

Newsletter

of the *Alliance for Green Socialism* – November / December 2014
www.greensocialist.org.uk



AGS Conference 2014

National Committee looks to implement conference decisions on Fracking, Internationalism and Green-Left Unity

The 2014 Conference of the AGS held on 18th October carried a number of policy resolutions clarifying or reinforcing existing AGS policy in some areas and setting new policy in others.

As usual the conference was a good natured affair and although there was debate and disagreement on some motions the comrades attending discussed the issues with a common goal: trying to reach decision that honoured our socialist, internationalist and environmentalist principles.

UK Politics after the Scottish Referendum

The longest debate at Conference was over our response to the recent referendum on Scottish secession and whether or not the AGS should welcome the undoubted advances made by pro-independence parties north of the border. A motion which many delegates took to imply a supportive position towards pro-independence parties was defeated but as no alternative motion was adopted conference did not determine a clear policy on this. This is one issue where there are clear differences amongst comrades as to whether the referendum campaign and its result has been positive for Green-Left politics in Britain or has led to widening divisions between progressive political forces on either side of the border.

The AGS does have some members in Scotland but did not participate in the referendum campaign. However, as Scottish independence would affect people and politics right across the UK then it is an issue the AGS may well have to return to in the future.

Transatlantic Trade & Investment Partnership

The misleading title of this proposed treaty between the European Union and the USA did not fool comrades who carried a motion committing the AGS to oppose this assault on the rights of citizens in Europe to elect governments to implement policies in our interests and not those of the corporations.

Fracking

Unsurprisingly the conference carried a motion opposing the dash to extract and burn more fossil fuels by the use of non-conventional drilling and hydraulic fracturing. The AGS has already been heavily involved in the campaign in Greater Manchester (see separate story on Manchester overleaf) and this will be a continuing issue as the Lib-Tory Coalition are hell-bent on encouraging new oil and gas wells across the UK and are proposing amendments to the law to make it easier for corporations to drill wherever they want (even under other people's property).

Human Rights

The resolution carried by the conference condemned the current assault on the European Convention on Human Rights and committed the AGS to promote a general debate across the Progressive Movement on the question of what such rights should be and how they should be implemented. This is a different approach to the more common demands for this or that 'right' - often without clearly specifying how such rights should be defined or how conflicts and incompatibilities between different 'rights' can be reconciled.

This will be a continuing issue with further debates and discussions over the coming year.

Continued overleaf

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Meetings of the AGS National Committee are normally open to any member to observe. Meetings are on Saturdays, most often (but not always) at the Calthorpe Arms or Lucas Arms near Kings Cross, Central London:

Next National Committee Meeting:
1.15pm, Saturday 10 January, 2015.
Calthorpe Arms, Grays Inn Rd, WC1X 8QR

The following National Committee meeting will be on Saturday 21 Mar 2015. Venue to be circulated nearer the date (or contact an NC member)

2014 Annual Conference (cont.)

International

Conference carried resolutions on two international issues. On Palestine we reaffirmed support for a just settlement for all inhabitants of the region and denounced the continued injustices perpetrated by the racist policies of Israel and supported by the US and UK. The AGS does not believe that partition into two states on racial lines (one 'Jewish' and one 'Arab') is either practical (given continued Israeli settlement and annexation of land) or capable of bringing about a just resolution. We believe that only a secular and non-racially defined state where all ethnic groups have equal rights (ie. not determined by their race or religious affiliation) can bring peace, however difficult this may be.

Conference also supported the autonomous (Kurdish) enclave of Rojava in Syria and called for it to be recognised internationally. During the debate the movers of the successful motion on Rojava clarified that their proposal was not a call to endorse the Balkanisation of Syria along ethnic or confessional lines.

Draft minutes of the Annual Conference will be available and circulated to all members shortly.

Crown Prosecution Service halts action against 'Frackers Police'

The AGS private prosecution against Igas Energy PL, and Greater Manchester Police (for allegedly acting unlawfully as a partisan Security Force on behalf of Igas) has been blocked by the Crown Prosecution Service. This decision no doubt reflects government policy, which is apparently to give fracking companies immunity from prosecution for illegal acts (like putting razor wire fences across public rights of way and getting the police to arrest people who try to exercise their rights).

The CPS has taken over the prosecutions launched by AGS Chair Mike Davies and has promptly dropped the cases.

National Committee decisions

The National Committee meeting on 16 November made several decisions following the conference.

Green Left Unity initiatives: comrades are encouraged to participate in such initiatives locally and to keep the Committee informed of these.

Palestine: comrades were urged to write to the press and media to challenge the overwhelming pro-Israeli bias in coverage of the conflict and the assumption that a "two state solution" was the only way to achieve peace.

May 2015 General Election: the Committee endorsed plans to field candidates (two candidates in Leeds and one in London agreed so far) and will shortly launch an appeal to members and supporters for funds to fight the election.

Campaigning priorities for the year: The Committee agreed that TTIP, Climate Change and the NHS would be AGS priorities for 2014/15.

2014/15 National Committee members' responsibilities

National Committee members are allocated responsibilities or leading roles for various areas of AGS activity. Some of these responsibilities arise from their role as elected National Officers and other tasks are determined by the National Committee at the first meeting after the conference. For 2014/15 the responsibilities (including elected officer posts) are as follows:

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