

# 200 workers challenge Labour council cuts

**Ken Douglas**  
Walthamstow Socialist Party

Over 200 council workers staged a noisy and colourful protest outside Waltham Forest town hall in north east London, calling on the Labour council cabinet to step back from forcing new contracts on the workforce, part of the council's £65 million cuts.

This was a joint lobby called by Unison, Unite and GMB, conducted by the three branch secretaries, and followed meetings of all three unions calling for a ballot for strike action. Two Unison meetings had to be moved outside as over 300 members endorsed the call at both.

On top of the hundreds of job cuts that the council has already put through, they are proposing cuts in pay, sick pay, travel allowances and holidays.

For example, a worker from the Meals on Wheels service, who has to use his own vehicle to deliver meals, told the protest that the council were going to stop his car allowance of £70 a month.

Following the announcement to the lobby that the NUT teachers' union had voted by 92% to strike on 30 June against the attacks on



Three unions - Unite, Unison and GMB - took part in the demo photo Senan

public sector pensions, Susan Wills, Waltham Forest college UCU branch secretary and a member of the Socialist Party, emphasised the need for joint strike action to stop the attacks on the public sector.

Linda Taaffe, Waltham Forest NUT and Socialist Party, received massive cheers when she called on the national leadership of Unison, Unite and the GMB to learn the lessons of the proposed joint action in

the borough and "get off their backsides" to join the other public sector unions in national coordinated action against the attacks of the Con-Dem government.

The workers on the lobby enthusiastically waved Socialist Party and NSSN placards, calling for opposition to all the cuts and for a one-day public sector general strike. They queued to sign up to the Waltham Forest Anti-Cuts Union.

## Staffordshire NSSN builds support for 30 June action

**Andy Bentley**  
Stoke Socialist Party

Trade union reps and members from PCS, NUT, CWU Postal, CWU Telecoms, Unison, GMB and Unite met on 15 June in Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, to plan how to build support for workers taking strike action on 30 June against attacks on pensions.

The meeting was organised by National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) Staffordshire activists with PCS DWP North Staffs branch secretary Pete Rofe playing a key role. Speaking from the platform, Pete explained why PCS members are angry and have voted to strike on 30 June.

Guy Hamnett, CWU North Midland branch chair, highlighted the decision by CWU conference to call on the TUC to organise a 24-hour general strike.

Chris from the NUT, also speaking in a personal capacity, explained that the teachers in his school were mainly NASUWT members and that many of them were angry that they hadn't

been balloted for strike action.

NSSN national chair Rob Williams explained that RMT London Underground workers and Unite and Unison council workers in Southampton would also be taking strike action on 30 June.

Everyone at the meeting agreed the need for a 24-hour general strike of public and private sector workers.

Speaking from the floor, Unison member Joanne reflected the mood which exists among many workers by explaining that she had booked a day off work on 30 June to actively support those striking on the day.

Workplaces not on strike will be leafleted explaining why they should support the action being taken. People affected by the strike, such as parents of school children, will be asked to offer their support as well.

Motions will also go to local branches of unions who are not striking on 30 June, calling on them to join future coordinated strike action.



## Labour MP fails to answer questions on cuts

**A Haringey Socialist Party member**

At a trades council and University and College Union (UCU) meeting in Haringey, north London, attended by around 30 people, Labour MP David Lammy was billed as one of the speakers.

In the speeches from the top table, only Oktay Shabaz, from Turkish/Kurdish group Day-Mer, pointed out that attacks on public services, including education, took place under the last Labour government.

When Lammy spoke, he concentrated on Tory attacks on the welfare state, and also emphasised his support for UCU's campaign against cuts at the College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London (CONEL). He made no comment on Haringey Labour council's cuts to local serv-

ices.

From the floor, a Socialist Party member explained that Haringey council plans £81 million cuts over three years. He asked Lammy: whether he thought it was acceptable that the low-paid of Haringey should pay for the bankers' crisis; would he be supporting the strikes on 30 June; if Labour were now in government would it pledge not to attack pensions; and would he oppose any such attacks by a Labour government.

In the replies from the top table, Jenny Sutton, Socialist Workers Party and UCU member, said she had had differences with Lammy in the past, and she had stood against him in last year's general election. But now, 'while we are fighting the Con-Dem government's cuts we should work together!'

Lammy said we should aim to re-

move this government. But, he continued, in the 20th century the left was in power for only 22 years. When we know the enemy we should stand together. There's a debate to be had on the balance between cuts and tax increases, he argued. At a time when we need to be defending the young, the disabled, the vulnerable, the blind, he said he would stand at the front of the campaign. He said there are discussions on tactics taking place in the Labour Party - in politics you have to duck and dive.

He did not answer one of the questions. Nor did he commit himself to attending the Haringey Alliance for Public Services demo on 25 June.

The Socialist Party will work with anyone who opposes all cuts - both in words and action. Sowing illusions in Blairite MPs like David Lammy does not help in fighting those cuts.

## Hillingdon workers back the pensions strike

**A Hillingdon Socialist Party member**

A large crowd gathered in Friends Meeting House in Uxbridge on 16 June for a special Hillingdon Against the Cuts (HAC) meeting to build solidarity and support for the public sector pensions strike on 30 June.

Mike Bosman, west London PCS Home Office rep, was the first to address the meeting. He gave a vivid description of the pressure workers in the civil service are coming under as staff numbers go down, the workload goes up and only the pay stays the same.

From the chair, Wally Kennedy, secretary of HAC, reminded the meeting of the power of strike action. If the bosses do not go to work the wheels of the economy keep turning regardless. But if the workers refuse to work then everything grinds to a halt.

A speaker for UK Uncut gave a

lively account of their campaign to expose tax dodgers such as Philip Green and Vodafone. He gave full support to 30 June, saying strike action was the highest form of direct action.

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Finally a speaker from the Socialist Party stressed the need to build for 30 June as a step towards a general strike in the public sector, as well as stressing the need to build a political alternative to the three mainstream parties of austerity.

There was an excellent discussion around this final point with contributions from the floor from the local Unison branch secretary, a Unite shop steward at Heathrow and reps from the local CWU and RMT branches. The meeting ended with plans to bring work colleagues to visit picket lines on 30 June.

### National youth and student meetings

**Socialist Party youth meeting**

Saturday 2 July  
Heathcote Arms, 344 Grove Green Road, London E11 4EA  
10.30am Youth, democracy, revolution  
The Arab Spring, Los Indignados and uprisings in Greece and Italy  
1pm lunch  
2pm commissions  
• Fighting the cuts and fighting for socialism • The role of the state and democratic rights • Women and the

struggle for socialism  
3.30-5.30pm Organisation and tasks

**Socialist Students meeting**

Sunday 3 July  
The Queens Head, 66 Acton Street, London WC1X 9NB  
10.30am Building the fightback in education  
1pm lunch  
2pm Organising college students  
3-4pm Socialist Students, Youth Fight

for Education and anti-cuts groups

**Youth Fight for Jobs meeting**

Sunday 3 July  
Calthorpe Arms, Greys Inn Road, London WC1X 9JR4  
10.30am the Jarrow March 2011  
1-2pm lunch  
2pm Building Youth Fight for Jobs groups  
3-4pm Reports: Finances, affiliations, trade union work etc

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|                 | £ target      | £ received    | April-June 2011 |   |   |   | Deadline: 8 July |
|-----------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|---|---|---|------------------|
| Wales           | 2,300         | 2,048         | ■               | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■                |
| West Midlands   | 2,100         | 1,714         | ■               | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■                |
| Yorkshire       | 2,900         | 2,154         | ■               | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■                |
| South West      | 1,400         | 1,019         | ■               | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■                |
| North West      | 1,200         | 766           | ■               | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■                |
| East Midlands   | 1,550         | 888           | ■               | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■                |
| South East      | 1,000         | 548           | ■               | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■                |
| Eastern         | 1,200         | 590           | ■               | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■                |
| Southern        | 1,200         | 572           | ■               | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■                |
| London          | 6,100         | 2,705         | ■               | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■                |
| Northern        | 600           | 167           | ■               | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■                |
| England & Wales | 3,450         | 2,455         | ■               | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■                |
| <b>TOTAL</b>    | <b>25,000</b> | <b>15,631</b> | ■               | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■                |