

# Bombardier Save jobs, renationalise UK rail and train building

Steve Score and Dave Gorton

Around 10,000 marched against job cuts on 23 July in the biggest demonstration in Derby for decades. It was a protest of the working class, with train manufacturer Bombardier workers marching alongside supporters from all over Derby and beyond.

Bombardier has announced the loss of 1,400 jobs following the government decision to award the Thameslink rail project to German company, Siemens. And they spent £15 million on consultants to help them make the decision.

At the closing rally speakers including Bob Crow, transport union RMT general secretary, called for a reversal of the government decision to give 'preferred bidder status' to Siemens rather than Bombardier.

Thousands of leaflets were handed out by Socialist Party members and supporters of the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) calling for the re-nationalisation of Bombardier and the rail network in order to expand public transport and create a long-term future for rail jobs.

Following the demo 100 people went straight to a meeting called by the NSSN. Darren Barber, vice chair of the Bombardier trade union shop stewards' committee, got proceedings off to a lively start: "I'm buzzing, I feel as though something can change because everyone has got together."

"The mood was dead when the announcement first came, but when the unions start getting involved we started to get some belief. It makes me proud to be a rep."

Alex Gordon, RMT president, in an excellent speech, spelt out his



Thousands of workers and their families joined the march. photo Paul Mattsson

union's position on nationalisation and public ownership and that workers' jobs would never be safe while in the hands of private companies.

Rob Williams, chair of the NSSN, said: "We fully support the Bombardier workers. It is in all workers' interests, whether in the public or private sectors, for Bombardier workers to win."

"We stand for international solidarity, but that is no contradiction to defending the jobs in Derby. How can any government force a company to invest when it isn't owned by

the government?

"Why can't the government nationalise Bombardier just like the banks? It was a Tory government that nationalised Rolls Royce in 1971 overnight to save that company - there is a precedent."

"Except that this time it should be with democratic workers' control and management."

Ex-Unite general secretary Tony Woodley's use of the 'British Jobs for British Workers (BJFBW)' slogan in his closing speech at the main rally, set alongside the platform of a Bombardier manager and Tory council

leader, can strengthen the impression that 'we are all in this together'.

In reality, the interests of the workers in Derby are to fight to reverse the government's decision and to explain the pro-business/neoliberal directives of the EU which enshrine the 'race to the bottom'.

But the BJFBW slogan is a complete divergence in this campaign. The call for nationalisation makes it clear that 'we' - the Bombardier workforce and management and the Con-Dem coalition - aren't in this together and emphasises that this struggle is a class one.

## In brief

### Journalists on strike

Around 25 National Union of Journalists (NUJ) members in Doncaster, Selby and Mexborough are in the third week of indefinite strike action which started on 15 July. Darren, the acting Father of Chapel (FOC - National Union of Journalists' union rep) said that "the strike is about everything - office closures, staff cuts, merged jobs, increased workloads and hours, low pay - all of which mean poorer quality local newspapers." Another striker Barbara said: "I worked during the last strike in 2006, but they've gone too far this time. We know it's not a nine to five job but it shouldn't be a sweat shop either. I just feel that after everything we've done, I've been smacked in the face with a wet fish."

Meanwhile, Hayley is giving it large on her megaphone on the picket line: "25 quid from Maplins, best money I ever spent." In an attempt to make progress, the NUJ chapel have approached arbitration service ACAS.

• Please send messages of support to darrenpburke@gmail.com and donations to account name DFP NUJ Chapel, no: 35630388, sort code: 60-06-39.

Alistair Tice

### ...and at the BBC

Members of the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) took industrial action in Coventry on 1 August as part of a national strike at the BBC against compulsory redundancies. The strength of the strike action in Coventry and regionally reduced the local radio station and regional news channel to a minimum service. Vanessa Pearce, Mother of the Chapel for BBC Coventry and Warwickshire NUJ spoke to members of the Socialist Party on the picket line: "It's really important for us to fight against compulsory redundancies. In September we will find out how the cuts in the BBC will affect us here, we need to make a stand now to fight for every single job."

