

LRC National Committee statement

The global capitalist crisis is the biggest threat facing working class people for decades. Throughout the world the cost of capitalist failures is being paid for by cuts to working people's living standards.

By accepting the necessity of austerity, even in diluted form, nominally socialist leaderships across Europe are accepting that the majority should compensate for the failures of a system for which they are not responsible and place the restoration of its profitability and the wealth of the rich above people's living standards. Where centre-left forces have colluded in these attacks it has led to the collapse of formerly powerful social democratic parties.

To avoid a similar fate here, the Labour Party nationally and locally must resist the cuts falling on working class communities and offer a genuine alternative based upon the redistribution of wealth – including the public ownership of essential services like the banks, railways and energy sector, through building new publicly owned infrastructure including council housing and renewable energy, and by raising living standards through job creation, pay rises and increases in welfare.

Trade unions are the primary opposition to the current government's austerity drive, and the massive turnout on 20 October demonstrates the capacity of our movement to organise large numbers. However, we must also recognise that the demonstration was smaller than 26 March 2011, which may be linked to the capitulation of some unions over public sector pensions – and their failure to date to co-ordinate members over pay.

The calls to look at the practicalities of a general strike should be supported as the crisis worsens for many people. This should not be conceived as a trade dispute but as national direct action protest by whole communities. A general strike cannot just be wished into existence. It must be built, and politically prepared for.

The role of the LRC in this period must be to educate, agitate and organise.

We must bust the commonly held myths about the economy and welfare, and expose the institutionalised profiteering in the energy sector and that is being introduced into the NHS. And we must make the case for workers' rights, trade unions and public ownership.

In this period there is a huge opportunity to bring more people into struggle, to make the arguments for socialism and to build the LRC both inside and outside the Labour Party. We should support every action aimed at defending our communities from austerity – and work within the Labour Party to give political expression to the resistance and to assemble a majority for a rejection of cuts. Only then will Labour win back the millions of working class votes it lost between 1997 and 2010.

At Labour Party conference and at Young Labour conference, we demonstrated that we can assemble coalitions and win on policy issues – as many local LRCs and individual members have within CLPs – and we must work within broad coalitions to ensure that Labour's leaders are held to these policies.

The LRC must continue to organise through its local groups and through equalities caucuses – to build a stronger nation-wide organisation that fully reflects our class.

In this coming period the LRC needs to do better at fundraising, organising, and being more visible within the Party as well as to those outside – and Labour Briefing will play a key role



in this process. Given limited resources, this will require the active participation of members and affiliates – and especially the commitment of those elected to the National Committee.

The incoming National Committee should work with members and affiliates, and as broadly as possible with other socialists and labour movement bodies, to:

- Highlight and publicise arguments against cuts and privatisation and expose the myths peddled by the coalition government and others
- Fight for socialist policies within the Labour Party at all levels, including through the affiliated unions, which have a key role
- Campaign relentlessly within the party to shift it away from the New Labour legacy by outlining a clear socialist vision for an incoming Labour government
- Supporting and work to build united left groupings within and across the trade unions
- Stand with and support those taking industrial action against cuts, and to promote donations for the Fighting Fund
- Support and learn from international struggles against austerity
- Call on Labour councillors to resist the cuts locally, and to refuse to implement them, and to help build the forces which can sustain that level of resistance
- Develop a socialist local government strategy for Labour councils
- Bring together a conference of LRC Labour councillors to discuss strategy, share experiences and build a councillors' network
- Secure the selection and election of socialists at all levels within the Party
- Work with others in the Party to deselect councillors and other representatives who support neoliberalism and the working class paying for the crisis
- Support the development of local LRC groups to organise in their local areas to achieve the above goals
- Support the development of equalities caucuses within the LRC to better improve our representativeness and to fight oppression
- Help build Labour Briefing as a means of raising the profile of the LRC and, above all, as a means of helping to transform the balance of forces within the Labour Party and labour movement

