



Save the National Health Service

Reject the Tories' cosmetic changes to their health bill

See pages 2&10

Huge votes in defence of pensions, jobs and services

STRIKE 30 JUNE



photo S.Beishon

Civil servants, teachers and lecturers balloted to strike on 30 June against the Con-Dems' attacks on public sector pensions and public services. The National Union of Teachers has voted 92% in favour of the action, while the Association of Teachers and Lecturers has voted 83% in favour of its first ever strike. London underground drivers in the RMT union are also due to take strike action on that day against victimisation of trade union activists.

Chris Baugh, assistant general secretary of the PCS civil servants union, spoke in a personal capacity at the National Shop Stewards Network conference on 11 June. Here is an extract from his speech.

Someone once said the Tories never talk about class war because they're usually too busy practising it. This crisis, caused by nearly 30 years of a high octane deregulated capitalism, fuelled by an explosion of credit and reckless speculation, has become the excuse for an all-out assault on nearly all the major social gains won by working-class people in the post-war years.

Perhaps the most callous elements of the cuts are reflected in the abolition of EMA student payments, the Sure Start children centre closures, the cuts in benefits to the disabled.

This is a government that is working to dilute 2,000 separate pieces of legislation, even the equality act that only came on the statute book in April. Everything is up for grabs.

But trade unions remain the major obstacle to the Tory-Liberal plans. It's why big business politicians introduced the anti-union laws. It's why the media attacks trade unions. It's why the employers pick out our activists and reps. It's why Vince Cable – supposed to be a restraining influence on the Tories – is already talking about even more limits on the right to strike.

This is a government that is fearful of the trade union

movement. There is a massive and growing anger against the bailout to the bankers and the financial institutions and the attempt to make the working class pay the price for a crisis not of our making. The evidence was shown in the student protests, shown in the magnificent turnout on 26 March, shown by the action that we plan to take on 30 June, as the first wave of coordinated action.

If you're a worker in any other part of the public sector you will be asking the question: 'why are we not taking action with our brothers and sisters in the civil service and education institutions?'

The PCS will continue to press the Trades Union Congress for coordinated strike action and to build direct support with individual unions. We expect to be joined by millions of public sector workers in the autumn in the second wave of the sustained strike action that will be needed to challenge this government.

This is an enormous opportunity to reach out to the ranks of the most exploited sections of the workforce, the millions who aren't in unions, the millions who are unorganised. PCS has found that when the union is prepared to speak and act for its

membership, that's when people are prepared to join, that's when they're prepared to get involved, that's when people are prepared to come forward and become reps in their own trade union.

We can start to challenge the dictatorship of the international markets, which are dictating the policy of individual governments. We can show that international worker's solidarity is not some utopian idea, it is the most powerful antidote to the neoliberal consensus, pursued by European governments, by mainstream political parties, by the Murdoch press, and by international bond and equity markets. We can raise the question of what sort of society we want to live in and start to pose a real socialist alternative.

See pages 6, 7 & 9 for reports from the NSSN conference