

GREEN LEFT NEWS

Newsletter SEPTEMBER 2009 amazing legible second edition for those with political foresight
Website; <http://www.greenleft.org.uk> Blog <http://greenlftblog.blogspot.com>

VESTAS

Vestas is a multi national company with a factory in the UK , on the Isle of Wight, this was England 's only wind turbine plant as Ed Miliband was announcing his belief in the importance of combating climate change, Vestas announced the closure of its IoW plant. Many of the workers struck and with support from several organisations including the Campaign against Climate change , Climate camp, AWL , IoW trades Council and (a little belatedly) the Green Party , a group of Vestas workers occupied the factory in an attempt to keep it open. Probably their most important supporters were the RMT, who recruited Vestas workers, sent down organisers and helped with legal costs. The Greens managed statements of support and some London Greens took down banners. Sadly the court granted Vestas an injunction and the occupiers were expelled. The Government sat on its hands. It makes fine speeches about global climate crisis but prefers to promote war, to defend oil supplies and financially cushion fat cat bankers, whilst allowing a vital industry to be destroyed. The struggle for Vestas and the struggle for a socially just environmentally sound society (aka Eco socialism) is not over.

Model motion for trade union branches, student unions and other organisations. This branch/organisation:

- (1) Supports the Vestas workers fighting for green jobs and for reinstatement of the workers sacked for occupying;**
- (2) [where applicable] Calls on the union general secretary to add his signature to the letter supporting the Vestas workers signed by 16 union leaders and published in the *Guardian* on 3 August;**
- (3) Resolves to support and publicise to its members local activities in support of the Vestas workers on the next national day of solidarity, Thursday 17 September;**
- (4) Resolves to make a donation of £..... to the Vestas workers' fund" [see details below];**
- (5) Resolves to pay the expenses of a branch member to visit the Vestas picket line, join it for a day, and give our support in person.**

Send a donation from your trade union or other organisation, or make a personal donation, with a message of support: cheques payable to RMT IOW 2 VESTAS HARDSHIP & DEFENCE FUND, send to: Keith Murphy, 57 Well Street, Ryde, IOW PO33 2RY. Or donate online at <http://savevestas.wordpress.com>

go to <http://savevestas.wordpress.com/> for Info
skill are required before they can begin to realize their vision. And that is not the end of the story: once work is

WHO CONTROLS EDUCATION?

(Martin Francis, Green candidate for Brent North asks)

Current conflicts over education date to the '70's and 80's when the political consensus over the welfare state began to break down. Norman Tebbit called for "Order in our streets. Order in schools and order in the home." This was the 'moral' aspect of the Thatcherite project which was carried on by New Labour: another aspect is bringing market ideology into education.

There is tension between capitalism and the welfare state, which relies on capitalism for funding but may have values that are subversive of capitalism.

The new right sought to use market forces to resolve this and as aspects of the old welfare state system had been unresponsive and bureaucratic new right reforms had some working class support.

One of the first targets was the inner London education authority which had begun to address issues of gender, class and 'racial' inequality; and the ILEA's abolition served as a warning to other LEA's to toe the line.

The Conservatives introduced a national curriculum which Blair extended so that many schools' timetables have been entirely devoted to meeting the targets that it sets.

Who controls education ?(continues)

As these are recorded in league tables schools are forced into a competition with each other where teaching, rather than social structure, is seen as the main cause of success/ failure. Financial devolution has turned Heads from teachers into managers juggling privatised services that take profit from tax payers' money. The culmination of this is the introduction of Academy and Trust schools.

Academies pose a competitive threat to other schools. Control over their own curriculums, admissions criteria, & over their employees' conditions give them some advantages. These may have been slightly restrained recently, but many remain as the higher level of exclusions and lower numbers of free school meal pupil show.

The Greens are the only party with the beginnings of a critique of this, with policies that challenge some of the commodification of education. However Greens still need to develop an alternative vision or education, perhaps starting from the point “..that the existing social and economic arrangements were not ordained by God and can therefore be changed by human activity and struggle.” (Chitty 1986)

Our strategy should include:

- i No new academies or trust schools.
- o Reassimilation of academies and trust schools; support campaigns for them to operate under the same conditions as local community schools.
- s Oppose plans to extend academies into the primary sector.
- t Abolish the national curriculum, testing, targets and league tables.

NUCLEAR DELU- SIONS: POWER & SE- CURITY

(Malcolm Bailey warns)



Tony Benn was Minister of Technology in 1966, of Power in 1969, and Energy Minister from 1975 to 1979 so his diaries, are an invaluable source on Nuclear policies. On the closure of the Dounreay nuclear plant in June 1988, he wrote; “Nuclear power is finished and I’m glad; I saw it late, but I saw it in time.”

‘Better late than never’, we might add, as the New Labour gov’t commits the UK to a new generation of nuclear power and renewal of Trident: Tory policy is not significantly different.

Green Party policy has long opposed nuclear power and weapons. This is a key reason why many joined and why I am dismayed to read Mark Lynas supporting

nuclear power in Green World(ed.65). Lynas wanted to reply to GW articles mentioning the dangers of spent nuclear fuel its transport and of the links with weapons. Lynas mistakenly thinks that the benefits of nuclear outweigh the risks; asserting that rejection of it is illogical and unscientific. But this is almost as bad as the pseudo-science of climate change deniers because it avoids nuclears’ horrendous cost implications, understates its health risks, side-steps the unsolved problems of waste disposal and ignores proliferation fears.

