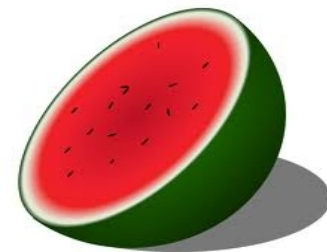


THE WATERMELON



Newsletter of Green Left

Autumn/Winter '11-'12

thewatermelon.wordpress.com – twitter.com/GreenLeftUK

A GREEN RESPONSE TO THE RIOTS?

Anne Gray-
haringeygreens.blogspot.com

At a meeting in Tottenham on August 16th, organised by a Caribbean-community local radio station, Jenny Jones took a welcome stand against the use of water cannon and plastic or rubber bullets. Greens should certainly campaign for these weapons never to be used on unarmed civilians, as they cause horrendous injuries.

Jenny rightly acknowledged the role of excessive and discriminatory stop and search policies as one contributory factor in the riots. She noted that the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) plays an important role in monitoring the use of stop and search and holding the police to account. But evidently not enough.

Surprisingly, however, Jenny said little about the future of the police force. The MPA is to be abolished this autumn. Government plans for elected local police chiefs promise a form of elected dictatorship which favours populist pressures for tougher policing whilst removing present forms of ongoing scrutiny. We need to press for greater democratic control of the police at local and regional level. Some debate is needed within the Green Party about how this can be achieved, and how minority ethnic communities can have a say in the governance of the police. Another urgent demand, which Jenny

didn't mention, is to reverse the cuts in legal aid.

The Green Party's social justice agenda – jobs, housing, attacking inequality, restoring the public education system – was never more needed. But some parts of this agenda are missing or under-developed – we need to fight cuts in the local voluntary sector, and to press for less conditionality in the benefits system. Tragically, much of what unemployed and disabled people perceive as job centre harassment will extend even to those who have lost homes, vehicles and livelihoods in the riots. The 'citizen's income' vision is not an adequate answer to the short term need for a major rise in JSA and an end to the punitive conditions for claiming it, which help to drive youth into the underground economy.

FALL-OUT FROM FUKUSHIMA

The nuclear power crisis

Malcolm Bailey - Nuclear Physicist

Radioactivity still leaks from the stricken Japanese nuclear reactors at Fukushima, almost six months after the humanitarian disaster of the massive tsunami on 11 March 2011. It will be at least January 2012 before the leaks can be stopped. The scrapped nuclear reactors, still highly radioactive and



toxic, will take many years and vast expense to decontaminate, monuments to the folly of nuclear power generation.

The Tokyo nuclear power company held back vital information, and failed to divulge failures in safety standards. Japanese public opinion has turned decisively against nuclear power. On 6 August, the Japanese Prime Minister marked the 66th anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing in 1945 by declaring that 'I will reduce Japan's reliance on nuclear power, aiming at creating a society that will not rely on atomic power generation.' Before the Fukushima disaster Japan had planned to raise nuclear generation from about 30% to 53% by 2030.

After mass anti-nuclear protests across Germany, all German nuclear power plants will be phased-out by 2022.

In the UK, the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority announced in early August the closure of the Mox plutonium recycling plant at Sellafield in Cumbria, due to events in Japan. This business depended on the shipment of weapons-usable material from Japan, always a crazy concept open to piracy and terrorism long before Fukushima.

The nuclear-convert environmentalist Mark Lynas spent two years researching a book, 'The God Species' praising nuclear power, ridiculing greens who oppose nuclear, implying that even Chernobyl was hardly more than a harmless picnic. Inconveniently for Lynas, the Fukushima nuclear disaster struck a few months before his book publication date. Unfazed, Lynas hastily included his anodyne assessment that Fukushima changed nothing; a gratuitous evidence-free conclusion made long before any rigorous scientific analysis is available.



The blown out reactors at Fukushima, Japan, in March this year

THE FIGHT AGAINST FREE SCHOOLS

Martin Francis

The results of applications to set up Free Schools are due to be announced in September. Although the Green Party is opposed to academies and free schools some local parties have sometimes found themselves in difficulty when faced with concrete proposals.

