

London socialists show how cutbacks can be beaten

THE ALL-LONDON Socialist Party and Socialist Students meeting on 6 October was not just a declaration of how terrible the cuts will be, nor a general exhortation to fight back, but a serious discussion about how the cuts can be fought, drawing on the lessons of battles against the Tories the last time they were in power.

Paula Mitchell
London Socialist Party

An excellent film of the Liverpool City Council's campaign for more government funding in the 1980s, and the battle against the poll tax that started at the end of that decade was shown to the 80 people at the meeting.

Both of these achieved victories against the Tories - winning extra funding for Liverpool council services, defeating the poll tax and bringing down Tory prime minister Margaret Thatcher.

In both of these battles the forerunner of the Socialist Party, Militant, played a key leadership role.

Hannah Sell, deputy general secretary of the Socialist Party, spoke as the author of the new pamphlet *How a Fightback Can Stop the Cuts*.

Hannah herself played a leading role in the massive school student strike in the mid-1980s against the



The meeting discussed the lessons of the anti-poll tax movement.

photo Steve Gardiner

Tories' youth training scheme. Contributors from the floor reported on local anti-cuts campaigns in communities and in universities.

The importance of the 23 October London anti-cuts demonstration was stressed. Socialist Party members in the National Shop Stewards Network have played a central role in working with the London committees of the RMT, FBU and PCS

unions to call the demonstration - the next most important step in building up the campaign against the cuts and keeping up the pressure on the TUC to act.

Most of those present who were new to the Socialist Party asked for information about getting involved in the party, and over £3,000 was raised in the fighting fund collection.

Growing anger against the cuts

Waltham Forest

THE THIRD meeting of the Waltham Forest Anti-Cuts Union (WFAUCU) meeting, attended by 35 people, made campaigning plans to oppose closures of a local library, a baby health centre, and a youth centre in one of the most deprived estates in the east London borough.

Youth Fight for Jobs speaker Sarah Wrack urged people to attend a Walthamstow town square demo at 5pm on 20 October in protest at education cuts and rising youth unemployment.

Steve White of the FBU spoke of the continuing attacks by the bosses on London firefighters' shift patterns and the threats of station closures. London firefighters are now being balloted over strike action.

Len Campling, from the PCS London Ministry of Justice branch, said how closing the local magistrates court would deny justice to the most needy and vulnerable in society.

Nancy Taaffe, WFAUCU secretary, reported on a recent victory where an impromptu street meeting of lo-

cal residents stopped the proposed building of a mobile phone mast in an area surrounded by three schools. There was a lot of support for Nancy's proposal to call for occupations of public-service buildings facing closure.

The meeting also heard how 600 to 700 Waltham Forest local government redundancies are expected in the coming year.

Stephen Turnbull
Walthamstow Socialist Party

Weston-Super-Mare

ON 6 October, Weston and North Somerset trade unions council held a public meeting that established an anti-cuts alliance. 25 people turned up to hear speakers from the CWU, NUT, PCS and Unison trade unions.

Speakers and contributors from the floor described how cuts were already starting to affect services like school transport and how they were determined to be part of a united struggle to defeat them.

The mighty movement against

Margaret Thatcher's hated poll tax was invoked as an example of how the Tories could be defeated. The audience were determined that Weston-Super-Mare would not be seen as a sleepy seaside town but would play a part in taking the fightback to this government.

Tom Baldwin
South West Socialist Party

Hastings

THERE WAS standing room only at Hastings trades council's meeting against the upcoming public sector cuts.

Chris Baugh, assistant general secretary of the Public and Commercial Services Union, spoke about the need to build active campaigns across the country.

From the trades council, Sam Buckley said that more than two thirds of the population of Hastings is directly dependent on the public sector - the coalition's proposed cuts of 25% to 40% could leave Hastings a ghost town.

Other speakers asked the audience to support the trades council's "horrors of cuts" Halloween fancy dress rally which will take place in the town centre at 11am on 30 October.

Hastings Trades Council

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

Find out about Socialist Party meetings in your area: www.socialistparty.org.uk/whatson

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Save Wanstead Flats



Protests have taken place against the building plans.

ALARGE and angry audience of local residents packed a meeting hall in Forest Gate, east London, on 6 October to quiz the police and City of London Corporation trustees over plans to build a 'temporary' police station on Wanstead Flats to serve the 2012 Olympic Games.

Dave Carr
East London Socialist Party

The Flats is an area of open land in congested London used by local people for recreation. It is managed by the City of London Corporation trustees, who are allowing the police station to be built there despite the impact on the environment and the precedent it sets for possible future development.

The police spokesmen stonewalled audience questions by repeatedly saying that no other potential site met their (unspecified) criteria. They also refused to reveal the whereabouts of the other sites on the grounds of "commercial sensitivity".

Some of the most searching questions came from school students who accused the police of hiding behind a screen of "commercial sensitivity".

The audience made it clear that they would fight the planning application and continue the campaign to save the Flats even if the police station development was a 'done deal'.

The meeting voted unanimously to reject the police station proposal.

Building the Socialist Party

Fighting Fund reaches 96%

THE SOCIALIST Party reached 96% of its fighting fund target for the July-September quarter, an improvement on the same quarter last year.

Southern, West Midlands and Wales Socialist Party members have had an outstanding quarter. Kent in the South East and Stevenage in Eastern have also done fantastically, bringing those two regions well over their targets.

A last minute £2,000 donation helped London Socialist Party

smash its target.

East Midlands Socialist Party came within a hair's breadth of its target, with a lot of hard campaigning work from Mansfield and Nottingham East branches in particular.

Socialist Party members taking part on campaigning stalls are finding that anger against the cuts and support for the Socialist Party's ideas are increasing.

Alex Gounelas
National fighting fund organiser

Increasing sales of The Socialist

SALES OF The Socialist ended the July-September quarter on 77% of the national target. Several Socialist Party branches have made a big improvement in sales, most notably Kent which has more than doubled its sales.

Adam Dudley, the branch secretary of Kent branch said: "If we take every opportunity to sell the paper and, through discussion, involve all members in the challenge of hitting our sales target, we can surpass it and use the

paper to build the branch at the same time."

Particular credit should go to Wales where the regional target was overshoot by almost 50% and to Caerphilly and Stoke branches who sold the most papers across the quarter. With 20 branches reaching their target, there is a solid foundation for others to follow and to smash the national target next quarter.

Sarah Wrack
The Socialist sales organiser

SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND

	£ target	£ received	July-September 2010	Final chart
West Midlands	2,100	3,278	█	█
Southern	1,200	1,725	█	█
Eastern	1,200	1,571	█	█
Wales	2,300	2,973	█	█
London	6,100	7,148	█	█
South East	800	873	█	█
East Midlands	1,550	1,536	█	█
North West	1,200	1,061	█	█
South West	1,400	1,033	█	█
Yorkshire	2,900	1,828	█	█
Northern	600	228	█	█
England & Wales	3,650	653	█	█
TOTAL	25,000	23,913		