

The biggest strike in a generation:

- How does it affect you?
- How can non-union workers organise to defend ourselves?



This strike is about a lot more than just pensions

With an estimated 2 million stopping work today, this is the biggest strike in a generation. The government's attempts to portray it as the selfish desire of public sector workers to hold on to their 'gold-plated' pensions is beginning to wear a bit thin as 61% of the population support the strike according to a recent opinion poll – despite continuous negative reporting of it. The government has attempted to divide public and private sector workers by characterising the public sector as a bloated drain on the nation's resources and the private sector as the source of all wealth. This strategy has backfired when they announced that today's stoppage will cost the economy £500 million. If that's true the public sector starts to look like an essential infrastructure to allow the economy to function.

We shouldn't allow the

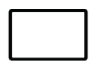
government to pit different groups of workers and the unemployed against each other in a war of words over who is the worse off. And we shouldn't see today's strike as a last resort. Because of the state's anti-strike laws it takes an enormous amount of organising to make a strike like this happen. We should be celebrating the fact that despite all the negative press, we've managed to pull it off.

But one day is not enough. It will take more than token days of action and protests to halt this onslaught against the working class. Because this strike is not just about pensions – with rents increasing, high inflation, wage freezes, redundancies, unemployment and attacks on benefit claimants we have a lot to fight about. This strike is another step on the way to making the country ungovernable through a widespread movement of people

saying no to all these attacks. It's also not about waiting for a Labour government to halt the cuts. The lessons of Greece and Italy show that the only government the markets will tolerate are unelected ones that will force through cuts with no input from an unruly electorate. A Labour government would have to do the same as the Tories – they just might feel bad about it.

So let's extend this dispute beyond what the unions can organise, by supporting all workers whatever their struggle. Over the page are some details of how the Solidarity Federation is linking together workers in all sectors of the economy.

Solidarity: the most powerful weapon in the world.





Not on strike? You can still get organised!

If you're not on strike today that doesn't mean you can't organise to defend and improve your living standards. FOR THOSE IN WORK, whether or not you're a member of a trade union, the Solidarity Federation runs workplace organiser training sessions. The next of these in Brighton will be in January 2011, date to be confirmed. The training gives you the tools to organise at work, including building contacts, picking issues and demands, direct action tactics, role-playing conversations and more. Please get in touch if you're interested.

If you're JUST TEMPING OR WORKING CASUAL JOBS, problems often arise after you've left. For example a common problem is wage theft. Earlier this year Dan worked for three days through the Office Angels agency but was only paid for one. After he got in touch with the

Solidarity Federation a campaign of pickets and phone-ins was organised and he got all his money. Recently in South London, Laura was let go from a pub after she hadn't been paid for 6 weeks. A campaign of phone-ins and a threatened Friday night picket did the trick, and Laura was paid in full, over £700.

IF YOU'RE NOT IN WORK, while striking is not an option, other tactics are. Locally the Brighton Benefits Campaign have been organising around attacks on benefits for those in work, unemployed or sick. This has included occupations of workfare providers, as well as marches and street theatre. Their weekly meetings are open to all, Thursdays at 6pm upstairs in the Duke of Wellington pub (venue is not wheelchair accessible, unfortunately). There is also a local Disabled People against the Cuts group, organising

around similar issues. We can put you in touch if you're interested, or see www.dpac.uk.net.

The Solidarity Federation has also been organising around HOUSING ISSUES, SUCH AS STOLEN DEPOSITS and landlords neglecting repairs and maintenance. We've also helped numerous tenants and workers write letters to their landlords, letting agents or employers, demanding resolution of problems from withheld deposits and unpaid overtime to sexual harassment and bullying, supported by the knowledge they have the back up of a campaign of direct action if their demands are not met. As the cuts continue to affect our lives, it's more important than ever that we stand together and support one another. *Getting organised isn't just an option for unionised public sector workers, it's a necessity for the whole working class.*

The meaning behind the red and black flag



The origins of the ever-present red and black flag lie in the fusion of anarchist ideas with the labour movement in 1920s Spain. The black represents *anarchism* - a commitment to direct action, mutual aid and a free stateless society. The red represents *the workers movement* and the communist ideal of 'from each according to abilities, to each according to needs'. The diagonal pattern represents a 'crossed out' flag, in opposition to all national flags and therefore a commitment to internationalism; the working class has no country.

The flag was first used by members of the Spanish union CNT, who simply sewed together parts of the all-black anarchist flags and all-red socialist flags that were already in widespread use. It thus came to represent anarchist unionism (a.k.a. 'anarcho-syndicalism') as the means of achieving libertarian communism.

That's why members of the Solidarity Federation, a revolutionary union initiative, proudly carry the red and black flag.

