

# All workers: unite to fight for decent jobs

**Paul Callanan**

Youth Fight for Jobs national organiser

Figures from the Association of Graduate Recruiters show there are 83 applicants for every graduate position, twice the figure in 2009. With around 2.5 million unemployed and rising chasing half a million job vacancies there is a serious jobs crisis in Britain.

In a recent speech in Spain Iain Duncan Smith (IDS), minister for work and pensions, spoke of his beloved welfare 'reforms' ie slashing benefits and implementing slave labour schemes.

These policies offer no solution to the crisis, only misery for millions.

In an attempt to deflect growing anger away from him and his ConDem government IDS suggested that high levels of immigration were hampering attempts by the government to tackle levels of long-term joblessness.

He argued that big businesses would have to "play their part" by employing school leavers born in Britain instead of so-called 'cheap immigrant labour'.

In response to IDS, David Frost, the director general of the bosses' organisation, the British Chambers

of Commerce, claimed that: "employers should choose the best person... The challenge is to ensure that more young Britons are in a position to be the candidate."

How exactly is this going to happen when this government is turning the clock back to the 19th century?

A good quality education is becoming a privilege only to be enjoyed by the sons and daughters of the very wealthiest in society.

There is no need for young people to be left to rot on the dole or for migrants to be excluded. According to the BBC IDS said a "realistic promise" of work formed part of the government's "contract" with the British people.

But the pro-big business ConDems have no plans to provide decent work on decent pay for all. On the contrary, for most young people they only offer unemployment, slave labour 'work for your dole' schemes or, at best, insecure, low-paid work.

Youth Fight for Jobs demands a programme of government investment in socially useful jobs.

This would mean, for example, a massive public programme of house building, renovation and infrastructure projects, with no place for private companies who will put profit first.



YFJ marching for jobs and homes, not racism in Barking photo Paul Mattsson

## Our demands include:

- The right to a decent job for all. We won't pay for the bosses' crisis!
- No to job losses. Open the account books to let workers see where the profits have gone.
- Bail out workers not bosses. Nationalise big industries threatening closure or large-scale job losses.
- For fighting trade unions, involving young workers, migrant

- workers and the unemployed.
- For training linked to decent jobs.
- The right to a decent education and/or training for all.
- For decent working conditions. No to bullying.
- For a living minimum wage of at least £8 an hour for all.
- Share out the work. For a 35 hour working week with no loss of pay.

If you want to get involved in the

fightback then you should join the Youth Fight for Jobs Jarrow march. In 1936 200 unemployed workers marched from Jarrow in the north east of England to London in protest at high unemployment and atrocious living standards.

Youth Fight for Jobs will be marking the 75th anniversary of the original march by doing it again. Join us on the march to tell this government; we won't be a lost generation, we will fight for jobs and education! [www.jarrowmarch11.com](http://www.jarrowmarch11.com)

## High street job cuts: Jane Norman worker speaks out

Jane Norman, the high street fashion chain, has gone into administration leaving 1,600 people unpaid and jobless. Here a worker tells her story.

On Saturday 25 June I opened my shop as usual. At 11am I received a phone call from the supervisor of another Jane Norman store. She sounded shaken and upset and said: "The bailiffs are in our shop. They're taking everything."

The staff were told to put their keys on the table and were marched to the office to hand over all the money from the safe. The poor girls, many of them very young, were so intimidated they didn't know what to do! I was then instructed to close my store before the bailiffs raided it too.

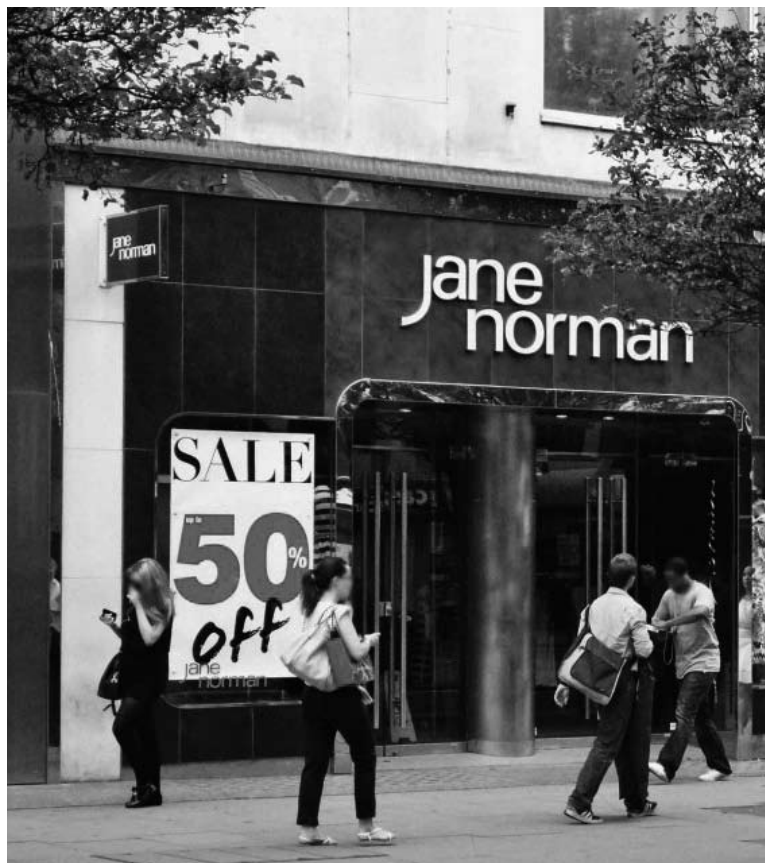
The chair of Jane Norman, Stuart Bennie, had informed everyone at head office that we had several people interested in buying the business. He had also said we had until the end of the month to pay unpaid rent on several Jane Norman sites.

