

Socialist Party summer camp

Preparing for a 'hot autumn' of action

Becci Heagney

The Socialist Party's summer camp took place on the August bank holiday weekend in the beautiful surroundings of Epping Forest. Around 80 people and their families came to the event, usually taking place after what is a quiet period in terms of political activity.

However, as the rally on the Saturday night was titled, 2011 has seen a 'hot summer' with the explosion of anger among young people in Britain, providing plenty of issues to discuss.

Peter Taaffe, Socialist Party general secretary, introduced the main rally outlining our response to the rotten propaganda about 'broken Britain' that has flooded the news this summer.

Lynn Walsh introduced an interesting discussion on the crisis in the world economy and how it is the basis of the upheavals across the world today. Bob Labi opened the international rally on the events in Libya, almost as they were unfolding.

We discussed the need for fighting trade unions in Britain, especially in the face of the government attempting to increase the



Celebrating socialist ideas photo Hannah Sell

anti-trade union laws.

Another session looked at how the problems of capitalism are reflected in sport, with strikes taking place by the National Football League in

America and the links with big business being exposed in the run-up to the Olympics in Britain. This shows the need for sport to be reclaimed, with democratic control, by working

class people.

Against the backdrop of the emergence of the 'slutwalks' - young women taking to the street in protest - we looked at whether society

is becoming more sexist. Women, in particular single mothers, are among the hardest hit by the cuts but are also demonised in the media and by the government. Even the riots were being blamed on 'bad parenting'.

While the weekend was relaxing, sitting around campfires and walks to admire the scenery, there was also time to consider the important role that the Socialist Party can play in response to all of these issues.

The lack of an alternative being put forward by the Labour Party, who echo the government's line on 'broken Britain' and the case for cuts, shows the vital need to build our party, to promote our ideas to as many people as possible by selling the Socialist and ultimately to argue for a socialist society.

The support for these ideas was reflected in the finance appeal at the camp which raised £1,514.74.

The camp was brilliant, bringing together members and supporters from across the country. It also helped to prepare for an even hotter autumn as the struggle against these attacks escalates among workers and young people.

My reasons for joining the Socialist Party

Kevin Corran

Salford Socialist Party

I left Ireland in 1984, studied at Manchester Polytechnic and very quickly got involved in student politics. I attended fund raising events for the Bold miners, the protests to protect Tamil Viraj Mendis from being deported to Sri Lanka, and the demos in London and Leeds that helped stop Thatcher's Tories introducing tuition fees.

Moving to Salford in 1987 to work for the local authority as a care assistant, I witnessed the gradual and insidious decline of public services.

The privatisation of care homes and more recently the introduc-

tion of the 'personalisation' agenda, amounts to local authorities reneging on their responsibilities to vulnerable people.

As a proud and committed trade unionist and socialist, I've helped to challenge these assaults on public services. In Salford the Socialist Party is active, and committed to organising and channelling the widespread disgust and anger caused by the Con-Dem government's plans for public services.

The Tories, and their Lib Dem poodles, have embarked upon the most comprehensive and vicious attacks on the working class for a generation. The privatisation of the NHS, public services and education, and the cuts to legal aid services,

housing benefit, welfare benefits and pensions, point to an escalation in the attacks on the living standards of working class people.

In Salford the Labour council is implementing these drastic cuts in the face of widespread public opposition. Trade unionists and socialists are in the vanguard of the opposition to these attacks.

We need a democratic and socialist alternative to the immoral and unsustainable capitalist agenda, and in Salford the left and trade unionists are working together to offer an alternative.

The decision to join the Socialist Party was due to the relationships developed with a number of activists I met at demos, union meet-

ings, campaign meetings and strike action in Salford over the last few years. The activists I met were organised, committed and mainly local members of the Socialist Party. I enjoyed their company and we were able to combine campaigning and enjoying ourselves.

Joining offered the opportunity to get involved with a group of focused and well organised, effective activists.

Throughout the world the recent

financial crisis has highlighted the undemocratic and destructive nature of capitalism, and shown that its promises are nothing more than a mantra propagated by a self serving, undemocratic, and wealthy elite.

The Labour Party has firmly nailed its colours to the mast of capitalism, in spite of its history, roots and continuing financial support from trade unions.

The Socialist Party can offer the alternative that we urgently need.

Building the Socialist Party

Setting up a new branch in Staffordshire

Andy Bentley

On 22 August we had a very good first meeting of Newcastle-under-Lyme Socialist Party in Wolstanton, Staffs. There was a mood of optimism and confidence that we can build a base for socialist ideas across the area.

We are checking out a room for our first public meeting and will assist with a Socialist Student stall booked at the Keele university freshers fair

We discussed the possibility of standing a candidate

in the local elections next May and agreed that we would do regular campaigning activity. In fact the day after the meeting Newcastle member Ronni was out campaigning with other members in Wolstanton.

The aim of the stall was to explain that we are against the government's attempt to slash public sector jobs and services and show how it can be fought. Before we had even set up, two BT workers came up to sign the petition and donate to our fighting fund!

Half the people signing our petition bought a copy of the Socialist.

Socialist Party meetings

Manchester

World in turmoil

Monday 5 September, 7pm
Friends Meeting House, 6 Mount Street,
Manchester city centre, M2 5NS

Hatfield

Defend the NHS

Tuesday 6 September, 7.30pm
Community Resource No1 Centre,
Town Centre, Hatfield, AL10 0JZ

Liverpool

Building our socialist international

Tuesday 6 September, 7.30pm
Casa pub (downstairs), 29 Hope
Street, Liverpool L1 9BQ

Leeds

How can we stop the racist EDL?

Wednesday 7 September, 7.30pm
59-61 New Briggate, LS2 8JD

Walthamstow

Jobs, homes and services, not racism: how can we defeat the EDL and BNP?

Thursday 8 September, 7.30pm
William Morris Centre, Greenleaf Road,
London E17 6QQ

Hillingdon

Public Meeting: Strike against cuts!

8 September, 7.30pm
The Friends Meeting House, York
Road, Uxbridge, UB8 1QW

Leicester

Public meeting: No to NHS cuts

Tuesday 13 September, 7.30pm
F Bar, 95 Walnut St, Leicester LE2 7LA

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SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND

	£ target	£ received	July-September 2011				Deadline: 9 October
North West	1,200	646	■	■	■	■	■
West Midlands	2,100	958	■	■	■	■	■
Wales	2,300	938	■	■	■	■	■
South East	1,000	341	■	■	■	■	■
Southern	1,200	398	■	■	■	■	■
South West	1,400	454	■	■	■	■	■
East Midlands	1,550	480	■	■	■	■	■
Eastern	1,200	371	■	■	■	■	■
Northern	600	172	■	■	■	■	■
Yorkshire	2,900	799	■	■	■	■	■
London	6,100	1,000	■	■	■	■	■
England & Wales	3,450	213	■	■	■	■	■
	25,000	6,772	■	■	■	■	■