEAP) and other policy commissions which have successfully helped provide the intellectual arguments and policies to combat the neoliberal consensus. LRC MPs have been central to re-establishing a representative voice in Parliament for the Labour and the trade union movement, through a network of trade union groups and the TUCG. We have worked constructively in solidarity with others in a range of campaigns from the People's Charter, individual industrial disputes to the Climate Change movement. The political challenges of the coming period need a much more active, engaging and dynamic LRC if we are to step up to the mark.

In practice this means launching a process at this year's annual meeting that fully engages all our members and affiliates over the coming months in:

- Setting out a clear LRC Platform for Change in the run up to the general election as a beacon for socialists in the party and supporters;
- Promoting support for the LRC platform both within the Labour party, the trade union movement and beyond;
- Mobilising practical support for Labour candidates supporting LRC policies in both national and local elections;
- Developing the LRC's campaigning activities on grassroots community campaigns, which means building the LRC's membership and affiliate base at the local level and working in solidarity in support of local political and industrial struggles.

In effect, the LRC now must become the grassroots Left campaigning body needed by our movement.

