

'What we heard'

The Socialist Party stall outside Stafford College proved to be very popular. The first group of students coming over remembered us from the demos held in the town last December.

We talked about youth unemployment. Many students told us of their experience of trying to find work:

"I was looking all summer for something but couldn't find anything."

"I was working in catering but they didn't keep me on."

There was a lot of anger about low wages. One student said her job in a fast food chain paid £4.30 an hour!

Another said he was looking to join the army as a last resort, as he cannot find a decent job.

There was also anger about the closure of the Connexions office in Stafford.

A recent jobs fair had been a waste of time. Employers said there were no vacancies on that day and recommended checking their relevant websites!

Josie Shelley, Stafford Socialist Party

At a Socialist Party stall outside a college in Newcastle-Under-Lyme, Staffordshire, Adam told us he'd applied for loads of jobs but had not received one reply.

One student said: "I need to get a job at Christmas because we are struggling to manage even though both my parents are working."

Another said: "My mum is a single parent and works but we still can't afford anything."

We talked about getting organised to fight back for decent jobs for young people.

"But what can we do, they won't listen to us?"

We said: "On 30 November there will be three to four million workers on strike, why don't you get other college students to join with those workers?"

"That's what we'll do!" they replied.

A woman walking past explained how her son had been prevented by the college from carrying on his course because of his medical problems. As she left she said: "If there's a march round here, let me know and we'll be on it."

Ritchie and Andy, Newcastle-under-Lyme Socialist Party



Gloucestershire: Rage ignites against NHS privatisation

Chris Moore
Gloucestershire Socialist Party

Fury is exploding in Gloucestershire as anti-cuts groups are campaigning to stop the transfer of 4,000 NHS staff out of the NHS and into a Community Interest Company (CIC) or Social Enterprise Trust (SET) on 1 October.

District nurses, podiatrists, health visitors, physiotherapists and nine local hospitals are due to transfer to a registered company, run as a business.

After a few years, or less if commissioners judge it to be failing, a CIC has to compete with other providers including private health companies, for all services.

The south west is being used by health bosses as a massive experiment as seven Primary Care Trusts are preparing to transfer to CICs.

An angry public meeting in Stroud saw NHS managers and the local Tory MP receive a roasting from the 250-strong audience.

In the Forest of Dean 100 people raged at health bosses, not surprisingly, because a social enterprise in that area costing £200,000 recently went bust.

The public have never been consulted and staff have not been balloted about the transfer. There have only been a few meetings where 'queries' can be raised but the process was presented as a done deal. Many workers felt intimidated, knowing their jobs could be on the line.

At a public meeting the Unison representative explained social enterprises elsewhere had led to private companies running services, but that nothing could be done to stop the process.

Yet in areas like Essex, Sandwell, Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and South Bedfordshire health trade unions have fought successful campaigns against transfers to CIC/SETs.

In Gloucestershire many staff feel the unions have been ineffective in explaining or challenging the transfer.

As an NHS worker said: "No one supports this, but we don't feel we've had a voice." A demonstration has been called by Stroud Against Cuts.

- Save our NHS protest: Saturday 24 September assemble 10.30am, Park Road, near the Maternity Hospital, Stroud, Gloucestershire



Big business wants a US-style private health care system
photo Paul Mattsson

Help us reach the Fighting Fund target

With the fighting fund quarter ending on 7 October, the Socialist Party is 51% off the national target. Two fighting fund organisers show how they intend to reach their branch targets.

Southampton

Jane Ward
Southampton Socialist Party

Southampton Socialist Party has been successfully raising money for the fighting fund. In the past couple of months branch members have sold socialist literature, attended a car boot sale, sold items on ebay, raised money at a public meeting and encouraged our members to save their loose change in a penny jar.

There are three weeks to go before the end of the quarter, and we still have a way to go before we hit the branch target. It was decided at our last meeting that we should maximise our efforts on the stalls.

We have been running a campaign in support of the Southampton city council workers who have been on strike because of the pay cuts imposed on them by the Tory council.

So far, the council have refused to back down. Southampton Socialist Party is now calling for an escalation of the action. We are also supporting the call for a 'needs budget' to be drawn up to properly fund our

much needed public services.

We are actively putting forward the idea of an electoral alternative. We stood anti-cuts candidates all over Southampton in the last election and now we want to build on this.

We have been campaigning in support of Southampton city council workers on strike because of pay cuts imposed on them

Against this background, we are finding that people are readily stopping at our stalls. People really want to discuss the issues we are raising and want to sign our petition. They respond as generously as they can to a polite request for a contribution to our campaign funds. Many people tell us to keep up the good work.

Salford

Paul Gerrard
Salford Socialist Party

Salford Socialist Party branch has been pretty average at raising fighting fund - usually somewhere mid-table! We were on 53% of target, with a month to go.

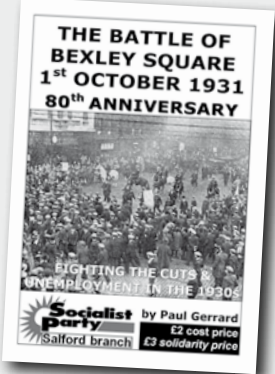
Branch members wanted to improve on this. We decided to target people we could ask for donations, and to plan for a social next quarter.

We decided to organise an evening around a local Labour movement commemoration - the Battle of Bexley Square, when the unemployed and police fought outside Salford Town Hall in 1931. One of us has written a pamphlet which we are already selling for £2.

We will have a party social on 12 October, when we will introduce the booklet and then have a socialist pub quiz with some testing and some hopefully funny questions. We will only charge £2 entrance to encourage people to come.

We are also raising sponsorship for one of our members who is a Jarrow marcher taking part in the Youth March for Jobs (see page 5).

Salford Socialist Party pamphlet



The Battle of Bexley Square: fighting the cuts and unemployment in the 1930s

Written to commemorate the 80th anniversary of an unemployed workers' march attacked by police in 1931, the pamphlet examines the tactics and demands of the National Unemployed Workers' Movement and draws the lessons for the present-day anti-cuts movement. 32 pages, £2 (£3 solidarity price).

Order on 07999 951869 or pgerrard2001@yahoo.co.uk

Available for collection/purchase at Socialism 2011 (see page 2).

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SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND

	£ target	£ received	July-September 2011				Deadline: 7 October			
North West	1,200	2,670								
Wales	2,300	1,860								
Eastern	1,200	923								
West Midlands	2,100	1,294								
Yorkshire	2,900	1,464								
East Midlands	1,550	763								
South West	1,400	615								
Southern	1,200	525								
South East	1,000	436								
Northern	600	186								
London	6,100	1,188								
England & Wales	3,450	238								
TOTAL	25,000	12,168								