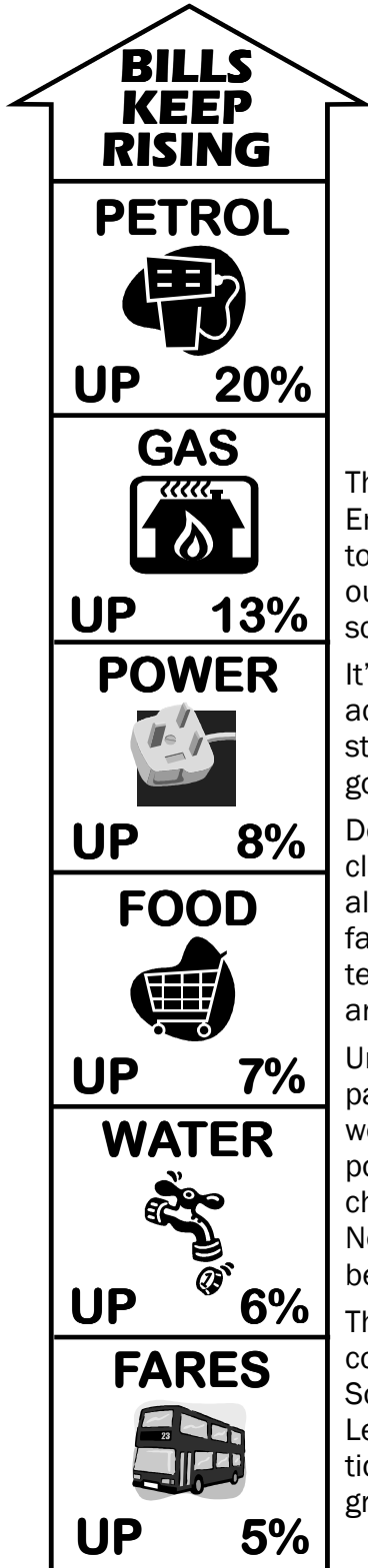



# Classroom Teacher

No. 2

## Action and Change for Teachers



# VOTE YES TO STRIKE BACK AGAINST PAY ROBBERY



The NUT's national strike ballot gives teachers across England and Wales the chance to stand firm together, to make clear that we're not going to sit back and see our salaries cut, our workload get ever harder, our schools further divided by tables, targets & privatisation.

It's been over twenty years since teachers took national action - two decades when conditions for staff, and our students, have been ground down by successive governments. It's time to say that enough is enough!

Don't let any colleague be fooled by Gordon Brown's claims that our pay is keeping up with inflation. We've already had three years when our pay awards have fallen behind the Retail Price Index. No wonder many teachers are already beginning to feel the pinch. If you aren't - then you soon will be if Gordon gets his way!

Unless we act, teachers face three more years of real pay cuts. Bills will continue to rise - but teachers' pay won't keep step. Year-on-year, the loss in purchasing power will add up to over £8,000 for a M6 teacher (see chart), and around £10,000 for a colleague on UPS3. Nobody would sit back quietly and allow themselves to be robbed of thousands of pounds - so why should we!

The best way that trade unionists can make sure their complaints are noticed is to take national strike action. So urge all the NUT members you know to vote for it! Let's make this the moment when we start to turn the tide, when we lift our heads from the daily grind and grumbles, and vote to take united national action!

*Martin Powell-Davies, Lewisham NUT.*

**April 2005**  
Pay Award 2.5%  
(+ 0.7% in Sept. '05)  
Prices up 3.2%  
**Total cut £380**

**Sept. 2006**  
Pay Award 2.5%  
Prices up 3.6%  
Annual loss £520  
**Total cut £920**

**Sept. 2007**  
Pay Award 2.5%  
Prices up 3.9%  
Annual loss £950  
**Total cut £1900**

**Sept. 2008**  
Pay Award 2.45%  
Prices up 4% ?  
Annual loss £1450 ?  
**Total cut £3430**

**Sept. 2009**  
Pay Award 2.3%  
Prices up 4% ?  
Annual loss £2020 ?  
**Total cut £5590**

**Sept. 2010**  
Pay Award 2.3%  
Prices up 4% ?  
Annual loss £2620 ?  
**Total cut £8430**

**WHILE REAL PAY FALLS**

**Classroom Teacher** is a campaigning newsletter written for, and by, classroom teachers. If you want help organising a union in your school, if you want to take action to defend teachers and education, if you want to give us your views about the pressures teachers face:

