

Scottish Socialist Party



MEDIA WORKERS VOICE

Jobs crisis in Journalism **UNITE IN ACTION**

The Scottish Socialist Party offers unqualified support to media workers facing butchery of their jobs, wages and conditions by profit-crazed media bosses. We will build solidarity in other unions and communities for any action taken by workforces to resist this concerted assault.

The methods used - especially by bosses at the *Herald* titles - are an affront to the entire trade union movement, a challenge the unions need to rise to with united action.

Journalist union reps from newspapers, broadcasting and new media face vital decisions on the jobs carnage across the industry.

More than 500 journalists' posts have been axed or left unfilled at local newspaper groups since June. More than 30 local newspaper offices have been closed and 50-plus titles closed.

In the last two weeks in Glasgow alone:

- 240 at the *Herald*, *Sunday Herald* and *Evening Times* have been sacked and forced to apply for their own jobs;
- more than fifty journalists and TV producers are facing redundancy at the BBC;
- elsewhere, staff are facing salary cuts and pay freezes just to stay in a job.

Activists should be clear: these cuts are a result of asset stripping or failed management priorities, NOT falling profits, or declining numbers of readers.

Operating profits margins at Johnston Press (29%) or Trinity Mirror (19%) are well above high street super-giants such as Tesco (5.9%).

Johnston Press boss Tim Bowdler trousers more than £1 million a year; Trinity Mirror's Sly Bailey takes home £1.76 million.

"It's time to turn despondency into determination. We know the support we have from the public for our campaign for quality journalism that's rooted in - and responsive to - the communities where we work.

The *Herald* newspapers, the BBC... they play a

Last year, Gannet UK - the local arm of the company which owns the *Herald* titles and the Newsquest papers - had operating profits of almost £480 million.

It is no wonder that surveys guided by the Health and Safety Executive show NUJ members at newspapers and broadcasting in Scotland to be dangerously stressed by careless and incompetent management.

Activists have resisted the current wave of attacks with work-to-rules and determined preparations for industrial action.

But now is the time for a co-ordinated campaign right across the union, in Scotland and the UK.

The NUJ's experience at the *Herald*, the BBC and dozens of other employers in the UK is that management will only pull back from these threats of joblessness and further pay cuts when their newspapers don't appear on the shelves, programmes are pulled or web-pages are frozen by **strike action**.

So, we believe NUJ reps in Scotland must now make detailed plans to co-ordinate industrial action against any compulsory redundancies.

Scottish activists should also join local newspaper Chapels in England and Wales preparing for the union-wide day of action and protest against the job cuts and pay freezes. **UNITE IN ACTION!**

historic and vital role in Scotland's cultural and political life.

When management attack us, we must not forget the strength we can bring when WE join to fight **TOGETHER.**"

Peter Murray, NUJ national vice president



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Scottish Socialist Party - media workers VOICE

CITIZENS' JOURNALISM??

CASH COWS FOR BILLIONAIRE BOSSES!

Gannet are one of the multi-nationals that wax lyrical about the beauty of 'citizens' journalism'.

As socialists the SSP believe in maximum participation in local communities and local democracy. But that flies in the face of multi-national corporations owning the output of the mass media, dictating content, keeping it within the safe confines of the system of market capitalism and its ideology that they defend and advocate.

When Gannet and their multi-millioned owners talk about 'citizens' journalism', beware; it is a smoke-screen for not having to bother paying decent wages to trained, professional journalists who actually source, research and corroborate their stories. In the mouths of media moguls such talk is an attack on the very essence of good journalism - holding corporations and politicians up to public scrutiny and criticism, helping to enhance democracy - and working in harmony with local citizens to ensure they have their say over the decisions of daily life.

General assaults demand generalised resistance by unions

● build united rally for action

Media workers face a generalised assault on jobs, wages and conditions - from profit-crazed employers.

The generalised nature of the attacks demands and gives the opportunity for generalised resistance by the unions.

SSP members in the NUJ strongly recommend a united public rally of media workers, with other trade unionists and supportive political organisations invited, to unite the resistance across the media. It would be a rally of strength and unity, giving a boost to each set of workers facing attack - preparing the way for appropriate industrial action.



'EXCITEMENT' AT THE PROSPECTS OF EVEN BIGGER PROFITS

Herald group managing editor Tom Thomson appeared on Newsnight Scotland in an sickening display of arrogance towards the 240 staff facing the sack and the need to re-apply for their own jobs - on worse conditions.

When questioned, he admitted that if another employer had used the same cavalier methods, the *Herald* editorials "may well" have exposed and denounced them!

Perhaps the words "rank" and "hypocrisy" should be the next *Herald* words of the day!

Thomson went on to claim that sacking 240 workers and then re-hiring 200 of them would offer "exciting" prospects! Exciting? In one sense of the word, a high voltage shock through the human body is 'exciting'! **We hope the crass brutality of *Herald* titles bosses will 'excite' the workforce into converting their anger and dismay into united action.**

UNITY CAN DEFEAT BOSSES' ATTACKS

This is an affront to every worker in the country - not the journalists and their families alone, though they are bearing the immediate brunt of it.

If employers see Gannet's local arm wielded to sack workers en masse, without even the pretence of consulting the unions or giving notice of changes of contract, and getting away with it, they will be encouraged to imitate their methods.

But if they see the unions at the *Herald* respond with swift, united industrial action, that will encourage the solidarity of other workers facing attacks from their own bosses, and it will stay the hand of would-be axe-wielders in other boardrooms.

JOIN THE SSP - the party of struggle, solidarity, public ownership, socialism

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