

Bombardier protesters speak to WSWS

Our correspondent
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A reporting team from the *World Socialist Web Site* spoke to some of those who attended the demonstration in Derby July 23 to protest the loss of 1,400 jobs and possible closure of the works at Bombardier.

Eamonn Tossell, an engineering worker at Celanese, who make speciality chemical products, told us, “We get made redundant in June next year. The reason we’re closing is because of the energy prices; all the energy companies have put up our prices massively.

“I’ve come down today because I want to support the Bombardier workers. All my mates are now unemployed, existing on £67 a week. One of my mates has been a lorry driver for 21 years, and now he’s on the dole.

“The economy is just going to go down and down. Money should be used to sort out industry, but it isn’t going to happen—Leyland DAF went, Rover went, MG went.

“It is going to go back to Victorian conditions, people living on the streets, widespread hunger”.

Sally Holmes works at Bombardier in the bids department. She said, “I’ve been with Bombardier for 14 years. The department I work in was responsible for putting together the bid for Thameslink, where we lost the bid for the contract, and that’s really why we are here today. It was a huge blow. I was really gutted when we found out the decision.

“There needs to be a complete U-turn. We need to get the government listening to us. I’ve come down to support the rally, and to try and get the decision changed.

“There’s 1,400 jobs being cut at Bombardier, and after the UK review there might be even more jobs cut at Bombardier, and that has a knock-on effect at all the

suppliers. You are talking about thousands and thousands of people. Closure [of Bombardier] would have a real impact, not just here in Derby, but throughout the UK”.

Chris Clark works for London Underground and is a member of the Transport Salaried Staffs’ Association (TSSA).

“I’ve travelled here because Derby has a rich history in the rail industry, and it would be a tragedy to see that go. I’m here to stand together with the people in that industry to make sure it has a future.

“A decision was taken by government to grant a contract to a company that has decided to locate the jobs outside this country. This is a political decision, but it is happening elsewhere as well and we need to reverse the tide of austerity”.

Aidan is an apprentice at Bombardier. He told WSWS reporters, “I’ve come down here to support all the Bombardier workers. My Dad works at Bombardier. If Bombardier closes, then I wouldn’t be able to finish my apprenticeship, where I hope to become an electrical engineer. Appeals to Prime Minister Cameron will probably not change anything”.

William McGiven works for the Job Centre Plus service and is a member of the Public and Commercial Services Union. His father works at Bombardier. He said, “Unions have been the traditional power of the working class, but today they are just going along with the government.

“I want a public transport system and publicly built railways. The more things that are owned publicly, the more effect working class people can have on it. The core utilities of the country should be publicly owned.

“Most of the people currently running the country

have been to private school. I think there are 25 government ministers who are millionaires. There's no representation in the highest echelons of society for the normal working class person.

"I'm from a poor working class area, and I've seen what it's like not to have hope for a job. Labour doesn't represent the working class now. I don't think any of the mainstream parties represent working people".

Peter Redfern has worked all his life in engineering in Derby, and came to the demonstration because some of his former colleagues worked at Bombardier.

"The closure of Bombardier would mean decimation for those that are there now and young people who want to be involved in manufacturing engineering. It would have a big impact on the whole town, along with EGG [a banking call centre] going down the road with the loss of 500 jobs.

"I worked for International Combustion, which was bought out by Rolls Royce and slowly decimated. It closed it down in the end. It went from 3,500 to 100 people.

"I have been a member of the union for 45 years. I believe in the unions because of what happened to me at an engineering firm in Derby where I lost 3 fingers in a power press. At that time on that particular day—no lie—there were seven people in the Derbyshire Royal Infirmary with hand injuries caused by industry. That increased my belief in the union, that you needed these people to protect you, because the company did not care about the people that worked in the industry.

"I think the unions only believe in themselves. They are there to protect themselves rather than the causes. I don't think it's how it used to be.

"At one place I use to work, I was talking to a colleague last night, and the wage structure there now has changed; everyone is on a different wage and that is done for a reason, isn't it? It's done to separate workers, isn't it? In the past we all would vote for say a £2 rise, and everyone would be happy with whatever Fred got. But now people are divided. My wife works for EGG and she is now going to lose her job. She is coming up for retirement, but a lot of people have mortgages and children and bills to pay. It's going to affect them drastically.

"There seems to me a lack of touch between the reality of what government wants and the reality of

what the majority of people actually want. All the people want is a bit of work, to pay the mortgage, feed the family and take the children on holiday. That is what the majority of people all over the world want. And that is being taken away from them.

"I supported the [1984-85] Miners Strike. [Conservative Prime Minister] Margaret Thatcher came to power, and that government economically raped and pillaged the working class people of this country. So when Labour came back into power I never thought I would see what took place, actually take place. I thought there would be more jobs, apprenticeships and support for working people. But [former Labour Prime Minister] Tony Blair went off to Iraq and other countries.

"I see conditions today, poverty and overcrowding on council estates, which I thought were a thing of the past. The investment should be in the future of young people. Labour are just as much a representative of this system as the Tories are. That makes me very angry.

"I've got children, I've got grandchildren. Years ago you would go to work, apprentices would come in, and they would work with you, and you would say, 'He is a good lad'. And I would see them when they were 25 and married and a youngster of their own, and you would say 'Wow that has come good'. And now you see so many young kids on drugs because of the social injustice that takes place".



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