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www.socialistparty.org.uk

Labour baroness wants politics kept out of the Forest of Dean

MARK HARPER, the Tory MP for the Forest of Dean, has 'concerns' about job security, but that is all he has in common with the millions of public sector workers whose jobs are currently under threat. This slick politician who spoke at a local anti-cuts rally in 2006 and praised his constituents for fighting hospital closures and NHS cuts, is now telling them to 'wait and see' before deciding whether privatising half of the Forest of Dean will be a bad thing.

Sue Powell
Gloucestershire Socialist Party

Locally, Harper is being called a traitor and a turncoat (that's the polite version). No one is in a mood to wait; they already know how the cuts will affect their community and fear that they will lose the very hospitals they fought so hard to save.

A magnificent protest movement, including a 3,000 strong demo in the forest on 3 January, has been organised by Hands Off Our Forest (HOOF). However, under the helm of Labour's shadow leader of the House of Lords, Baroness Jan Royall, the campaign has declared itself to be "non-political".

At a public meeting in December, amidst numerous demands to look into the right to recall MPs and unseat Harper, she explained: "I know and like Mark Harper … he's a good MP but I believe he is fundamentally wrong about the forest".

Privatisation

ROYALL SEPARATED privatisation of the Forest of Dean from the other forests, which she will not campaign for. According to Royall, privatisation of utilities and transport is fine, but privatising "our forest" is not.

There is no wall between the Con-Dem plans for forests and plans to dismantle public ownership and services. People in the Forest of Dean see the cuts as a class issue.

The latest local media survey shows just 2% in favour of forest privatisation. Only 14% think the government is doing a good job, 81% say they are not.

Four days after the HOOF rally, Socialist Party member Lee Hyett accompanied a constituent to Harper's surgery.

Lee asked Harper if he could guarantee job safety for the 49 Forest of Dean Forestry Commission workers. Harper refused to give that guarantee.

When asked why the usual parliamentary procedure of a white paper preceded by a green paper along with a consultation process had not been observed, Harper replied that he didn't know!

The campaign to save local libraries has already had a big impact. In the private sector, 200 Unite members at the Ribena plant in Coleford are being balloted for strike action over a wage dispute. These campaigns need to be linked together to create a mass campaign together with trade unions.

Campaigns to stop cuts and closures must be linked to trade unions for a united mass movement. *photo Paul Mattsson*

Fighting Labour's cuts in Waltham Forest

THE WALTHAM Forest Anti-Cuts Union (WFACU) met during the first week of 2011 when 35 people discussed organising against cuts in the north east London borough, including having a demonstration in February.

Reports were given from trade unionists fighting cuts in local government by the Labour-run council, health and London Underground. Strike action by Waltham Forest local government Unison members is likely.

The meeting agreed to organise a demonstration to the town hall, when the first full council meeting of the year will vote on 600 local government job cuts.

Though there were no Labour Party members present, members of the Socialist Workers Party said that the local Leyton and Wanstead Labour MP John Cryer should lead this march for 'maximum unity'. This proposal was rejected.

As WFACU coordinator Nancy Taaffe pointed out, when challenged Cryer has publicly said that he would not ask Waltham Forest Labour councillors to vote against cuts and to set a needs budget.

It was also agreed that lobbies of the January and February council cabinet meetings would be organised, along with lobbies of cabinet members' surgeries.

Bob Severn
Walthamstow Socialist Party

Socialist Party meetings

Stevenage Socialist Party
Liverpool, a city that fought
Monday 17 January, 8pm
Shephall Centre, Shephall Green, Stevenage SG2 9XR

Leeds (Hyde Park and Headingley)
The sex industry - a socialist analysis
Tuesday 18 January, 7.30pm
For more information contact Nick on 07522505474

West London Socialist Party
How should we fight the cuts?
Wednesday 19 January, 7.45pm
West London Trades Union Centre, 33/35 High Street, Acton, London W3 6ND

Huddersfield Socialist Party
Big Society or Big Sham?
Thursday 20 January, 7.30pm
Irish Centre, Fitzwilliam Street, Huddersfield.

Wrexham Socialist Party
Alternatives to austerity
Wednesday 26 January, 7.30pm
Wrexham Lager Club, 1 Union Road, Wrexham

Rotherham Socialist Party
Fight the cuts!
Thursday 27 January, 7.30pm
The Bridge Inn, Greasbrough Road, Rotherham, S60 1RB

For more details of meetings and events, see www.socialistparty.org.uk/whatson
No details for your area? Phone 020 8988 8777

Building the Socialist Party

Fighting Fund hits 132% of target

THE SOCIALIST Party's fighting fund reached 132% for the October-December 2010 quarter, with a grand total of £32,876 raised!

Alex Gounelas
Socialist Party fighting fund organisers

Congratulations go to Socialist Party members whose hard work and campaigning has made this possible.

The Socialist Party regions that went over their quarter target are: Eastern 234%, Wales 172%, East Midlands 135%, London 120%, Yorkshire 112%, North West and West Midlands both 111%, South West 108% and Southern 105%.

These figures are due to the support that exists for building a serious fight against all cuts, as well as the Socialism 2010 financial appeal in November. If you have not yet redeemed your pledge for the appeal, it is not too late but please do so as soon as possible!

The October-December figure puts Socialist Party fighting fund on a total of £105,427 for the year overall, 105% of the annual target. The regions that beat their annual targets are: West Midlands on 159%, Wales 146%, Eastern 113%, East Midlands 110%, London 103% and South West on 101%.

Fighting fund is essential for financing campaigning. Unlike the three main big-business parties, the Socialist Party is not funded by the rich but by working-class and young people.

Socialist Party branches with fighting fund organisers and well-planned fighting fund campaigns always do better at raising money than ones without. Branches without a fighting fund organiser should elect one to get off to a good fundraising start for 2011.

Socialist Party branch organiser's packs can be ordered from alexgounelas@socialistparty.org.uk or on 020 8988 8791.

New readers for The Socialist

IN OCTOBER to December 2010, sales of The Socialist reached 75% of the quarterly target. 21 Socialist Party branches around the country managed to surpass their targets, including York Socialist Party members who more than doubled the number they expected to sell!

Throughout 2010, sellers of The Socialist have found many new regular readers and buyers.

In particular, many young people have wanted to read the articles carried in The Socialist reporting on the student movement.

With many demonstrations, protests and meetings about the cuts already happening or planned for early 2011, there is clearly the potential for every branch to improve on sales this quarter and to find the 179 subscribers needed to reach our national subscriptions target.

Sarah Wrack
The Socialist sales organiser

John Macreadie fund

A SOCIALIST PARTY fighting fund appeal has been launched in the name of John Macreadie, at the request of Terry Adams with support from John's wife Roisin.

John was a courageous class fighter and a militant leader in his work for the Public and Commercial Services union (PCS) and its precursor the Civil and Public Services Association (CPSA), as well as the wider trade union and labour movement. John died from a brain tumour in December 2010.

Please send donations, made payable to the Socialist Party, to PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD. An obituary for John was carried in issue 652 of The Socialist and can be read at www.socialistparty.org.uk.

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SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND

October-December 2010 — Final chart

	£ target	£ received
Eastern	1,200	2,809
Wales	2,300	3,949
East Midlands	1,550	2,096
London	6,100	7,303
Yorkshire	2,900	3,239
West Midlands	2,100	2,335
North West	1,200	1,328
South West	1,400	1,508
Southern	1,200	1,264
South East	1,000	540
Northern	600	222
England & Wales	3,450	6,277
TOTAL	25,000	32,875