

Newsletter

of the Alliance for Green Socialism – November/December 2015
www.greensocialist.org.uk - E-mail: newsletter@greensocialist.org.uk



AGS Conference Decisions

The 2015 conference of the Alliance was held at Swarthmore Hall in Leeds on 10th October. As well as electing Officers and National Committee members this gathering made a number of political decisions which the National Committee has since met to incorporate into our political priorities and activities for the coming year.

Fighting the Corporate Capitalist Assault on Democracy

We have agreed to campaign urgently against the "Transatlantic Trade & Investment Partnership" (TTIP) which, along with its pernicious siblings CETA and TISA, would place multinational corporations above democratic governments. These secretive and complex, but little reported, proposed treaties to enshrine capitalist "Free Trade" above any other considerations (like the environment, social justice or democratic accountability) will place as many, if not more, restrictions on so-called 'national sovereignty' than the various EU treaties but

we are likely to wait in vain for UKIP, the Daily Mail or Daily Express to throw their weight behind the public campaign against them.

A Fairer Voting System

We have backed the extension of the right to vote to sixteen and seventeen year old citizens together with a renewed call for a more proportional and democratic electoral system (eg. one which would prevent the Tories from imposing brutal austerity to enrich their wealthy backers when most of those who voted opposed them and when they won the positive backing of just a quarter of the electorate).

continued overleaf

--- PRINTER APPEAL ---

The AGS depends on printing to produce member communications (including this newsletter) and political leaflets for national and local campaigns. Except for very long runs, it is far cheaper to do this in-house than to pay for commercial printing. For this reason, three years ago, we bought, with the help of members' generous donations, a good colour laser printer. The AGS has had many tens of thousands of quality printed pages from this printer but unfortunately it has now broken down - after the two-year warranty expired, of course - and the maintenance company recommended by the manufacturers have failed to fix it.

At its last meeting, the National Committee discussed a range of possible options. The most economical and prudent option was judged to be the purchase of a new printer for £1,500 together with a maintenance & consumables contract from the supplier. The £1,500 price is a discounted deal linked to the maintenance contract.

Over a five year period this would be clearly the most economical way forward. Oddly (or, under capitalism, perhaps not) this would significantly reduce the cost per page printed compared to buying toner ourselves. It would also, of course, provide security against any further breakdowns, so this situation should not recur. If the new printer were to break down it would be repaired under contract.

Although this is clearly the best option overall, the AGS does not have a spare £1,500 to hand. The committee therefore appeals to you for donations to help us solve this problem. Any contribution, large or small, would help. A FREEPOST envelope is enclosed to make it easier to donate.

NORTH LONDON GROUP MEETING 2pm SUNDAY 6 DEC
"MARX & BIRTH CONTROL" speaker DEBORAH LAVIN all welcome
Lucas Arms, 245A Grays Inn Road, Kings Cross, London, WC1X 8QY

LEEDS GROUP MEETING 7.30 TUESDAY 8 DECEMBER
"PARIS CLIMATE TALKS: THE OUTCOME" speaker MIKE DAVIES
2-7 Swarthmore Centre, Woodhouse Square, Leeds, LS3 1AD

AGS Conference Decisions *(continued from page*

Refugee Crisis

Our Conference condemned governmental responses to the current refugee crisis and the abysmal failure to show principles, courage or compassion by some European leaders (notably including our own in the UK).

A New Vision for Europe

We agreed to develop and promote an AGS vision of a progressive and more democratic Europe. However, the question of whether the AGS will call for a YES or a NO vote in the Tories' promised referendum on the UK's EU membership in 2017 (or earlier) remains unresolved.

Air Pollution

The AGS will seek legislation and action to limit air pollution. This is a serious health and environmental matter but it is also inextricably linked with many other issues such as Energy and Transport.

New Labour Party Leader Welcomed

The AGS has welcomed the election of Jeremy Corbyn as Labour Party leader whilst re-affirming that our contribution will be made outside the Labour Party. A lively debate amongst AGS activists on whether there is any real chance of progressive change in the Labour Party is still going on.

Officers and National Committee

AGS Officers and National Committee members elected for the coming year are:

Chair	Mike Davies
Secretary	Celia Foote
Treasurer	Malcolm Christie
Membership Sec.	Steve Radford
Editor	John Sillett
Press Officer	Eddie Adams

As well as representatives of AGS Groups and Affiliates, Liz Peck, Mike Butler and Bob Archer were directly elected to the National Committee.

CAMPAIGNING PRIORITIES

Each year the AGS National Committee selects, in the light of conference decisions, three issues to prioritise in campaigning and resource allocation. This year's priorities are:

TTIP – the ongoing campaign against the Transatlantic Trade & Investment Partnership treaty and its close relatives CETA (Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement) and TISA (Trade in Services Agreement)

Energy – including usage and consumption, renewables, fossil fuel, nuclear and fracking.

Military Adventurism – even after the Iraq disaster Tories (and some New Labourites) still want to bomb people without legal justification or achievable objectives.

Raffle Result and Apology

The top prize in this year's AGS raffle, drawn at conference was won by Dave Church of Walsall. The raffle raised around £600 net, a much needed contribution to our straitened funds. Thanks to everyone who helped achieve this. The raffle is necessarily built into the AGS budget and we depend on it.

The apology is to those members who had earlier indicated, perfectly reasonably, that they did not agree with raffles and did not wish to receive tickets. We failed to exclude them this time but will try harder next year. Finally; many thanks to those who made donations instead of, or in addition to, selling tickets.

Mass Murder in Paris

The AGS has sent messages of solidarity and condolence to our sister organisations in France (who our Chair was due to meet with on 14/15 November) following the massacre by Islamist fascists on 13th November.

Pick up their swords

We have lost our comrade Sam Apter from North London, known to many members, especially those who came to the AGS from the *Green Socialist Network* and the *CPGB* before that. However, Sam's political contribution was respected far beyond the ranks of the old Marxist Left and he was well known across the Labour Movement. Watch out for an obituary in a future edition of *Green Socialist*.