

# Prepare for N30 - strike and demonstrate!

The strike to defend public sector pensions on 30 November (N30) represents the biggest and broadest coordinated industrial action since the 1926 general strike 85 years ago. In terms of numbers of workers involved, up to three million, it is likely to exceed the initial days of that great strike.

But that was in the context of a period of far greater militancy and workers' radicalism. The strike on N30, coming, as it does, after decades of relative industrial 'quiet', in reality a management counter-revolution in both private and public sectors, can transform the consciousness of millions of workers within the unions on strike and the anti-cuts movement generally. The huge potential power of the working class will be demonstrated for the first time in decades.

Crucially this power will also be displayed; firstly to the working class, including those who currently stand outside of the unions, but are being crushed by the Con-Dems' vicious cuts programme and the economic crisis. Every public sector union should be balloting to take part in the strike.

It is also essential that, as with the 30 June coordinated strike, the impact of the N30 strike is publicly displayed in mass demonstrations in cities around the country. This also provides an opportunity for those not on strike, such as the unemployed, students, pensioners etc, to publicly show their support for this action, the next big step in the 'fight of our lives'.

Of course, the meaning of these events will also be imprinted in the collective minds of the bosses and their political representatives, particularly the Con-Dem government.

Therefore, any judgement about what the political and industrial world will look like after the strike day has to be carefully weighed up. Similarly, the precise way in which the strike is followed up has to be estimated and tactics and strategy tested by the changing mood and consciousness.

The Socialist Party calls for an escalation of the action after N30, in the main by continuing to coordinate this on a national basis. This could mean calling a 48-hour strike as the next action or possibly another 24-hour strike.

This doesn't preclude sectional, regional or local action, as a supplement for coordinated strikes.

We do not support, for example, the current attempts of the Unison leadership to prevent local ballots for action against savage cuts on the basis that everything is put aside to build for the 30th.

However, after 30 November, it is likely that right-wing union leaders will argue for local or sectional action rather than to escalate the national coordinated action. This must be opposed by all trade union activists.

A campaign should also be launched to reach out to workers in the private sector to encourage them to coordinate any current disputes.

What is primary is to combat any attempt by the more conservative union leaders to see N30 as the end of the campaign rather than the beginning and look to dissipate the mood of members.

On N30 millions of workers will feel their collective strength for the first time, that must be built on to create a movement powerful enough to bring down the government.



photo Paul Mattsson

## The whole world in its hands

Simon Carter

The sovereign debt and eurozone crises, the Great Recession, etc, have all focussed attention on the failings of the banking sector and the greedy giant capitalist corporations. But exactly how powerful is finance capital in the world?

Posing and answering this question is not new. Lenin's famous booklet - Imperialism: the highest stage of capitalism - did just that at the turn of the 20th century.

But of course the capitalist world economy has grown immeasurably since then and the tentacles of finance capital appear to grasp every corner of the globe more tightly.

And, indeed, this is the case according to a study by the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, reported in New Scientist.

The Swiss number crunchers used a 2007 database listing 37 million companies and investors internationally from which they extracted 43,060 'transnational companies' and the share ownerships linking them. "Then they constructed a model of which companies controlled others through shareholding networks, coupled with each company's operating revenues, to map the structure of economic power." (New Scientist 22/10/11)

What this exercise showed is that a core of just 1,318 corporations effectively controlled the majority of economic activity on the planet. "The 1,318 appeared to collectively own through their shares the majority of the world's blue chip and manufacturing firms - the 'real'

image not available

economy - representing 60% of global revenues."

But the researchers revealed another fact: "A 'super-entity' of 147 even more tightly knit companies - that controlled 40% of the total wealth in the network."

In other words just 1% of the giant corporations effectively control the world economy! "Most were financial institutions. The top 20 included Barclays Bank, JP Morgan Chase & Co and The Goldman Sachs Group."

Key demands of the Socialist

Party are:

- For a socialist government to take into public ownership the top 150 companies and banks that dominate the British economy, and run them under democratic working class control and management. Compensation to be paid only on the basis of proven need.

- A democratic socialist plan of production based on the interests of the overwhelming majority of people, and in a way that safeguards the environment.

### Them and us

#### Coleman gets real

Brian Coleman, Tory councillor and London fire authority boss, is notorious for threatening Fire Brigades Union members with mass sackings and claiming vast expenses on top of his reported £120,000 a year earnings. Coleman's latest outrage has been to contemptuously dismiss an unemployed single mother's plea for help. Sharada Osman, whose son has learning difficulties, is facing eviction after the landlord increased her rent by £150 a month to £1,100. She wrote to councillor Coleman asking for some help and guidance. Coleman's 'helpful' advice, which arrived nine days later, was to tell Sharada that her only option was to turn to the private sector. Presumably, the same private sector that had just racked up her rent! When she complained about his lack of empathy Coleman simply reiterated his Tory callousness: "Lack of empathy?????..." he wrote, "I am afraid you have to live in the real world where the country has no money and residents will have to deal with their own issues rather than expect the system to sort out their lives."

What Coleman had, hypocritically, failed to tell Sharada was that he was living in a subsidised housing association flat, where his rent is £546 a month - half that of Sherada's rent.

#### Protest support

A university opinion poll found two-thirds of voters in New York City agree with the Occupy Wall Street protesters' views. And asked about regulating the financial system 73% agreed laws should be tougher. Moreover, a Time magazine poll found that public support for the anti-

capitalist protest is running higher than that for the right-wing Tea Party Republicans.

In the UK, a Guardian opinion poll found that 88.2% supported the Occupy London Stock Exchange protest with only 11.8% opposed.

#### Tax evasion

The Tax Justice Network (TJN) says that a newly agreed tax deal between the UK and Switzerland is flawed. TJN says that there are several loopholes that might enable UK tax evaders to maintain their anonymity without paying back taxes by: Moving cash out of Switzerland by May 2013; if money is held in a trading, manufacturing or commercial company; moving assets to another branch of a Swiss bank; if money is held in a discretionary trust where it is not known if there is a British beneficiary.

#### Big Profits

BP - a byword for environmental pollution and mega-profits - hit the jackpot last week with a new licence to resume oil drilling in the Gulf of Mexico and third quarter profits of £3.2 billion. Profits for the first nine months of 2011 were £9.9 billion. The energy giant's reversal in fortunes - following the Deepwater Horizon disaster in the Gulf of Mexico 18 months ago when eleven oil rig workers were killed, causing the biggest oil spillage in US history - was helped by Brent crude oil hitting \$110 a barrel. BP has also been given the green light by the Con-Dem government for potentially hazardous deep water drilling operations in the North Sea.