

***They created the debts -
not us. So why should we pay?***

ACADEMIES, PAY, PENSION & JOB CUTS

JUST HOW POOR do they think our memories are?

This Government wants the public to believe that it is the 'excesses' of overpaid public sector workers, with our 'gold-plated' pensions, that are to blame for the debt crisis.

But that's just not true. Do they think that we have forgotten that it was the reckless gambling by greedy financiers that led to this crisis? Or that it was the unprecedented multi-billion pound bailout of these banks that created these state deficits?

Our pay and pensions are not to blame. After all, despite the pay campaign that included national teachers' strike action in 2008, recent pay awards have really been pay cuts. Teachers will still get a 2.3% pay award in September but inflation stands at over 5%. Then the Tories tell us we'll get a two-year pay

freeze from 2011-13. In real terms, that's at least a 10% cut.

Public sector pensions were reviewed as recently as 2005. The Government and unions agreed changes that protected the retirement age for existing teachers but increased our contribution rates too. That was supposed to ensure the scheme was fully budgeted for.

Now the Government have set up a new Public Services Pensions Commission that is due to make its first report in September. It's clear that this is going to be used to mount a huge attack on our living standards and pension provisions.

If that wasn't enough, Osborne's Budget announced 25% cuts in Whitehall spending over the next five years. The Comprehensive Spending Review in October will spell out where those cuts will fall. However,

local councils are already warning of big cuts and job losses to come.

This is no surprise to the Government. A leaked Treasury document confirms they expect over half a million public sector jobs to be lost by 2015, plus even more in the private sector.

But these huge cuts won't even save the economy as Ministers pretend - they'll wreck it. Countries like Ireland - where pensions and pay have already been cut - show that the economy and deficits will just get worse, not better.

This Government is really just using the recession as an excuse - to help their friends by cutting corporation tax while they attack the rest of us. It's also their excuse to attack both our national conditions and our public services through Academies, Free Schools and other privatisation plans. We must not fall for their lies.

... CALL FOR NATIONAL STRIKE ACTION !

The Government has prepared their attacks. Now we have to act quickly to organise our defence.

(Martin Powell-Davies, Lewisham NUT)

That's why my NUT Association in Lewisham passed a motion calling for firm local and national action.

We urged schools to arrange joint union meetings to organise against cuts and Academies. A leaflet has already been given out to parents on the gates of schools that have been listed as 'registering an interest' (see example overpage).

We are linking up with other local unions and the Trades Council to fight cuts and attacks on services.

But local action will not be enough. We called on the NUT Executive to urgently liaise with other unions to fix a date for a national union led demonstration and to announce we will be balloting for national strike action against these attacks.

With our largest association meeting in many years it is clear that among teachers in Lewes and Eastbourne NUT there are real worries about the coming cuts and the academies bill.

(Phil Clarke, Lewes & Eastbourne NUT)

Like Lewisham, we passed a motion calling for national action.

We also asked the Executive to give clear guidelines on how members could be balloted across whole local authorities for strike action. Reps saw the need for joint action alongside other public sector unions too.

Both Lewes and Eastbourne now have Liberal Democrat MPs and it was decided to organise lobbies and demonstrations outside their surgeries as they are seen as a 'weak link' in the coalition government.

IS YOUR SCHOOL PLANNING TO BE AN ACADEMY ?

Would you trust an invitation from this Government?

This Government wants to cut and privatise our schools and other public services. As part of these plans, they have invited thousands of schools to become Academies - schools that are independent of local Councils but are accountable to Whitehall instead. Most schools have rejected the invitation - but not all. A Government website lists over 1,500 schools which they say 'have registered an interest' in becoming an Academy.

Your school could be rushing into a very bad decision

The Government wants schools to become Academies quickly - even by September! It wants to change the law so that a school Governing Body could make the decision without parents, staff and the local community having any say in what happens.

If a school decides to become an Academy, it isn't allowed to change its mind later. If a salesman wants you to rush a decision, don't they usually have something to hide?

Don't believe Government claims about Academies

The Government claims Academies raise standards - they are wrong. Many have been distorting exam results by using non-GCSE entries and by higher rates of exclusions.

The Government claims Academies will get lots more money - that's wrong too.

The Government wants Academies to worsen staff pay and working conditions.

Parents will have less say in how their school is run if it becomes an Academy.

Academy schools won't be able to call on local Councils for support they might need.

Council services for other local schools will be cut back if schools become Academies.

GET ORGANISED TO PROTECT YOUR SCHOOL'S FUTURE

All six of the main school staff trade unions think that it would be wrong for schools to become Academies. Perhaps some Heads and Governors want to go along with this Government's privatisation plans - but what right do they have to takeover our schools?

We urge parents and staff to speak to the Head and governors to ask what is going on in their school. If they are considering being an Academy, you need to get organised fast. Demand that decisions are not rushed through in secret. Call for a proper consultation where all views can be heard. Set up an Anti-Academies group to organise a campaign. Staff should meet and call for a ballot for joint strike action to oppose Academy status.

CONTACT:

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