

Reject appeals to government ministers:

Saving Bombardier jobs means mobilising against Britain's Tory-Lib Dem government

Socialist Equality Party
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The announcement of 1,429 job losses and the threatened closure of Bombardier engineering works in Derby by 2012 is a bitter blow. There are estimates of up to 13,000 further job losses in the supply chain.

The Department for Transport awarded the £3 billion contract to build trains for the Thameslink private rail franchise to Siemens. This cannot be fought by appealing to the very government who made the decision in the first place. Resisting job losses means workers launching a mass political and industrial struggle to bring down the Conservative/Liberal Democrat government.

The trade unions organising today's protest, the RMT, GMB, Unite and TSSA, have no record of defending jobs at Bombardier or elsewhere. They have collaborated with the government and the employers again and again in destroying jobs. They have seized upon the decision to place Bombardier on "stand-by", in case of problems with the Siemens bid, to claim that the deal has not been finalised and can be reversed if enough "pressure" is applied.

But like Labour before it, this government is an instrument of the financial elite and carries out its dictates. The fate of workers in the ship building, steel, mining and rail industry is a warning to Bombardier workers of what they face.

Unite General Secretary Len McCluskey has urged the government to "act swiftly and decisively to save Britain's last train manufacturer", but he has no intention of saving jobs. "Unite will be working tirelessly to maximise voluntary redundancies and natural wastage, and we expect the company to fully cooperate with us", he declared.

McCluskey is fresh from imposing a bitter defeat on

British Airways workers who fought for nearly two years against efforts to smash up their working conditions. The agreement signed resulted in the slashing of jobs and the introduction of a two-tier workforce with new entrants on inferior pay. Unite signed up to a scabs charter, agreeing to BA's right to train and use a special pool of replacement cabin crew in the event of any future strike.

The Rail Maritime Transport Workers Union (RMT), led by Bob Crow, is involved in what they describe as a "redundancy consultation" process.

Crow comes fresh from collaborating with London Conservative Mayor Boris Johnson imposing 800 job losses on London Underground workers. On the basis of a review procedure the RMT called off a series of strikes. The review then simply rubber stamped the original decision on redundancies.

The trade unions are presenting Bombardier as the victim of a plot by the European Union, the government and Siemens as though it was a model employer courageously battling to defend its workforce against predatory capitalists. In truth Bombardier is a huge transnational corporation just as ruthless as Siemens in pursuit of profits.

Bombardier wrote to the government declaring that even if their bid was successful they would be firing 1,000 of the 3,000 workforce. This comes on top of continuous job losses and factory closures over the past years.

The fate of the livelihoods of thousands of workers cannot be left in the hands of Conservative ministers, the European Union, executives at Bombardier or Siemens. Neither can any trust be placed in the trade unions and the Labour Party. The unions claim that a

defence of “British” industry is the only way to preserve jobs. The RMT has produced a report on the practices of Siemens in cornering markets. But Bombardier is a huge Canadian transnational corporation. The RMT is only seeking to justify its efforts to build relations with the Tories and is pitting workers at Bombardier against their colleagues in Germany rather than appealing for solidarity action. That is why the campaign has won the support of Rupert Murdoch’s *The Times* and *The Sun* and the *Daily Mail* and *Daily Express*.

Workers must take their stand on the arena of class struggle, not economic protectionism, which, as in the 1930s, would end in disaster.

Bombardier workers must mobilise a rank-and-file movement oriented towards building solidarity action with other sections of workers now facing mass job losses and speed-ups. They must make an appeal to workers throughout Britain, to their colleagues in Siemens in Germany and throughout Europe, for a unified offensive against the attacks waged by the employers in every corporation. Against the beggar-thy-neighbour politics of the union apparatchiks, the demand must be “An injury to one is an injury to all!”

All redundancies must be opposed and the factory occupied to prevent closure and the removal of machinery. Such an action would be a powerful rallying point for a mass strike movement of workers in the public and private sector, directed not at appeals to the government but at bringing it down and forming a genuinely democratic workers’ government.

Such a government would remove the railway network from private ownership and pour billions in major investment into the dilapidated rail network and train building sector that is so essential to a modern mass society.

These policies are advanced by the Socialist Equality Party. Those who agree with them should contact us. We will do all we can to assist in mounting the necessary counter-offensive.



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