

# Fujitsu strikers in the UK speak out in defence of framed-up Maruti Suzuki workers

Our reporters  
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UK Fujitsu workers took strike action Thursday as part of a series of 24-hour stoppages in opposition to plans by the Japanese-based IT firm to carry out up to 1,800 redundancies as well as pension cuts. The workers are also demanding a living wage.

The job losses in the UK and Ireland are part of 3,300 redundancies planned throughout Europe in a restructuring operation. Some 400 jobs are to go in Finland and between 400 and 500 of Fujitsu's 12,000 employees in Germany will be made redundant. Fujitsu announced 5,000 job cuts globally in 2013, with 3,000 of those in Japan.

The company—the world's fifth largest IT services provider, employing more than 150,000 workers across five continents and supporting customers in 100 countries—is constantly rationalising its global operations due to competition intensified by the introduction of new technology.

In the UK, Fujitsu employs 14,000 at various sites including London, Manchester, Birmingham, Wakefield and Edinburgh.

WSWS reporters spoke to pickets at the Manchester site, which employs 600, and is the only Fujitsu site in the UK that recognises the Unite trade union. The Manchester workers have taken 12 separate days of strike action in recent months over a number of issues. The strikes ended in February when Unite accepted a pay rise of 1.42 percent—a pay cut in real terms with inflation at 2.3 percent.

Michael has worked for Fujitsu for over 30 years and has been a union rep for 25 years. He said that the company had made no concessions in the latest talks with the union. When the WSWS reporters pointed out that the unions no longer functioned as defensive organisations of the working class, but as arms of management of global corporations, he responded, “I

agree, we are compromised. The struggle internationally should be ramped up.”

Last month, pickets at Fujitsu in Manchester expressed their support for 13 Maruti Suzuki workers in India who have been framed-up, listening attentively as a member of the Socialist Equality Party explained the case. On March 18, the Maruti Suzuki workers received life sentences, after being falsely accused of the death by asphyxiation of a company human resources manager. This came after the workers had waged a bitter struggle against redundancies.

WSWS reporters appealed to the Fujitsu strikers this week for further support. Michael gave the following statement of support for the Maruti Suzuki workers: “We've had similar incidents in the UK over the decades, and the blacklist. I support our brothers in India who are being victimised for taking political action.”

Philip said, “This is the second time Fujitsu will have made me redundant. Two-thirds of our jobs are threatened in the Manchester plant.” He agreed that workers should unite their struggles internationally and gave his support to the jailed Maruti Suzuki workers, saying, “It shouldn't even be a question that they are in jail. It sounds like some dodgy practices are going on.”

Philip said that he would be supporting Saturday's international March for Science. “On April 22 I will be joining a science strike in Manchester—it's a worldwide protest against government cuts in science spending. The US military budget is \$500 billion—the education budget is a fraction of this, and everything else is being cut.”

He continued, “With the space research at NASA, the benefits way outstripped the investment. Today, however, with paranoid idiots in charge, they're increasing defence spending and cutting science

spending.”

WSWS reporters referred to the web site’s perspective on “Science and Socialism,” which argued that capitalist crisis and decline lay behind the reckless and shortsighted decisions of politicians.

They pointed to the following section from the article: “What is the way forward? Those who wish to defend and advance the work of science must confront a contradiction in their own ways of thinking. They are accustomed to applying scientific methods to the processes of nature, but not to the workings of society, still less to politics.”

Another picket, James, expressed the insecurity and uncertainty experienced by many Fujitsu workers: “Things are getting desperate, it’s a struggle, you don’t know what you’re doing tomorrow. The National Health Service is going to pot. As for all the political parties, you don’t know who to trust.”

Brian has worked at Fujitsu since 1982. He spoke about how the drive for profit and speed-up is compromising safety conditions all over the world. “There’s a pattern emerging,” he said. “I read about an accident in an American car plant. An employee under pressure to meet her quotas on piecework tried to fix a robot that had stopped working. She ended up impaled on the wall and unfortunately she died. They’ve got terrible conditions over there. It’s a race to the bottom.”

The WSWS reporters pointed out that such terrible conditions are a consequence of the collaboration of the unions with employers—carried out in every country—at the expense of the working class.

Peter, who has been employed for 10 years at Fujitsu, then asked, “What would you replace the unions with?” When the reporters explained that the contradictions of capitalism between global production and the nation-state based on private profit demanded an international socialist strategy, he declared, “I have no objection to taking the wealth out of the hands of the rich.”



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