

Marching against council cuts

Haringey

ON MONDAY 17 January, 1,500 people marched against cuts in Haringey in a protest called by Unite, Unison, UCATT and NUT union branches.

Haringey council looks to cut £87 million in spending over the next three years, including £46 million in 2011/12.

This will mean cuts of 1,000 jobs, over 20% of the workforce! Despite promises to 'protect front line services and the vulnerable', the initial cuts are to residential homes for adults with physical and learning disabilities, and day and drop-in centres for the elderly.

The lively and angry anti-cuts protesters marched to a rally outside Haringey Civic Centre. One of the speakers at this rally was Labour leader of Haringey council, Claire Kober. Councillor Kober made it clear that she wasn't going to 'break the law' by setting a 'needs' budget, and she and the ruling Labour group were going to vote through the cuts.

She then implored the council workers and other protesters present to join her at the 26 March TUC demo against government cuts!

The deputation to the council meeting from Haringey Alliance for Public Services (HAPS) explained why the cuts were not economically necessary and called on councillors to not vote for cuts. HAPS members said that if councillors were not prepared to vote against cuts, they should step aside to make way for those who would.

This was followed by an unexpected joint deputation to the council meeting from the Unison, Unite and GMB trade unions. Despite a December branch meeting of 700 Haringey local government Unison members overwhelmingly voting to fight local cuts, the trade union spokesperson said to the councillors: "we are not in the business of asking you to stand aside, we want you to stand with us and resist the cuts."

This raises the question, when the trade union officers talk about 'resisting' the cuts, do they just mean

"blame the Con-Dems for all of the cuts, but back Labour councillors who vote for cuts"?

John Dolan

Haringey Unison local government branch (personal capacity)

Hull

"I JOINED the union yesterday, I'm on my first demonstration today and I'm loving it!" These words from a Unison member summed up the mood of 400 council workers from Unison, Unite, GMB and UCATT who joined the Hull Against the Cuts lobby of the Lib Dem-controlled Hull city council on Thursday 20 January.

Probably the biggest anti-council demo in more than a decade followed a week of mass meetings that explained to the workers the full extent of the cuts in Hull. The city council joint shop stewards committee met for the first time to begin to coordinate action.

At one local workplace meeting the local Unison rep urged caution and warned against use of "left wing rhetoric" in case it puts people off. This advice was ignored by the speakers and significantly, many from that meeting joined the union and came on the lobby.

As the lobby grew, a spontaneous march started that went right round the guildhall. When it returned to the main entrance, there was only one place to go - into the council meeting itself! The councillors were forced to retreat to their offices behind locked doors.

Earlier, Steve Brady, the leader of the Labour group of councillors reiterated his earlier promise that if Labour wins the council in May, there will be no compulsory redundancies and all privatised services will be brought back in-house.

We welcome Steve's stand but to make sure that he can deliver these promises, Hull Against the Cuts is determined to build an even bigger movement that will unite the work-



Marching in Southampton in support of Medirest workers.

ers in the council with the voluntary sector and service users to defend jobs and services in the city.

Mike Whale
Hull Socialist Party

Leicester

THE MAIN public sector unions in Leicester, Unison, PCS, NUT, GMB and Unite, organised a 300-strong rally on Wednesday 19 January outside Leicester town hall. It was against a budget of cuts and job losses being voted through by Leicester's New Labour council.

Council workers' pay is being cut with the imposition of a 35-hour week. By contrast, the Socialist Party stands for jobs being created by a 35-hour week, but with no loss of pay. As well as this, eight old people's homes are being closed and 1,000 council jobs are under threat across the city. In Leicestershire county, there is a similar picture, as vital services are being slashed.

Tony Church, convenor of Leicestershire Against the Cuts, drew attention to the £120 billion of taxes left unpaid by the rich in his speech.

He was followed by Becci Heagney, from Youth Fight for Jobs and Education, who was inspired by young people who came to the rally: school and sixth-form students who face the axing of Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) and a lifetime of debt if they decide to go to university. She said that students would unite in struggle with workers for a decent future.

