

Bristol MPs fail to answer young workers' anger at PCS debate

ON 30 September PCS civil service union young members in the South West held a question time event about cuts in the public sector as part of a young workers' week. We contacted the Labour Party, Liberal Democrats, Conservative Party, Youth Fight for Jobs and the Green Party, along with John McNally, PCS vice president.

Mike Wheeler
PCS young members' network
(personal capacity)

The first to confirm was the Conservative Party. Tory MP for Kingswood, near Bristol, Chris Skidmore said he would love to come along. The Labour Party sent Roger Berry, former MP for Kingswood. Nick Foster attended for the Greens and Tom Baldwin for Youth Fight for Jobs. The Lib Dems declined our invitation.

The meeting was well attended with about 70 members of various trade unions present. The first question was on the privatisation of Royal Mail and the universal service. This helped to set the mood of

the meeting with the Tories on the back foot trying desperately to tell us that, although the cuts will devastate services to the public, they were necessary.

John McNally explained the PCS alternative to cuts. John said that £130 billion remains uncollected in taxes each year from big business and the rich and this is how the budget deficit should be reduced rather than creating mass unemployment and removing services from the most needy in society. There were no answers given by the Tories and the Labour Party agreed with PCS for once.

The meeting proved that the cuts are ideological. Subsequent questions made it clear that there are very few differences between the Tories and Labour. Tom Baldwin commented on how the only difference between the new and old governments on making schools into academies run by unelected businesses and groups is the speed they will be implemented and the number of schools to go.

Tory Skidmore summed up with



A Youth Fight for Jobs protest in September. The meeting's YFJ speaker showed there was little difference between the Tories and New Labour.
photo Paul Mattsson

a statement that in five years there will be more jobs and the economy will be in a better state, or else we can vote him out. There was a clear shout of "you won't last five years"

from the audience.

The arrogance of the government and contempt for the voters was shown with no attempt to listen; it was just a weak attempt to try to get

us to accept an attack on our way of life. The members of the panel will be invited to a second event after the spending review.

Meetings and protests against the cuts

Coventry

AROUND 120 people packed into the first public rally of the Coventry Against the Cuts campaign.

Caroline Johnson, secretary of Birmingham Unison, spoke about the 26,000 workers who have been given notice informing them that their contracts are being changed.

Alan Lewis and Tony Conway, from Unite and PCS respectively, emphasised the need for joint, united action.

Matt Wrack, general secretary of the FBU, gave a storming speech, recalling the lessons of the successful campaign that beat the poll tax and the importance of organising in the communities.

Dave Nellist, Socialist Party councillor, described the cuts being planned by the council and outlined a fighting strategy. The ruling Labour group say they oppose the Tory cuts, but they have 'no choice'

but to implement them.

Dave said that if Labour opposes the cuts, they should use the council reserves to 'hold the line', which would give some breathing space to allow an anti-cuts army to be built by the trade unions in the city and in every community to fight for extra funding from the Tory government.

A protest has been called on 20 October, the day of the government's comprehensive spending review.

Coventry Socialist Party members

Leicestershire

ALMOST 100 people turned up to the launch meeting of Leicestershire Against the Cuts at the end of September. The feeling at the meeting was that the Con-Dem government's cuts could be defeated, but there is a need to "agitate, educate and organise" to see this happen.

National Union of Teachers vice-president Nina Franklin, Unison

national executive member Jean Thorpe and PCS civil service union president Janice Godrich spoke of how the cuts will affect working class people while bankers are picking up obscene bonuses after being bailed out with public money.

A local community activist told the meeting about a campaign against the building of a private finance initiative health centre on a greenfield site next to the University of Leicester.

The campaign will now organise a demonstration against the cuts in Leicester on 30 October. Email leicestershireagainstthecuts@yahoo.co.uk for more details.

Tony Church, Leicestershire Against the Cuts convenor

Liverpool

THE FIRST meeting of the Liverpool anti-cuts committee took place at the end of September. 60 people, in-

cluding trade union delegates and Socialist Party members, heard proposals about building a campaign to oppose the Con-Dem coalition's attacks on ordinary working people and the worst-off in society.

