

10 July 2014

# BUILD RESISTANCE ESCALATE TO WIN



Over 1.4 million workers from eight different unions are striking today. NUT, PCS and FBU have called national strikes, while Unison, GMB and Unite have called out their local government sections. Local disputes in UCU (in King's College London), Bectu (Ritzy Cinema) and RMT, TSSA and UNITE (London Underground) have been timed to coincide with the national day. This means a big show of strength for the trade union movement, the biggest since the pensions' dispute of 2011.

Like that dispute, this strike is an opportunity for building confidence and unity. It is easier in local government when Unison, Unite and GMB act together. It's easier in schools when support staff and teachers act together. Large demonstrations in cities and towns should help inspire activists with a sense of our strength and of what is possible, and also help to draw in those not striking who are still affected by the austerity project.

The NUT's vision of "social movement trade unionism" – placing the strikes at the heart of a wider campaign in defence of our public services – is a good example of how linking to wider demands can give the strikes a political dynamic that draws in broader support.

## Strength

But as well as being a show of strength, this strike is a test of strength. Every picket, demonstration and rally is a test of how well organised we are in workplaces and communities. This strike gives the opportunity to build networks across unions, and to build organisation in our workplaces. But we have to take that opportunity!

This is essential if we are to avoid a repeat of 2011, where initiatives stalled after the major unions called no further strikes before signing up to a poor deal that December. While pressing for further action in all our unions we need to use this chance to build and sustain organisation on the ground.

## Establishment

Meanwhile, the establishment is in crisis. A series of scandals – from expenses

to the unfolding sex abuse scandals – have rocked people's faith in existing politics. The Tories increasingly look like what they are – a group of self-serving toffs only interested in defending their rich mates. Yet instead of going for the throat, Labour continues to mimic the Tory agenda, promising their own brand of austerity.

If Labour won't put forward clear opposition to making the vulnerable suffer for the crisis, we must. That's why our strikes and demonstrations shouldn't just be about pay and conditions – but about challenging the whole austerity project.

## Networks of resistance

The fear of insecurity and pressure of workload grinds us all down daily. The strike, and its build up, offers a moment of confidence and collective action. The fact that over a million are striking strengthens the unions' ability to secure a better deal. Striking will achieve a better compromise than not striking. But more important in the long term will be its impact on our strength inside our own workplaces. We should use the strike to:

- 1 Get to know other activists in our areas before the build up to the TUC demo on 18 October.
- 2 Motivate new people to help organise at work and refresh formal and informal union organisation.
- 3 Call workplace meetings to discuss the strike and what issues to take up inside work afterwards.
- 4 Demand more action – make today a stepping stone, not an end point.

rs21 revolutionary socialism in the 21st century

## STRIKE BULLETIN

“ I'm striking because we're working harder, PRP is being introduced: it's meaningless in public service, and we deserve a pay rise ”

Social Worker, North London

rs21 is a group of revolutionary socialists who stand for socialism from below. We need to better understand the world in order to change it; our aim is to contribute to a renewal of revolutionary ideas and organisation. Exploitation, oppression and alienation are inherent in capitalism and can't be reformed away. We still have a world to win.

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