

Protests and meetings against the cuts

Liverpool

AN ANTI-cuts lobby of Liverpool city councillors on 10 November, called by Liverpool Trades Union Council, saw 200 workers defying police by blocking the main road outside the town hall in protest against cuts in services and jobs.

Socialist Party member Tony Mulhearn, one of the 'Liverpool 47' surcharged councillors, spoke to the demonstration, calling on the Labour-controlled council to refuse to carry out cuts. He said: "The people of Liverpool did not elect a Labour council to carry out Tory cuts, they elected it to protect the people of this city. They have the choice of doing what we did between 1983 and 1987, to say to the Thatcher government that we are not prepared to cut services in the name of Tory cuts."

Labour council leader Joe Anderson made it clear that the current council would not defy the ConDem government, claiming: "What is the alternative; to get surcharged, kicked out of office and set an illegal budget? We can't do that."

In a face to face exchange, Tony Mulhearn challenged Joe Anderson to fight the cuts and mobilise opposition as the city council did in the 1980s. Joe retorted: "You have to live in the real world", before entering the council chamber.

It does not seem to have occurred to Councillor Anderson and his friends that, unlike the millionaires' government, workers already live in a very real world - and one that will get much worse if the cuts are implemented! Perhaps it's too much to hope that when he learns that councillors can no longer be surcharged, that he may place himself at the head of a mass movement of resistance to cuts.

The Labour motion outlined their pro-cuts approach - it specifically stated: "Liverpool will not return



Surcharged 'Liverpool 47' councillor Tony Mulhearn (left) with RMT member and Liverpool TUC president Darren Ireland on the 10 November council lobby.
photo Merseyside Socialist Party

to the dark days of the 1980s". This was put to the full council and narrowly carried - with both the Green Party and Liberal Party supporting Labour's cuts policy. The Lib Dems, having the 'luxury' of being the opposition party, took the coward's option of abstaining.

Mark Hoskisson, secretary of Liverpool TUC, was able to speak to the councillors inside the town hall: "People out there do not accept these cuts ... We are going to organise to fight them and we say to the council, join with us, don't join in with the coalition's cuts."

Roy Farrar
Merseyside Socialist Party

Exeter

ON TUESDAY 9 November over 70 people attended the Exeter Anti-Cuts Alliance launch meeting. This alliance was established as a federal, grass roots organisation by members of the Socialist Party and trade union activists.

The speakers included Phil Chadwick from the Communication

Workers Union, who outlined the devastating effect privatisation of Royal Mail would have on communities; Rob Edwards from Youth Fight for Jobs gave historical examples of the anti-cuts battle of Liverpool city council in the 1980s and the anti-poll tax movement a few years later; and Phil Bialyk from the RMT transport workers' union who pointed out the nonsense of Tory claims that we are "all in it together".

Mark Baker from the PCS civil servants' union NEC was the last speaker. He talked about the dire need for united national trade union action and pointed out the TUC's lack of leadership. He urged others to support the PCS in its call for a national demonstration as soon as possible.

The Labour leader of Exeter city council who came into the discussion, refused to answer whether he would be making cuts, disgustingly calling the policy of 'no cuts' "populist".

However as Andrew Duncan, a member of the Labour Party and on the steering committee of the Anti-

Cuts Alliance, said: "We will take a logical position; if councillors are against cuts we will support them, if they are for cuts though, we will fight them and even stand against them in the next election."

The meeting raised £125 for the Exeter Anti-Cuts Alliance and 12 people bought copies of The Socialist.

Jim Thomson
Exeter Socialist Party

North Devon

THE LATEST leg of Devon county council's propaganda tour disguised as consultation - 'Tough Choices' - reached Barnstaple on 9 November. Members of North Devon Anti-Cuts Alliance challenged the false assumptions behind the cuts, which the officials, led by council leader John Hart, presented as unavoidable.

We opposed the obscene attempt to get the 50 plus people at the meeting to play something called 'Devonomics', which was nothing less than turning people's jobs and

essential services into a game. Just under half of those present refused to play this sick game, and many present undermined the pro-cuts arguments advanced by Hart.

Hart claimed that refusing to make cuts would be illegal and he would be removed from office, but since the Local Government Act of 2000 this has not been the case.

