

No 'Ifs', No 'Buts'

TEACHERS ARE FIGHTING THE CUTS!

THIS MILLIONAIRES' GOVERNMENT is trying to take a massive axe to our jobs, conditions and all our public services. What it can't cut or close, it wants to privatise, whether it be schools or health services.

Lord Hutton's second report this month will reveal more of his plans to attack public sector pensions. Meanwhile, across England & Wales, national cuts are being passed on by local councils of all colours.

But, as these cuts turn from general targets to concrete attacks, the anger against them is mounting - and so is the fightback! The reports below outline just some of the battles being fought by teachers:

YORKSHIRE

The ongoing action at Rawmarsh School in Rotherham (reported in



February's Classroom Teacher) has secured an important victory. No redundancies will now be made this term. The fight to protect jobs & education at the school continues.

Kirklees Council has been forced to abandon its plans to establish an academy at Fartown High School in Huddersfield thanks to a vigorous campaign by local parents.

LONDON

Angry anti-cuts protests have taken place across London. On 19 Feb. alone, 100s marched in **Hackney, Lewisham** and **Waltham Forest**.

Teachers at **Chestnut Grove** school in Balham were on strike to oppose it becoming an Academy



Whitmore School, Hackney, voted by 100% to strike if governors

refuse to adopt a work-life balance policy to limit the overall working week - a demand that Classroom Teacher has been campaigning for.

Tower Hamlets NUT have won a borough-wide strike ballot against cuts in central education services with an 85% YES vote. They hope to now hold a joint strike on Wed 30th March together with UNISON staff.

EARLY YEARS

Research shows that for every £1 spent on under 5's, a further £7 is saved in social & educational expenditure that would otherwise have to be spent in future. Yet Sure Start is now under attack.



Hampshire & Manchester are just two areas fighting these cuts. Lewisham NUT is holding an indicative strike ballot on Early Years cuts and could follow Tower Hamlets in borough-wide action if the Council won't retreat.

WALES

Parents have won a three-year campaign to close Landsdowne

Primary school in **Cardiff**. See the new 'Classroom Teacher in Wales' on our website for a full report.



SCOTLAND... & beyond!

A mobilisation of parents, teachers and the local community forced **Renfrewshire Council** to abandon plans to axe 60 teachers posts. The mass campaign involved a public rally of over 1,000 people in Paisley and an indicative ballot of teachers in the EIS union for industrial action which produced a 97% YES vote.

Teachers also need to be proud of our colleagues across the world.



A mass "sick-out" of **Wisconsin** teachers spurred the action to stop Republican union-busting. In **Egypt, Tunisia** & beyond, teachers have also been to the fore. It's time for mass teachers' action here too!

Action and Change for Teachers

STOP THE PENSIONS ROBBERY

The campaign to defend teachers' pensions is reaching a decisive stage. The Government have had to recognise that unions are ready to act to oppose their plans to make us PAY MORE, to get LESS PENSION and then have to RETIRE OLDER.

On the one hand, they are sabre-rattling about "which schools have a high proportion of NUT staff ...if they go on strike we will be prepared" (The Independent 22.2.11). But, behind the bluster, they know that they could not break our action.

On the other hand, they have opened talks with unions to see if a settlement can be reached. However, they are really just playing for time. They haven't yet shown any wish to seriously negotiate.

George Osborne has now said that final decisions about increased contributions (perhaps £100 extra a month from our pay) will be postponed until June. But they have so far refused to remove the proposed £2.8 billion savings from that extra 'stealth tax' on public sector workers from March's Budget. Unless that is withdrawn, there is no room for negotiation - unions would just be left to agree exactly how that pay cut will be applied.

They have also refused to withdraw the changes from the RPI to the lower CPI inflation index. Nor have they postponed publication of the second Hutton Report - due around March 10th - which may well contain further threats of an increased retirement age & worse 'career-average' pensions.

An article in the Times (Feb 24) revealed the true Government agenda. In order to privatise schools and other public services, businesses don't want to have to pay the costs of decent pensions. It states that a public sector pension of £20,000 might be cut to just £6,000 in a private scheme.

The NUT, alongside other unions, is prepared to discuss with Ministers. However, if they won't withdraw the budget savings and other threats from the table, unions must delay no longer and urgently proceed with plans for strike action.

Every Division, and every member, needs to get ready for a ballot for strike action. Start by making sure that your membership details - including

current workplace & home address are up to date. We also need to decide what kind of escalating programme of discontinuous action needs to be called in order to force the Government to retreat.

February's NUT Executive concluded that the NUT will give it until Easter's Annual Conference before making a final decision over balloting for a programme of strike action. That would hopefully start with a joint union national strike next term with other teaching and public sector unions.

Conference delegates of all three teaching unions - NUT, ATL and NASUWT - must not allow any more hesitation. Together, we must show Ministers that we're not going to allow them to get away with this pensions robbery - and take joint strike action.

MAKE IT A MONSTER MARCH ON MARCH 26

The TUC demonstration on 26 March looks like it will be massive. Coaches and trains are coming from far and wide. Plans are being made to have more than one assembly point to cope with the hundreds of thousands expected in London.

A massive demonstration will have a tremendous effect on boosting the confidence of trade union members to fight. Millions more will be looking at the TV and news coverage. The message should be clear - you don't have to sit alone and accept these cuts, together we can fight back!

Unfortunately, that might not be the message from some of the platform speakers who may hope to just send marchers away with a call to 'Vote Labour' to defeat the Con-Dems in the May elections. But, with Labour Councils also passing on Government cuts, that's not good enough. So let's make sure that everyone gets the message that the march has to be a step to mass action - led by public sector unions taking co-ordinated national strike action to defend jobs & pensions.

CALL JOINT STRIKE ACTION

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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