Since the opening of the first Magnox reactor at Calder Hall in 1956, nuclear power has been linked to weapons. Democratic accountability and access to information have always been casualties in this regard.

In March 1977 Tony Benn records a conversation with John Hill of UK Atomic Energy Authority in which Hill admits frequent leaks and slapdash methods of covering them up on the Windscale site. Benn concluded “Nobody can truthfully say that this whole project can be handed over to future generations to look after safely (...) the duration of the risk 10,000 or 15,000 yrs, is enormous.” It is unfortunate that some environmentalists have been seduced by the desperate arguments of the nuclear industry that it offers a solution or partial solution to climate change. Renewable energy sources

are the only answer backed by a truly determined government effort. The failure to back the Vestas workers shows New Labour's absence of serious commitment. Nuclear power stations remain highly dangerous centralised sources of energy that are not carbon neutral, are a potential terrorist targets and pawns in games of hypocritical power politics. **The Green Party must continue to reject these nuclear delusions.**

Malcolm Bailey is Green Left regional representative in the Eastern Region. He was Senior Radiation Physicist at the Royal London Hospital for many years, and is Green Party parliamentary candidate for Mid Bedfordshire.

THE NEW ASIAN DRAMA

(By Farid Bakht)

The Af-Pak war is unwinnable and is partly about fossil fuels.

That means regional stabilisation to allow laying gas pipelines, primarily to feed India. It is also about preventing Russia, Iran and China from gaining regional control which they are concerned to do because instability may already be spreading from the war into their territories. Following the lead of Britain, the US since the 1940's have been engaged in stoking up local rivalries. In 1947 Britain,

having supported the Muslim league left a new state 'Pakistan' in two parts (west & east) separated by India. Pakistan was an unstable and artificial construct. In 1971 the Bengalis of East

Pakistan split away from it. With Rebellion in Baluchistan in the '70's, and the army humiliated by its defeat in Bangladesh, Pakistan could easily have trifurcated into Punjab/Sind, Baluchistan and the NW frontier province. But the brutal suppression of Baluchi revolt held the country together.

To replace the 'strategic depth' lost with Bangladesh, the Pakistani generals turned their attention to Afghanistan. Thus the Delhi-Islamabad rivalry found at new playground for their ludicrous game of one-upmanship. The Pakistani ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence) used Saudi resources to organise the original mujahedeen against the Russian army. They then moved on to the Taliban, purpose built for extending into the 'stans', the oil and gas rich states left by the retreating Russians in 1991. The ISI also operated in Kashmir, perhaps operating as a state within a state even at the risk of dismembering Pakistan itself. Recently there has been fighting in the Swat valley where insurgent areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan meet.

Delhi is equally culpable, garrisoning Kashmir and backing the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan. India needs central Asian natural gas but the Afghan war is in the way. Resources might be easier

to obtain from Iran and/or Baluchistan, but Washington blocks any development of this. Until there is regime change in Teheran, gas will not flow to pro-western states.

Baluchistan should be watched, holding more copper than Chile, with fossil fuels, possessing resources worth more than \$65m. Some Baluchi secessionists seek US help, the prize could be Baluchi resources for US energy companies. Washington has not acted on this but the conditions for such a split could be developing as Cross border attacks from Helmand loosen the fabric of Pakistan. If the Afghan war proves unwinnable, compensation could come from a friendly Iranian regime willing to allow use of its resources and/or an independent Baluchistan, a client state rich in minerals and gas, perfectly positioned on the Arabian sea and a land base from which to project power into Asia.

This scenario might seem attractive to the US or India but it could not provide lasting peace.

For this:

We need to stop beefing up the ISI i.e. rein in the awful Saudi regime.

We need to think of UN and regional solution, rather than NATO.

WE NEED TO GET OUT. ONCE AND FOR ALL.

(Farid Bakht is Parliamentary Candidate for the Green Party in Bethnal Green & Bow)



JOIN GREEN LEFT

It has been agreed by GL meetings that GL should become a subscription based organisation. One reason for becoming subscription based is that we have minimal funds and are dependant on members donations for income. We don't ask for or get any money from the Green Party because we are not subsection of it, but an organisation of GP members who wish to influence all its policies in a certain direction and it follows, that GL has some disagreements with some parts of existing GP policies and/or their emphasis relative to one another. If we were party funded our independence in this respect could be compromised.

The decision to initiate GL subscriptions is also influenced by a degree of mystification as to why some people who have joined the GL mailing lists did so. This is especially so since some of the statements of principles that GL supports are now easily publicly accessible on this website,. If someone holds the perfectly respectable belief that Green politics has in some way totally superceded older left/right political divisions and that there is therefore no need for GL, then surely a GL list is not the place to argue this.

So it is hoped that a subscription might give slightly more political coherence to GL membership as well as providing a modest income for things like a banner and some leaflets and maybe even the little enamel badges that the more ambitious GL steering committee members dream about.

The simplest way to start this off is with a single rate subscription of £5 p.a to cover a **subscription running up to 1/10/2010.**

If you wish to join GL send a cheque for £5 (or more) made out to 'Green Left' to:

Peter Murry (GL Treasurer)
18a Oxgate Gardens
London NW2 6EB

Please also complete and send the following with your cheque

NAME

Address

GREEN PARTY MEMBERSHIP (name of Party)

Email

PHONE/s

Membership slip Green LEFT 15/16 august 2009

Name_____

Is a member of Green Left

Signature of GL Officer_____date