



## A world in turmoil

Peter Taaffe, Socialist Party general secretary, discusses the political prospects for 2012

See pages 5-8

# DEFEND OUR PENSIONS

## Escalate the action

**John McNally**

Public and Commercial Services union (PCS) national vice-president (personal capacity)

Over two million public sector workers from 24 unions took action together on 30 November (N30) in the biggest show of workers' strength in living memory.

This show of solidarity and determination gave hope to millions beyond the trade union movement who are looking for a lead against the Con-Dems. The government is carrying out the most breathtaking transfer of wealth and power in British history through a cuts and privatisation programme in the interests of the banking and business elite and against 99% of the population.

John Cridland, the head of the Confederation of British Industry, gave the game away when he said that public sector pensions must be reformed in order to make outsourcing (ie privatisation) affordable.

Defeating the attacks on pensions would not only defend the terms and conditions of millions of mainly low-paid public sector workers, but would also create a firm platform on which to challenge the wider cuts programme itself.

The N30 strike's success shook the leadership of the Trades Union Congress almost as much as the government. 100,000 workers joined unions on the basis of the action, many more would be recruited on the basis of further struggle.

But after N30, it became clear at



Marching on the 30 November strike photo Paul Mattsson

meetings of the TUC's Public Sector Liaison Group (PSLG) that their priority was agreement to the government's so-called offer at any price. TUC leader Brendan Barber presented a 'Heads of Agreement' with the government for unions to take

back to their executives.

This proposed conceding the core issues of paying more, getting less and working longer completely, just as the government demanded.

The only legitimate response is to have further national coordinated

industrial action as early as possible in 2012 and for the PSLG on 12 January to name the day. Action must be escalated by bringing more unions on board including private sector workers like those in Unilever.

**Continued on page 2**

## PCS Left Unity open organising conference in defence of pensions



Saturday 7 January, 11am - 4pm  
Friends Meeting House,  
(opposite Euston station, London)

Chair: **Janice Godrich**  
PCS president

Speakers:  
**Mark Serwotka** PCS general secretary

**John McDonnell** MP

**Kevin Courtney** National Union of Teachers deputy general secretary (personal capacity)

**Roger Bannister** Unison executive (personal capacity)

**Padraig Mulholland** Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance vice-president (personal capacity)

**Mark Campbell** University and College Union executive (personal capacity)

**Zita Holbourne** Black Activists Rising Against Cuts

**Kevin Donnelly** Unite United Left

We would urge all activists on the left from all unions to build for this event which will be an open democratic forum.