

Newsletter

of the Alliance for Green Socialism – May 2012
www.greensocialist.org.uk



LABOUR GAINS IN LOCALS

The local elections results were remarkably good for the Labour Party. Beforehand the Tories had tried to set unrealistic expectations of Labour gains, so that they could later describe the actual gains as failing to match up to predictions. Their unrealistically high figure was 500 seats. In fact, Labour gained 800.

On the one hand, this does point to a very widespread rejection of the ConDem policies of cuts and austerity for ordinary people combined with favourable treatment for the rich. That rejection has to be good. The LibDems were again savaged – rightly – and look to be out of the running for a decade. (In my ward in Leeds, the Alliance for Green Socialism beat the LibDems by one vote last year; this year we beat them by nearly two hundred.) The Tories themselves also did very badly, losing over 400 seats. Although the locals have no direct effect on national policies attacking the poor, it surely demonstrates a very healthy rejection of those policies.

On the other hand, the Labour gains suggest that our worst fears of voters flocking back to Labour when that party is in opposition have been realised. For thirteen years New Labour governed as Tories: illegal foreign wars, privatisation of health and education, national identity cards, keeping anti-union laws, sucking up to the USA, etc. They demonstrated beyond any possible doubt that Labour was simply an equally capitalist and imperialist version of the Conservatives. Yet, as soon as Labour is out of office, people seem able to fool themselves that Labour is different from the Tories.

We face a politics in which Labour capitalists and Tory capitalists alternate in government, with voters suffering almost instant amnesia about the real nature of Labour as soon as they are in opposition.

A disturbing aspect of this is that Labour seems to have gained some votes even from minority parties that one might have expected to benefit from rejection of the ConDem mainstream. Even the AGS made no significant advance this time! We must re-emphasise Labour's record in government and the need for a genuine alternative.

AGS LOCAL RESULTS

The AGS stood in nine wards in Leeds. The affiliated Epping Forest Green & Democratic Left stood in one ward in Loughton.

In Leeds we averaged over 200 votes. Our best result was nearly 500, almost coming second. That result would have been better had the Green Party not chosen to stand against the AGS, taking over 400 votes.

In Loughton the Epping Forest GDL candidate got 3% of the vote, and helped see off the previous BNP councillor.

ELECTED DICTATORS?

The government, with Labour support, forced ten cities to hold referenda on having elected mayors with huge powers and no accountability. Disgracefully they rigged the question, pretending that mayors were equivalent to the existing leaders, whereas in fact they are vastly more powerful and impossible to remove. Equally disgracefully they forced councils to distribute "explanatory" leaflets that were extremely misleading.

The AGS, particularly in Leeds, campaigned strongly against elected mayors. Nine out of the ten cities forced to hold referenda saw through the government's lies and rejected the idea, Leeds by nearly two to one.

GREEKS REJECT EURO-AUSTERITY

All except PASOK & ND are against austerity

*

KKE	Communist	8.5%	26 communist
SYRIZA	Radical Left Coalition	16.8%	52 left & green
DIMAR	Democratic Left	6.1%	19 social democ
PASOK	Panhellenic Socialist	13.2%	41 social democ
ANEL	Independent Greeks	10.6%	33 anti-cuts right
ND*	New Democracy	18.9%	108 right
CHA	Golden Dawn	7.0%	21 neo-nazi

* 250 seats elected + a bonus of 50 seats to the top party

ISTANBUL CONGRESS: Red and Green Alternatives

The Red and Green Alternatives (RAGA) international conference will be in Istanbul from 5th to 8th July 2012, Thursday to Sunday. This has been organised by ourselves and French and Turkish comrades, with participation from dozens of countries mostly in Europe, the Middle East and Latin America.

Do think about whether you might attend.

Return flights from Britain cost £200—£300. You can look for flights on the web: search for “flights Istanbul”. More convenient times may cost more.

Basic accommodation in Istanbul costs from about £15 a night for a single (eg Yeni hostel), so £45 for three nights. Search on the web for “hotel Istanbul” and sort the results by price. Taksim district is walkable to the venue (Istanbul Technical University, Macka Campus)) Sultan Ahmed district is a tram ride away. Closer to the venue is more expensive. Smooth hotels cost lots.

Istanbul is safe and very interesting. Transport in is pretty good and fairly cheap: metro, trams & ferries. Food is reasonable and cheap meals will be available at the venue.

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Meetings of the national committee are normally open to any member to observe. Meetings are on Saturdays, most often at the Calthorpe Arms on Grays Inn Road, Kings Cross, London.

12 May 2012 Lucas Arms, London WC1X 13:15

7 Jul 2012 Rugby (venue tba) 12:00

8 Sep 2012 Calthorpe Arms, London WC1X 8JR 13:15

10 Nov 2012 Calthorpe Arms, London WC1X 8JR 12:00

12 Jan 2013 Calthorpe Arms, London WC1X 8JR 13:15

9 Mar 2013 Calthorpe Arms, London WC1X 8JR

ANNUAL CONFERENCE October 2013

CONFERENCE MOVES TO OCTOBER

AGS annual conference in April agreed a rule change moving conference to October. The previous date, March/April, clashed with both local elections and general elections. The next annual conference will be in October 2013.

Conference instructed the national committee to give a high priority to education on global warming; committed to campaigning against the implementation of the Health & Social Care Act; supported a comprehensive free education service, publicly owned and run; urged AGS members to campaign for a “no” vote in the referenda on elected mayors; opposed nuclear energy; called for expropriation of the assets of the rich, public ownership of the banks, and a change in taxation law so everyone operating in Britain pays appropriate tax; prioritised attempts to form a non-sectarian, powerful, broad, democratic green-left; and urged AGS members to suggest electoral tactics to the national committee.

A very enjoyable social evening, with music from Jim Radford, followed conference.

Just published

“LONDON RECRUITS:

the secret war against apartheid”

ed: Ken Keable, intro: Ronnie Kasrils, pub: Merlin Press

2011 National Committee members

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