

NATO: Greens still have the courage of conviction

Patrick Harvie MSP

The proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and their means of delivery, threatens incalculable consequences for global stability and prosperity.

So states the new 10-year mission statement of NATO. The document also commits the organisation to the goal of "creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons".

Yet the very same document repeatedly makes another commitment – that as long as there are nuclear weapons in the world NATO will remain a nuclear alliance, deploying the very weapons that pose such incalculable threats.

It's the contradiction which so many UK politicians have decided they can live with; like the ranks of senior Labour Party members who once proudly held membership of CND, but are willing to support nuclear weapons now that they hold elected office.

I understand why some changed from supporting unilateral disarmament, to work instead for multilateral deals so that more countries decommission weapons. But multilateral disarmament is still disarmament. It is not the policy actually being pursued by the UK, including Labour. By supporting the replacement of Trident, they are pursuing a policy of unilateral re-armament.

"Opposition to nuclear weapons is one of the reasons I first became open to the idea of Scottish independence."

Opposition to nuclear weapons is one of the reasons I first became open to the idea of Scottish independence. I know I'm far from alone on that. So it's deeply disappointing that the SNP are now repeating the mistakes of Labour and adopting a deeply hypocritical stance.

By seeking Scottish membership of NATO the SNP are saying that even if Trident is removed, they will sit happily under the nuclear umbrella so long as someone else deploys the weapons on our behalf. It betrays the same moral contradiction as those who say they want to disarm, while committing billions of pounds to a new generation of nuclear weapons.

I congratulate those in the SNP who put up a fight against the leadership. They only lost by a narrow margin. But the SNP is no longer the party they joined, and cannot be taken seriously by anyone committed to a nuclear-free Scotland. As some of their members have already concluded, it is the Greens who must now represent that cause in the political arena. We must make that case consistently and without a hint of the moral contradiction which Labour and the SNP have fallen into.

Editor's Letter

As another year draws to a close, I'd like to thank everyone who took the time to help with Greenprint's editions in 2012.

It's no surprise that so many of you have the enthusiasm to share your stories and opinions, but the quality of contributions this year has been remarkable.

As we move into 2013 with our MSPs and our elected and re-elected councillors working hard with invigorated Green activists around Scotland, there are sure to be no fewer opportunities to contribute to the magazine, and help communicate to the public that it is the Scottish Green Party who are working to make ours a better, fairer, healthier nation to live in.

On behalf of everyone at Greenprint, enjoy your well-deserved holiday and Hogmanay. We look forward to seeing you on the other side of our hibernation.

Richard Doherty, Editor

PS. If you received this in the post, please provide us with your email address so that we can further reduce our environmental impact. Thanks!

WE'RE MOVING OFFICE!

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The rational train of thought leads to re-nationalisation

John Nichol

It's a weird feeling having the government dictate who your employer will be without you having a say in the opaque process. For 18 months, a workforce remains in the dark about the machinations of companies wanting to own the franchise for which they work. The "winner" is announced a few months in advance, and only then do employees discover who will pay their wages.

It could even have been a lot worse. Christian Wolmar's book, 'On The Wrong Line', details some ways in which John Major's government wanted to privatise the railways. One idea was to auction off each train every month. So the 0900 Edinburgh to London Kings Cross could one month be run by GNER, the next, by Tesco. And the 0930 run by Thomas Cook.

Thankfully, the bloodied stump of British Rail pulled the emergency cord on that scheme, but what we were left was hardly any better. If a company (or consortium) fancied running a train service then the easiest way to get their hands on it is to promise too much. The Department for Transport are embarrassed by how much subsidy the railway receives (£4 billion in 2010/11 compared to £1.14 billion under British Rail), so companies are in the habit of lying about premiums they will pay. Famously, both GNER and National Express promised too much for the East Coast franchise and couldn't deliver. First Group are 'giving back the keys' to Great Western, having taken the subsidy and not wanted to pay the premiums.

The logo-splashed trains are all leased - even Virgin's shiny Pendolinos. Tracks are "owned" by Network Rail, an effectively-nationalised not-for-profit company. And almost every line needs a subsidy (ironically, Virgin had turned the corner with West Coast and paid a premium to the government in the last year, rather than taking subsidy). Companies run trains they don't own on tracks that aren't theirs with money they don't have.

