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www.socialistparty.org.uk

Building the anti-cuts movement

2,000 march in Norwich

SATURDAY 4 December saw approximately 2,000 people march through Norwich. This was in protest against cuts to vital services that the Tory administration in Norfolk County Council will implement on behalf of their millionaire club puppet masters in Downing Street.

The march brought together students, trade unionists, workers, service users and carers, and many others, who again made loud and clear the message to county hall that the people of Norfolk will not accept any cut to any service.

One of the speakers at the rally which followed the march was Felicity Dowling, one of the 1983-87 Liverpool 47 councillors, who demanded and won £60 million out of the then Tory government with the mass support of the people of Liverpool. Her experience of fighting and defeating ideological cuts was undoubtedly an inspiration to all.

It is also worthy of note that not one of the county's MPs attended the march and rally, proving that they are indeed 'all in this together' in their blinkered ignorance of the desires and needs of their constituents.

The same week saw a student occupation and separate protest at the University of East Anglia against the proposed trebling of tuition fees. There was also a protest by students from City College Norwich against the impact that cuts in public transport would have on those who live in the rural areas of Norfolk, essentially denying them access to further education opportunities.

Mick Duffin
Norwich Socialist Party

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

Youth Fight for Education speaker Liat Norris at the north Staffordshire rally. *photo Stoke Socialist Party*

Coventry demo of 400

UP TO 400 people marched through Coventry city centre in a demonstration called by the Coventry Against the Cuts campaign on Saturday 4 December.

There were banners and placards from the PCS, Unite, Unison, Coventry TUC, GMB, NUT, TSSA unions and many more. Socialist Party 'Fight the Cuts' placards were also prominent.

The loud, vibrant demo finished with a rally with excellent speakers from Coventry TUC, Unison, Unite, NUT, disability rights campaigners and student activists. One of the student speakers, Lenny Shail, gave a barnstorming speech calling for students and workers to link up.

Socialist Party councillor Dave Nellist called for the Labour council to refuse to implement cuts. The council plans to make huge cuts and has recently sent out letters to all employees warning their jobs could disappear. The council also wants 1,000 workers to give up their jobs as part of a voluntary redundancy programme.

The rally was addressed by Coventry Labour leader John Mutton, who tried to explain that the Labour council will not be making any cuts. This was met with disbelief from many council workers. A Connexions worker directly challenged Mutton over job losses and how the council are making cuts.

A Coventry Socialist Party member

Stoke-on-Trent demo

OVER 120 people attended a protest against the cuts in Stoke-on-Trent on Saturday 4 December, organised by North Staffs Against Cuts (NSAC).

Trade unionists came together with local community members to tell the local Labour-led city council and the Con-Dem government that we will fight all cuts. There were speakers from the NUT, Unison, PCS, NUS and Unite trade unions, Youth Fight for Jobs and local community anti-cuts campaigners.

Mark Weston explained how parents and NHS workers are taking part in the Save Buttercups NHS Nursery campaign.

Liat Norris from Youth Fight for Education said that if the TUC gave its sanction, millions of workers would take action against these brutal cuts. This is proved by the recent student strikes and demonstrations, including in the nearby Tory bastion of Stafford.

Socialist Party member Andy Bentley, speaking on behalf of NSAC, had a message for local councillors: "Instead of sitting in rooms planning how they can stop us marching, who they can sack or what they can cut, close or privatise, they should join with the growing campaign of opposition to cuts."

Stoke Socialist Party

Salford Campaign launch

OVER 70 people attended the launch of Salford Against the Cuts, an initiative of Salford Trades Council, including 'Shameless' TV star and ex-Salford University student Maxine Peake.

Sarah Davies, a midwife and midwifery lecturer at Salford University, spoke for the long-running campaign to save maternity services at Salford Royal Hospital. Sarah appealed to people to support the lobby of the strategic health authority (see page 3).

Matt Wrack, general secretary of the Fire Brigades Union, gave examples of the realities of daily life under capitalism, the impact of the cuts and the need for a change of society.

Jane Warburton of the PCS Young Members' Network, said how the cuts effect young workers and promoted the Rally Against Youth Unemployment in Manchester on 29 January.

In the discussion the deputy leader of the Labour council, councillor Lancaster, said nothing had been decided yet about cuts and negotiations were continuing with the unions.

