

nationalshopstewardsnetwork bulletin

Trade Union Conference Bulletin 2011

wemarchedtogether nowstriketogether



Who now says that workers in Britain won't fight like our brothers and sisters in Europe, the Middle East and this year even in the USA?

No matter how they try and downplay it, the 500,000 plus strong demonstration on March 26th has shaken the ConDem Coalition. Their wobble on the NHS is a direct consequence of the huge pressure that they are under.

The anger and outrage, that has been bubbling away in every workplace, estate, school and university, erupted for all to see on that day. Forget the opinion polls and their loaded questions, it's now clear to everyone that there are more of us than them!

Working-class people are not prepared to give up the gains of the past - the NHS, public services and the welfare state - for a crisis caused by the bankers.

The NSSN has been saying since the election last May that this is a weak government but they'll get away with their cuts if the anger behind the demonstration isn't mobilised into coordinated strike action. It's that prospect that's terrifying Cameron and Clegg. Thousands carried our placards and many more took our leaflets on the TUC demo calling for a 24-hour public and private sector general strike to stop the cuts and defend pensions.

The NSSN has written an open letter to the TUC calling on them to carry out last year's conference policy and co-ordinate the strike action that's needed now.

We also call on them to organise a midweek demonstration in London and regionally on the first day of strike action by a national trade union. There could be up to five balloting. We've shaken the Con-Dems, now we have to smash them and their cuts.

24-hour public sector general strike to stop the attack on pensions

the nssn is supported by the following trade unions:



building pressure for coordinated action

Supporters of the National Shop Stewards Network have been consistently calling for a serious programme of action to defeat the cuts – in 2010, we organised a hundreds-strong lobby of the TUC demanding they organise a national demonstration before the end of the year and coordinate industrial action.

We finally got that demonstration at the end of March – and what a success it was – but the TUC has still not followed through on its conference promise to build for coordinated strike action to defeat the government. The NSSN wrote a letter (see below) to the general

council of the TUC calling on them to put their resolutions into action, supporters of the NSSN across the country have been passing branch motions in support of the letter to increase the pressure on the TUC and build support for generalised strike action on a branch-by-branch basis.

We urge all of you to take this letter back to your trade union branch and get support for it passed there too – we can beat this rotten government, but we need to put pressure on the leadership of the movement to do what their name suggests and lead!



...the letter

To TUC General Council, April 7th 2011

The TUC demonstration on Saturday March 26th was a massive success. We congratulate the General Council in implementing conference policy so successfully - "Congress resolves that all TUC affiliates will urgently work together to build a broad solidarity alliance of unions and communities under threat and organise a national demonstration, lobby of Parliament and national days of protest against the government austerity measures"

At least 500,000 trade unionists, young people, pensioners and community campaigners sent a deafening message to the ConDem Coalition that working-class people will fight their £81 billion cuts package. The march should finally dispel the myth that somehow British workers are different to our brothers and sisters internationally.

The same was said about those in the Middle East and North Africa...before they overthrew dictators this year. Even worse was said about workers in the USA...before hundreds of thousands protested and took strike action in Wisconsin and other states. Now workers here have shown that, faced with this brutal assault given a lead, we too are prepared to fight.

Understandably, workers are now asking: "What next?" While the march has given everyone a huge boost of confidence, we in the NSSN feel that it won't be enough to stop the cuts. Already, the new financial year has seen still more workers losing their jobs in local authorities of all party affiliations. Cameron and Clegg have public sector pensions in their sights and the announcement of the privatisation of HMP Birmingham is another sign of this government's desire to roll back all past gains of working people in this country to boost the profits of big business.

We believe that the General Council in accordance with conference policy should discuss the fight against the cuts and to defend public sector pensions in particular "support and coordinate campaigning and joint union industrial action, nationally and locally, opposition to attacks on jobs, pensions, pay or public services". This meeting should discuss coordinating strike action against the cuts. The TUC should take the lead in advocating that unions combine to plan for a 24-hour public sector general strike as a step towards a one day general strike of all workers. We also believe that the TUC should discuss with those unions who have already committed to balloting on pensions about organising a midweek march in London to coincide with strike action called by these unions to support their action.

The March 26th demonstration has shaken this government, far more than they would admit. Their vacillation on the NHS comes on the back of the U-turn on privatising the forests and concessions on EMA. But to shatter their cuts we need to take our campaign to a new stage. The NSSN is confident that if we are prepared to act together we can win. We will continue to work alongside the TUC, its affiliated unions and other anti-cuts organisations in order to defeat this government.

Rob Williams
NSSN anti-cuts convenor



online at: www.nssn.org.uk
and www.stopcuts.org.uk

national health service in crisis

... as Con-Dem Coalition seeks to privatise services and sack staff

Much of the welfare state, established by the post war Labour government, is under threat from the slash and burn policies of the government, none more so than the NHS. To many workers and their families the NHS is the jewel in the crown of the welfare state. Labour brought the private sector into the NHS but the legislation planned by this government will allow large chunks of the NHS to be 'cherry picked' by the private sector.