Josie Nicholls, Leicestershire County Unison branch chair, personal capacity, pointed out that councillors do have a choice. They should go into communities and workplaces to campaign for a mass movement that demands that the government saves jobs and funds decent public services, with no rise in council tax.

Sir Peter Soulsby, Labour MP for Leicester South, said that he would "stand with trade unions" and blamed the Tories and Lib Dems for the cuts. But his speech offered nothing in the way of ideas or concrete support.

Andrew Walton
Leicester Socialist Party



photos David Smith

dates for your diary

Bristol Socialist Party
Breaking Britain - the Con-Dem agenda
Tuesday 1 February, 7.30pm
Cheltenham Road Library, Bristol, BS6 5QX

Portsmouth Socialist Party
May 1968 - lessons for the student movement
Tuesday 1 February, 7pm
Fratton Community Centre, Portsmouth

Huddersfield Socialist Party
Class struggle in Africa
Thursday 3 February, 7.30pm
Irish Centre, Fitzwilliam Street, Huddersfield.

Socialist Party Wales conference
Sunday 6 February, 11am-4pm
Cardiff Bus Social and Sports Club, Tudor Street, Cardiff

Leeds district Socialist Party
Socialist struggle around the world
Tuesday 8 February, 7pm
The Packhorse Pub, 208 Woodhouse Road, Leeds

Portsmouth lobby of council budget setting meeting
Tuesday 8 February, 1.30pm
Guildhall Square, Portsmouth

Greenwich march against cuts in jobs, pay and services
Saturday 12 February, assemble 11.30
Riverside House, Creton Street, off Powis Street, Woolwich

Yorkshire Socialist Party
LGBTQ day school
Saturday 12 February, 12noon-6pm
The Packhorse Pub, Woodhouse Road, Leeds
For more info contact Iain on 07809 839793

Bristol Socialist Party
Women and the struggle for socialism
Tuesday 15 February, 7.30pm
Cheltenham Road Library, Bristol, BS6 5QX

Huddersfield Socialist Party
Do you have to be red to be green?
Thursday 17 February, 7.30pm
Irish Centre, Fitzwilliam Street, Huddersfield

Waltham Forest Anti-Cuts Union
March against cuts in jobs and services
Saturday 19 January, 12noon
Abbot Park, Leyton, East London, marching to Walthamstow town square

www.socialistparty.org.uk/whatson

Socialist Party Wales launch youth committee

THE FIRST meeting of the new Socialist Party Wales youth committee was held in Swansea and attended by eleven delegates, representing Socialist Party Wales branches and college and university Socialist Students groups.

Rae Lewis-Ayling introduced the political session on Marxist economics. Rae explained the real objective of the Con-Dem coalition's cuts programme, to decrease the share of wealth received by the workers, and increase the share going to the bosses.

This laid the backdrop for the organisational session, which was focussed on mobilising in the colleges and universities for the anti-cuts demonstration in Manchester on 29 January.

It was also agreed to organise for the 19 January Pontypridd pro-

The mood to fight back against attacks is there amongst young people in Wales.

test called by Unison, which could prove an important stepping stone for trade unionists in Wales wanting to organise an effective movement against the cutbacks.

The mood to fight back against the attacks on our living standards is there amongst young people in Wales. It's up to us to provide a lead to all those wanting to organise to defend our rights to an education, a job and a future.

Joe Fathallah
Youth and student organiser
Socialist Party Wales

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SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND

	£ target	£ received	January - March 2011	deadline: 8 April
Southern	1,200	1,162	████████████████████	████████████████████
Eastern	1,200	287	████████████████████	████████████████████
East Midlands	1,550	253	████████████████████	████████████████████
London	6,100	915	████████████████████	████████████████████
South West	1,400	172	████████████████████	████████████████████
South East	1,000	117	████████████████████	████████████████████
Wales	2,300	225	████████████████████	████████████████████
Yorkshire	2,900	283	████████████████████	████████████████████
West Midlands	2,100	182	████████████████████	████████████████████
North West	1,200	64	████████████████████	████████████████████
Northern	600	0	████████████████████	████████████████████
England & Wales	3,450	25	████████████████████	████████████████████
TOTAL	25,000	3,690	████████████████████	████████████████████