Fight against cuts continues to grow

800 march in Ipswich

BETWEEN 700 and 800 people marched through Ipswich town centre on 27 November with banners from Unite, National Union of Teachers, Communication Workers Union, Unison and the Fire Brigades Union.

At the final rally, speakers put forward a variety of strategies to oppose the cuts. David Ellswood of Ipswich Labour Party suggested that demonstrators write to and lobby their local MPs and councillors, "when they're worried about losing their seats, they may change their minds".

But the best reception was given to speakers who took a more realistic line. Paul Moffat of the CWU condemned the TUC decision to sit on its hands until March and called for support of a demonstration in Witney, in David Cameron's Oxfordshire constituency, on 10 January. Students from Suffolk New College and Northgate High School, 100 of whom took action on 24 November by striking and marching through the town, made fighting speeches.

The leader of the Lib Dem group on Suffolk county council claimed to deplore the actions of her party at national level and condemned the slash and burn policy of the current Tory-led county council. She also attempted to distance herself from the Lib Dems on the district council who are cutting services. As her speech turned into a rather drawn out plea to be recognised as a nice liberal, ie one in opposition, rather than a nasty Liberal, ie one in power, her listeners grew increasingly angry and a chorus of heckles and jeers accompanied much of what she had to say.

Socialist Party member Teresa MacKay praised the initiatives taken by the students and mapped out a strategy for building the movement and defeating the government - calling for an urgent national TUC demo to build for a one-day public sector strike.

Dave Murray
Eastern region Socialist Party

300 at Sheffield launch

THE SHEFFIELD demonstration of 2,000 students against cuts and fees on 24 November provided an excellent backdrop to the launch meeting of the Sheffield anti-cuts alliance, an initiative put forward by all the PCS civil service union branches across Sheffield, and supported by most local unions.

In a packed out meeting of almost 300, it is clear that there is an increasing mood to fight the cuts planned by not only the weak Con-Dem government but also by the even weaker Liberal-led minority Sheffield City council, who stand to be wiped out in the May local elections.

There is a growing hatred not only for the cuts, but also for deputy prime minister Nick Clegg, the MP for Sheffield Hallam. He is viewed with contempt and hatred for the lies he told in order to get elected.

However it is equally scandalous that Labour, which complains on the sidelines about the Lib Dems, could take control of the council now but is cynically refusing to do so. If Labour was serious about supporting Sheffield residents, then it would take control of the council now, refuse to implement the cuts and agree an alternative budget which supports jobs and services across the city.

It was clear that the mood is to oppose all cuts in jobs and cuts in services and build the broadest based opposition right across the city. This will begin with a lobby of the council to defend the local children's hospital which faces massive cuts, and supporting youth who will be out protesting again in the days and weeks to come.

Marion Lloyd
PCS Sheffield and NEC (personal capacity)

The Sheffield anti-cuts alliance launch meeting followed a demonstration of 2,000 students in the city. *photo Sheffield SP*

200 fill Leeds council hall

OVER 200 people filled the Leeds council chamber on 25 November for a meeting organised by Leeds Against the Cuts. LATC was set up by the Leeds TUC and a majority of those attending were trade union members, many of whom were shop stewards and activists.

Speakers from the unions Unison, Unite, UCU and the Leeds tenants' federation explained that the cuts are a vicious attack on working people.

Following a student march and occupation (see pages 6 and 7), university students Joe Johnson and Ian Pattison showed that higher tuition fees would hit working class families hardest.

Three school students, one only 12 years old, also spoke. They had organised a walkout of over 800 pupils from their school, campaigning against the ending of EMA. All three received standing ovations.

Many contributions from the floor raised the question of strike action to defeat the Con-Dem government.

Manny Dominguez explained how the 1983-87 Liverpool city council united the whole city in fighting the Thatcher government's cuts, and said we should stand anti-cuts candidates in May's council elections.

The final speaker, PCS president Janice Godrich, said that £120 billion of uncollected taxes could be used to stop any cuts.