The Coalition proposals have no mandate from the public and are opposed by the majority of NHS staff and patients. Already under the guise of 'efficiency savings' cuts of £20 billion are planned, such as those at East Lancashire Hospital NHS Trust where 1,013 full time staff from are earmarked for redundancy between 2011-2015.

Included in this number are nearly 50 doctors and dental staff as well as 270 nurses. University Hospital of North Staffordshire NHS Trust is forecasting a reduction of 1,349 full time posts from 2011-15, some 22.5% of its entire staff. It is the same story around the country, with some 53,000 confirmed, planned or potential staff cuts.

Under the proposals, GP Consortiums will be able to purchase services from 'any willing provider' which will open the door to 'cherry picking' by private health companies, many of which are multinational giants. This will leave the NHS with the less financially viable services and will lead to a two-tier health service, with the poor receiving a basic service similar to the American health system.

The GP Consortiums are totally unaccountable, even though they will be responsible for £80 billion of our money.

In many areas GP Consortiums are up and running under what is called the 'Pathfinder' scheme, however no community organisations are yet in place to monitor and check their performance. In other words there is a total lack of transparency or accountability.

The Coalition is planning to set up Health Watch and Health and Wellbeing Boards in all areas, none of these are yet established, yet PCT's are being run down and GP Consortiums are springing up around the country.

If we are to defeat these proposals we must oppose them root and branch. New Labour did not protect the NHS as it opened the door for the Con-Dem Government to begin privatising services.

Only a massive campaign involving NHS staff and patients can drive back this attack on one of the pillars of our welfare state.

- We support all public sector unions taking industrial action to defend jobs and services in the NHS.
- No to privatisation of any part of the NHS.
- Democratic control by staff and patients of the NHS.
- Make the bankers and corporate tax dodgers pay for the crisis not NHS staff and patients.
- Build community action against hospital closures and staff cuts in all areas.



national shop stewards network ONLINE

The NSSN has two websites, www.stopcuts.net and www.shopstewards.net, which highlight industrial struggles and community campaigns, report on action that the establishment press ignore or try to do down, and help coordinate much-needed solidarity for workers taking action. Recent highlights on the website include:



- Olympics site picketed: End the Blacklist!



- 400 construction workers fight lock-out at BP Saltend, Hull



- PCS members in Jobcentreplus strike



- Ford workers call for strike against attacks on their pensions



- POA fights privatisation

shopstewards.net cuts.net

...JOIN US



nationalshopstewardsnetwork who we are

Founded in 2007, the Network has held four national conferences and a special anti-cuts conference, each attracting hundreds of rank-and-file activists. The Network was initiated by the RMT and now also has national support from PCS, CWU, NUM, NUJ and POA as well as many branches, trades councils, etc.

Who our members are

The network is open to bona fide rank-and-file TUC affiliated trade union workplace representatives. Officials can participate with speaking rights. All trade unionists are welcome at our meetings and actions.

What we do

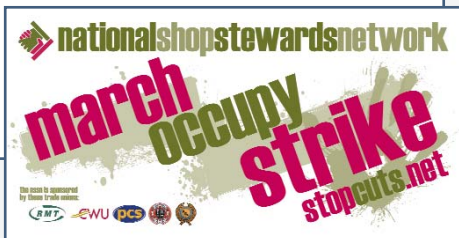
The Network exists to support workers in struggle. We campaign for justice in the workplace, workers' rights, solidarity and equality – trade union freedom. Visit the website or contact us to find out more.

How we can help you

Do you have a campaign or dispute which needs support? The Network website and emailing list reaches hundreds of activists. Contact us at the details below so we can publicise your struggle. We can put you in touch with Network supporters in your union/sector/area.

How you can affiliate

Trade union branches can affiliate to the NSSN for a minimum fee of £25; local trades councils and individuals are also welcome to affiliate and join. Send details and contact information of your union branch or trades council and a cheque made out to 'National Shop Stewards Network' to: NSSN, PO Box 54498, London E10 9DE. Individual membership of the network is £5; please send your name, union, contact details and a cheque to: NSSN, PO Box 54498, London E10 9DE. Or alternatively, you can affiliate online at: www.stopcuts.net/affiliate via PayPal.



nationalshopstewardsnetwork conference 2011

- Strike to defend jobs and pensions
- Fight the anti-trade union laws
- Save our NHS

Saturday June 11th
11:30am - 4:00pm

South Camden Community
School, London NW1 1RG
Registration: will begin at 10.30am
Email: info@stopstewards.net to register



nationalshopstewardsnetwork
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