This is sometimes the case because the proposals come from a genuine grass-roots community group that are dissatisfied with their local schools. In Brent we were faced with a proposal to set up such a school by Black parents and teachers who felt local schools were failing their children and because the local authority had refused to build a much needed new secondary school in their area. Sadly the Coalition government is now operating on the basis that any new schools should be academies or free schools. This means that local authorities seeking to preserve their community school network will look at other alternatives first, even those they might not be ideal. In Brent this has meant a series of ad-hoc solutions including bulge classes and expansion but also large secondary schools opening primary departments and consideration of primary schools of five forms of entry (1050 pupils).



All the above, present practical political problems in policy and campaigning terms.

However there is a further dimension which comes from within the Green Party itself. We have a critique of the state system in terms of its centralisation, a rigid curriculum, SATS testing, large sized institutions etc so the concept of 'free schools' where we can set up a school prefiguring what a



Green government would do is enticing. The possibility of setting up a small all-through school with a green curriculum and ethos appears exciting and achievable because government funding is available. If these proposals are made against the background of the introduction of mega primaries the case is reinforced.

I see a real danger in such an approach because we will be using reactionary policies (aimed at undermining democratic accountability and local authorities and introducing privatisation by the back-door) for progressive ends.

COALITION OF RESISTANCE - FIGHTING THE CUTS

Dr. Joseph Healy - CoR Council Member

At the recent COR conference I was elected as Green Left's representative on the National Council and having on been on its steering committee since its creation. The National Council will meet in October to elect a new Steering Committee and I will be standing for re-election. Romyne Phoenix, former National Campaigns Coordinator on GPEX, and a leading member of both Green Left and the Green Party Trade Union Group has been the Chair of COR since its first conference last November and many other Greens have also been involved. Recently following the riots in England's cities COR held a very successful event in London called

'Riots, Recession and Resistance' which was addressed by among others, **John Mc Donnell MP**, **Lee Jasper** (Black Activists Rising against the Cuts) **Symeon Browne** (Tottenham Youth Worker) **Zita Holbourne** (PCS National Executive) and others. This was attended by many activists from communities affected by the riots, together with trade unionists and others. COR are organising a whole series of meetings nationally to address the issues around the recent unrest, not the least of which is cuts to public services and income inequality.

COR is also calling on the TUC (who are organising demonstrations at both the Lib Dem and Tory conferences) to ensure that the demonstrations are large and well organised and are doing everything possible to support them. The same cuts and austerity programme which we are seeing in Britain is also widespread across Europe. CoR is organising a Pan European Anti-Austerity Conference on October 1st in London which is being widely supported by a variety of social movements, trade unions and political groups across Europe, including Caroline Lucas. We want as many Greens as possible to attend the conference, which will also have a session on the G8 Summit taking place in Nice in November, where COR hopes to help organise a Counter Summit to challenge the prevailing economic orthodoxy in Europe. *For more information on the October Conference:* europeagainstausterity.org



EUROPE AGAINST AUSTERITY

OCT 1

10AM-5PM CAMDEN CENTRE LONDON WC1H 9AU

GROWING THE GLOBAL GREEN LEFT

Dr Derek Wall -

another-green-world.blogspot.com

Temperatures are rising, species are disappearing and the basic life support systems of our planet are under threat. Such devastation is a product of our wasteful and destructive economic system. If we work harder, produce more, consume more and waste more, profits flow in.

However, infinite economic growth on a finite planet is impossible. It would be easier to conclude that a little more renewable energy generation, better conservation and some other mild reforms would make the future possible. This is however, unrealistic. The present system is hostile to life.

Its also as we have seen with financial crisis, rising inequality and debt socially destructive and economically unstable. Over production and imbalances in the economy have led to renewed measures to cut government spending and privatise. The cuts programme is not about living in balance with the rest of nature, its about grinding down the welfare state and destroying unions, so that pay can be slashed and workers made to work long hours with fewer rights.

Eco-socialism is a simple alternative to the chaos. We have a democratically owned economy rather than one controlled by and for a tiny number of the hyper rich and we have an economy that generates prosperity without ecological destruction. Goods can be made to last longer, library systems can be extended, work can be shared, we can live better with less impact on the environment. Think permaculture, wikis and workers control.

