

# the Socialist

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## Strike on 30 November - no secret talks

### For democratic control of all negotiations and industrial action

Trade unionists across Britain will have been angered to see reports that the TUC general secretary went to the Tory party conference a couple of weeks ago – not to protest at the government's anti-working class policies, but to hold

secret talks to try to avert "mass strikes" against the attacks on pensions. The National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) immediately released a statement, an extract of which is below.

The NSSN recognises the need for negotiations but these should be out in the open, involving all those unions preparing to take action on 30 November (N30), which could see up to three million public sector workers on strike - more than on the first day of the 1926 general strike.

So-called "private talks" can only confuse union members and activists at a time when millions will be balloting for strike action.

In any case, the clear message that has to be sent to the government is that only a total and complete retreat from their plans to attack public sector pensions would be enough to consider stopping the N30 strike.

The government's proposals will make public sector workers pay more into their pensions at a time of pay freezes - and when many of these workers have actually seen pay cuts because of attacks on their terms and conditions. The Con-Dems then want them to get worse pension benefits and wait longer to receive them. It has been calculated that the net effect will be to take a day's pay off each worker every month.

It is clear from this situation that the government is terrified of the

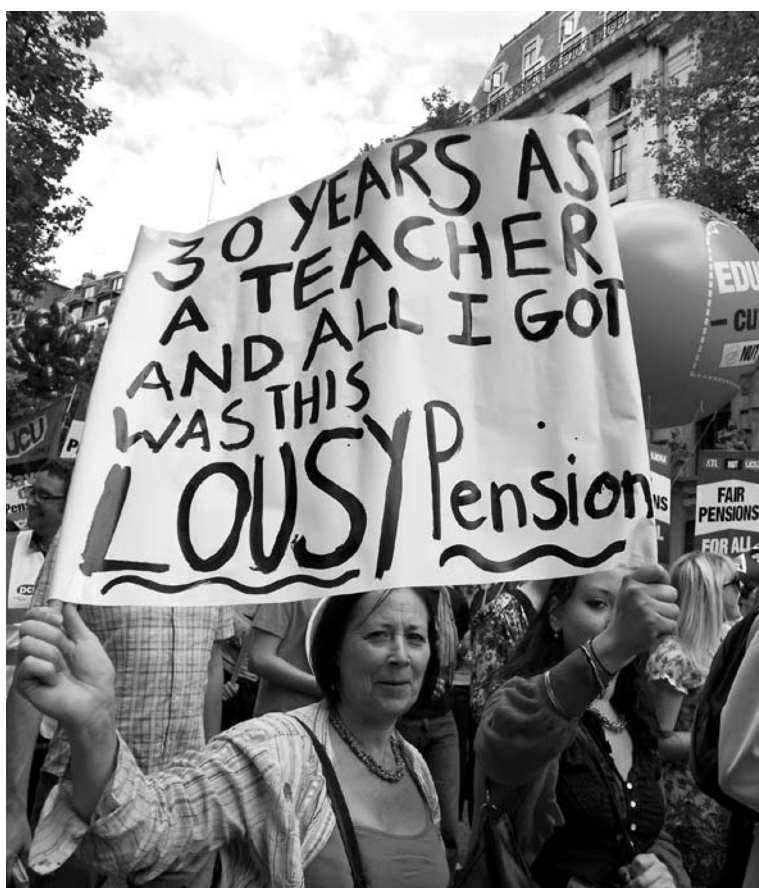
N30 strike and is desperate to prevent it. But this should be the signal to keep the pressure up.

The TUC and the trade unions need to send a clear message of defiance to the Con-Dems and work to get the best possible vote for strike action on the maximum turnout and then to build for a massive strike on N30 that can appeal to private sector workers, young people and pensioners to defeat this cabinet of millionaires.

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development announced on 10 October that 610,000 public sector jobs are likely to go in the next four years. This is the same figure released in a leaked document from the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) in 2010. Since the leak, the OBR has been trying to massage their figures downwards, their latest effort claiming that 330,000 jobs are on the line.

TUC research shows that the lowest paid are being hit hardest by job cuts over the last three years.

It is no surprise to find that the government are lying about the effects of their cuts. But it makes it all the more vital to ensure that N30 is a success and that plans are made for further action to defend jobs, services and pensions.



Marching on the London 30 June demo photo Paul Mattsson

### Who is voting when

- NAHT (headteachers' union) – ballot closes on 9 November
- NASUWT will ballot between 4 and 17 November
- Unison: 11 October – 3 November
- GMB will ballot between 31 October and 16 November
- Unite has yet to announce a timetable for a ballot
- Teaching unions ATL, UCU and NUT along with civil service union PCS, do not need to re-ballot. Having balloted for the very successful action on 30 June, they still have a ballot majority for strike action in place.

### Lobby of Parliament

The main teaching unions: - ASCL, ATL, NAHT, NASUWT, NUT, UCU and UCU are backing a lobby of parliament on Wednesday 26 October.

