

APRIL  
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# POSTHORN



Communication Workers Union

## MARCH FOR THE ALTERNATIVE



### March For The Alternative - 26<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2011

On Saturday, 26<sup>th</sup> March 2011, over half a million people marched from London's Victoria Embankment to Hyde Park to send a clear message to the Government - stop the scale and rate of cuts to pub-

lic services and stop them now!

The current coalition Government has embarked on a course of action that would readily see thousands of public sector jobs disappear and consequently many thousands more from the private sector. Even Nobel prize-winning economists have poured scorn on

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the Government's questionable plans that are being driven by political ideology rather than out of a genuine concern for the everyday working person in the country.

Twenty-one members from our Branch formed the largest CWU Branch contingent in our region and marched, banners and flags proudly held high, with our CWU colleagues from around the country in a protest organised by the T.U.C.

All other Unions were represented at the rally, from Unite, PCS, Equity and even Unions many people would not be familiar with such as the Bakers' Union.

Thousands of other people demonstrating were not part of any union, nor necessarily working in the public sector. They were marching out of a genuine concern that cutting public sector jobs and services would inevitably lead to a worsening of those services. One woman I spoke to even said she had voted Conservative but



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bitterly regretted it because of the recent cuts made to a local day centre she attended to help with her disability.

So numerous were the protestors that it took us around two hours to get moving properly, at which point the front part of the protest was nearing Hyde Park. We eventually marched down Whitehall and past Downing Street four and a half hours after the demonstration started at 11am.

Young, old, rich, poor and people from across the political spectrum walked on the march. This was no 'left-wing, public sector revolt' but the coming together of what David Cameron would call 'Middle England' if the cause had been for anything he had been in favour of.

The police were non-confrontational and some were even laughing and chatting with protestors as they walked by. Some may even have secretly been pleased that one of the public service cuts being protested against was that to the Police Service. Whilst Labour would have made cuts in the region of 12% to the Police Service, a figure that would not have seen a reduction to frontline officers, the current Government is looking to make a reduction of 20% that will have a significant impact on the police presence on the streets.

Despite the serious message behind the reason for the march, people were in good spirits and a sense of dignified unity was definitely present with drummers, pipers and



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steel bands all providing entertainment along the way.

However, the media seemed to want to later concentrate on and sensationalise the acts of vandalism and public disorder perpetrated by a few hundred anarchists who were nothing to do with the main demonstration. People who were part of the organised demonstration were quick to publicly denounce the anarchists and disassociate themselves from their actions.

Whilst violence as a means of protest can never be condoned it is nevertheless understandable that so many people feel frustrated. The reality of the situation is that this Government does not have an elected mandate to carry out anything it is currently doing and it will ignore the peaceful demonstrations to its political peril.

Colleagues, if we fail to come together, not only within our own Union, but as a society standing strong against the swathe of attacks on the services that have been hard fought for to create, it will be to our own detriment.

Don't let any of us have to look our children in the eye one day and secretly feel ashamed that they will now be at risk because the N.H.S, for instance, was dismantled whilst we chose to stand back and do nothing.

**Wesley Muir – Deputy Branch Secretary**

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