However, in response to pressure from the meeting on a 'no cuts' policy, he said that the meeting could not ask councillors 'to put their house on the line' – ignoring the fact that councillors can no longer be surcharged like the 1983-87 Liverpool councillors. Nonetheless a 'no cuts' policy was agreed, as was support for a lobby of the council at its January meeting.

Steve North
Salford Socialist Party

West Cheshire against cuts

55 PEOPLE attended the launch of West Cheshire Against Cuts on 2 December. The mood was lively and the idea of putting forward a Socialist alternative to cuts was greeted with much applause.

The PCS civil service union highlighted stopping tax avoidance by the rich and job creation as alternatives to the government's cuts agenda. Socialist Party members promoted the 9 December student protests, the 11 December Liverpool demo, and the TUC national demo on 26 March. Many people spoke of the need for a movement similar to the one that defeated the poll tax.

Alec Price
Chester Socialist Party

Nottingham march against billionaire tax dodgers

AS PART of a national day of protests on unpaid tax, Nottinghamshire SOS (Save Our Services) organised a protest outside a Vodafone store before moving on to other stores to expose tax avoidance by companies. Each Vodafone store closed during the protest outside it.

The HMRC permanent secretary for tax, Dave Hartnett, has allowed the phone giant to avoid paying an estimated £6 billion tax. As one placard nicely put it, "Dave Hartnett – Vodacrony".

The protest raises the question of how to stop tax avoidance schemes when large corporations wield massive economic power and will threaten governments if they feel their profits are threatened.

For example, how can Kraft, the owners of Cadbury, be stopped from moving substantial parts of the chocolate manufacturer to Switzerland which has a far lower rate of corporation tax? The answer: public ownership under democratic workers' control and management.

The protest raises the question of how to stop tax avoidance schemes when large corporations wield massive economic power and will threaten governments if they feel their profits are threatened.

The march was joined by students from both Nottingham universities who arranged to meet after the ending of the University of Nottingham occupation.

This was followed up by a meeting to discuss building for the 9 December protests.

A Nottingham Socialist Party member

Hull: racist BNP demo stopped

ON SATURDAY 4 December around 250 local activists in Hull, including trade unionists, Kurdish people and users of the Pearson Park mosque, joined together to oppose a hate-spreading demonstration by the British National Party (BNP).

The BNP oppose a planned extension in the tiny Mosque, one of only three in the city. BNP members met just outside the park but, when they saw the number of anti-racist protesters, cancelled their demo, as they would have been outnumbered by 20 to one.

The anti-racist protest heard speakers from trade unions and local groups.

Matt Whale, from Youth Fight for Jobs, spoke of the need to link anti-racist campaigns with the anti-cuts movements to fight for jobs, homes and services.

Though BNP members were prevented from holding their planned demonstration, police effectively kettled the anti-racist demonstration, leaving the BNP free to campaign and hand out leaflets.

A Hull Socialist Party member

Socialist Christmas cards

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Available from Socialist Christmas card offer, Socialist Party, PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD. Please make cheques payable to LSP
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London Socialist Party Christmas party with speakers from the CWI

Saturday 11 December, 7pm to 12midnight (speeches start at 8pm)
Pirate Castle, Oval Road, London NW1 7EA
Nearest tube: Camden Town
Entrance: £8 waged/ £4 unwaged including food.

2010 has been a massive year of struggle as workers and youth fight back against the biggest attacks on jobs and services for decades. The tenth world congress of the Committee for a Workers International (CWI) takes place against this background with delegates discussing the different struggles taking place and the need for a socialist alternative. Come along to hear reports from this congress and the work of the CWI.
After a very full year where the Socialist Party has played a key part in the battle against the cuts and in the student protests, this event will also be your opportunity to have a relaxing and fun evening with food, drink and music.

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SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND

October-December 2010 deadline: 7 January

	£ target	£ received
Eastern	1,200	1,432
London	6,100	6,091
East Midlands	1,550	1,313
Yorkshire	2,900	2,383
Southern	1,200	894
North West	1,200	828
West Midlands	2,100	1,341
Wales	2,300	1,409
South West	1,400	853
South East	1,000	524
Northern	600	210
England & Wales	3,450	5,915
TOTAL	25,000	23,198