

Newsletter

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



Fighting the cuts

The national committee urges all AGS members, affiliates and supporters to participate actively in the struggle against the cuts and privatisation of the ConDem government.

The AGS has two good leaflets which are relevant to this: "Green Investment" and the AGS priorities leaflet addressing "Cuts & Privatisation, Decent Housing, and Green Investment & Jobs". If you can use either of these, in quantities large or small, contact the Secretary or Chair.

Local Trades Councils, where they exist, are one way to organise broad campaigns.

Such campaigning inevitably throws up the problem of the second Tory party, misleadingly called Labour. We want to work with anyone who genuinely opposes the cuts, so we will inevitably find ourselves working with Labour supporters as well as those with more sense.

On the other hand, there is no point in putting in a lot of effort to replace Conservatives (with a policy of cuts and privatisation) with Labour (with a policy of cuts and privatisation). It is crystal clear that Labour aspires to the "leadership" of the anti-cuts campaign and that the media support that, despite its evident gross hypocrisy.

Attack on Housing

A particularly vicious part of the cuts is the attack on people's housing - surely a basic human right.

The proposed cap on housing benefit, at a level below the rent people have to pay, will drive the poor out of all more prosperous areas. An estimated 200,000 will be driven out in London alone. Social cleansing on a massive scale.

For those in social housing the government wants to end tenure. That means anyone in a council house or a housing association property will just be there temporarily, not "living in their home" in the normal sense.

LOOKING FOR A XMAS PRESENT?

Why not give your friend, family or colleague a gift that means something? A subscription to "Green Socialist" for a year, with a gift card, for only £5.00. Don't waste your money on tat, give something that may help the struggle.

Send a cheque for five pounds per subscription, plus the name and address of each recipient, to:
AGS GS, Freepost NEA 9574, Leeds, LS7 3YY

LIMITED LIABILITY

was the subject of a resolution of AGS conference which read in part

This conference notes that the law allowing limited liability companies is a licence for non-accountability that

- explicitly allows limited companies and their shareholders to evade responsibilities for their debts
- implicitly encourages reckless behaviour by limited companies and their directors. ...

It instructs the national committee to promote ... discussions on the extent and nature of the required reform ...

A paper sent to you earlier this year looked at the problems of limited liability.

The national committee asks groups and affiliates to discuss the issue and to send in ideas for reform. It also invites letters to "Green Socialist" with suggestions.

**Alliance for Green Socialism,
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THE AGS STANDS IN ELECTIONS HOW EFFECTIVE IS IT?

The last newsletter listed some reasons for standing in elections. How about outcomes?

Raise the profile of the AGS. - "Who are you?"

There is a wealth of anecdotal evidence to show that standing has made people more aware of the AGS - especially where we distribute an election address widely and where we can and do put out roadside display material. In such areas it is now quite common to knock on a door and get "Oh yes. You're the AGS" or "Yes, you put out those signs". (9/10?)

Gain members, supporters, and voters.

Obviously we attract votes, sometimes only 1%, at best 10%. Given the huge difficulty, under FPTP, of persuading people to vote for a small party, that's not so bad. Experience shows that we attract supporters at elections, many of whom do some work for us. We do gain some members, from leaflet reply slips or personal contact, but disappointingly few. (5/10?)

Give electors a genuine democratic choice

We succeed in doing this only to the extent that we stand - not widely enough! In Leeds, there is consistent evidence that where the AGS stands against the BNP the far-right vote is reduced. (4/10?)

Feedback from ordinary people

Often we have not made personal contact with many voters, so we have got only limited feedback. (1/10?)

Boost to our local organisation.

Experience shows that where we do not stand (or work) in elections it can be difficult to establish or maintain a local organisation. Where we do stand, we are much more able to campaign outside elections and to support local struggles, because we have the pool of workers and the experience of campaigning and producing & distributing material. (6/10?)

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.

11 Dec 2010 Calthorpe Arms, London 13:15

5 Feb 2011 Calthorpe Arms, London 12:00

30 April 2011 Calthorpe Arms, London 13:15

ANNUAL CONFERENCE Sat 2 Apr 2011 Leeds

LEAFLETING, STALLS, FUN

AGS members distributed hundreds of leaflets at each of the demonstrations outside the TUC in Manchester, the LibDem conference in Liverpool, and the Tory conference in Birmingham. Mostly these were the "vomit bag" leaflets, which were generally received with great enthusiasm.

Comrades ran a stall, and leafleted, at the Burston School Strike rally in Norfolk.

In Leeds there was an AGS stall at the local Chapel Allerton Festival in September.

Epping Forest GDL, an affiliate, had a successful evening of music and dance in October, as well as holding a meeting opposing local cuts. They also helped with a Chelmsford meeting on public services.

The EFGDL also hosted a meeting of the national committee, with local members attending.

ECOSOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL NETWORK

Mike Davies attended a conference of the network in Paris on behalf of the AGS in September and was (rather reluctantly) elected to the committee of eight members.

It is unclear whether the EIN is going anywhere. The last conference was three years ago and the previous committee did not function. The next conference is to be in London, so we will take a lead in organising that in the hope that the network might become more of a reality.

