

Good evening

My name is Pete Millward and I am a shop steward in a company called Twinings.

Twinings is a company that many, many, people that like a drop of tea will most certainly have heard of. Twinings is a company that is quintessentially British.

As well as a plant in Andover Twinings employ 263 workers in Newcastle too.

So some of you will probably be surprised to hear that Twinings are closing the plant in Newcastle with the loss of those 263 jobs and also making 50% or 129 workers at the Andover plant redundant to. That is a total of 399 workers directly affected along with their families too.

You would probably be forgiven for thinking Twinings must be running as an extra ordinary loss making company at the moment; well you could not be further from the truth. If I were to tell you that Twinings made over £70 million in profit last year you would probably be surprised at our misfortune to say the least. If I were to tell you that I have negotiated with the company for pay & T&C's for our members for the past 16 years and that for every one of those 16 years Twinings had made huge profits you would probably be gob smacked.

You will also probably wonder as we did, when the announcement was leaked to our union last year, what it was that we the workforce had done to deserve this. We have dedicated, loyal, hard working and long serving employees at Twinings with 10 to 20 years service not being anything unusual, the very same workers that made such big profits for Twinings found out in Nov last year that they were being dumped so that Twinings could move to Poland & China. And you don't have to look too far to see that Twinings are not the only company's doing this in the private sector.

The reason for the move is quite simple, it is nothing less than corporate greed, Twinings will make a 9/10's saving on their labour costs, and

these are Twinings figures not mine and were freely given during the consultation period.

The reason for my explaining this to you tonight, when we are here to talk about the launch of Lrc branch in Hampshire is twofold.

Firstly as stated I work for Twinings, Twinings is in the private sector, and the private sector care only about one thing and that is profit, profit to the cost and detriment of everything else including health and safety, job security and T&C's.

Tonight though I would also talk about job losses in the public sector too.

The idea being promoted of course is that the jobs that are lost will be privatised, with the private sector re-employing with all the problems that brings.

However the government's hope that private sector employers will create enough jobs to make up for public sector cuts have been dealt another blow with news that a growing number of businesses are planning to cut staff.

A slowdown in new orders across the services industry during September has cast further doubt over the strength of the UK recovery, according to the latest survey of the sector.

Growth through the third quarter as a whole was the weakest since the second quarter of 2009.

It is, simply put, not realistic or right to expect the private sector to run public services for profit; we all know what happens, the bottom line is all that counts and the service to be provided comes a poor second place.

And what happens to the private sector when so many people are made redundant from the public sector? The coalition Govnt would have you believe that the private sector will provide, but with private company's losing work that they did for the public sector and companies shutting up shop and chasing cheap labour in eastern Europe this seems extremely unlikely. And even should you be "lucky" enough to land a job in the private sector there will be so much competition for a job T&C's are bound to be much worse than what you had before.

The Governments own figures suggest that nearly half a million job losses in the Public sector will cause the loss of almost 450,000 jobs in the private sector.

But When George Osborne announced these figures he conveniently forgot to mention that the Office for budget responsibility estimated that at least 600,000 public sector Jobs would go meaning that a further 700,000 private sector jobs would be lost as a result.

Figures released on the 03/11/10 by Europe's largest human resources & development body the chartered institute of personal development estimate that 1.6 million jobs will be lost across the economy.

So what are we to do? Should we sign petitions, postcards, should we arrange demonstrations? All are good ideas and useful in their own ways but this time not enough on their own. No we have to come together we have to unite as one group because George Osborne's Spending Review has left us with no other option than to take the sorts of action seen in countries such as France, Spain and Greece.

A crippling 7.1 per cent will be scrubbed off the local government budget every year for the next four years, with dire consequences for services. George Osborne reeled off plans in Parliament to brutally hack away at local government spending during his Comprehensive Spending Review last month, civil servants and local service users have been left in a state of shock. On top of the annual 7.1 per cent cut to the local government budget up to 2014 Mr Osborne announced that ring-fencing for all local government revenue grants, which allow councils to prioritise spending on areas of greatest need, will end from April next year. This - along with massive budget cuts to other departments - will mean vulnerable services like social care are likely to be hit first.

In fact the cuts are so huge and unprecedented that they will forever alter the way councils work.

Public-sector unions PCS and Unison warn that the extra job cuts will make hitting front-line services up and down the country unavoidable, with a massive decline in local spending power.

The Local Government Association (LGA) warned that if these cuts are pushed through without reforming the way the public sector operates,

there will be a huge funding shortfall to frontline council services of up to £20 billion a year by 2015.

"Councils deliver hundreds of front-line services from collecting rubbish to helping elderly people live independently in their own homes, and People will not forgive those who cut front-line services without first exhausting every possible avenue for cutting unnecessary waste, complexity and red tape within the system."

Public sector unions warn that even only 500,000 public-sector job cuts will prove a "false economy."

