

Stop the Bombardier jobs slaughter

Steve Score
East Midlands Socialist Party

Derby has been rocked by the announcement of 1,400 job losses by the train manufacturer Bombardier. The company blames the loss of the £1.4 billion government Thameslink project contract to build 1,200 carriages.

Instead the contract was awarded to the German company Siemens. This comes only months after David Cameron hypocritically took the whole Con-Dem cabinet to Derby to pledge support for manufacturing industry!

The 446 permanent workers and 983 agency-employed staff facing the axe would only be the tip of the iceberg. For every directly employed worker, there are four jobs in support industries that would go.

When the government was challenged about the effects of public sector cuts, it claimed that manufacturing industry and the private sector would take up the slack. This government action proves that to be a lie too!

Bombardier, a Canadian owned company, is the last train manufacturer left in Britain. There is apparently no new work on the order books from September and the company is carrying out a review of its UK operations.

It has not ruled out closing the Derby plant which employs 3,000 workers. It has been claimed that many of the job losses would have taken place even if Bombardier had



Socialist Party members campaigning in Derby photo East Midlands SP

won the contract.

The government claims that the contract was awarded to Siemens as it represented the "best value for money" for taxpayers, as required under EU rules.

However, this is rubbish when you consider the long-term cost of up to 15,000 job losses in lost tax, consumer spending and increased welfare benefits.

Wasted skills

Skills built up over years in the workforce could be poured down the drain. The Socialist Party says the company should be nationalised under democratic workers' control and management to save jobs, with compensation paid to shareholders

only on the basis of proven need.

If governments can nationalise banks, then they could do the same at Bombardier! Let's have the company's books open for inspection. Let's see where the previous profits have gone.

Why, in a time of increased awareness of climate change, is the rail network not being expanded to reduce road traffic? A fully integrated plan of public transport, publicly owned and democratically run, could utilise the skills that exist in workplaces such as Bombardier.

The bosses try to set workers from different countries up to compete with each other. But a 'race to the bottom' - jobs being relocated in a drive to cut costs and maximise profits - is not in the interests of

workers in any country.

German workers face their own struggles against redundancies and for decent pay, terms and conditions.

Union demo

The unions Unite, RMT, GMB and TSSA have organised a massive joint demonstration in Derby on Saturday 23 July. The Socialist Party appeals to public sector workers to take part in the demonstration too, to undermine the government's attempts to divide workers in the public and private sectors.

This can be the beginning of a massive campaign to save jobs. Support already exists from the people of Derby who know what the further decline of industry will mean to them.

If the plant is threatened with closure, trade unions should consider following the example of the Vestas wind turbine factory and the Visteon car plants where occupations of the factories took place in 2009.

- Stop the jobs slaughter
- Nationalise Bombardier to save jobs
- For an expansion of the rail network and public transport on the basis of public ownership and democratic control

Derby demonstration against job cuts

Saturday 23 July, 10am
Bass Recreation Ground, marching to a rally at Cathedral Green

In brief

CWU elections

Voting starts for the National and Industrial executive committees of the Communication Workers Union (CWU) on 18 July.

These elections come at a crucial time for CWU members. Many members in the Postal constituency feel that the anti-Royal Mail privatisation campaign has been ineffective and in Telecoms the executive has delivered a pay freeze, two years of below inflation pay increases, the widespread use of contractual overtime for field engineers and the continuance of BT's oppressive performance management culture.

Socialist Party members are part of the Communication Workers Broad Left (CWBL). See www.socialistparty.org.uk for a list of candidates to support to build a leadership that will fight.

Clive Walder

Leeds college strike

University and College Union (UCU) members at the Leeds College of Building (LCB) mounted a picket outside on 6 July, striking against jobs cuts, demotions and pay cuts. Michael Howley, the college's UCU branch secretary said: "We're on strike today because the college has decided to impose a restructuring programme to fund a new college building."

"Yet the four college directors who earn almost £400,000 between them don't face any cut. The college has over £10 million in reserves with almost £7.3 million in cash!"

The college is aiming to impose the changes in September. Unfortunately, despite Unison union members at the college facing similar attacks, they have not yet been balloted.