The most interesting part of the last meeting was an address by Peruvian activist Hugo Blanco, arguing the need for "indigenous consciousness", but clearly saying that he was not calling for a return to a primitive lifestyle.

2010 National Committee members responsibilities

Chair	Mike Davies	newsletter	m.davies@greensocialist.org.uk	07811 384888
Secretary	Celia Foote	fundraising	celiafoote195@btinternet.com	0113 262 4667
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Chichester	Simon Boxley		tinderbox@gn.apc.org	01730 821464
Epping Forest GDL	Pete Relph	housing		020 8508 1817
Leeds	Dave Marlow		davemarlow@gmail.com	07946 440535
North London	Eddie Adams	liaison with allies	samstjohn2003@yahoo.co.uk	020 8964 9531
Rugby RGA	Liz Peck	green investment	lilibet.peck@ntlworld.com	01788 335534
Sheffield	Brian Turley	leaflet linking priorities	briturl@googlemail.com	0114 250 7315
Socialist Alliance	Toby Abse		t.abse@gold.ac.uk	020 7373 7881

STRATEGY: POSITIONING THE AGS AS ENVIRONMENTAL

One outcome of the recent strategy review was that the AGS will positively position itself as part of the wider environmental movement, both publicly and internally. This dimension will be given equal or greater weight than positioning within the labour movement and left.

The national committee is writing to a wide range of environmental groups nationally, on a rolling basis. We will offer practical cooperation including exchanging speakers and working together on campaigns.

It would be helpful if local groups could complement this national approach by getting in touch with compatible local environmental organisations and offering local cooperation.

LEEDS AGS MEETING ON PALESTINE

Tuesday 16 November

7.30pm, Leeds TUC, 88 North St, LS2 7PN

Shajaham Miah of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign will speak at the November Leeds AGS meeting of members and supporters.

LEEDS AGS GREEN FAIR

Saturday 27 November

1 to 4pm, Methodist Hall, Chapel Allerton

Green Fair with information, gifts, plants, books and campaigns. Plus soup, tea & coffee.

Do come and help - or just come and browse, buy and warm up with home-made soup!

MEDIA COVERAGE

Do you have any experience dealing with the media? Or would you be willing to try it? The AGS needs a Press Officer who will attempt to get some AGS news or views into the papers or on radio or TV, nationally or locally.

The job is not difficult. It involves sending out press releases and writing letters to the media. It is, of course, very hard to get releases carried (letters are a little easier) but that's our right wing media. If we don't try we will certainly not get anything carried!

GREEN SOCIALIST

You should have received two copies of the last Green Socialist, with a request to try to make use of the second copy.

If you have not already done so, please don't forget to try. And don't forget to tell us at: AGS, freepost 5794, Leeds, LS7 3YY

STRATEGY: ELECTRONIC CAMPAIGNING

The AGS wants to extend its use of a whole range of electronic campaigning methods.

That includes email, the world wide web, Utube videos, "social networking sites" such as Facebook, blogging, "instant communication means" such as Twitter, and the older electronic methods of communications such as text and even telephone

The national committee is looking for members with experience or skills in any of these.

There are two main areas where we are asking for help. The first is advice on how any of these means could be best used to promote the AGS and its policies, and which are effective. The second is help with actually setting up and running systems to utilise these campaigning tools and to get other members to pitch in.

Could you help with such thing as:

- Experience of Facebook, etc
- Skills in building web-sites
- Producing & uploading Utube videos
- How to use Twitter effectively
- Email and how to get it read
- Texting to target audiences
- Telephone canvassing etc

If you have some skills or experience in any area like this, and could put in a little time and effort, it would be a valuable contribution to the AGS.

Please let Malcolm Christie know:
0113 293 1948 m_christie@yahoo.com
22 Montagu Crescent, Leeds, LS8 2RF

Please send news of local politics and events to Mike Davies for the newsletter.
m.davies@greensocialist.org.uk

AGS CONFERENCE 2 APRIL 2011 LEEDS

Do come to AGS conference on 2 April 2011. If you want to make or change AGS policy, change the rules, alter the way the AGS works, or replace the officers, then conference is the place to do it.

Contested elections are healthy, so don't have any hesitation about standing against, say, the Chair. We really do need a better geographical distribution of officers and national committee members, so please think about standing or nominating from the south.

The 2011 conference will be in Leeds on Saturday 2 April. There will be plenty of space for people to stay over and we will have a social evening after the formal proceedings.

POOLED FARE FOR CONFERENCE

The AGS constitution mandates a pooled fare for conference. The purpose is to reduce the chance of a conference being unfairly dominated by members who happen to live locally, and to reduce the cost to members who have to travel a long way to get there.

The idea is very simple: everyone who travels to conference pays the same, regardless of whether they live round the corner or had to travel from Penzance. If you live close then you will pay into the pool to subsidise those who had to travel a long way. If you live far away, then you will receive a payment from the pool. Everyone ends up paying the same for travel.

The only complication is how to assess a reasonable travel cost, since we do not really want to pay the first class air fare from Penzance! The national committee has agreed that the standard coach fare will be used to assess payments into and out of the pool. Of course, that does not mean you have to actually travel by coach.

Taking part in the pooled fare is NOT optional. It is a condition of attending conference.