

Fighting back against council cuts

Manchester

NORTH WEST Shop Stewards Network (NWSSN) supporters working and living in Manchester lobbied outside the Manchester city council meeting on Wednesday 8 December, and received a great response from council workers and passers-by.

The lobby was called to show that we do not accept the cuts agenda from the Con-Dems and not from Labour councillors either.

Despite being one of the richest large local authorities in the region, Manchester city council is attempting to force changed conditions on its workforce. The union Unite, whose branch secretary joined the lobby, is rightly resisting this not-so-thin end of a mass redundancy wedge.

But Unison's branch leadership recommended the changes on the grounds that they avoid compulsory redundancies. Workers understand that they will mean job losses by the back door, and a majority of those who voted in the unions' ballots on the issue voted against them.

The council claims it has a huge deficit even before the Con-Dems' cuts, though the government claims the council has £108 million banked in reserves. The "deficit" will be used as an excuse for cuts and for refusing to stand up against the Con-Dem cuts.

The South Manchester Law Centre anti-closure campaign was present at the lobby and supporters came from many trade unions including PCS, Unite health, local government and voluntary sector, Unison and NUT, as well as from the Socialist Party. A group of newly-trained union reps came straight from their TUC course to the lobby!



Protesting in Manchester.

photo Hugh Caffrey

To join the NWSSN mailing list, email nwshopstewardsnetwork@gmail.com or ring/text 07742 417 862.

Andy Ford, NWSSN secretary, and Hugh Caffrey, Socialist Party

East London

A COLD wind of savage cuts is sweeping across east London, as it is across the country. In Newham, a New Labour 'one-party state', the council is threatening to axe 1,600 jobs. This could be lowered to 1,200, it suggests cynically, but only if workers accept harsh attacks on terms and conditions.

Unite union reps have begun to organise the fightback. Clearly, there is now an urgent need to link up with other unions to organise determined and coordinated action.

The Socialist Party in east London held a protest outside Newham town hall on 6 December, an opening shot across the bows of this rotten borough council.

On 7 December social workers in the neighbouring borough of Redbridge lobbied their council. Adult social service workers are facing

a 10% pay cut with the removal of recruitment and retention allowances. 50 or so workers, supported by Unison, GMB, and NUT trade unions and Socialist Party members protested.

These frontline staff are essential for organising home visits to housebound and vulnerable people, and they do emergency call-outs. Further action is promised.

**Manny Thain
East London Socialist Party**

Leeds

ON SATURDAY 11 December 150 protesters held a demonstration in central Leeds against tax-dodging companies and government cuts. The protest began with a rally called by Leeds trades council.

Speakers included fighting trade unionist and Socialist Party member Jane Aitchison from PCS, Socialist Students national chair Ian Pattison, and local secondary school students, who spoke out passionately against education cuts.

Following the rally, protesters conducted a noisy and colourful march around the city centre, stop-

ping off at several locations including Vodafone, Topshop, Boots and banking giant Santander. Some protesters tried to enter stores to carry out planned occupations but found their way barred by police.

The march ended outside the student union building in solidarity with the occupation of Leeds Trinity University which ended that day.

**Dave Younger
Leeds Socialist Party**

Lewes

UP TO 400 students, parents, and children marched through Lewes, East Sussex, on 11 December to voice their anger at the proposed abolition of Education Maintenance Allowance and at £9,000 tuition fees.

The march, organised by local students and parents at Priory School, Lewes, and helped by Socialist Party members, passed the local constituency office of Lib Dem MP Norman Baker, who said he was considering resigning his position as junior transport minister in order to oppose the policy, yet ended up voting for it anyway.

Many people said they felt betrayed by Baker, and would not be voting for him again.

The march culminated with speeches by local students, teachers

and Socialist Party members.

Many passers-by expressed support for the march, and said they would be attending the launch meeting of the new local anti-cuts group next week.

