

Con-Dems pile on the misery

'ENOUGH IS ENOUGH'



Trade unions must escalate strike action

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“We are the 99%” - that has been the rallying call of the year. Worldwide, 2011 will go down in history as a year when the poor, the oppressed, the working class - the majority in society - rose up and started to fight back.

In the Middle East, in North Africa, in Southern Europe and also here, in Britain, working class people have begun to demonstrate their potential power to change history.

30 November was the day when around two million public sector workers, members of 30 trade unions, took part in the biggest strike for over three decades. The majority had never taken strike action before, many had never expected to. But they see no other way of both defending pension rights and signalling to the government that they will not accept its plans to destroy public services.

There were massive demonstrations in cities, towns and even villages, with estimates of over 1,000 taking place. In most cases they were the biggest rallies to have taken place for many decades, if not ever. In Bristol over 20,000 marched, in Manchester more than 30,000. In smaller

towns there were large demonstrations - 2,000 in Bournemouth, 4,000 in Truro, 1,200 in Birkenhead, 1,000 in Hastings, 1,200 in Warrington, the list goes on.

Many of the strikers were disgusted by the lies, insults and smears not only of Jeremy Clarkson but of the capitalist politicians and media as a whole. But these slurs had very little effect on public opinion. Even the online poll of the anti-strike Daily Mail showed 84% of people supporting the action. The Daily Mail, in its normal unbiased way, responded by quickly deleting the poll.

Nor did the claims that the strike had been a flop have any real impact. On the contrary, even David “damp squib” Cameron was forced to accept it was “obviously a big strike”. No wonder. Official Department of Education figures showed that 62% of schools were completely closed, 14% partially closed, and only 16% definitely open.

The NHS was also disrupted. For example, in London the Metropolitan Police, City of London Police and British Transport Police were all asked by the London Ambulance Service for help when it could not cope with demand.

Approximately 84% of PCS civil service union members joined the strike. Museums and courts were closed or severely disrupted. Only 20 out of the 1,200 staff in the Student Loans Company went into work. The Cabinet Office had its best supported strike ever.

The government claimed that only 18 of 900 job centres were closed. However, the big majority of those that opened were staffed only by management and could not offer a full service. Over 50% of job centres offered no service to the public at all.

At Heathrow more than 90% of PCS members were out. Queues at airports were only minimised because over 20,000 passengers had taken the airlines’ offer to rebook their flights for free.

Whatever brave face the Con-Dems show in public, behind the scenes they were shaken by the massive display of ‘people’s power’.

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