

Merthyr won't pay for the crisis...

MARCH FOR JOBS!

Merthyr to Cardiff 4-6 August



photo Alex Ivanov

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Tory work and pensions secretary, Iain Duncan Smith, singled out Merthyr Tydfil in the south Wales valleys when he implied that the main barrier to jobseekers finding work was their own apathy - 'why don't they just get on a bus to Cardiff?' he asked.

Youth Fight for Jobs (YFJ) Wales is marching from Merthyr Tydfil to Cardiff from 4 to 6 August in protest at the cuts to jobs and services and the levels of youth unemployment. A polite version of the response to Iain Duncan Smith's slur on Merthyr Tydfil's unemployed is summed up by Guardian journalist John Harris: "You can't catch a bus to a job that doesn't exist."

The civil servants' union, PCS, was quick to point out that - counting residents of the city alone - there are nine unemployed people chasing every job vacancy in Cardiff.

And despite the figures getting worse and worse, the government plans to close the jobcentre at Caradog House in Cardiff. This not only makes finding work even more difficult, it also throws more experienced public sector workers into the same jobs market in which everybody has to compete.

Young people, with a shorter CV and fewer qualifications are being hit the hardest, especially by recruitment freezes in the civil service and in councils.

The truth is that the government is trying to blame the victims of the recession for unemployment, when the real criminals are sitting in Parliament forcing through cuts and in the board rooms of the banks and big businesses stacking up profits.

YFJ has been campaigning in the area. Rhys Harrison, one of the organisers of

the Merthyr march asked a YFJ meeting in Merthyr Tydfil: "why is it that every student on a grant and every young person looking for work is a scrounger, but every banker with a golden handshake and gigantic bonus is a legend?"

Merthyr Tydfil has the highest level of unemployment in Britain and one of the smallest number of job vacancies. One in four adults claims benefits and for every job opening there are 84 jobseekers.

Unemployed people didn't create this situation: they're the casualties of the free-market capitalist system that, in the search for ever greater profits, has brought about the 'Great Recession'.

Steve Fothergill, an academic at Sheffield Hallam University, has calculated that 45,000 people will be thrown off benefits in Wales alone as a result of the government's attacks. Of these, 17,000 will be denied any form of benefits and could face terrible suffering.

These people are being picked on not because they're to blame but because the government thinks they're an easy target. Or, as Rhys says, "they'll always kick those who they think cannot kick back".

YFJ in Merthyr Tydfil and neighbouring valleys are taking IDS' advice and are marching to Cardiff. But they're not swapping one dole queue for another; they're marching to demand an end to attacks on the poor and for decent jobs for all.

Jaime Davies, a young shop worker from Caerphilly, said "We will not be oppressed by capitalist society. We march for our future."

Get in touch with YFJ to join the Merthyr march or the Jarrow march which is taking place from 1 October - 5 November:
www.jarrowmarch11.com
youthfightforjobs@gmail.com
020 8558 7947

What we stand for

The Socialist Party fights for socialist change - a democratic society run for the needs of all and not the profits of a few. We also fight, in our day-to-day campaigning, for every possible improvement for working-class people.

As capitalism dominates the globe, the struggle for genuine socialism must be international.

The Socialist Party is part of the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI), a democratic, socialist international that organises in over 40 countries.

Our demands include:

Work and income

- Trade union struggle to increase the minimum wage to £8 an hour without exemptions as an immediate step towards £10 an hour. For an annual increase in the minimum wage linked to average earnings.
- All workers, including part-timers, temps, casual and migrant workers to have trade union rates of pay, employment protection, and sickness and holiday rights from day one of employment.
- An immediate 50% increase in the state

retirement pension, as a step towards a living pension. Reinstate the link with average earnings now.

- Reject 'Welfare to Work'. For the right to decent benefits, education, training, or a job, without compulsion.
- Scrap the anti-trade union laws! For fighting trade unions, democratically controlled by their members. Full-time union officials to be regularly elected and receive no more than a worker's wage.
- A maximum 35-hour week with no loss of pay.

Public services

- No to privatisation and the Private Finance Initiative (PFI). Renationalise all privatised utilities and services, with compensation paid only on the basis of proven need.
- Fully fund all services and run them under accountable, democratic committees that include representatives of service workers and users.
- Free, publicly run, good quality education, available to all at any age. Abolish university tuition fees now and introduce a living grant. No to academies!
- A socialist NHS to provide for everyone's health needs - free at the point of use and under

democratic control. Kick out private contractors!

- Keep council housing publicly owned. For a massive building programme of publicly owned housing, on an environmentally sustainable basis, to provide good quality homes with low rents.

Environment

- Major research and investment into replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy and into ending the problems of early obsolescence and unrecycled waste.
- Public ownership of the energy generating industries. No to nuclear power. No to Trident.
- A democratically planned, low fare, publicly-owned transport system, as part of an overall plan against environmental pollution.

Rights

- Oppose discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, disability, sexuality, age, and all other forms of prejudice.
- Repeal all laws that trample over civil liberties. For the right to protest! End police harassment.
- Defend abortion rights. For a woman's right to choose when and whether to have children.
- For the right to asylum. No to racist immigration laws.

New workers' party

- For a new mass workers' party drawing together workers, young people and activists from workplace, community, environmental and anti-war campaigns, to provide a fighting, political alternative to the pro-big business parties.
- Trade unions to disaffiliate from the Labour Party now and aid the building of a new workers' party!

Socialism and internationalism

- No to imperialist wars and occupations. Withdraw the troops immediately from Iraq and Afghanistan!
- Tax the super-rich! For a socialist government to take into public ownership the top 150 companies and banks that dominate the British economy, and run them under democratic working-class control and management. Compensation to be paid only on the basis of proven need.
- A democratic socialist plan of production based on the interests of the overwhelming majority of people, and in a way that safeguards the environment.
- No to the bosses' neo-liberal European Union! For a socialist Europe and a socialist world!