

Support the firefighters!



Defend pensions Stop the fire service cuts!

TUC must
name the date
for a 24-hour
general strike to
defeat Cameron's
austerity!

Text JOIN with your name & postcode to 07761 818206

E-mail join@socialistparty.org.uk; phone 020 8988 8777; write to Socialist Party, PO Box 24697, London, E11 1YD

FBU members start their industrial action campaign to defend their pensions on September 25th with a 4-hour strike. After two years of protracted negotiations, the ConDems are steaming ahead with their proposals that will mean that like other public sector workers, fire-fighters will have to work longer to get a worse pension and pay more for it. Yet again, this fat cat government is forcing workers to pay the price for a crisis caused by the bankers and big business. The Socialist Party gives full support to the FBU and their members!

Correctly, the FBU have identified the fact that all fire-fighters will now have to work until 60 as a key attack. At the moment, two-thirds are in the pre-2006 scheme where fire-fighters can get their full pension at 55 (or 50 after 25 years' service). However, the new scheme is a sinister attempt to get rid of workers on capability.

The government's own report found that half of all fire-fighters will not be fit to work beyond 55 and that two-thirds would not be fit enough at 60. In the worst case scenario, 85% would not be fit to work beyond 55!

For fire-fighters, this is the last straw! In every area, stations are being closed by representatives from all the mainstream parties. Just as with the NHS, fire-fighters will be stigmatised by politicians and the right-wing press if brutal cuts put people at risk. But just as with the fight to defend the health service, the most likely way to succeed is through a mass campaign of resistance led by the trade unions and their members with mass co-ordinated strike action at its core.

The FBU must be given full support by

the whole trade union movement to give the union confidence to take further action, particularly given the employers' strikebreaking plans, which could turn this struggle into a bitter dispute.

A potential scab army has been put into place as the London Fire Brigade has withdrawn 27 fire engines (out of 169) from service so that they can be used by Securitas to break a strike! So we have the scandalous position in London where Boris Johnson ignores successive decisions by the Fire Authority and public opinion against his plan to close 10 fire stations but is willing to further risk the safety of the public to break the justified action of hard-working fire-fighters! It seems that other areas like the North West have similar plans. In addition, Surrey Fire Authority is locking-out fire-fighters on Wednesday.

The Socialist Party believes that if the TUC and the unions called a 24-hour general strike, it would unite behind 6 million organised workers the millions suffering from the ConDem cuts in an unstoppable force that could force Cameron and co into retreat or even out of office. This isn't a strong government, as the vote on Syria showed.

Already this autumn, the teachers are committed to strike action and the PCS are still in dispute. Royal Mail workers are balloting against privatisation and unions from UCU and Unison in higher education to NAPO are poised to join in. If all these unions and more along with the FBU picked a date to strike together, it would be a massive step in the right direction for the mass joint strike action that can force the ConDems back and hopefully out.

Victory to the fire-fighters!



The NSSN has been to the fore of the campaign for a 24-hour general strike, organising lobbies, protests, petitions and more.

Organising mutual solidarity when trade unions are in dispute has been at the heart of our work. The NSSN brings together fighting trade union activists to share ideas and to build a united struggle.

Initiated by the RMT in 2006, the NSSN now also has national support from PCS, CWU, NUJ, NUM, POA and BFAWU as well as many branches, trades councils, etc.



The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) was set-up in 2010 to enable trade unionists, community campaigners and socialists to stand candidates against the pro-austerity establishment parties.

TUSC has a clear position of opposing all cuts, and candidates endorse a clear 10-point programme (see the website). TUSC was set up by the RMT and includes other leading trade union fighters and socialists, including the Socialist Party.

www.shopstewards.net

www.TUSC.ORG.UK

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