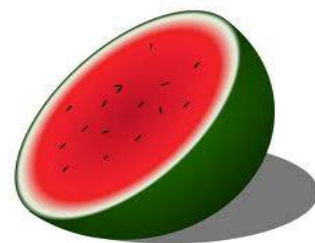


# Green Left News

The Newsletter of Green Left  
Conference/Autumn '10



thewatermelon.wordpress.com – greenleftdiscuss-editor@lists.riseup.net

## Government Consensus on Welfare Cuts

**Alan Wheatley; Green Party**  
**Spokesperson on Disability & Social**  
**Care**

Now that Labour is out of office and keen to side with the poor, it's important to recognise that the ConDem cuts are based upon Labour's dirty work, much of it unreported in the press and broadcast media.



*Alan campaigning against the ConDem cuts.*

One way that Labour and the ConDems have had such an easy ride has been that the major disability charities have largely been watching their organisational backs, colluding with Government and 'doctors' from Atos Medical Services in determining the nature of the 'Work Capability Assessment' — the test for Employment & Support Allowance eligibility.

The complexity of the disability benefits system, lack of acknowledgement of disability equality legislation, and the huge and malicious advertising spend on 'targeting benefit thieves' campaigns; all make it more tempting for mass media to dance to the Government's tunes.

Of course, when life for disabled people and carers is hard work in itself, for very little or no reward. Government on a

crusading mission is attacking the line of least resistance. But the question arises: "Who will be next?"

So inform yourselves and start joining in the fightback in support of disabled people's rights.

***Conference Fringe Monday 1pm***  
***Benefits cuts: how the poorest and most vulnerable will suffer the most.***

### **A warm welcome to delegates from West Midlands Green Left**

**Roy Sandison; West Midlands Green Left**

Green Left would like to welcome all delegates to Birmingham.

During the General Election Green Left successfully persuaded local Green Party members to vote in favour of standing aside for Salma Yaqoob the leader of Respect. Although she narrowly failed to be elected. It shows willingness to work with those who share our beliefs.

Green Left's representative for the West Midlands is Roy Sandison, he can be contacted via [roy.sandison1@ntlworld.com](mailto:roy.sandison1@ntlworld.com) or by phoning 01788 541064.



*Birmingham Conservatoire*

# Copenhagen or Cochabamba?

***Farid Bakht; Joint International Co-ordinator on GPEX***



The debate over the politics of climate change is now polarised.

Will Copenhagen be seen as the high point of the 'Carbon Trading Agenda'? With the ebb of a 'consensus' on how the world needs to tackle climate change, an alternative movement is gathering force to challenge this. It is being hammered out in Latin America.

Last April, the World People's Conference on Climate Change produced the 'People's Agreement' at Cochabamba in Bolivia. This is now the operating document forming the basis of a challenge to the status quo.

## **One or two degrees?**

The Copenhagen Accord talks of limiting the increase in temperature to 2 degrees. It promises to evaluate this in 2015 and see whether it is possible to reach the goal of 1.5C.

The Peoples Agreement (PA) demands we limit the increase to 1 degree and a gas concentration of 300 parts per million. Copenhagen merely set some voluntary reductions in emissions for rich countries. Meanwhile PA calls for a 50% reduction based on 1990 levels for the second period of the Kyoto Protocol (2013-2017). It also rejects attempts to annul the Kyoto Protocol.

## **Carbon Markets, debt & money**

Copenhagen sees carbon trading as the panacea. PA rejects the carbon market. It wants rich countries to make real reductions in GHGs.

Copenhagen talked about providing half the finance via carbon markets. Just \$100 billion in ten years, 0.05% of GDP. The bank bailout cost \$2,500 Billion!

PA says this figure should be 6% of GDP on the basis that the poor countries are owed a climate debt.

## **Forests, food & agriculture**

Copenhagen proposed incentives related to REDD, based again on the carbon market. PA says markets cannot reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. It places the rights of indigenous people at the centre of the debate. PA also calls for a shift to sustainable agriculture and the concept of food sovereignty.

## **Earth and Capitalism**

The concept of 'Mother Earth' is crucial to PA which has 'rights' to life and the right to regenerate its bio-capacity.

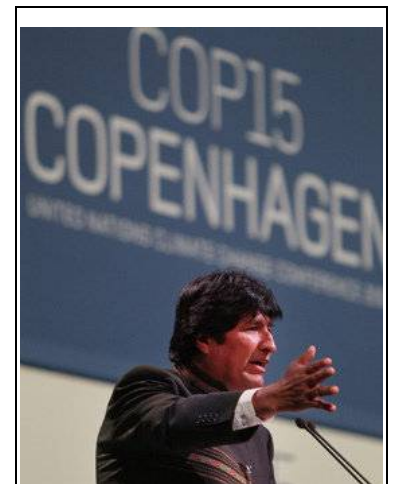
Copenhagen prefers not to get into the structural causes of climate change, PA sees the capitalist system, profit maximisation and the exploitation of nature at the heart of the problem. The solution can only be a different system.

## **What lies ahead?**

The November summit in Mexico is being downgraded. The climate talks in Bonn this June were a fiasco. Rich countries failed to force through a document which implied the killing of the Kyoto Protocol and blurring the distinctions between developed and developing countries.

It was at Cochabamba that a movement successfully challenged the privatisation of water and to the continent's first indigenous leader coming to power and cementing a shift to the Left in Latin America.