**Holly Smith
Brighton Socialist Party**

Woking

TRADE UNIONISTS, students and other local people in Woking joined together with Save Our Services in Surrey (SOSiS) and marched around the town before joining a Surrey Labour Party-organised rally.

Unison, Unite, PCS and FBU trade union banners, flags and placards were complemented by an array of home made placards.

Several leading Labour and trade union speakers addressed the rally but the biggest cheers by far were for those, including Chris Leary, SOSiS chair, and myself. We called for trade union leaders to organise national action now and demanded that anyone standing for election must oppose all cuts.

Leaflets were given out for the SOSiS lobby of Surrey county council on 21 December from 11.30am at County Hall in Kingston.

**Paul Couchman
Secretary, Surrey County Unison
(personal capacity)**



Socialist Party member Jon Redford speaking at the Lewes protest.

photo Brighton Socialist Party

For the latest reports on meetings, protests and industrial action taking place against cuts, go to: www.socialistparty.org.uk

Building the Socialist Party

Record numbers join the socialists

THE SOCIALIST Party is on 83% of its six-month recruitment target to get 315 new members by 7 January. In the lead are Yorkshire Socialist Party members who have achieved 132% of their recruitment target.

Many of the new Socialist Party members have joined through the growing student movement against fees and cuts, while many others are young workers or are among the almost one million unemployed under-25 year olds.

There have been record numbers of people applying to join through the party's website, with the highest numbers of applications being sent in after mass student protests as well as regional and local anti-cuts protests.

Several people have joined the party through local and national anti-cuts campaigning, including many public sector workers facing cuts in local government, the NHS, education

and civil services.

You can help the Socialist Party get to 100% of its membership target by 7 January. Socialist Party members should make sure that people they have met when campaigning, along with workmates and friends that have shown an interest, are asked if they want to join the party.

If you are not yet a Socialist Party member, but agree with the strategy for fighting cuts put forward in this paper, then why not join? That way you can help build the battle against all the cuts and fight for a socialist alternative, so the lives of ordinary people are put before the profits of big business.

To join, phone 020 8988 8777, text 07984 027754, apply online at www.socialistparty.org.uk/join or write to Socialist Party membership, PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD.

Bob Severn

Socialist Party 2010 Christmas appeal

THE SOCIALIST Party is appealing to all supporters and readers of The Socialist to make a fighting fund donation this Christmas to support the fight to build organised resistance to the Con-Dem onslaught.

The working class is being presented with the bill for the bank bailout but the bankers themselves are back to making super-profits. They have paid themselves over £7 billion in bonuses this year while many working-class families are worrying whether they can even afford even the basics.

However, led by the magnificent protests and demonstrations of the students and the youth, the fightback has begun. Socialist Party members are at the heart of this movement and everywhere are involved in building democratic anti-cuts campaigns and protests.

Throughout all our work we emphasise the necessity of linking these struggles with work-

ers defending their jobs and communities defending their services.

There also has to be a political alternative to the attacks of the three main parties. We will be campaigning for as many anti-cuts candidates as possible to stand in the May elections as a step towards building a new mass workers' party.

Capitalism has shown conclusively that it is incapable of taking society forward, despite the huge wealth that has been created and advances in technology.

That is why we are fighting for a socialist society, where all the wealth that is created by workers is democratically owned and controlled by them and is used for the benefit of everyone. If you support our fight then please make a donation.

**Ken Douglas
Socialist Party treasurer**

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SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND			
	£ target	£ received	October-December 2010 deadline: 7 January
Eastern	1,200	2,761	████████████████████
Wales	2,300	3,393	████████████████████
London	6,100	6,091	████████████████████
East Midlands	1,550	1,386	████████████████████
Yorkshire	2,900	2,543	████████████████████
North West	1,200	923	████████████████████
Southern	1,200	895	████████████████████
West Midlands	2,100	1,538	████████████████████
South West	1,400	871	████████████████████
South East	1,000	524	████████████████████
Northern	600	210	████████████████████
England & Wales	3,450	6,058	████████████████████
TOTAL	25,000	27,199	████████████████████