Socialist Party



SUPPORT THE **CLASSROOM ASSISTANTS**

he overwhelming support classroom assistants have received from parents and the public at large not only underlines the just nature of classroom assistants pay claim but is also a damning denunciation of the Assembly Executive.

Assembly votes against pay claim

The shameful role the Minister for Education Catriona Ruane has played has been recognised by all workers. Her pretence that she sympathises with classroom assistants has been exposed as utter hypocrisy because of her imposition earlier this summer of what in effect is a pay cut in classroom assistants pay and attacks on working conditions. In fact all the political parties in the Assembly Executive yesterday voted against paying the classroom assistants. This is not surprising from politicians who also sat on local education and library boards which implemented pay cuts over 12 years!



Combined with soaring prices, classroom assistants have been left with no alternative but to fight back by taking strike action. Classroom assistants have had enough. Empty promises don't pay the bills. By taking strike action and building support amongst the rest of education workers and in the community, classroom assistants can force the Assembly Executive to back down. Already there are signs that today's strike action has forced the employers and the Minister to consider making some concessions.

However, they are in. If no serious offer is made which can be put to classroom assistants, then next weeks planned three day strike must proceed.

Solidarity must be built

Classroom assistants in the other unions (UNISON, GMB and

T&GWU/Unite) now need to demand that their leaderships immediately begin to organise solidarity action and join their colleagues on the picket lines. It is unfortunate that the leadership of these unions have failed to co-ordinate strike action with NIPSA classroom assistants. In fact, UNISON dassroom assistant members should demand to know why their 'leadership' actually accepted the pay 'offer' from Catriona Ruane back in June!

If all other education workers, teaching and non-teaching staff, were to take solidarity action it would put significant pressure on the Assembly to back down. Meetings between classroom assistants and all other staff in schools should now be called to discuss how to organise solidarity action. This should also be done in the community, involving parents and students who can also put pressure on the politicians.

For united public sector action

The plight of classroom assistants is not entirely isolated. Across the public sector, workers are being faced with below-inflation pay 'rises' from Maggie Thatcher's No. 1 fan Gordon Brown. But workers are resisting these pay cuts. Postal workers have been forced into taking another two 48 hour strikes next week followed by weeks of rolling action. Civil service and health workers are also being bal-

loted to take industrial action. The Socialist Party is campaigning for the unions to call a united one-day public sector strike to maximise the opposition to attacks on workers pay and conditions.

A working class party is also needed

Working class people however also need a voice which can represent them politically. None of the parties in the Assembly represent the common interests of working class people. The Executive is implementing a vicious programme of neo-liberal right-wing policies of privatisation, cuts and job losses.

The Socialist Party believes a party which organises workers and young people to fight attacks from the Assembly and challenges them with a socialist alternative is desperately needed. If you agree with our ideas, then join the Socialist Party today.

Socialist Party PUBLIC STATEMENT 17th Sept 2007

The Socialist Party fully supports classroom assistants job evaluation pay claim in their struggle for decent pay and conditions at work. It is a disgrace that the local political parties on local councils, education and library boards and in the Assembly have overseen exploitation of classroom assistants for 12 years by using 'job evaluation' to keep wages down.

Classroom assistants play an invaluable role in the educational development of children, especially those with special needs. The shoddy treatment of this group of workers speaks volumes about how those in power on local councils and in the Assembly regard the educational rights of all children.

The imposition of what is in effect a pay cut for class-

room assistants is all the more obscene when compared to the £100,000 a year salary (excluding bonuses) the Permanent Secretary of Education Mr. Will Haire receives. Workers would be advised not to hold their breath waiting for the politicians in Stormont to start cutting these bureaucrats wages!

We give our unconditional support to any strike action taken by classroom assistants and call on all workers to support their just fight. The Socialist Party will actively campaign within the trade union movement, will campaign in the workplaces and within the community, in schools and colleges calling on all workers to support your struggle. Our paper, The Socialist, will also carry articles outlining why classroom assistants have been forced to take strike action and what people can do to help your campaign.

Unity is Strength! Victory to the classroom workers!

Socialist PartyFor Workers' Unity & Socialism

The Socialist Party campaigns on many issues affecting working class and young people in the communities, workplaces, colleges and schools. We have consistently stood for unity of working class people against attacks from Government and the bosses

Fighting water charges

and against sectarianism.

We have been the most active political party to fight the introduction of water charges and the attempt to privatise the water service.

In 2003 we initiated the We Won't Pay Campaign to build support for and organise mass non-payment of water charges. Socialist Party members, against the opposition of the right-wing trade union leaders, successfully campaigned for the trade unions to support mass non-payment of water charges.

All the parties in the Assembly are united in supporting New Labour policies of attacking working class people's living standards. What we need is a party which stands for the common interests of working and unemployed people - a socialist alternative where the millions run society, not the millionaires!

Join the Socialist Party	Join	the	Socia	list	Part	V
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I would like \square to join \square more in	ıfo
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Tel: 90232962

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