**Write to:** [classroom.teacher@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:classroom.teacher@yahoo.co.uk) <http://classroomteachers.blogspot.com>

## Who's being greedy?

If you hear it said that the government can't afford to pay us more than 2.45%, bear the following facts in mind:

- The super-rich in Britain avoid paying tax to the tune of £13 billion a year.
- The government has lent over £25 billion to a reckless private bank and is guaranteeing all its liabilities to the tune of £60 billion.
- Over a £100 million is spent a month on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

If you hear it said that teachers should settle for 2.45% when others such as the police got only 1.9%, remember:

- The NUT backing down won't help the police or nurses - just Gordon Brown.
- A strong NUT ballot will encourage other trade unions to take action too.
- United trade union action can make the government back down - just as they had to retreat over pensions.

**Vote yes to strike action in defence of your living standards!** *Dylan Murphy, NUT rep., Honley High School, Kirklees NUT.*

## Fiddling the figures

Compare any bill or shopping receipt with one from last year and you'll know that annual inflation is well over 2%!

- Only the Government's "Consumer Price Index" claims inflation is 2%. Wages have always been based on the "Retail Price Index", now at 4%.
- Prices of essentials like food and fuel are rising by over 4%. 'The low cost of leather sofas' has kept down the RPI!
- But when it comes to paying back student loans, the Government uses a higher rate of inflation - 4.8%!
- The NUT's full pay claim is for 10%.

## Let's win the ballot

*Most teachers have never taken part in a ballot for strike action so be ready to answer any queries:*

### • How do I get my ballot paper?

Ballot papers will be sent to home addresses. Make sure the NUT has the right details for all your staff.

### • How can I help win the ballot?

Make sure all your colleagues know about the vote. Call a school meeting to discuss it. Call or visit

other nearby schools as well. Some Local NUT Associations, like mine, have set up campaign committees - help build one in your area too.

### • Can my school stop me striking?

No! You will be protected by our official action ballot. If the NUT gives the go-ahead, thousands of teachers will take united action. We can all join together on the day, with local rallies and meetings too.

### • Can I afford to take strike action?

Can you afford not to?! You will

## Making us pay for their mistakes ?

What reward do teachers get for working so hard to get children up to the targets set by government? Look at your pay slip and compare it with the long hours you work each month. Many teachers will find they earn as little as £10 an hour - before tax!

We all know the cost of housing. It takes a huge bite out of our pay, whether we are struggling with a mortgage or trying to get on to the ladder. Young teachers also suffer from huge student debts.

Tax takes another huge chunk of our salaries. But not everyone has to worry! Look at the scandal of the 'non-domiciled' residents who virtually pay no tax at all. One rich London businessman even sympathised that he paid less tax than his cleaner!

Like other workers, we are watching the news about stock market volatility and wondering how it is going to affect us. We wonder what the future holds for our own children and the pupils we teach. Things are beginning to look decidedly uncertain.

The only certainty is that Gordon Brown and his government will continue to carry out policies that are in favour of big business. These 'masters of the universe' have reaped the dividends when the going was good. Now that the market looks shaky they want to make workers pay for their thieving stewardship of the world's resources. And they expect New Labour to do their bidding. Hence Gordon Brown's demand to hold down public sector pay - dressed up, of course, in the language of prudence and common sense.

We say no way. We cannot afford to just accept this pay insult. We have to fight back. We cannot afford not to. Teachers need a clear strategy to win. A key part of that is to bring together public sector trade unions and take united joint action to win decent pay for all.

In this pay battle, as in other local campaigns such as those to stop school closures and academies, teachers find ourselves up against New Labour and the other two parties of big business. The NUT has won its 'political fund' to allow us to speak out at election time - but who can we rely on to stand up for teachers in local or national elections? We have to start thinking about a campaign to create a trade-union backed alternative that stands for the millions - not the millionaires. The combined strength of united union action and a real challenge at the ballot box can help us turn the tide at last.

*Linda Taaffe, NUT National Executive member for Outer London.*

**BE READY FOR THE NATIONAL BALLOT !  
Ballot opens on Feb. 28, closes on March 31.  
STRIKE PLANNED FOR THURS. APRIL 24**

lose a day's pay - about £60 - but you will lose thousands if these pay cuts are imposed. With all the hoops we have to jump through, you can't even rely on going up the pay spine to earn more. We have to rely on union action instead!

### • Will one-day action be enough?

From a solid first day's strike, we must build the united public sector action that can make ministers think again. So vote YES for action!

*Faith McGrath, NUT rep., Adamsrill Primary School, Lewisham NUT.*