Iain Dalton

Hyde Park and Headingley Socialist Party

Fire service job cuts

Over 1,000 firefighters' jobs have been axed in 12 months, with another one in ten to face the chop in the next three years. The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) has said fire and rescue budgets are being cut by 25% over four years.

Meanwhile AssetCo, the company that owns all London and Lincolnshire fire engines, is in talks with a Bahraini banking firm Arcapita to avoid going bankrupt. AssetCo used scabs to try to break the London firefighters' strike in October-November 2010.

The FBU has warned that creditors could seize fire engines and other equipment to recover AssetCo debts.

Staffordshire NSSN

An excellent public meeting organised by Staffordshire Shop Stewards Network (SSSN) took place on 11 July in Hanley. The meeting discussed building for a 24-hour public sector general strike over pensions in the autumn.

The meeting was attended by union reps and members of CWU, PCS, NUT, FBU, GMB, Unison and NUS.

Speakers included Liat Norris from Youth Fight for Jobs, who explained about the 2011 Jarrow march. Marchers would be visiting Stoke-on-Trent on 19 October to highlight the city's 22% youth unemployment rate. See page 12.

• Read more at:
www.socialistparty.org.uk

Southampton Anger grows as workers face the axe

Nick Chaffey
Southampton Socialist Party

On 11 July, Southampton council workers faced the sack unless they signed new contracts cutting pay and enhancements. But at least 400 workers were yet to sign the contract. Port, bin, library, traffic and toll bridge workers were out on strike on the 11th, as part of co-ordinated action across the council workforce.

Port Health Authority workers explained why they have joined the

latest strike against the council's cuts: "We stand to lose £200 a month under the new contracts. Clearly we can't afford pay cuts. It will demotivate people and we will lose quality staff."

"Our jobs involve inspecting all ships in and out of the city, massive amounts of containerised food destined for Sainsbury's, KFC and Iceland will sit on the quays. We are also responsible for all international shipping going to the Exxon refinery at Fawley and BP Hamble."

Southampton dockers joined the pickets, saying they would not touch any cargo handled by scabs during the dispute.

Many workers were angered by Richard Williams, leader of Southampton Labour group who, in a local press article, attacked the strike and said 1,500 jobs would need to go to balance the books. A local Unite official said his phone had been red hot with the response from mem-



photo Nick Chaffey

bers. One Unite striker said that if he'd been asked last week he would have considered rejoining the Labour Party, but not now!

Socialist Party members have consistently argued against the need for any cuts and have put forward an alternative 'needs budget', drawn up

by workers, the trade unions and the community.

As the Socialist goes to press, another day of strike action involving 700 council workers is planned on Wednesday 13 July, with a mass demonstration and protest outside the full council meeting.

'Fire and rehire' Shropshire council sacks 6,500 workers

Sam Morecroft
Shropshire Socialist Party

All 6,500 Shropshire county council employees have been sent 90-day redundancy notices last week, informing them that from 1 October, they will effectively be fired and rehired on dramatically reduced terms and conditions, including a 5.4% pay cut and the withdrawal of sick pay and holiday benefits.

The proposals will affect every single worker at the council, and

many believe they will be as much as £3,000 worse off each year.

Alan James, branch secretary of Shrewsbury Unison, has said: "The council claims that this is the only way to save enough money to stop compulsory redundancies, but we know they have already earmarked £13 million of taxpayers' money for a 'rainy day' slush fund."

"The real purpose of these proposals is to undermine the terms and conditions of council workers and make us more attractive to private sector vultures

such as Serco Group.

"Our members are simply not prepared to accept these proposals and we are intending to ballot for industrial action."

The tactic of 'fire and rehire' is one that we can expect other councils to employ in the future.

The entire trade union movement, in both the public and private sector, should offer solidarity and support to council workers in Shropshire, Southampton and anywhere else these proposals are put forward.

London trade unions public meeting - all welcome

**TUC must organise a 24-hour
public sector strike**

Monday 18 July 6pm, Indian YMCA, 41 Fitzroy Square, W1T 6AQ
Called by NSSN, RMT, FBU, PCS, CWU

Speakers:

- Chris Baugh assistant general secretary PCS
- Martin Powell-Davies NUT executive, personal capacity
- Steve Hedley RMT London organiser
- Mark Palfrey CWU London divisional rep
- Ben Sprung FBU London organiser