



Nottinghamshire

News, campaigns, action and solidarity | Issue 4 | November 2011

Trade Union NEWS

PENSIONS JUSTICE

What is going on with our pensions?

The government is trying to change pensions to make every public sector worker **PAY MORE, WORK LONGER** and **GET LESS**.

All the major unions are balloting local government workers for strike action and many more unions in the NHS and civil service are preparing for action.

November 30th will be the biggest day of industrial action since the general strike of 1923. It will be a massive opportunity for our movement to show its potential strength, to organise new layers of workers, to re-make itself and to prepare for the further—necessary—actions to come.

The TUC has a campaign website (pensionjustice.org.uk) packed with useful information and resources. Visit the site, use the material and have a go on the pension calculator to see just how much you could lose if the government gets its way!

The government is putting a three-way squeeze on public service pensions:

Squeeze 1: From RPI to CPI

Once you get a public sector pension, it goes up each year in line with prices. But the government wants to change the way it measures prices, and use the CPI measure of inflation instead of RPI. CPI is nearly always lower than RPI. The switch to CPI is a stealthy way of cutting pensions. The Independent Public Service Pensions Commission led by Lord Hutton said it cuts the value of public sector pensions by 15%. ***The CPI switch was announced with no negotiation!***

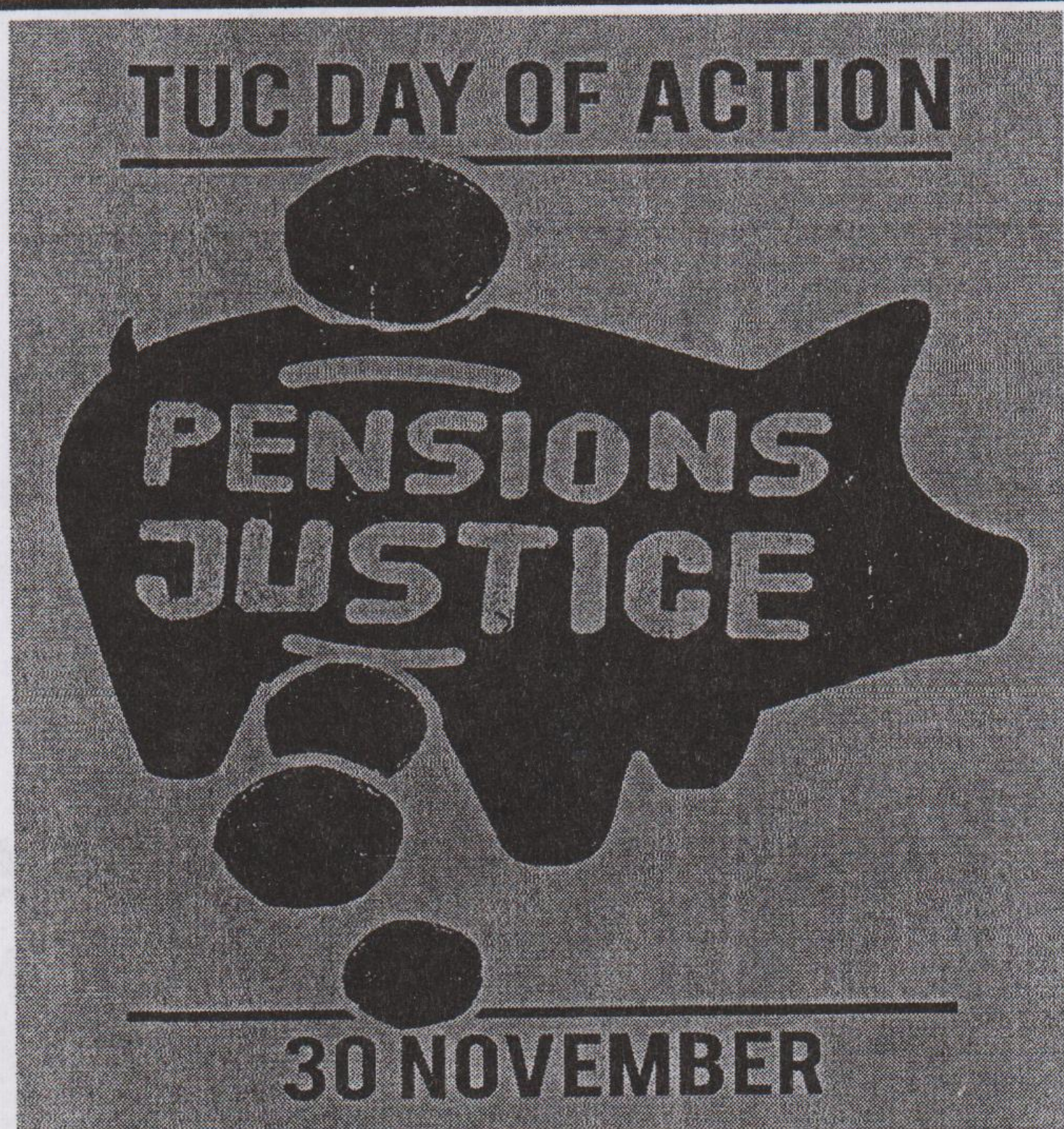
Squeeze 2: Higher contributions

The government is increasing public sector pension contributions by 3.2% of pay by 2015 – roughly the same effect as a 3% wage cut. ***This was announced without negotiation.*** The government wants to take more than £3 billion a year from this tax on public sector staff. The same government cancelled a tax on banker's bonuses that raised £2 billion, and may well now raise more.

Squeeze 3: Working longer for a smaller pension

The government wants everyone in the public sector to work longer before they can get their pension. Most people would need to work through to the state pension age – which ministers want to go up to 66 for men and women by 2020 and 68 by 2046. This tears up the agreement made with the previous government. But it recognised that it is unfair to impose a new pension age on staff who have already worked many years. In the local government scheme, everyone already has a pension age of 65.

This triple squeeze adds up to paying more, working longer and getting a pension that no longer properly keeps up with prices.



Nottinghamshire, Mansfield and Nottingham Trades Council | www.nottstuc.org | nottstc@gmail.com

November 30th Strike Day

where to go & what time to get there

Nottingham:

Assemble from 10.30am at the
Forest Recreation Ground.

March to Albert Hall at 11am.

Mass strike rally in Albert Hall

Websites with more info on pensions

www.pensionsjustice.org.uk

www.falseeconomy.org.uk