We now believe he had known for over a month that we were going into administration and continued to tell everyone it was 'business as usual' and to remain positive and upbeat so that shop floor staff would feel motivated and make more money.

Then all the head office staff were called to a meeting. Stuart Bennie told them that we had no buyer and that he was handing over to the administrators.

It was only then that the head office staff realised that the people they had been told to assist over the last month to help the company reduce costs had been appointed as an administrator.

The administrator coldly announced: "We can't afford to pay



Things are looking dismal on the high street

you so you will be made redundant." It was awful. People broke down in tears. Someone from the back shouted: "So you knew you couldn't pay us and you let us work for free?"

We all received this information via text as everyone was too overwhelmed and upset to call. On Tuesday I received a phone call from my area manager. She sounded devastated. She told me how sorry she was but that my store would not be one of the few kept open.

She informed me that I had been made redundant and asked me to hand in my keys to head office at the

request of the administrators. I told her they could have my keys when I get my wages!

Even the area managers don't know if they have a job. There are eight of them and they've been informed one will be kept on. This is the administrators' disgusting tactic to get them to do their dirty work for free. I can't believe that in this day and age it is legal to treat people like this.

I worked for the company for eight years. I have friends who have been there for up to 18 years. For it to end this way is absolutely disgraceful!

## Socialist Students meeting prepares for new term

After an academic year which has seen hundreds of thousands of students and young people come to the streets in protest, the Socialist Students national meeting on 3 July was a brilliant opportunity for activists to come together to discuss the lessons of this movement.

Two sessions were held, the first discussing aspects of the attacks on education and the student movement and the second an organisational session.

Socialist Students correctly predicted that students, facing the trebling of tuition fees, draconian education cuts and the scrapping of EMA student payments would be forced to fight back. We were the first organisation to make the call for student strikes and walkouts.

Socialist Students members played an important role in organising the huge student protests at the end of 2010. Also, we raised the demand for democracy and accountability of different organising groups within the movement.

In the new academic year, the cap on university places will remain or could even be extended and we could see the unchecked expansion of private universities and the back-door privatisation of state universities.

We need mass student support for strikes of education workers as they continue in the autumn. Let's make 5 November, when the Jarrow March for Jobs arrives in central London and marches into Trafalgar Square, the date of the next national demonstration against fees and education cuts.

We discussed the importance of Socialist Students having campaign stalls throughout university freshers' weeks. These should advertise introductory meetings that discuss who we are and what our ideas are.

Socialist Students will hit the ground running in the new term, and with our energy, activity and ideas is uniquely placed on campuses to offer leadership.

**Ian Pattison and Alex Moore**

## Youth Fight for Jobs: campaign moving forward

On Sunday 3 July Youth Fight for Jobs (YFJ) held an open steering committee where 30 young trade unionists, students and unemployed activists met to discuss the progress of the campaign.

The first session was a discussion on the Jarrow march for Jobs. People reported on how the plans were going in their areas to build for the march.

The second discussion was about building YFJ. This session focussed on the attacks on the rights and living standards of young people and practical steps for building the fightback. People raised the need to unionise young workers who are

mostly in low-paid, insecure jobs.

We finished off with a report on the work of the campaign. We are now over half way to raising the funds for the Jarrow march. Since the last YFJ conference the TSSA rail union has affiliated to the campaign. We also talked about the motion at the last Trade Union Congress that commended YFJ for the work it had done and led on to the 29 January demonstration against youth unemployment and tuition fees in Manchester.

YFJ is now seen as an important campaign in the eyes of many trade unionists and youth.

**YFJ campaigner**