Eco-socialist ideas and action are advancing fast. In 2009 Elinor Ostrom was the first women to win the Nobel Prize for her work on the commons, a cornerstone of eco-socialism. The One Million jobs campaign highlighted by Pete below is an example of the fight here in the UK. In Latin America countries like Bolivia, Ecuador, Cuba and Venezuela, political leaders like Evo Morales are explicitly arguing for eco-socialism and real climate action. Indigenous eco-socialist movements

most significantly in the Peruvian Amazon are winning victories.

We must organise eco-socialist ideas and action, the alternative is to see a decaying capitalism kill our planet and maims our society in the process.

For more info: ecosocialistsunite.com/
stateofnature.org/ecosocialismForASociety.html

ONE MILLION CLIMATE JOBS

Peter Murry -

campaigncc.org/greenjobs

At the moment, Britain and many other states seem to be facing two crises, ecological and economic. When riots, social disorder, strikes and other protests flare up against Government spending cuts; it is sometimes impossible to remember the failure to stop global over-use and reliance on fossil fuels continues unchecked, threatening disastrous climate change.

There is a solution. The creation of a low carbon economy of the type which can help to combat climate change. It entails large scale projects to reform the economic infrastructure through such things as switching to renewable sources of energy, an energy efficiency revolution; including insulating the existing housing stock, a higher standard of insulation for new build and a radical upgrading of public transport

If government and the major political parties lack the intelligence and foresight to initiate such a revolution then they must be pressured into doing this. Instead of following a short term policy of putting people out of work and denying opportunity to young people through spending cuts.

The campaign against climate change (supported by; Public and Commercial Services Union, the University and College Union, the Communication Workers Union and the Transport Salaried Staffs' Association.) has published two pamphlets to campaign for this and is collecting signatures for a petition for One Million Jobs.

ABUSIVE AND NEGLIGENT GOVERNMENT BRINGING DISABLED PEOPLE TO ACCOUNT

Peter Allen and Alan Wheatley



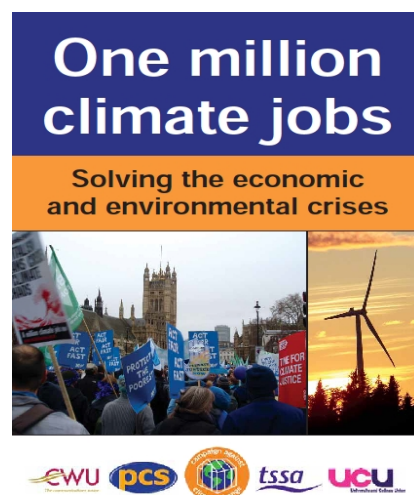
Tabloid newspapers frequently declare the vast majority of claimants of out-of-work disability benefits Employment & Support Allowance (ESA) and its predecessor Incapacity Benefits 'cheats'. That is on a very skewed presentation of the number of ESA claimants who pass the 'Work Capability Assessment' (WCA) administered by publicly unaccountable Atos Healthcare, which Citizens Advice declares 'not fit for purpose'. 40 of ESA tribunal appellants are successful.

The figure for those with expert advocacy is considerably higher. Yet the ConDems are cutting access to legal aid, especially for claimants in civil cases and especially for benefit claimants. A 'bad press' allows further abuse to go on.

A man with a weak heart won an ESA tribunal. A DWP in administrative meltdown had only a month to appeal against that first level tribunal outcome. His next WCA was just months later and he died of a heart attack the day before that. So, he failed to 'complete the process' rather than 'chickened out'. Too little is heard of retesting.

Meanwhile those forced to claim JSA and be "available for work" are frequently accused of not sufficiently being so, are sign posted back on to ESA and then found fit for work again!

So the cycle of victimisation and scape-goating continues, and probably will do so until the Green Party legislates for a Citizen's Income. In the meantime Greens must continue to support Disability Rights Campaigners, and all those who defend the vulnerable and fight for social justice.



Feed the world without destroying the planet

Tour of Philipina Eco-socialist

Terry Conway

We live in a world where soil erosion, desertification and famine are ever-increasing realities for millions of poor people. Meanwhile the profits of large landowners and supermarkets continue to soar.

