

# 'What we heard'

Every socialist now has their eyes set on 30 November in preparation for a historic strike and a huge demonstration of working class power. But as campaigning socialists we are often engaged in day-to-day tasks of a more mundane nature, which all contribute to building support for socialist ideas and providing a way forward for our struggle against all cuts.

I was recently charged with one such job - buying red cloth for the rally stage for Socialism 2011 on 5 and 6 November. It provided an illustration of how the world is changing and so is people's outlook. I asked for fabric, saying it was for a rally. The question came back immediately: "Rally - what's that about?" My answer - that it was a 'rally for socialism' - opened up some interesting discussion about the nature of capitalism and the urgent need for an alternative - and earned a one-third discount.

Support for a socialist alternative manifests itself in all sorts of ways.  
**Emma Smith**  
**Walthamstow Socialist Party**

"You're sexy, you're cute, take off your riot suit!"

**Women students to massed ranks of riot police on 10 November demo**

Email 'what you heard' to editors@socialistparty.org.uk or text 07432 593 149

# Stop Wales NHS downgrades

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Welsh Labour is desperately trying to spin a recent YouGov opinion poll to support their hospital downgrading programme, but public opposition is shown on the BBC Wales website that reports how Labour backbench assembly members (AMs) are lobbying Wales first minister Carwyn Jones to drop the plans.

Despite all their protestations to the contrary, NHS bosses' plans are largely about cuts. This was admitted by one of the foremost advocates of these changes, Marcus Longley from the University of Glamorgan, who said the NHS bosses had to "persuade the public that this was not about merely saving money".

The cutting of hospital services is an attempt to provide lower quality health treatment on the cheap. Socialists would support more community-based treatment if it is properly funded and in place before hospital reconfiguration, with



photo S Mayo

no job losses. The hospital services could then be reconfigured if and

after demand for hospital services fell.

Instead, reconfiguration plans will follow the fate of the under-funded care in the community mental health, where vulnerable patients have been left isolated.

Already the NHS is struggling before the cuts kick in. In September, 33,312 people in Wales had been waiting for six months or more for hospital treatment. This figure is set to soar as the cuts begin to bite and services are cut.

As Socialist Party Wales has explained, there is no way that working people in Wales will accept the cuts to the NHS or Labour's hospital downgrading plan, which was rejected at the polls in 2007.

Across Wales, the Socialist Party is campaigning against NHS cuts and to save hospital services from being 'reconfigured', ie cut. Hundreds of health workers have told us of the widespread health cuts happening and thousands have signed our petitions.

## Save Alfreton station!

**Brian Loader**  
Mansfield and North East  
Derbyshire Socialist Party

Over 60 people attended a meeting organised by Alfreton town council, in Derbyshire, about the future of Alfreton's train station.

Alfreton's town clerk summarised the McNulty Report which proposes the closure of 675 ticket offices where annual station passenger numbers are below 260,000. The clerk attacked the lack of investment by train companies and Network Rail over platform access for disabled wheelchair users.

An East Midlands Trains senior

manager said they had no foreseeable plans, with the exception of Melton Mowbray, to close/reduce ticket offices. But, after the present franchise expires in 2015, new franchises may close 'category E' ticket offices such as Alfreton.

A TSSA rail union officer challenged the local Tory MP to sign a parliamentary early day motion which opposed the McNulty report's deletion of Schedule 17, the need for public consultation over closures. The MP said he didn't sign any motions as they were all engineered by parliamentary lobbyists!

There was a call from the audience for the renationalisation of the train network.

## Occupy! protests

### Cardiff occupation evicted

**Ross Saunders and Edmund Schluessel**  
Cardiff Socialist Party

After a heroic six-hour stand off, South Wales police physically forced supporters of Occupy Cardiff off their protest site at Cardiff Castle.

Martin Hamilton, Cardiff council's city centre manager, informed protesters that they were in breach of an ancient bye-law, passed in 1875.

Hamilton expressed concern at the damage the camp could do to the lawn, while he stood just a few yards from deep grooves scored in the grass by Wales Rally GB cars. Questions of why big business could camp out on the lawn but Cardiff residents couldn't went unanswered.

