

Newsletter

of the *Alliance for Green Socialism* – March 2016
www.greensocialist.org.uk



Tory Civil War over Europe kicks off again

The long-running conflict on the right of British politics over Europe has erupted into the open again, even more spectacularly and destructively than it did in the mid nineteen-nineties when John Major felt obliged to face down the 'Bastards' in his Parliamentary Party and put himself up for election (thus finally being elected as Tory Leader five years after assuming that role).

In the normal course of events, the sight of right wing reactionaries fighting amongst themselves would be no bad thing for us on the Progressive and Green Left. However, the fact is that this Tory internecine strife is reflected to some extent on the Left where many groups are divided over the issue as well. Thus it is that the AGS still has no formal position on the referendum question to be put in the Summer.

Some of our members are fully behind a '**stay in**' vote, although not for any of the reasons being advanced by our Prime Minister (in fact despite them). Other members veer towards the '**get out**' option for all the many reasons advanced by a range of socialist and Labour Movement figures over the years - especially the lack of democracy and accountability in the EU and the outrageous imposition of austerity measures by the European Commission and the European Central Bank.

There are others who think the entire referendum is a distraction from the real issues facing the Green Left and that we should not be drawn into arguing on other people's territory and dividing ourselves on this when there are so many other vitally important issues where we are united and should concentrate our efforts and our limited resources.

Within the AGS the debate has been, and will continue to be, fraternal and comradely, which is not the case amongst the Eton College alumni and Bullingdon Club toffs who are already accusing each other of lies, intimidation and of trying to mislead the public with bogus arguments and scaremongering.

Whatever the result of the referendum, there will be at least one small consolation prize. This will be the early demise of the misbegotten political careers of some unpleasant individuals who will have chosen to back the wrong side. If the UK leaves the EU then Cameron, and possibly Osborne and May as well, will be dead meat. However if the UK votes to remain in the EU then London's loudmouth Mayor, Boris Johnson, will be one of those with few prospects for political advancement.

So is there a European Green Left?

The answer is '**Yes... sort of**'. The AGS regularly talks with like minded groups in Europe and we have been represented at meetings with these groups in Paris, London and Istanbul in recent years. The AGS has contributed to discussions over an alternative plan for Europe ('Plan B') to promote a more progressive, greener and more democratic European Union.

There is not yet an agreed Plan which we can ask all AGS members to give their support to but there are people and organisations working to challenge the pro-capitalist, pro-austerity and anti-democratic ethos of the European Commission and the ECB. Whatever the result of the UK referendum it is certain we shall remain in contact with these groups as the economic and environmental problems we all face cannot be resolved within any one country.

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AGS seeks higher profile at CND Trident demo

The huge CND demonstration against the renewal of the Trident nuclear missile system on 27th March 2016 saw AGS comrades attending and promoting the latest edition of our magazine 'Green Socialist' wearing our new Hi-Vis tabards, intended to raise our visibility and profile at public events.

The National Committee agreed to acquire the tabards to give us a more visible public presence at events we are supporting. The AGS participates in a number of protests and other events where our members are spread out and fail to make a concentrated impact so that many other participants are unaware of our involvement.

It is intended that at future demonstrations and rallies we will have a group of people, armed with copies of our journal and other AGS publicity material, who will be highly visible and will advertise our participation. One of the barriers to the growth of the AGS is the fact that a great many of those who might be sympathetic to our politics and policies do not know of our existence or confuse us with the Green Party. The AGS has distinctive and attractive policies and an intelligent political analysis that chimes with the concerns of a great many people so getting our message out to a wider audience is a high priority for us.

The great COP21 Con-trick

The AGS National Committee in January discussed the much vaunted agreement supposedly reached by the Paris conference on Climate Change late last year. It was noted that Green Parties across Europe (as well as Corporate and big business lobby groups) have broadly welcomed the "agreement" and some have heralded it as the dawn of a new age of the low carbon economy.

The consensus on the Committee was that the 'agreement' reached in Paris does little or nothing to actually stop carbon emission in the near future and has no effective means for setting targets and enforcing them and does not provide a mechanism for an end to serious carbon emissions, or even any significant reduction in the immediate future.

Corporate capitalism is happy with COP21 as it is largely business as usual for them. Why Green Parties should go along with this charade may seem less obvious but to denounce it would expose the fundamental absurdity of their claim that an environmentally sustainable economy is compatible with globalised capitalism. Never-ending growth, fuelled by debt and increased consumption, regardless of our ecosystem's ability to cope with the consequences is a suicide pact and the AGS will continue to fight for the only sane alternative.

AGS equipped to produce short run publicity materials

The AGS has a new laser colour printer (thanks to comrades' generous response to our appeal to buy this equipment) which should be capable of producing colour leaflets in relatively short runs for local issues and events or for one-off interventions.

For longer runs of leaflets and publicity material then commercial printing is still more economic but if a local group or affiliated organisation want a couple of hundred leaflets for distribution at a rally or demonstration in their area then it makes sense for us to be able to produce these ourselves.

We are also preparing draft leaflets on various topics (eg. militarism; energy policy; austerity etc.) that can be adapted for local use or as leaflets for one-off national events..

Momentum loses its thrust

Most AGS members welcomed Jeremy Corbyn's election as Labour Party Leader and several went along to local groups of 'Momentum', the grass roots body formed to support his candidacy and mobilise behind the key policies he stood for. However, the AGS is not an entryist organisation seeking to infiltrate the Labour Party so the decision to exclude supporters of other political groups from Momentum will probably end this collaboration. This is regrettable as the AGS is willing to work with the Labour Left even if we don't see Labour as a means to achieve socialism or environmental sustainability.

Epping Forest Green & Democratic Left

EFGDL is one of the AGS's most active affiliated groups. Its activities range from local political and community campaigns to supporting a local Folk Club and holding public meetings on numerous topics. Anyone in the Essex area interested can contact Pete Relph on: 020 8508 6313

AGS National Committee.

National Committee meetings are open to all members to attend as observers. The next meeting will be held from 12 noon at the Lucas Arms, 245 Grays Inn Road, London WC1 (5 mins from Kings Cross station).