

## COALITION GOVERNMENT ATTACKS COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION and TEACHERS' NATIONAL PAY & CONDITIONS

### Organise against the Academies Bill

#### **Government mounts 'explosive' attacks**

(Derek McMillan, West Sussex NUT)

In case anyone had doubts about the Con-Dem Government's intentions, the 20 May Financial Times editorial spelt it out:

*"The government must rein in a fiscal deficit of 11.1 per cent of output. Public jobs and pay must bear the brunt of spending cuts.*

*The parties' manifestos suggested plans to outflank the unions. They wanted to force through tight pay settlements while undermining the unions by contracting out an increased share of public services to private providers. The coalition agreement sets out a path to direct confrontation."*

The government will throw down the gauntlet to the trade union movement. The Cameron/Clegg mask will be torn off to reveal the Thatcher within. In particular for teachers, they want our national pay and conditions agreements torn up. The FT puts it like this:

*"More explosively, the government intends to attack national pay bargaining. It wants to "reform the existing rigid national pay and conditions rules... for schools " "*

Yes this will be "explosive" but it is up to classroom teachers to make sure it actually is. We must call on trade union leaders to organise a fightback. Delay and compromise will only invite defeat.

The new Government has put the whole future of comprehensive state education under threat.

(Martin Powell-Davies, Lewisham NUT)

Education Secretary Michael Gove is rushing an Academies Bill through Parliament at such a rapid speed that hundreds more schools could become Academies by September - and he wants many more to follow.

This could just be the start of a complete break-up of planned Local Authority schooling. Gove wants to put "rocket boosters" under the Academies programme. Parents' groups and education businesses will also be encouraged to set up similar 'free schools' to compete with existing provision.

As a 'Whitehall source' told the Guardian soon after the coalition was formed, these plans are "about getting local authorities out of the picture". They are intended to turn the creeping part-privatisation of education under Labour into a full-blown dismantling of a planned state education system. Education will be stolen from local control and handed to education profiteers to run as chains of privatised schools.

Despite all the attempts over the years to privatise and divide schools over the years, most areas still retain a locally co-ordinated system of community schools, accountable to an elected Council that can plan admissions and provide central support to try and meet the needs of all pupils.

Gove's plans would create a chaotic system of competing schools. Of course that market would create 'winners and losers' - and it would be predominantly working-class communities that would lose out.

It would become a privatised, selective system against a background of spending cuts. Academies would seek to select the students that can produce the highest results for the cheapest input - leaving cash-starved Local Authorities to support those with the greatest needs.

Gove's decision to invite all schools deemed 'outstanding' by OfSTED to take a fast-track to Academy status shows what the Government has in mind. They want to create a 'two-tier' system where Local Authorities are left with the 'secondary moderns' to teach the youth with little prospect beyond low pay and unemployment.

Gove says that Academies' budgets will be boosted by 10% compared to community schools. This would be money previously paid to local authorities to provide shared services. This is no real gain for an Academy if those services are still to be provided - although it might boost the profits of a privatised provider. It is certainly a loss to a Local Authority who will see their budgets - and the support they can provide to remaining schools - dwindling. ... contd. over

## **The Academies Bill - an attack on trade unions** - *continued from front page*

These privatisation plans are designed to remove the threat of the national trade union action that could seriously challenge a government intent on driving through massive cuts. By dividing schools into a series of different Academy employers, all able to set their own contracts, national pay and conditions arrangements will be torn apart.

Gove's letter to 'outstanding' schools spells out that they stand to win the "ability to set your own pay and conditions for staff" and the "ability to change the length of terms and school days". He hopes that an atomised teaching profession can be bullied into working even longer hours and cowed by even more discretionary performance pay arrangements.

The Government has seized the moment to attack at speed. We have to respond just as quickly. There are 600 'outstanding' secondary schools and 2,000 'outstanding' primary schools. Even if only some of these schools took up Gove's invitation to become Academies by September, this would mark a huge increase by the start of the next academic year.

The new legislation would even outlaw the sham 'consultations' that at least allowed local campaigns some limited time to oppose Academy plans. The Academies Bill proposes that school governors can just take a simple vote without any consultation with parents, staff or the community. The Department for Education website sets down a timetable that would allow schools to move from 'registering an interest' to becoming an Academy in just three months!

We have to organise to make clear that we aren't going to accept these attacks. It is welcome that the General Secretaries of the teaching unions NUT, NASUWT and ATL, together with UNISON, have written jointly to schools opposing Gove's plans. Unions will also be contacting 'outstanding' schools urgently to encourage staff and governors to reject Gove's invitation. But wider action drawing on the combined strength of all these unions is also vital. Meetings should be organised across the country building for a national demonstration to defend state education and to prepare for national strike action.

## **ACTION ON WORKLOAD: 1265 hours - do the maths!**

*( Murray Sackwild, Harlow & Epping Forest NUT )*

When Kenneth Baker imposed a 1265 directed hours into our contracts I can't imagine that he thought he was doing many teachers any favours .... and yet years later as workload continues to rise and work/life balance continues to go askew this old piece of Tory legislation can be helpful.

Take your typical teaching day - maybe 8.40 - 3.20. We have to add 10 mins before and after school as directed time and break counts too .... take off, maybe, 45 mins lunch and that gives you 6 ¼ hours ... multiply that by 190 (you can't be made to work more than 190 teaching days by the way) and add 30 hours for your 5 days of compulsory "CPD". That'll give you 1217 ½ hours .... leaving only 47 ½ hours for meetings, briefings, parents' evenings etc etc!!! You can't legally be made to do more than that!!!

Chances are your total will be a little less than 1217 ½ hours ... but a typical total is usually about 1200 and by the time you have taken parents' consultations etc off the remaining 65 hours, there genuinely is only time for an absolute maximum of one meeting per week . This isn't just guidance ... it's in your contract!

**Ask your Head for consultation over the directed time budget and meetings calendar at your school.**

## **Answer the NUT Survey**

***but demand National Action to win a National Contract***

We don't just want to defend existing national pay and conditions, we need an improved National Contract that guarantees real workload limits.

As part of that campaign, the NUT is circulating a survey asking school reps and members to indicate the top measures they'd like implemented to reduce workload. It is available on the NUT website [www.teachers.org.uk](http://www.teachers.org.uk).

However, surveys alone will not win improved workload. School NUT groups and Associations should also keep up the demands for national action to be organised to unite members together to win that National Contract.

### **Classroom Teacher**

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... so we can build action to win  
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... 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 ...

### **Get in touch :**

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