General secretary Dave Prentis said: "They could cost the Treasury around £4.6 billion in lost tax revenue and £6.1bn in increased benefit payments - adding £10.7bn a year to the annual deficit "The cuts come as no great surprise, but the scale is a devastating blow to workers and their families whose jobs are in the firing line," he said. Unite joint general secretary Derek Simpson said: "This is not a spending review - it's a massacre. It's totally perverse to claim that cutting half a million jobs and razing our public services to the ground is good for this country. "No matter how often they repeat that their actions are fair, this government is making a political choice to attack the public sector and by doing this now damaging the whole of the economy long into the future

Unite assistant general secretary Len McCluskey said that after months of warning that the Con-Dem cuts threatened the recovery, "now even Price water house coopers - the favourite accountants of British business - is spelling out the devastating consequences of government policy. When will the Con-Dems start to listen?"

Having said all of that it is plain to see the real importance that private sector unions join in with the struggle and show solidarity with the public sector unions because we really are all in this together.

The coalition Govt would have us all believe that the public sector or welfare state is a wasteful drain on government resources. Again nothing could be further from the truth. Public spending is an investment not a debt, services are provided to the public not for profit or capital gain but to do what it says on the tin. That is to provide a service.

The govnt would also have you believe that the reasons for the cuts are to reduce the deficit.

But let us have a closer look at the figures surrounding the deficit and try to put it into perspective.

From 1918 – 1961 the U.K. national debt was 100% of G D P. During that period the govnt of the day introduced the welfare state, the N H S, state pensions, comprehensive education, built millions of council homes and nationalised a range of industries.

Today we are, believe it or not, in a far healthier state of affairs with the U.K's debt as a % being healthier than Germany, France, US and Japan

The U.K's % of G D P as debt is just a shade over 60%, Germany aprox 80% US 90% and Japan over 200%

I believe these figures go a long way to showing again that this is just an excuse for an ideological attack on working people. We neither have to cut services or put people out of work, there is an alternative.

Making cuts of 25% or more will devastate the economy but could be avoided.

A staggering £120 billion could be brought into the exchequer by clamping down on tax avoidance.

Iraq & Afghanistan have cost the country over £21 billion since 2001 and Afghanistan is draining the country of 2.6 billion for every year that we are out there.

Trident a complete and utter waste of space and time is costing the U.K tax payer another 1.5 billion a year with defence spending over the next 10 years said to be anywhere between 350 – 450 billion pounds. If we were to reign in on some of the spending on illegal wars do something about tax avoidance introduce the Robin Hood tax on banks we would not have to lose one job or cut one service in the welfare state?

On the organisational side of things it seems clear to me that the Tory's always manage to be..... more organised! They are one party with one aim and that is generally to keep the working man and women downtrodden, poorly paid and poorly educated where ever possible. This can be seen by the fact that the coalition wish to allow universities to raise fees to £9K a year, among other things.

We on the left generally want the same thing and of all the different groups on the left generally agree on most political points. The problem is the fact that we have so many different groups, groups that run independently of each other, and because we are so fragmented, serious and broad based organisation is almost impossible; if we are to organise and unite it is essential we come together as one group and I believe the best vehicle for this is the L R C.

If we are to be as organised as the Tory's it is imperative that we unite under one leader, that leader should be committed to the labour movement, and what it is that 99% of us in this room tonight want, such a person is John, whom I believe, is deeply committed to the organisation and to the representation of the workers.

To join the L R C you do not have to be a member of the Labour party. I am presently not a member. But I do realise the absolute importance of organising against the massive problems that are facing us today under the coalition government and that is why I am a member of the L R C.

We do not always have to agree on all points and probably won't but we do have to organise and we do have to work together to bring down this government and we do have to unite.

Let's no longer have S W P, Militant, The socialist party, The Labour Party holding separate meetings at separate times to achieve the same thing, and let's no longer be ridiculed for our lack of organisation.

We do not want to hear again the question are you a member of the Peoples Jordian front only to hear bollocks to that brother we are the people's front of jordia. The intentions are well meaning but it doesn't work, it never has and it never will.

Instead let us stand shoulder to shoulder, brother and sister working together in one organisation helping each other achieve all that we can and all that we deserve, brothers, sisters, we have membership forms here tonight and I ask you to consider seriously joining us, you can and no doubt will remain within whatever group you are now a member of but you could also attend as delegates at meetings, as delegates of your own particular groups you could let us know what it is we should be doing.

This is a broad based group that will be lead by an extremely well qualified gentleman, a bloke that is capable, clever and more importantly well versed in the ways of Parliament and its workings, somebody that we all know would do everything in his power to represent all of us here tonight.

It is my genuine belief that if this Government runs full term that the welfare state as we know it will be destroyed for generations to come if we do not organise seriously to oppose this, and time is fast running out.

The best way to do that is for all of us to become a member of one organisation and I believe that is the L R C.