The issues of food production and food sovereignty – who controls the production, sale and distribution of food – have never been more crucial. In November 2011 Green Left and Socialist Resistance will be hosting a national tour to let audiences in British cities hear from Maria Neri B. Pampilo from Mindanao in the Philippines.

Maria is a long-standing activist and eco-socialist who will share her powerful experiences of struggling for land reform and producing ecologically sustainable food.

Monoculture – the industrial growing of a single cash crop – is a major contributor to soil erosion and desertification along with forest clearance. Agribusiness calls for ever-increasing yields that may give short-term benefits but at a devastating long-term cost including pesticides polluting rivers and oceans.

The cost to human communities is immeasurable – peasants are thrown off their farms as land reform is reversed in the insatiable search for profit. Millions are forced to migrate to unsustainable cities – living in shanty towns with no infrastructure.

Over the last few years appreciable amounts of speculative capital has moved into food production forcing food prices up. At the same time there has been a massive expansion of land grabbing, particularly in Africa, by both private and state capital, for the production of both food for export and agrifuels.

There is resistance – from the growth of militant peasant and indigenous organisations in many parts of the globe, the pioneering of organic agriculture in countries as diverse as Cuba, Venezuela and the Philippines and of guerrilla gardening in post-industrial cities in the US like Chicago.

Dates are confirmed for Leeds, London, Brighton, Birmingham, Cambridge, Manchester and Oxford see socialistresistance.org for further details as they become available.



JOINING GREEN LEFT

Membership fees for Green Left are on a sliding scale according to your income, that way we practice what we preach:

INCOME under £10k*(students & unemployed) :£7.50 £15-20k: £15 £20-25k: £20 £25-30k: £25 £30-40k: £30 £40-50k: £35 £50k+ £45

Name: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

Sub/Donation included: £ _____ *cheques payable to 'Green Left'*

Even better, why not set up a monthly standing order

(fill in and return form to below address):

To (bank name): _____ Sort Code: _____

Bank address: _____

Account name: _____ Account no: _____

Please pay the sum of £ _____ on the _____ day of _____ (month), and on the same date every month thereafter, unless cancelled or amended by me in writing to 'GREEN LEFT' account at Co-operative bank, PO Box 250 Delf House, Southway, SKELMERSDALE WN8 6WT.

Sign: _____ Date: _____

Return to: Peter Murry (GL Treasurer), 18a Oxgate Gardens, London NW2 6EB

KEEP OUR NHS PUBLIC

Teresa Delaney – A+E Nurse

It has been an eventful summer and it may have escaped some peoples' attention that by the time we meet in Sheffield the Health and Social Care Bill will have had its third and final reading in the Commons. You will recall that the Bill was delayed in order to allow for an unprecedented "listening exercise" - largely because of the unanimous level of uproar the original bill caused. Sadly, the bill has now returned to Parliament more complex than ever but with none of its intent to turn the NHS into a state insurance provider removed.

It will now pass to the Lords and we can only hope that that body takes a reforming if undemocratic eye to this worrying and dangerous piece of legislation.

All is not lost. Please join your local Keep Our NHS Public branch and ask your GP branch to affiliate. Find out which members of the Lords live or have interests locally and lobby them. Find out who and what your local patient's groups are and if you work in the NHS, find out what your union is doing.

Unite, Organise and Win

Andy Hewett

A small but symbolic battle was recently won in the fight against the public sector cuts imposed by the Tory/Liberal coalition, and their Labour Party collaborators in local government. Lambeth Library workers forced the Labour-run Council to back down over threatened compulsory redundancies. This was achieved by building and organising within their union branch, balloting to strike and with the support of local anti-cuts activists the management were forced to climb down.

Solidarity, collective action and strikes are important tools for our struggle. It is vital in the building the movement against the cuts, from the grass roots. This must surely be known by Plymouth City Council who shamefully de-recognised the council workers Unison branch. It is however encouraging that there has been momentum building in their campaign for re-recognition, with many international messages of solidarity flooding in. The struggle is truly international, but cannot be built without solid local foundations.

Green Left is the Eco-Socialist

Anti-Capitalist movement within the Green Party

Edited and produced by James Youd

