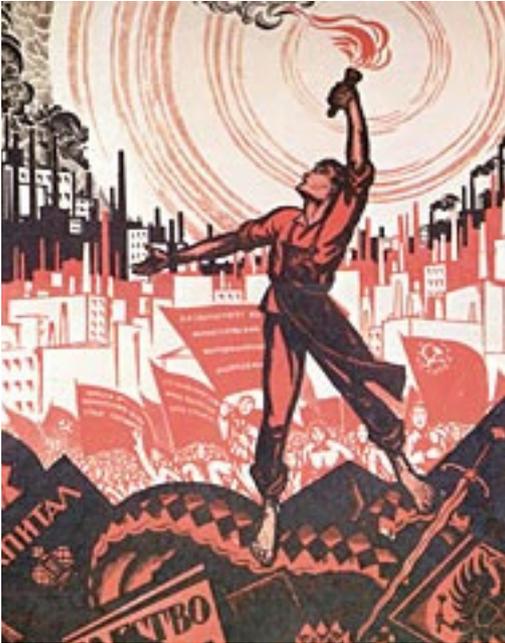


# From Protest to Power

A leaflet by Manchester Communist Students

**The capitalists have drawn the battle lines but are we ready to fight and can we win? The anger and hatred against the government is not enough to build a successful movement against austerity. We need a programme committed to transforming society through mass action and socialist revolution.**



After chipping away at the welfare state since the 1970s, the capitalists are seizing the opportunity brought by the world economic crisis to try and finish it off altogether. The economic crisis was not caused, as the mass media and even some of the left will say, by the malicious actions of a few greedy bankers. What we are witnessing is an unresolved crisis in profitability which has resulted in increasing assaults on the public sector and economic piracy in the so called "third world". The economic crisis is fundamentally a crisis of the capitalism; it is an expression of the historical decline of the capitalist system.

The last Labour government ended free education and universal grants whilst overseeing a massive increase in the role of private companies in health and education. Public services are not organised for what is needed, but for the satisfaction of balance sheets. The Coalition Government is intent on accelerating New Labour's policies and it will use the review by Lord Browne to fundamentally change the nature of the Higher Education system. Labour

may have scrapped free education but it is the Conservatives and the Liberals who want to bury the notion of university education for the masses.

Fighting against the austerity measures is the most urgent battle facing students, workers and pensioners in Britain and across the world. In Greece and France we have seen mass demonstrations, strikes, occupations and repression. In Iran students and workers have united against the subsidy withdrawals which, along with the American-led sanctions regime, are sending millions of families into poverty and starvation. Our fight is - and always will be - an international fight. Here in Britain, the battle is just beginning. The occupation of Conservative Party HQ by students and education workers, and the recent strikes by fire fighters and tube workers have sent a clear message to the government, the media and the union bureaucrats that we will fight.

We must continue this fight: not simply with action after action but by struggling for a political alternative. Not just against the cuts, but an alternative programme of democracy in every aspect of human activity. The austerity measures represent just one threat to our class. Ecological crisis, imperialist wars and occupations, racism, homophobia and fascism and the subordination of women are all tied in together. These threats and many others can only be overcome and defeated by socialist revolution.

