

75 years ago 200 unemployed men from Jarrow marched from their home in the North East to London to demand jobs and an end to their poverty conditions.

This October Youth Fight for Jobs is marching their route again to demand:

- A massive government scheme to create jobs which are socially useful and apprenticeships which offer guaranteed jobs at the end - both paying at least the minimum wage, with no youth exemptions.
- The immediate reinstatement of EMA payments, expanding them to be available to all 16-19 year olds.
- The immediate re-opening of all youth services that have been closed, including reinstating sacked staff.
- The scrapping of 'workfare' schemes - benefits should be based on need not forced slave labour.
- A massive building programme of environmentally sound, cheap social housing.

To get involved with the march see the website (opposite), email youthfightforjobs@gmail.com or call 020 8558 7947

This page was planned and written by young Socialist Party members in Wales.

# One in a million...fighting back!

Scott Jones

I am one in a million, a million unemployed young people in the country at the moment. What does one million mean? A million is not a statistic - it is a million individual tragedies.

It means one million young people are being prevented from making lives for themselves.

Whether it be people in their early 20s with young families to provide for; school leavers who can't get a first foot on the ladder of life; university graduates who have ploughed huge amounts of time, money and effort into gaining degrees they now can't use; or people like myself whose efforts to build a life and career for themselves are being stifled by the scarcity of real, full time, permanent jobs.

I have been unemployed for significant periods in the past and now face it again. I dread being asked, "what do you do?" and the shame of answering "I'm unemployed" which feels tantamount to saying, "I don't do anything".

Or being mistaken for a student and not denying it because you don't

want to admit the truth. You can rewrite your CV till the cows come home or offer to do work experience but that's only possible if you can afford the fare.

This feeling of helplessness is exacerbated by attacks on benefit claimants by the right wing press, mirroring the attitude of the Con-Dem government. David Cameron has said that youth unemployment is "a matter of deep regret" but has done nothing to solve the problem.

Instead he has spoken about further cuts to and conditions on unemployment benefits, increasing misery and poverty but not increasing the jobs available. Government cuts to public sector jobs and the inevitable effect on the private sector will only aggravate the problem.

Events like the Jarrow march give hope and although it deeply saddens me that 75 years on from the original, the same thing needs to be done, it also gives me confidence of a brighter future.

This is our chance to put youth unemployment at the top of the agenda and tell the government that we will not be a lost generation, we will fight for jobs and we will fight for a better future.



photo Paul Mattsson



## Local Housing Allowance

The recent Socialist feature (issue 683) showed how the Con-Dems' attacks on benefits hit young people. This included the January 2012 increase in the minimum age, from 25 to 35, to receive full housing allowance for a single-occupant tenancy.

This attack builds on Labour's introduction of Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates in April 2008, which replaced housing benefit for private tenants. A new LHA applicant, whatever their age, sharing a multi-bedroom home, can only get the very low 'bedsit' rates. This is usually not enough for someone sharing a two or three bedroom property. LHA rates were reduced in April 2011 from being based on the cheapest five out of ten rental prices to three out of ten, while private rental rates have increased. Many people under 35 face the prospect of very poor quality, cramped and expensive housing conditions, often with no or little privacy.

If any government wants to stop subsidising private landlords, it should cap rents not benefits and build decent public housing, available at affordable rates. Instead the Con-Dems are bringing social housing rents closer to private ones.

## £36,000 for a degree

Edinburgh University is the third university in Scotland to announce how much it will charge students from outside Scotland (Scottish students will continue to not pay fees) and has made itself the most expensive place in the UK to get a degree. Edinburgh will charge £9,000 a year, despite all its degrees being four years.

This means that even without a maintenance loan, students from England and Wales will incur £36,000 debt. The reality of higher education after the fees increase is becoming clear. Many students from working and middle class backgrounds will feel completely shut out by these costs. The campaign against fees isn't lost. With the prospect of all public sector workers taking coordinated strike action in the next few months and the burning anger of young people after the attacks of last year, the momentum to reignite the movement against cuts and fees could quickly develop.

The Jarrow march calls for the immediate reinstatement of EMA and the scrapping of tuition fees. When the march arrives in London on 5 November, the end demonstration in Trafalgar Square will be a great opportunity for students to join young workers and unemployed people in telling this government that the fight isn't over!

# NEET figures still rising

Jaime Davies

The number of NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) youth in the UK has risen to 18.4%. One year ago NEET figures were at 16.3%. It is no coincidence that the figure has risen sharply and steeply under the rule of the Con-Dem coalition.

The NEET figures are disgraceful but they come as no surprise due to the savage cuts regime being implemented all over Britain by the Con-Dem government and in Wales by the Labour-led Welsh Assembly. Simply put, there are hardly any jobs out there.

Finding work under these conditions is particularly hard on young people as employers are more likely to fill limited places with older, more experienced workers.

A lot of young people cannot afford university tuition fees and so will miss out on an education. Even young people wanting to go to college or sixth form who rely on EMA will suffer since it's been scrapped.

A striking example of just how bad the situation for young people looking for a job is would be the town of Merthyr Tydfil in South Wales. Youth Fight for Jobs recently took action after Tory MP Iain Duncan Smith implied that the working class people of

Merthyr were too lazy to get on a bus to Cardiff and find a job, in light of the staggering 84 JSA claimants to every one vacancy in the town.

Youth Fight for Jobs marched 26 miles over three days from Merthyr to Cardiff, to show Duncan Smith that unemployed people aren't too 'lazy' to get a job. In Cardiff, with local people alone there are nine claimants to one job vacancy!

In order to change this drastic situation for the better what we need and deserve is a real alternative to

the cuts - and to replace the current capitalist system! The only future for my generation is a socialist future - a future that caters to the needs of the millions and not the millionaires!

It is important that we all support and campaign for the upcoming Jarrow to London march for jobs and put pressure on this weak coalition government.

Let them know that the youth have a voice and are willing to take organised action against their attacks on our living standards and futures.



On the Merthyr march photos YFJ Wales



Jaime Davies speaking on the march