

Socialist Worker

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Target the bosses—“British jobs for British workers” is not the way...

WE NEED UNITY IN THE FIGHT FOR JOBS FOR ALL

ALL OF us have seen TV and newspaper coverage of the unofficial walkouts at construction sites across the country.

It's never been more urgent to fight for jobs. Economic crisis is threatening the jobs and living standards of every worker.

The world is in the deepest crisis since the 1930s with spreading mass unemployment, pay cuts and poverty.

This government, which has so utterly failed working people, showers billions on the bankers to shore up profits. But workers are ordered to the dole queue.

We need a fightback, with strikes and protests. The unions have been scandalously slow to offer any sort of resistance to the jobs massacre.

Why hasn't there been a massive campaign, strikes and occupations against the job cuts at Corus, Perkins Engines, Nissan, HDNL and a hundred other places where jobs are going?

It's right to fight for jobs and against wage-cutting. It's right to take on the poisonous system of sub-contracting that is used to make workers compete against each other. It's right to demand that everyone is paid the proper rate for the job and that there's no undercutting of national agreements. And we need militant action, including unofficial action, to win.

Contractors

But the slogan “British jobs for British workers” that has appeared on many of the “wildcat” construction workers picket lines targets the wrong people. It lets the bosses off the hook and it opens the door to murderous division at a time when we need unity in action to fight back.

Of course many of the strikers know this. It was absolutely brilliant to see workers at the Lindsey oil refinery throw the Nazi BNP off the picket line. Every worker should applaud this action.

It's not Italians or Poles or Portuguese workers who are to blame for the attacks on British workers' conditions. It's the contractors and multinationals who benefit from the system. Construction workers have always been forced to move far from home for jobs, whether inside a country

or between countries. How many British workers (or their fathers or brothers) have been forced to work abroad from Dubai to Dusseldorf?

When workers are divided it's the bosses who gain. Total Oil, who manage the Immingham refinery, make £5 billion every three months! Jacobs, the main contractor which has then sub-contracted to an Italian firm, made £250 million in 2007. These are the people workers need to hit.

We have to recognise that urging on these strikes in the direction of “British jobs for British workers” is dangerous.

We all know what will happen if the idea spreads that it's “foreigners”, or immigrants or black or Asian people who are to blame for the crisis. It will be a disaster for the whole working class, will encourage every racist and fascist and make it easier for the bosses to ram through pay and job cuts. Already the BNP are pumping out racist propaganda supporting the strikes.

Everyone should ask themselves why Tory papers like the Express and the Sun and Mail—which hate union power, call for the outlawing of unofficial action and urge on privatisation—are sympathetic to the strikes.

Everyone should be pressurising the union leaders to fight. And if the union leaders won't fight then workers will have to organise the resistance themselves. Let's bring workers from abroad into the unions and link arms against the bosses.

Our unions should learn from the general strikes in Greece and France that we need

mass, militant action directed at the bosses and the government to win.

- Fight all job cuts
- No deals that cut wages or accept lay-offs
- Smash privatisation and sub-contracting
- Unity against the bosses, no to racism and the BNP.

WATERFORD GLASS OCCUPIED TO SAVE JOBS!

Hundreds of workers at Waterford Glass in Ireland have launched an occupation of their factory against the closure of their plant.

It began after the receiver told union officials that he would not be reversing his decision to shut the plant's manufacturing operations with the loss of 480 jobs. Most of the workers are members of Unite.

It's a brilliant example of the fightback needed now. And the sister factory at Stoke-on-Trent where 600 jobs are threatened should be doing the same! Everyone should get behind the occupation and Unite should be taking them round workplaces across Britain and Ireland.

- Messages of support to ATGWU, Keyzer St, Waterford, Republic of Ireland. Phone 00353 5187 5438. Fax 0353 5187 8401

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