The National Pensioners Convention will also be attending to protest at the way that the change of indexation from RPI to the lower CPI is already robbing pensioners (see page four). Assemble 12 noon, Victoria Gardens, Westminster, SW1.

March to the Department of Education to hand in the mass petition.

## How to make N30 a success

• If your union is balloting, you could organise a workplace meeting, if applicable jointly with other unions. This should form the basis for democratic control of the strike.

• You could organise a public meeting in your town or city via the unions in dispute or trades council, anti-cuts campaign or NSSN. Explain the need to prepare for further action if necessary.

• Plan for a demonstration in your town or city on the day.

• All united – invite private sector workers, young people, pensioners, benefit claimants etc, to any public meetings, rallies and demonstrations.

## Plan now for more action

Martin Powell-Davies, a member of the national executive of the NUT writes a regular blog about NUT issues. In his latest entry, reporting on the recent NUT executive meeting and plans for N30, he finishes by saying: "The NUT executive will meet again in November to discuss what plans are being made for further action with other unions.

The NASUWT is talking about workload action - although their plans aren't yet clear. However, we

"my own preference is... a national 48-hour shutdown across the public sector."

are certainly happy to discuss joint 'non-strike' sanctions. However, it is strike action that will be the key.

I will certainly be calling for the union to name further days for ac-

tion after Christmas if the government refuses to retreat. A rolling programme of regional strike action is being considered, as well as national strike days.

As I said at the NSSN rally [before the TUC lobby on 11 September], my own preference is for a clear step-up in our action - by calling a national 48-hour shutdown across the public sector."

• For more see: <http://electmartin1.blogspot.com/>

### Wales Assembly budget: Labour piles on the misery

Edmund Schluessel

The Welsh Labour-led government's 2012-2013 draft budget, published on 4 October is the second one in a row to cut Welsh public services. It proposes 12.2% cuts to education, 3% cuts to the NHS and an average of 6% cuts to environment, housing and fire services.

An 8.2% cut to higher education support calls into question how long the Welsh government intend to keep their promise of lower tuition fees in Wales.

Funding for workers' literacy and numeracy programmes has been halved, as has money for the poor to access post-16 education. Anticipating this slashing of support for education, Youth Fight for Education, involving students from half of Wales' universities, have organised a demonstration and an All-Wales Student As-

sembly against education cuts on 21-22 October. Activists from Wales will be leaving from the Assembly to join the new Jarrow March for the week of 24 October and will be supporting the rally welcoming the march in London on 5 November.

A 5% real-terms cut to local government will give councils across Wales an excuse to sack thousands more workers. While some trade union branches are already taking steps toward industrial action against the cuts, public sector unions Unison and GMB can no longer make apologies for a Welsh government that takes its members' money and yet acts completely against those members' interests.

In the whole budget there is only one winner: big business which will receive £10 million in handouts through "enterprise zones", £4 million for incinerators and an additional £1.7 million through "encour-

aging innovation"

The government will claim, as Thatcher did 25 years ago, that "there is no alternative" to the cuts. The Socialist Party has always put forward an alternative, based on struggle, tested and proven in Liverpool council in the 1980s: defy Cameron and Clegg, set a budget based on need and hand the bill to Westminster.

If Labour in the Assembly put half the effort into such a fighting programme as they do into making excuses for implementing cuts, Wales would have all the money it needed to create jobs and build a sustainable, productive economy. They, alone and in partnership with Plaid Cymru, have failed to do so. Welsh Labour have written the budget of the Welsh government; but only a new, mass workers' party can write a Welsh budget that represents the interests of the working class of Wales.

### London elections - more support for TU/anti-cuts stand

Support is growing for the idea of standing trade union and socialist anti-cuts candidates in the London elections in 2012.

The Socialist last week carried extracts of an appeal letter from Steve Hedley and John Reid of the RMT and Ian Leahair and Ben Sprung of the FBU (in a personal capacity).

Are you a trade unionist in London? If so, add your name to the statement: "We, the undersigned, support the call for trade unionist and socialist candidates to stand in the Greater London Assembly elections in 2012, committed to opposing all cuts, privatisation and PFI". Go to [www.tusc.org.uk](http://www.tusc.org.uk) or email [jjpreidie@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jjpreidie@yahoo.co.uk)

New signatories this week include:

**Martin Powell-Davies** NUT executive member for Inner London. **John Kelly** secretary London Transport regional council. **Brian Ingham** UCU national executive 2007 - 2011; former chair of UCU London FE branch. **Brian Kelly** former Southwark Labour councillor. **Lee Vernon** PCS Young Members Convenor London and South East. **Lewis Peacock** RMT Assistant Secretary LU engineering branch. **Kevin Parslow** Unite secretary LE1228 and regional committee. **Nancy Taaffe** Chair Unison in Waltham Forest.

(all signatories are in a personal capacity)