



nationalshopstewardsnetwork

www.shopstewards.net www.stopcuts.net PO Box 54498, London E10 9DE 07952 283 558 info@shopstewards.net

NSSN Statement on Riots

Back in September 2009 TUC general secretary Brendan Barber predicted that the government's cuts would lead to riots. His prediction has been borne out as riots have broken out across London and other cities. The initial riots in Tottenham in the borough of Haringey on the 6-7th August were a consequence of the fatal shooting by police of 29 year old Mark Duggan. Most of the rioting that has taken place so far has been in areas of high deprivation such as Tottenham where 10,000 people in Haringey are claiming jobseekers allowance.

Contrary to reports from some politicians and media, the rioting and looting that took place was not just the result of 'outsiders' or 'hooligans' but was a spontaneous outpouring of the anger of sections of the local population, particularly young people from every ethnic background. Contrary to the media reports, these were not race riots but involved young people from every ethnic background.

However, whilst rioting is an understandable reaction of rage to the conditions so many working class people face it does not offer a way forward. As a result of these riots local shops and services have been badly hit and people have been burned out of their flats. During the riots around London on Sunday night and since, several fire crews and ambulance workers were attacked. There are also reports that a bus driver was attacked before his bus was set on fire. These attacks are completely unacceptable and make it even more urgent for the labour movement to provide an alternative.

There is anger both with the police and the Independent Police Complaints Commission over the death of Mark Duggan. The family is angry that no-one from the police has discussed Mark's death with them. The protestors on Saturday evening were also angry that no senior police officer was prepared to meet them then. There is no trust in the police, particularly following their lies about the deaths of Jean Charles de Menezes in 2005 and Ian Tomlinson last year as well as many

other incidences, including the framing of Winston Silcott and the 'Tottenham Three' during the Broadwater Farm riots of 1985, and their collusion with the Murdoch press.

There is growing anger against cuts to essential services. Issues affecting young people include the closure of youth centres, the attacks on EMA which help young people to continue their education and of course youth unemployment where 914,000 young people between 16 and 24 are unemployed.. The government's all-out assault on public services includes cutting EMA and trebling university tuition fees to £9000 a year.

Labour MPs such as David Lammy and Diane Abbott alongside Haringey Labour council leader Claire Kober and Theresa May, the Tory Home Secretary have condemned the rioting and looting. But what about the looting of public services and jobs carried out by their parties either through government or council cuts?

Whilst Brendan Barber had predicted these riots, he and the TUC have not offered an alternative by demonstrating they are capable of leading a movement to defend living conditions. Unfortunately, Barber actually welcomed the below-inflation increases in the minimum wage. The trade union movement must show there is an alternative in order to counter frustration and social breakdown.

The huge demonstration on 26th March and the strike of three quarters of a million teaching and civil service workers on 30th June have given some idea of the strength that organised workers have. A successful one-day public-sector strike will be a big step forward in the battle against the cuts. That is why the NSSN is organizing a lobby of the TUC on 11th September to demand that they name the day for such action. A successful battle against the cuts nationally and locally, whilst not solving all the problems that these communities face, would be a big boost in the struggle to improve ordinary people's living conditions in the area.



WE DEMAND:

- A genuinely independent inquiry led by the local community and trade unions into the death of Mark Duggan.
- No to all cuts in jobs and services – youth service funding should be re-instated.
- Demand back the money stolen by the government to bail out the banks.
- Immediate re-housing by of all those who lost their homes as a result of the rioting.
- Cancel tuition fees, for a proper living grant and re-instate the educational maintenance allowance.
- The TUC to call a one-day strike of all public-sector trade unions as the next step in the battle to defeat all cuts in jobs and services.

Add your support to this statement by emailing your name, trade union and position to info@shopstewards.net

the nssn is supported by the following trade unions:

