

WE CAN STOP THE CON-DEM CUTS



photo Suzanne Beishon

For a national trade union led demo

The massive cuts threatened by the Con-Dem coalition can be beaten! The reports below show that determination and militancy can make employers back off from cuts proposals. The Trades Union Congress, meeting from 12 September, should give a clear lead to this vital struggle (see editorial page 2).

THE UNISON union branch in Kirklees, Yorkshire is balloting for industrial action against cuts in services and jobs with a strike likely in October. Workplace meetings have become angrier and angrier as members hear about the savage cuts imposed by the council.

Compulsory council redundancies aim to halve the number of admin workers - about 350 staff, mainly women! The council chiefs spent up to £30 million paying off their mates in high places, who were offered secret deals to go. After the middle and higher managers, it will be our turn but we won't get the payoffs, just the boot!

Managers were given lists of those they can dismiss... temporary staff; workers over 64; people with too much sickness absence... It's a bullies' charter and union members see they can only stand up to bullies by sticking together.

Workers are dismayed that a so-

called Labour council is pushing through these cuts with no consultation. They are no friend of the unions or their workforce. Yet they shell out over £1 million on eight chief officers. One rule for them, another for us.

Local unions are backing the demo in Huddersfield called by Save Our Services (SOS) on 11 September. This will probably be the town's biggest demo since over 2,000 marched in protest around NHS cuts in 2006 to stop hospital closures.

Joint campaigning

THIS DEMO is also supported by the Unison health branch which is campaigning alongside Unison local government branch to stop privatisation of district nursing services among others.

Unison held about 15 campaign stalls over the summer to build public support and there are almost

daily local press headlines about the looming strike ballot and the unions' demo.

Young people organised by Youth Fight for Jobs, joining the march to stop the appalling cuts in young peoples' services, will be given pride of place on the demo and the platform of speakers.

The council is beginning to realise these cuts will not be taken lying down - they are now asking to speak to the unions!

Our ballot will confirm a growing confidence amongst the membership that now is the time to fight. Despite the recession, we know we can get a 'yes' vote and push back this council's offensive against public services.

Come on the demo: Saturday 11 September. Assemble outside Huddersfield railway station, St Georges Square, 12.30pm

Mike Forster, Kevin Crowe, Angie Waller and Bradley Chambers

LOBBY THE TUC CONFERENCE

Sunday 12 September 12 noon

Central Convention Centre, Manchester

Organised by the National Shop Stewards Network

See www.shopstewards.net for transport details

Health workers' victory

HOSPITAL WORKERS, Unison members in Calderstones Health branch (centred on Clitheroe, Lancashire), faced proposals to introduce 'super-flexible' contracts and work patterns that would have reduced the hospital's qualified nursing care.

The Unison branch said they would ballot members for strike action if these proposals were imposed. A demonstration was organised through the village of Whalley, which attracted strong public support, including from the policeman on duty and a local shopkeeper who gave protesters

ice creams! Faced with such opposition inside and outside the hospital, the employer backed down and a negotiated settlement has been agreed.

East Lancashire Health branch (centred on Blackburn and nearby towns), faced similar proposals that would have downgraded nursing and healthcare staff and reduced service provision to children's hospital services. Again, a determined stand and preparedness to ballot for strike action has resulted in negotiations that are expected to result in an agreement acceptable to the union.

Save our NHS

Tories declare war on health services

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No to Trident

Nuclear spending continues

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Tony's Journey

Workers not invited

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