www.nottstuc.org

www.tuc.org.uk

Myths and Reality about Pensions

The Government certainly organised its spin with its attack on public sector pensions - "*Gold-plated*", "*Pensions Apartheid*", "*Not Affordable*", etc. But how much of this is true and what implications does it have for our campaign to save pensions?

- Average pensions for public sector workers are £8000-£1000pa – hardly "gold-plated".
- "Pensions apartheid" was created by successive governments (and private companies) since 2000 with the destruction of state assistance for private pensions. The outcome of that in the future will be much more costly. Robbing public pensions now will do nothing to solve this – quite the opposite. It will push down all pensions even further.
- Of course the public sector schemes are affordable – they are self-financing. It's funny how, after many requests, the government refuses to give us audited figures for the schemes. Wonder why?

The truth that this pensions robbery is a political act and has little to do with the practicalities of "getting out of the crisis". It would force everybody to work until they were 68 cutting back on pensioners spending power and taking up jobs that young people could do. It is part of the whole attack on public life. That is why for us it is make-or-break time.

The pensions campaign is vitally important: we must take as much control for ourselves through our unions and the Trades Council. We are going to have to fight this until the bitter end. Come along to Notts Trades Council monthly meetings on the first Tuesday of the month alternating between Nottingham and Mansfield and have your say.

Ring Paul (Joint Secretary) for more information – 07986 351807

what next?

The November 30th strikes will be the biggest single day of industrial action in four or five generations. It is both a massive opportunity and an enormous test for the trade unions. Most importantly, we want to win on pensions and other issues like job losses and cuts. But to win, we must build the movement.

How can you help do this?

1. Hold a meeting on the dispute in your workplace. It doesn't matter if your union isn't balloting for action—you can still hold a meeting and invite a speaker from one of the striking unions.
2. Recruit new members to your union. Public sector unions are still well organised, but every workplace has people who have never been asked to join.
3. Organise a picket line if your workplace is to stay open. If you're not on strike, organise collections and visit picket lines on the day.
4. Affiliate to the trades council and help us with the important work of linking-up, sharing experience and resources and building solidarity across unions around the county.
5. Attend the next trades council meeting—this meeting is open to all. Check the trades council website for more information.

**ALL TRADE UNIONISTS
WELCOME!**

Notts Trade Union News

Editor: Tom Unterrainer, Nottingham NUT
We welcome news, views and information from trade unions across the county. Get in touch with us at nottstc@gmail.com