

Newsletter

of the Alliance for Green Socialism – January 2011
www.greensocialist.org.uk



Education & Health for sale

The intention of the ConDem government to privatise the National Health Service and education arguably poses an even greater threat to our society than their direct cuts.

Last year's NHS white paper, now followed by a Bill, transforms the NHS from a public service to a set of private bodies able to spend our money. Health is to be a commodity, bought and sold, not a service. "Consortia", supposedly of GPs but really of HealthCos, will commission health care from hospitals. Hospitals and other medical services will themselves be increasingly private.

Local Education Authorities are to be effectively abolished. State schools will no longer be locally accountable. Schools will be pushed into the private sector, or replaced by "academies" and "free" schools. Universities and colleges will lose state support for teaching.

Of course, none of this is new or surprising. Labour enthusiastically pushed the "commissioner/provider" market split in the NHS, introduced Foundation Trusts, forced the use of private hospitals and clinics, and sold GP practices to private firms. Labour brought in "academies" and encouraged the privatisation of education services including LEAs. Labour introduced student fees.

We need to get rid of the ConDem Government. But replacing them with Labour would simply change the label on the same policies.

AGS Conference 2011

This year's AGS annual conference is on **Saturday 2nd April 2011** from 11am to 5pm, at Swarthmore Education Centre, Woodhouse Square, Leeds, LS3 1AD. Please come if you can.

Overnight accommodation will be available for Friday & Saturday nights. Book via the Secretary. There will be a social on the Saturday evening, following the conference.

Motions for conference should be sent, by post or email, to the Secretary (see box). Motions to change the constitution must be received by **26 February 2011**. Policy motions should be in by then if possible, so that they can be circulated early to members. The latest date for receipt of policy motions is **19 March 2011**.

You are invited to **nominate** (or volunteer) for Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Secretary, Editor, Press Officer; also for the three directly elected non-officer members of the national committee. Nominations should go to the Secretary and must be in by **26 March 2011**.

AGS groups should review who might **represent** them on the national committee and inform the Secretary. Could you represent your group?

Pooled fare

A pooled fare will operate for everyone attending conference, as a condition of attending. Going to conference will cost everyone the same amount. All those going to conference, near or far, will either pay in to the pool (if their travel costs are low) or get a rebate from the pool (if their costs are high). For this purpose, travel costs will be based on the standard coach fare. Of course, you can actually travel however you like.

When you arrive you will need to tell the door-person where you have come from so that your rebate or contribution can be worked out.

Last time the conference was in Leeds and operated a pooled fare system, no-one had to put in more than ten pounds.

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STRATEGY: WHY DOES THE AGS PRODUCE POLITICAL LITERATURE?

The AGS gathers, formulates and promulgates information from a socialist and environmental perspective. This is produced in the forms of leaflets, booklets, manifestos, the journal and the newsletter.

The *Green Socialist* journal is sent to every member, plus subscribers, and sold via a few commercial outlets. It is sold, and back copies given away, at many events. *Green Socialist* provides information on political issues, gives a platform to both the AGS and others, and helps the AGS develop its own thoughts and policies, stimulating debate. It also publicises the AGS itself.

The newsletter goes to members. It is intended to keep members in touch with what the AGS as a whole is doing and to serve as a notice board for group and individual activity around the country.

Booklets give a considered view of issues, such as privatisation, in moderate depth. They are sold, or given away if appropriate. Their purpose is to inform and to make a political case for AGS policies, mostly to people already interested in the issues.

Leaflets and election addresses have a wide and varied distribution. Many are handed out at public rallies and demo's. They are delivered to households, often during election or other campaigns. Leaflets are intended as basic political propaganda, raising issues with ordinary people, letting them know the AGS exists, and promoting AGS policies.

Manifestos go to individuals and organisations likely to be interested and/or influential, including the media. They summarise AGS policies for a particular election.

TUC anti-cuts "March for the Alternative" London 26 March 2011

Be there if you can. The AGS will be leafletting.

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.

5 Feb 2011 Calthorpe Arms, London 12:00

30 April 2011 Calthorpe Arms, London 13:15

AGS ANNUAL CONFERENCE Sat 2 Apr 2011 Leeds

Leeds AGS ran a Green Fair at the end of November. This coincided with the first severe snow, so it was quiet, but still successful and profitable.

The Xmas offer on gift subscriptions to *Green Socialist* is still available: Five pounds for a years subscription plus card.

A draft leaflet for the May referendum on Alternative Vote is enclosed. Suggestions for improvement are welcome, as are orders for supplies of the leaflet, to our freepost address or by email or phone.

CHEAP CONFERENCE RAIL TICKETS

Advance purchase rail tickets for the weekend of AGS conference have just gone on sale. For example, if you book now, it's only £20-50 London to Leeds return. Less with railcard.

The National Shop Stewards Network has a conference on 22 January, 12 to 4, South Camden Community School, NW1 1RG. There is a Socialist Party proposal to turn the NSSN into a wholly owned SP front, so attendance at the conference to stop this would be good.

It is AGS strategy to stand as widely as possible in elections. There are local elections in many places next May. Can you stand a candidate? It's free.

2010 National Committee members responsibilities

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