The next LATC activity will be the "tax dodgers day of action" on Saturday 11 December, meeting in front of Leeds City Art Gallery at 12noon.

Kevin Pattison
Leeds Socialist Party

NHS walk-in centre saved, but campaign continues

ON 13 November 30 people demonstrated their opposition to NHS plans to close Bitterne Walk-In Centre (BWC). BWC is a well-used facility, allowing the public speedy access to medical expertise, taking pressure away from GPs, the general hospital and the A&E service.

David Rawlinson
Southampton Socialist Party

Since the campaign started in July over 2000 signatures have been collected.

The NHS Trust aims to save £2.2 million. Under pressure, the trust has said the BWC could stay open, but with drastically reduced opening times. This has been rejected by the campaign. The campaign will continue until we have a promise from the trust that the BWC can remain open without a reduction in opening hours.

Among the unsavoury acts this campaign has exposed was a Tory councillor emailing people to say the BWC had been saved, not mentioning the reduced hours. The local Labour MP was seen putting in a token hours worth of petitioning but has not been seen since.

The meeting that followed the demonstration was presented with a broad picture of NHS cuts. A consultation period has now started over the next two months where we will make sure that the fight to protect frontline NHS services continues. There was enthusiasm to take the campaign out to schools, parents and ensure local councillors were urged to stop the cut in hours.

Nuneaton protest against racist EDL

ON SATURDAY 27 November Socialist Party members and allies in the Nuneaton Anti-Fascist Alliance staged a successful counter-protest of over 150 people as the English Defence League (EDL) marched through Nuneaton. This was EDL's fourth visit since September, in an attempt to stir up racial tension and create division in the community.

EDL propaganda claimed that its march would be peaceful, but it only took a few minutes to turn violent. There were five arrests for offences including carrying bladed weapons.

photo Nuneaton SP

The EDL's claim to be campaigning against 'radical Islam' was also quickly shown to be typical racist lies as they threw bottles, firecrackers and flash grenades into the crowd demonstrating against them and spat at local Asian youth to try and provoke a reaction.

Saturday shoppers were bemused as to why the EDL keep picking on Nuneaton and at one point gave the EDL march a slow hand clap.

See www.nuneatonsocialists.co.uk for a longer report.

Pete Playdon
Nuneaton Anti-Fascist Alliance

Building the Socialist Party

Party with international socialists

THE LONDON Socialist Party Christmas social will be your chance to hear from socialist speakers involved in struggle from across the world, including Segun Sango from Democratic Socialist Movement (CWI Nigeria) and Jagadish Chandra from New Socialist Alternative (CWI India).

The party follows the tenth Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) world congress, to be attended by delegates and visitors from east and west Europe and Russia, Africa, all parts of Asia, North and Latin America, Australia and the Middle East.

The week-long congress will debate the main issues facing the working class internationally in a period of deep capitalist crisis and as the bosses try to impose unprecedented savage cuts on the working class and poor. See www.socialistworld.net for the congress documents.

Saturday 11 December, 7.30pm
Pirate Castle, Oval Road, Camden, London NW1 7EA
Near Camden Town underground station

Join the 2010 Christmas Collectathon

THE ANNUAL Socialist Party Christmas Collectathon has now started!

All Socialist Party branches should be organising extra fundraising activities in the run-up to Christmas. All Socialist Party members can help by dedicating some of their time to campaigning among the Christmas shoppers or by organising a fundraising party or raffle.

Campaigning reports and fundraising ideas can be emailed to editors@socialistparty.org.uk.

You can also support the Socialist Party by donating via our website at www.socialistparty.org.uk/donate or by telephoning 020 8988 8777.

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SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND

October-December 2010 — deadline: 7 January

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Eastern	1,200	1,423
London	6,100	5,557
East Midlands	1,550	1,303
Yorkshire	2,900	2,327
Southern	1,200	819
North West	1,200	785
Wales	2,300	1,394
West Midlands	2,100	1,191
South West	1,400	788
South East	1,000	524
Northern	600	152
England & Wales	3,450	5,851
TOTAL	25,000	22,121