In Leeds the strike severely disrupted programming. At lunchtime, an impromptu rally was held to boost morale. A work to rule has begun and further industrial action looks likely over the next few months.

Socialist Party reporters

### Coastguards

Over 200 people packed into Oystermouth primary school, Swansea on 22 July to hear coastguards and local campaigners make the case for saving Swansea coastguard station.

The original government proposal was to close Milford Haven station and downgrade Swansea to a daylight hours-only service. Now the Con-Dem coalition proposes to close Swansea, although Milford Haven has had a reprieve. The public consultation (closing on 6 October) tries to steer respondents into choosing between Swansea and Milford Haven, but this divisive tactic must be resisted at all costs.

A campaign committee was set up at the meeting.

Readers are urged to sign the online petition at <http://www.gopetition.com/petitions/save-swanea-coastguard.html> and respond to the consultation on the Department for Transport website.

Dave Warren

PCS South West Wales

## Reinstate Paddy Brennan!

Paddy Brennan, Unite convenor at the Swindon Honda plant has been suspended from work. Paddy's suspension is a provocative attack on a prominent trade union fighter and by extension an attack on the right to organise at Honda. We demand Paddy's reinstatement and the NSSN pledges to do all it can in support of this.

Donald McDougall, Honda Unite branch secretary said: "Paddy Brennan is a dedicated socialist who deserves better than this shoddy treatment, for no other reason than fighting for the best interests of his fellow workers. He has given a massive amount of his time in the support of those in need, both within the workplace and outwith, supporting many campaigns nationwide. It is now time that we rally behind him and expose his accusers of their anti-union agenda. In the coming days Paddy and our organisation will be looking for support and solidarity from our brothers and sisters."

Please email letters of protest to [humgen@honda-eu.com](mailto:humgen@honda-eu.com) and messages of support to: 07985 800763

Rob Williams  
NSSN chair

## Action to save our libraries

Planned strike action by Lambeth libraries staff for 22 July was postponed as the council management conceded that there will be no compulsory redundancies.

This offer is being put to all Unison members in libraries at a joint shop meeting. Staff are not ruling out industrial action to protect libraries from cuts but this offer represents a

significant victory as it protects both jobs and many frontline services. Every library in Lambeth looked set to close before the action was organised.

Andy Tullis, Lambeth Unison

### More library battles

Battles to save libraries are going

on in many areas, including a mass lobby of Surrey county council on 26 July.

Reports of these are on the Socialist Party website [www.socialistparty.org.uk](http://www.socialistparty.org.uk).

In Waltham Forest, east London there will be a protest to save the libraries - on Saturday 13 August from 4pm in the Town Square.

## Stop the cuts at St Helier hospital

Despite management intimidation, an inspiring protest took place outside St Helier hospital in south London on 27 July. 100 health workers came out in a lunchtime protest against the potential loss of over 100 posts.

Kevin O'Brien, the Epsom/St Helier Unison union branch secretary

explained that roughly 4,600 staff work for Epsom and St Helier University hospitals trusts.

Of these, 762 are casual staff who face the sack. He said any job loss is unacceptable.

Local staff still cannot understand how the trust has gone from a £3 million 'surplus' in April this

year to a situation a few weeks later of announcing up to £45 million of cuts.

Those present are determined to continue to fight to defend jobs and services and a further protest is planned on 3 August at Epsom hospital.

Chris Newby

## Surrey social care staff say enough is enough

Adult social care workers from across Surrey have voted to refuse to work to proposed new shifts. Surrey County Council (SCC) have been trying to change the working hours of staff in adult social work teams since last year but staff, most of whom are Unison members have stood firm and SCC have been unable to implement the changes.

A meeting of reps from across the county voted unanimously not to accept the changes and not to participate in a planned 'pilot' of the changes in hospital-based teams.

The meeting also elected five new Unison workplace contacts to build for potential action. Dozens of Unison membership forms were taken

away to recruit those staff not yet in the union.

Surrey County Unison branch will now conduct a consultative ballot for industrial action and let the council know that our members will not be pushed around any longer.

Paul Couchman

Surrey Unison branch secretary, personal capacity