Birmingham: city of a thousand cuts

Tom Creek

Birmingham Socialist Party

Birmingham has been hit hard by the ongoing capitalist crisis. Unemployment stands at 11.6% and in some wards is over 20%. Once key to the city’s economy, its thousand trades, its manufacturing base is a shadow of its former self, and the city is also facing public service cuts. In March, the council’s ruling Con-Dem coalition slashed £122 million from its budget. Over 7,000 council workers are being laid off over the next three years, and 5,000 more will see their jobs privatised. All those who remain have been threatened with redundancies unless they accept reduced terms and conditions. The latest strike to be announced is the ‘offshoring’ of up to 100 council IT jobs to India.

The Con-Dem coalition on the council is weak, and after gaining 14 seats in May, the council now controls the rest of the elections in 2012. But Labour’s ‘alternat"