Speakers included Tony Mulhearn, Socialist Party member and former Liverpool 47 councillor. Tony drew comparisons with the Liverpool council campaign in the city in the 1980s which brought all sections of the workers' movement together. With huge demonstrations of 50,000 in the city, the council won extra funding from Thatcher's Tory government to deliver improvements including new homes, jobs and sports centres.

Tony said similar victories against the current government could be achieved. The meeting drew to a close with a determination to build the Liverpool anti-cuts committee and take the campaign into the trade unions and communities.

John Marston Merseyside Socialist Party

Stoke

ON 29 September North Staffordshire Anti-Cuts Alliance campaigners were on the streets of Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, demonstrating anger, opposition and importantly an alternative to the Con-Dem government's savage cuts in public services, as part of the Europe-wide day of action.

A large contingent from the Unison combined health branch turned out with their banner and flags, along with other union members from the city council Unison, GMB,

For the latest reports on action taking place against cuts go to www.socialistparty.org.uk

and UCU, to hand out leaflets to shoppers and workers passing by. North Staffs TUC had a stall and also handed out leaflets. The Stoke Socialist Party stall campaigned against government attacks on the NHS.

Just down the road at Staffs University, Socialist Students marched with the Stoke Socialist Party banner to a new sixth form college to explain to students that they need to fight for a decent future.

Andy Bentley Stoke Socialist Party

Salford

ONE HUNDRED and twenty Unison, Unite and GMB trade union members joined a lunchtime protest outside Salford civic centre to hear speeches from union campaigners.

Steve North, a Socialist Party member in Unison and assistant secretary of Salford trades council, drew loud applause when he pledged the support of the trades council in setting up a broad anti-cuts alliance. Steve pointed out that half of the children in Salford are already growing up in poverty. An interview he gave was later featured prominently on the radio station Key 103.

Paul Gerrard Salford Socialist Party

dates for your diary

www.socialistparty.org.uk/whatson

Leytonstone Socialist Party
Spain and Portugal: general strike eye-witness reports
Tuesday 12 October, 7.30pm
491 Gallery, Grove Green Road, London E11 4AA

Plymouth University against education cuts 16 October
NUS and UCU day of action
Followed by a public meeting, 7pm, Roland Lewinsky Building, and Socialist Students presents bands, DJs and speakers, 8pm, The Fortescue Inn, Mutley Plain

Mansfield Youth Fight for Jobs and Socialist Students
Protest against EMA and public spending cuts
20 October, 12.30pm
Chesterfield Road College

Mansfield and North Derbyshire Socialist Party
The battle to save our public services
20 October, 7.30pm
Ladybrook Community Centre, Ladybrook Lane
Speaker: Pete Watson (Notts county council Unison - personal capacity)

Walthamstow Socialist Party
How can we fight the comprehensive spending review cuts?
21 October, 7.30pm
William Morris Centre, Greenleaf Road, London E17 6QQ
Speaker: Hannah Sell, Socialist Party deputy general secretary

Lewisham Youth Fight for Jobs
Fight for your future
Thursday 28 October, 7.30pm
Toad's Mouth Too Café, 188 Brockley Road, London SE4 2RL

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SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND

	£ target	£ received	July-September 2010				deadline: 8 October
West Midlands	2,100	3,011	█	█	█	█	█
Southern	1,200	1,550	█	█	█	█	█
Eastern	1,200	1,521	█	█	█	█	█
Wales	2,300	2,786	█	█	█	█	█
South East	800	833	█	█	█	█	█
South West	1,400	1,033	█	█	█	█	█
North West	1,200	769	█	█	█	█	█
East Midlands	1,550	984	█	█	█	█	█
Yorkshire	2,900	1,651	█	█	█	█	█
London	6,100	3,371	█	█	█	█	█
Northern	600	173	█	█	█	█	█
England & Wales	3,650	653	█	█	█	█	█
TOTAL	25,000	18,339	█	█	█	█	█