The People's Agreement takes this further to what can be called a **Green-Left vision** for Latin America. Where there are alternatives, there is always hope.



*President Evo Morales of Bolivia announcing the 'World People's Conference on Climate Change'.*

# Vote NO to a 'Shadow Cabinet' - YES to 'Party Democracy'

Larry O'Hara

As a Green Party member for over 20 years, I take fundamental issue with the argument for a 'Green Shadow Cabinet'

- 1) The current trend towards the centralisation of power within the Green Party is anathema to Green principles.
- 2) Power can not flow "upwards" if it is centralised in a mimicking of the parliamentary game of "Leaders" & "shadow cabinets". A Green shadow cabinet would be another step on the road to the Greens becoming a pale shadow of their former selves, a group of New Labour-ite clones representing no threat to the current political system.
- 3) Green politics needs to be more than "the environment & peace"– it needs to be linked to social justice, opposition to racism, support for those workers and communities struggling against capitalism. This exercises voters far more than Cabinet games!
- 4) Talk of seeking to "mirror the activity of government" is hardly helpful. The point is not to "mirror" the status quo, but transcend it. We should learn, and quickly, from the disaster of the Irish & German Greens in government. It would be unfair to mischaracterise opponents of the Shadow Cabinet as "sitting on the sidelines and whining"– our party must revolutionise, not simply standardise.
- 5) Certainly, the Green Party should contest elections – but should also understand politics is about far more than elections. Hence, as the disaster of the Irish & German Green Parties shows, those who naively imagine 'getting in government' as the summit of our political ambition we will be doomed to failure. The Shadow Cabinet supporters vision of democracy is people ceding power to 'professional' Green 'leaders' who act on their behalf.



*A Shadow Cabinet will be a step towards a centralised Blairite party structure. Don't vote for it!*

My vision, for within and outside the Green Party, is delegate democracy and decentralisation of power. Being elected is just one facet of overall transformation, to be elected alone will change nothing. It is the context of elections, and how it relates to popular struggles, that counts.

- 6) I do not think we will win by orienting ourselves primarily to what people watch on TV. Some say we "need to work in a world where most people get their politics through the media". Not only can the party not rely on the mainstream media to give us a fair hearing when we look like we are getting somewhere, the two forces who have made electoral headway in the last 30 years or so – Liberal Democrats & the BNP – both made ground by going direct to communities, not primarily through the established media. The implication of those who support this view is that if we don't dance to the mainstream media's tune, they will misrepresent us. Well of course they will, as they will too if it looks like Green politics are challenging vested interests successfully. If even Nick Clegg was vilified in the Tory media when the Lib Dems surged in the pre-election standings, don't you think the Greens would be attacked to? I do. We need to be ready and prepared for it, not give in before a shot crosses our media bows. The point is not just to reject the Shadow Cabinet idea: but to get out there and do some real politics.

## Campaign Against Police Violence; The sad death of Ian Tomlinson

***Gayle O'Donovan***



The behaviour of the police at the G20 climate camp in April 2009 was the worst I have seen on any demonstration. It was in the evening of April 1st 2009, we got a call from a friend trapped in the police cordon outside the Bank of England. He had been there for several hours in the heat with no water after receiving a head injury. We wanted to bring them water but the police, for reasons best known to themselves, would not allow us in. A few minutes later we crossed the road and saw several medics begin CPR on a man lying on the ground surrounded by very worried looking police officers. We later found out this to be Mr Tomlinson. I certainly didn't see any of the paramedics being pelted with bottles or stones as reported by the police but later discredited by video footage. Mr Tomlinson had become caught up in the demonstrations due to the police tactics on the day. They shut off an area trapping all inside. Parents and children, the elderly and passers-by can often get caught up in the tactic known as 'Kettling' because of the effect it has on those enclosed. It is a

dangerous indiscriminately used tactic. Corraling is a form of mass arrest despite no one being charged with an offence. Ian Tomlinson (7 February 1962 – 1 April 2009) was a local newspaper vendor on his way home. Video footage of a masked officer shoving Mr Tomlinson to the ground with other officers looking on later showed up on a news website. This footage confirmed witness accounts of police involvement in Mr. Tomlinson's death and left a question mark hanging over the initial corners report blaming natural causes for his death; two subsequent corners reports also contradicted this report citing internal bleeding caused by blunt force trauma to the abdomen. Dr Freddy Patel, the pathologist who carried out the first post mortem exam has since been suspended pending a General Medical Council hearing into allegations of misconduct in several unrelated cases. The IPCC completed its investigation in August 2009 and passed its file to the CPS, which announced in July 2010 that no charges would be brought. The CPS concluded that medical disagreement about the cause of the death meant prosecutors could not prove beyond reasonable doubt that there was a causal link between the death and the alleged assault. As campaigners we asked 'If this does not warrant a criminal charge, what exactly would a UK policeman have to do in order to face prosecution?'

### **JOIN GREEN LEFT FOR £5 A YEAR**

**Green Left membership fee is £5 annually with a suggested extra donation equivalent to an hour's wage.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Donation/Sub (Min £5): £ \_\_\_\_\_ :

Please send to: Pete Murry, 18a Oxgate Gardens, London NW2 6EB

Alternatively complete a  
**'Standard Order Mandate'** available from  
you bank with our details:

Account Name: GREEN LEFT

Bank: Co-operative bank

Branch: SKELMERSDALE

Sort Code: 089299 Account: 65284751



***Green Left is the Eco-Socialist;  
Anti-Capitalist movement  
within the Green Party***