Plaid Cymru's Neil McEvoy, deputy leader of Cardiff council, claimed he sympathised with their demands, but unfortunately that sympathy did not extend to allowing the peaceful

protest to continue. McEvoy, whose council has passed cuts in jobs and services such as adult social care, ordered protesters to exit the city centre and set up in Callaghan Square, adjacent to the bypass.

Police chief inspector Roger Whitcombe invoked the 1986 Public Order Act. This is the first time this undemocratic piece of legislation - created under Margaret Thatcher's Tory government - has been used to clear an Occupy protest in Britain.

The group resolved to hold firm. The 30-minute deadline stretched to several hours until protesters were shoved from the site.

There were six arrests, including college students and trade union activists. Two people, including a 17-year-old student, have been charged with the other four cautioned.

A protest will be held outside the council's next meeting, Thursday 17 November, 3.30pm at Cardiff City Hall.

### Occupation starts in Leeds

**Nial Vivian**  
Leeds Socialist Party

Joining the global 'Occupy!' movement, the occupation of City Square in Leeds started at 9am on 11 November.

Starting small, including members of the Socialist Party, Leeds occupation has already grown significantly and had visitors from other occupations across the country.

The occupation, taking root in a prominent spot around a huge Christmas tree, has struck a chord with Leeds citizens.

"We were just getting massive amounts of support from the public," said Mary, one occupier. "We've only had to go out for tins of soup once, and there are a lot of us here".

One sympathetic woman was even reported as spending much of the night ferrying tea to the occupiers using her bike.

The camp supporters' concerns range from the impact of the cuts to the way that youth have been marginalised by the government.

For more info about Occupy Leeds, how to get involved and support the occupation, visit www.occupyleeds.co.uk

## Leeds anti-cuts campaigners build for N30

**Hannah Bastow**  
Aireborough and Horsforth Socialist Party

On 8 November a joint planning meeting of anti-cuts groups and unions was held in Horsforth, Leeds, to discuss coordinated action to support the 30 November (N30) strike.

Members of Aireborough and

Horsforth Socialist Party, Youth Fight for Jobs (YFJ), Horsforth Against The Cuts (HATC), teachers, lecturers, and NHS workers were all in attendance as well as members of UCU, Unison, PCS and Leeds Trinity student union.

The meeting discussed the potential of N30 to be the biggest coordinated action in Britain since the 1926 general strike.

Socialist Party member, YFJ activ-

ist and Jarrow marcher Stephanie Maston, highlighted the implications of the government's attempt to increase the retirement age on unemployed youth and stressed the importance of uniting youth and unemployed with workers.

A public meeting hosted by anti-cuts groups from Horsforth will be held on 24 November at 7pm, in the Auditorium, Leeds Trinity University College. All welcome!

## Bradford coalition against cuts conference

On Saturday 12 November, 24 people attended a Bradford People's Coalition Against the Cuts conference.

Chair Neal Heard went over the activities the coalition had successfully taken part in, including lobbies, demonstrations and the recent Bradford occupation that was evicted on the order of the city's

Labour council.

Paul Tillyer from the civil servants union PCS gave an account of the background of attacks on civil service pensions dating back to the initial attack by Gordon Brown in 2005.

Michael Young from the Socialist Health Association spoke about the government's sinister attack on our

NHS through the Health and Social Care bill and the need to carry on the fight.

Two workshops took place, one focusing on the 30 November day of coordinated strike action and the other on future plans of the Bradford anti-cuts group.

**Matt Leek, Bradford Socialist Party**

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## SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND

	£ target	£ received	October-December 2011				Deadline 6 January
South West	1,400	1,744	█	█	█	█	█
South East	1,000	1,107	█	█	█	█	█
East Midlands	1,550	1,544	█	█	█	█	█
North West	1,200	1,185	█	█	█	█	█
Eastern	1,200	903	█	█	█	█	█
West Midlands	2,100	1,374	█	█	█	█	█
Yorkshire	2,900	1,594	█	█	█	█	█
Wales	2,300	1,240	█	█	█	█	█
Southern	1,200	503	█	█	█	█	█
Northern	600	235	█	█	█	█	█
London	6,100	1,396	█	█	█	█	█
England & Wales	3,450	2,839	█	█	█	█	█
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25,000</b>	<b>15,669</b>	█	█	█	█	█