



PENSIONS ROBBERY Time for Action!

The Government is trying to rob teachers. We must stop them.

They have announced that they want to increase our pension contribution rates from 6.4% to as high as 9.8% of salary. That's around a £100 a month pay cut:

PAY MORE

Can you afford a £100 per month pay cut?

This is what an extra 3.4% taken from your salary looks like:

Inner London M1 =

£77 MONTHLY PAY CUT

England and Wales M6 =

£89 MONTHLY PAY CUT

Outer London U1 =

£107 MONTHLY PAY CUT

England and Wales U3 =

£104 MONTHLY PAY CUT

This money won't be going to help pay for teachers' pensions. The Government's own figures show that teachers' pension scheme costs are already set to fall.

No, this is just a 'smash-and-grab' raid by the Treasury. Billions are lost in tax avoidance each year but they want to impose an extra tax on teachers to plug the hole in the Government's finances.

In short, the Con-Dems want us to foot the bill for the bankers' gambling debts - and bonuses. It's time to say, 'we're not paying!'

The Government's have already announced that they want to rip off millions of us by switching from RPI to CPI indexation this April.

Next month, the second and final Hutton Report will recommend further attacks on our pensions.

GET LESS

Annual pension increases are based on the inflation index each September. But the Con-Dems want to switch from the RPI to the lower CPI index:

RETAIL PRICE INDEX 4.6%

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX 3.1%

RETIRE OLDER

Hutton could recommend the normal pension age goes up to 65 for all - or even more to match rising state pension age.

Hutton's Report must be given a clear answer - by teacher unions balloting for strike action.

The UCU lecturers union - including members of the Teachers' Pension Scheme - are being balloted already. Their first day of strike action could be in March.

The NUT has already agreed that it will start a ballot this term but postponed any final decision to see if agreement could be reached on joint action with other teaching unions.

Those discussions are ongoing - but a decision needs to be made, and quickly. Joint action by the NASUWT, ATL and NUT would be a sign of strength. But delay to go at the 'speed of the slowest' would be a real sign of weakness.

TIME TO ACT

- Hold joint meetings in schools to prepare for action.
- Attend your local NUT 'Pensions Roadshows'
- NAS and ATL members - call for joint action with the NUT
- Discuss what we need for a successful campaign: publicity, demonstrations, leaflets, hardship funds - to build an ongoing programme of strike action that can defeat these attacks
- Build the demo on March 26

The Government needs to know that unions mean business - and so do classroom teachers. The NUT must start its ballot in March - so strike action can start next term - hopefully with other unions.

A solid one-day strike to start our action will boost confidence - and be another step to united action to defeat all the Con-Dem cuts.

Rawmarsh : "To lie down will only lead to devastation"

February 3rd marked the eighth day of strike action by NUT members at Rawmarsh Community School (RCS) in Rotherham.



This courageous action is to oppose the axing of up to a third of staff posts at the school.

The solid strikes have already had an effect, persuading management to defer some of their proposals. But the RCS NUT group know that the 9 remaining compulsory redundancies and 25 teacher job losses are still totally unacceptable. Class sizes will rise and pupils will lose out. As their parents' leaflet states "the responsibility for current debts at RCS does not lie with the pupils, teachers or community therefore they should not suffer"

NUT rep, Ralph Dyson, explains: "Every teacher has gone through all the guilt pangs of: 'are we doing the right thing?' But when you sit down and think about it there is no other alternative. It is up to others who have created this mess to search their conscience. Rawmarsh is a community which has gone through steel and mining closures and now sees their education being attacked by bureaucrats who can only see the dollar sign. Is this a cause worth fighting for? I think so. I have had first hand experience of pit closures and the effect this has on education and community. From bitter experience I have learnt that to lie down and accept it will only lead to even more devastation".

On strike days, teachers have held solid pickets and then gone leafleting in the town to explain the dispute. Support from parents and pupils has been fantastic.

The strike is also becoming a beacon to inspire others to stand up to the cuts that are threatening local services and communities. The 500 strong Sheffield Anti-Cuts Alliance demonstration on 29 January was proudly led by the Rawmarsh NUT "Kids not Cuts" banner.

Further strike action is planned for 8 February and then a three-day strike on 15, 16, & 17 February.

Send messages of support to: ralphdyson@yahoo.co.uk and donations to the: NUT Regional Office, 7 Chequer Road, Doncaster DN1 2AA.

ACADEMIES: Government Agenda Exposed

A letter written by Government Minister, Lord Hill, exposes exactly how they want to use Academies to rip up teachers' national pay and conditions.

The letter restates the Government mantra that "the ability to set the pay and conditions of staff [is] one of the key freedoms of Academy status". But Lord Hill goes further. He writes that any agreement with local unions to maintain national conditions would be a "significant factor" in deciding whether the Government accepts or rejects a school's application to become an Academy. In short, he is warning Heads that, if they want their school to convert to an Academy, the Government expects them to attack staff pay and conditions.

The newly-released Education Bill provides further evidence about the Government's plans to dismantle democratically accountable comprehensive education. It would let schools do away with any staff governors and allow Local Authorities to have no Admissions Forum. The Bill would also make it even more likely that any new school would open as either an Academy or Free School.

These are all further steps to allowing Academies and Free Schools to select their intake, leaving cash-starved Local Authority schools to teach the kids that they have rejected. Already, the proposed Bolingbroke Free School in Wandsworth has shown what such a future could mean for working-class communities. Their admissions will be based on feeder schools. But one nearby school - literally on the wrong side of the railway tracks, based around a council estate - has of course been excluded.

Teachers and Parents take action

These threats have to be met by action. Last month's 'Classroom Teacher' reported on the joint strike by NUT and NASUWT members at Clitheroe Royal Grammar School. In February, NASUWT members in Derbyshire and NUT members in Wandsworth will also be taking action to oppose Academy proposals at their schools.

Parents have also won a victory in their long-running campaign to oppose Tidemill Primary School in Lewisham becoming an Academy. Their legal objections have forced governors to withdraw the school's Academy application. In particular, their solicitors have argued that the school may have provided incorrect or misleading information that may have exaggerated the financial benefits if the school became an Academy. This battle is far from over but the campaign's success could be a useful precedent in other areas where school finances are being argued over.

Classroom Teacher

... is an initiative ...
by, and for, classroom teachers
... voicing the concerns and
experiences of classroom teachers
... so we can build action to win
change for classroom teachers

If you want :

... help organising a strong Union group in your school
... to share your views about the pressures teachers face
... to take action to defend teachers and education ...

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