He made it perfectly clear that he and his council are taking on the people of Devon on behalf of the government, and refused to take the serious action suggested to defend against the savage austerity. When challenged that he should step aside in favour of someone who will fight the cuts, he refused. Hart made it clear that he supports the cuts, and is not interested in opposing them.

Many people at the meeting expressed an interest in getting involved in the campaign to defend our public services, jobs and welfare.

Jim Lowe
North Devon Anti-Cuts Alliance

Hillingdon

ON 2 November, 50 people from the local community, trade unions and Socialist Party attended the launch meeting of Hillingdon Against Cutbacks. The meeting was called by former Militant Labour councillor Wally Kennedy, and addressed by two local CWU union reps.

Along with £14 million of council cuts due, there are two major mail-sorting offices which are already facing major cutbacks due to the plans to privatise Royal Mail. The borough also suffers from a chronic shortage of affordable housing, which will only get worse following the cuts to housing benefit.

The council cuts will have a big effect on the provision of care for the elderly and disabled.

These services have already been privatised in the west London borough, and cheaper contracts are now being sought by the council. This has led to some carers receiving a wage cut of 30-50%.

The meeting discussed the need for a national demonstration as well as coordinated industrial action to fight the cuts, and passed a motion in support of the PCS union's call for a national demonstration unanimously.

Ian Harris
Hillingdon Socialist Party

For the latest reports on meetings, protests and industrial action taking place against cuts, as well as video and audio recordings from the Socialist 2010 weekend, go to:
www.socialistparty.org.uk

datesforyourdiary

www.socialistparty.org.uk/whatson

Coventry Against the Cuts gig

Saturday 20 November, 7pm
£4 on the door
2 Tone Central, Coventry Uni Students Union, Priory Street

Stevenage Socialist Party meeting

How to fight the cuts
Monday 22 November, 8pm
Shephall Community Centre, Shephall Green, SG2 9XR

Leeds Against the Cuts

Public meeting
Thursday 25 November, 7pm
Council Chamber, Civic Hall

Shropshire Socialist Party meeting

How we beat the Tories last time!
Thursday 25 November, 7.30pm
Hobbs Room, Shrewsbury Library, Shrewsbury

Camden Socialist Party meeting

Building the anti-cuts movement
Thursday 25 November, 8pm
Fleet Community Centre, Lawn Road, NW3 2QL

Leeds Socialist Party meeting

Liverpool - A city that dared to fight
Monday 29 November, 7.30pm
The Adelphi, 1-3 Hunslet Road, Leeds

Speaker: Mike Forster, Halifax Socialist Party secretary

Mansfield/North Derbyshire Socialist Party meeting

Coalition punishes the poor - the fight for decent pay and benefits
Wednesday 1 December 7.30pm
Ladybrook Community Centre, Ladybrook Lane, Mansfield NG18 5JJ

Chester TUC

Chester anti-cuts public meeting
Thursday 2 December, 7.30pm
Guildhall, Watergate Street, Chester, CH1 2LA

Stevenage TUC public meeting

Stop the cuts - join the fightback
Thursday 2 December, 7.30pm
Speakers: Billy Hayes, CWU general secretary; Chris Baugh, PCS deputy general secretary; Martin Powell-Davies, NUT national executive

Coventry Against the Cuts demonstration

Saturday 4 December, 11am
Assemble outside Council House, Earl Street

Nuneaton Socialist Party meeting

The Spanish revolution

Wednesday 8 December, 7pm
Hatters Space community centre, Upper Abbey Street, Nuneaton

Manchester: NSSN-initiated anti-cuts demo

Wednesday 8 December
7.30-10am lobby before council meets
4-6pm demonstration after council meets
Outside Manchester Town Hall, Albert Square

Your area not listed?
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SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND

	£ target	£ received	October-December 2010				deadline: 7 January
Yorkshire	2,900	2,001	█	█	█	█	█
London	6,100	3,924	█	█	█	█	█
East Midlands	1,550	912	█	█	█	█	█
Eastern	1,200	651	█	█	█	█	█
Wales	2,300	1,224	█	█	█	█	█
South East	1,000	524	█	█	█	█	█
Southern	1,200	580	█	█	█	█	█
West Midlands	2,100	927	█	█	█	█	█
North West	1,200	444	█	█	█	█	█
South West	1,400	354	█	█	█	█	█
Northern	600	109	█	█	█	█	█
England & Wales	3,450	3,821	█	█	█	█	█
TOTAL	25,000	15,477	█	█	█	█	█