

Newsletter

of the *Alliance for Green Socialism* – June 2010
www.greensocialist.org.uk



Budget hits poor

“Overall everyone will pay something, but the people at the bottom of the income scale will pay proportionately less than the people at the top” said Tory Chancellor Osborne. Laudable! Unfortunately, it’s a lie. Of course, the poor will pay more to fund the bail-out of the bankers.

The biggest tax rise in the budget is putting VAT up to 20%. Since VAT is a flat rate tax, it hits poorer people harder than richer people. The rise is estimated to put £500 a year on family bills. If you earn £9,000 a year (the initial tax threshold) then that is nearly **six percent** of your income. But if you get £150,000 a year (the new top-rate tax threshold) then it is less than **half a percent** – barely noticeable.

Most public sector workers, often already paid less than private sector equivalents, face a two year pay freeze and the huge job losses that will flow from 25% cuts. Even the lowest paid will get a pay “rise” equivalent to only half what they lose through the extra VAT they will have to pay.

Those unfortunate enough to be on benefits are already at the bottom of the heap. They are to be hit by over £11 billion of cuts, including a range of welfare benefits. Parents will lose on child benefit, pregnancy grant and Sure Start. Many disabled people are threatened with loss of living allowance entirely. Housing benefit is to be capped.

Plus it will be the poor who are worst affected by the huge departmental cuts. It is not the rich who are likely to be hurt by reduced or abolished services, but ordinary people.

Meanwhile corporation tax is to fall 1% every year - while unemployment tops 8% - at least.

Of course, a Labour budget would not have been much different. The budget is dictated by finance capital, regardless of which of their stooge parties is nominally in power.

LEEDS AGS GARDEN PARTY

Saturday 17 July

The fun event of the summer.

Scrumptious food, real ale, stalls, games, kids stuff, good company and guaranteed sunshine

41a The Drive, Roundhay, Leeds LS8 1JQ

2 - 5 pm

Members, supporters and fun-lovers welcome. We can provide overnight accommodation for people from outside Leeds.

NORTH LONDON AGS

Sunday 18 July

Underground: past, present & future
Dave Welsh, author, discusses writing, art and political opposition. For details ring Eddie Adams on 020 8964 9531

EPHING FOREST GREEN & DEMOCRATIC LEFT

Saturday 2 October

Music evening

A variety of good live music in convivial surroundings.

Loughton (*venue tba*)

For details contact Pete Relph
020 8508 6313

AGS strategy review

The first stage of an AGS strategy review was held over the first weekend in June, attended by some twenty members. Many thanks to all those who contributed ideas beforehand or during the weekend. Special thanks to Malcolm Christie for a very enjoyable Saturday night. The review produced a set of options that those present thought were high level enough to be "strategic" and worth considering. They are NOT recommendations, just things we thought worth looking at further. The names on the right are those asked to write up each option as a page of "what does it mean, why should we do it, and how would we go about it".

- a) Make links with single issue groups including environmental groups (Liz Peck)
- b) Seek to form a unified party with existing/new local parties and campaigns. (Nick Long)
- c) Move significant effort into running activities for local people. (Nick Long)
- d) Encourage AGS members to join the cooperative movement and become active in it. (Brian Jackson)
- e) Formulate national schedule of events at which to run stalls and who will staff them. (Nick Long)
- f) Six month project to build up more outlets to sell journal. (Mike Davies)
- g) Explore and adopt a range of electronic campaigning and train people in this. (Malcolm Christie)
- h) Publicise to members the fact, rationale and effectiveness of the range of AGS activities including standing in elections. (Celia Foote)
- i) Support/help local campaigns/struggles. (Ben Evans)
- j) Stand fewer election candidates. (Trevor Bavage)
- k) Stand more election candidates (Mike Davies, Azar Iqbal)
- l) Do more face-to-face contact. (Mike Davies)
- m) Look at having unpaid volunteers, whose costs we pay, for projects /extension work. (Toby Abse, Nick Long)
- n) Position the AGS as part of the environmental movement (primarily/equally) (Malcolm Christie, Mike Davies)
- o) Organise annual green festival(s) (Joe Welch)
- p) Seek to recruit disillusioned LibDem activists (John Sillett)

Comments or ideas to the Secretary. Some of the above will end up as recommendations for action.

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Meetings of the national committee are normally open to any member to observe. Meetings are on Saturdays, most often at the Calthorpe Arms on Grays Inn Road, Kings Cross, London.

31 Jul 2010 Calthorpe Arms, London 13:15
 2 Oct 2010 Epping Forest (venue tba) 11:00
 11 Dec 2010 Calthorpe Arms, London 13:15
 5 Feb 2011 Calthorpe Arms, London 12:00
 30 April 2011 Calthorpe Arms, London 13:15

Note that the Epping Forest meeting is now October.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE Sat 2 Apr 2011 Leeds

2010 National Committee members responsibilities

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