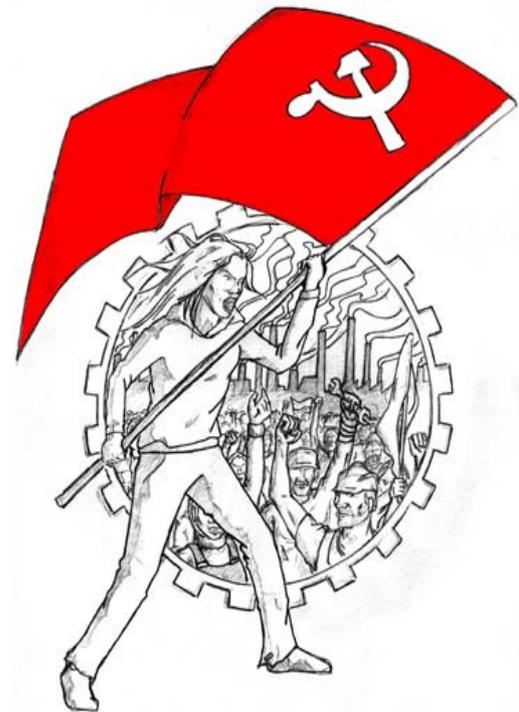
As communists we argue that whilst the immediate struggle is important it must be linked clearly with the struggle to end capitalism. We need to build a movement against cuts, but we also need to build a wider political movement against capitalism. Occupations and mass meetings must become genuine arenas of decision making, where politics and actions are discussed together. This is in contrast to the top-down bureaucratic approach we are witnessing in the movement where planning meetings are presented with decisions already made by a minority of officials or political charlatans. Communist Students calls for genuine mass assemblies where the way forward for our movement can be discussed freely.

Please turn over

During the uprisings in France in 1968, students opened up their universities to workers from across Paris, and in these assemblies they discussed everything from the running of the occupations to the intricacies of Marx's political economy. The unity of theory and action helped create a movement of ideas that not only organised spectacular marches and occupations, but presented to France and the rest of the world, the idea that there is another world waiting to be born. As communists, we believe that occupations and direct action offer little by way of long term strategy and even less of a political alternative.

We need to get from occupying classrooms to overthrowing class society. There are those in our movement who don't want politics to be discussed in occupations or in anti-cuts meetings. Either they have no politics beyond protest marches or they are trying to control and direct the movement for their own interests. The latter are split into two camps: firstly, the bureaucrats in the Students' Unions and the Trade Unions whose positions depend on playing it safe and undermining struggles. Secondly, there are those who come from differing socialist groups and think that by leading students and workers into action after action they can be tricked into revolution. The politics they raise in the movement have more in common with the reformism of Eduard Bernstein – who once wrote that “the movement is everything, the final goal nothing” – than the communism of Karl Marx. We believe that ideas matter just as much as action; in fact, if we do not link the final goal of socialism to the struggles we face today, then we are doomed to repeat the mistakes of previous generations and lose.

Let's develop the anti-cuts movement into a broader struggle against capitalism, linking workers, the unemployed, pensioners and students into a single cause to improve their status permanently. The communist project of universal human liberation is audacious and necessary. We are for the abolition of all class societies and with it the social ills that have accompanied capitalism. We want a system in which everyone gets what they need, and everyone gets the opportunity to develop their abilities however they want. We want an economy based on a democratic plan, not the Stalinist nightmare that existed in the Soviet Union, but an economy that is run by those who work in the shops, factories, schools and workshops. We want an economy that is run by the working class of all countries.



## We Fight for:

**Unity in the movement** – We are against minorities organising our movement beyond closed doors. Genuine unity can only be achieved through open and democratic organisations, otherwise it will fall apart. Workers and students must fight side by side if we are to win.

**Free education** – Education should not only be for those who can afford it. We fight for an education funded by the state with living grants for all students.

**No cuts, no austerity** – We did not cause the current crisis but we are being forced to pay for it. We oppose the attacks on the public sector and welfare provision. The cuts are not necessary but ideologically motivated attacks on the working class and the poor.

**Seize our education** – The education system should be organised and run by workers and students for the need of the community not the capitalists.

**No to sectionalism** – The government will try to defeat us cut by cut. Only if students unite in action with staff, public sector workers, the unemployed and all others under attack will we be successful. Otherwise we will be picked off one by one, as we were by Thatcher in the 1980s.

**Marxist unity** – The vast array of squabbling left sects must be transcended and those who are committed to socialism must unite under a Marxist programme.

**An end to capitalism** – The system cannot regulate itself; in the face of crisis it can only punish the masses. The immediate task is to defeat the cuts programme – but to get more than a stay of execution, we must use the momentum to build support for revolutionary politics.