The problem of fragmentation is beginning to be addressed by 'integrated control rooms', with Network Rail cosying up to train operators. Now, instead of two people doing the same job from

different buildings, two people do the same job sitting next to each other.

The next step should be re-integrating track and train. Nationalise the train companies, whether on the same not-for-profit model as currently used by Network Rail or as wholly-owned arms of government, and make the same company responsible for both maintaining the track and running the trains. The SNP recently began parroting the New Labour mantra that European rules make this illegal, but you only have to look to France and Germany to know this is a lie. In fact, the Advocate General of the European Court suggested that in his view, the European Directive in question does not require 'institutional separation'. Next year, Ireland will adopt the German model of railway infrastructure rather than follow the UK. There is no reason why an independent Scotland cannot follow Ireland in this.

In fact, we needn't wait. The Scottish Government awards the Scotrail franchise, and there is no reason they couldn't award it to a not-for-profit bidder, or give Scotrail to Network Rail or Transport Scotland. It would be a bold statement that acknowledges the failure of UK rail privatisation.

Wolmar captured what many in the industry feel when he said: "The privatisation of British Rail was a terrible calumny inflicted on the British people, an act of sheer, wanton violence by ideologically driven but ill-informed politicians. It has cost, quite literally, billions of pounds of taxpayers' money and put at risk the most efficient mode of transport - all at a time when concerns about energy conservation, global warming, pollution and road congestion call for a much greater role for the railways".

The Peace Prize is for us: we must heed its message

Dominic Hinde

Whether we like it or not, we are all European citizens. We share the same basic freedoms, and most of us share the aspiration for a Europe united in building a better common future, with, by 2045, our continent having gone 100 years without international war.

The Nobel peace prize was not awarded to the problematic Europe of today, but to our collective dream of a better world through peace and reconciliation.

For anyone born after the 1970s, the post-Maastricht European Union is something which we have grown up with – Europe is no longer foreign – but it has not always been so. It was once easier to travel to Australia or Canada than to France or Sweden as a British citizen. The great tragedy of European history will always be the record of conflict between the disparate groups in our tiny but culturally diverse continent, yet its greatest achievement has been the establishment of democracy from Iberia to the Russian border.

The supposedly cosy agreement between the French and the Germans has become an easy target for eurosceptics, but this is preferable to the destructive history of war which had previously defined their relationship. We have been lucky enough to grow up in a continent marked by cooperation, not by antagonism. This is one of the reasons that the handling of the Euro crisis has been so unacceptable. The European Union's ideals of democracy and cooperation have gone out the window. They have been replaced by an economic reductionism which makes a mockery of the social union we supposedly enjoy, losing sight of the fact that European economic integration is ultimately a tool for social cohesion and not an end in itself.

The treatment of Greece by their more powerful European neighbours has been shameful, yet it also reveals that the EU has not been paying enough attention to the ideals it espouses in the first place. Many of Europe's democracies are still young and fragile. We must remember that Spain, Greece and Portugal have been dictatorships within recent memory. Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia have found

a home in Europe away from the shadow and undemocratic influences of Russia, and the EU has on many occasions been a force for good in less developed parts of our continent, not least the work done by the EU police force in Kosovo.

Europe has, however, gone from a dream of cooperation and coexistence to one of self-interest. As European citizens we cannot allow this to happen – we must reclaim the ideals of peace and prosperity for all and stop seeing the EU as a means of increasing our own wealth.

In 2014 there will be an election to the European Parliament. This will most likely be the most important European election ever, as our continent goes through a stage of economic and democratic crisis. Euroscepticism is rife, yet the challenge for everyone who believes in peace and cooperation is to ask not what Europe can do for us, but what we can do for Europe. This does not mean giving up fiscal controls or joining the single currency, nor does it mean accepting Brussels and not Edinburgh or London as the centre of power. It means re-asserting the primacy of the social union in Europe as the reason for the EU's existence.

Irrespective of whether or not we think the EU's prize is deserved, it is hard to disagree with the words of Thorbjørn Jagland, chair of the Peace Prize committee, that we should do all we can to preserve what we have achieved, and to continue forward. Our continent is in crisis, and history shows we cannot afford to be complacent – peace and democracy are our hard won privileges. Scotland may have a pitifully small number of MEPs, but we need to make sure as many of them as possible are ready to stand up for the solidarity and common values our continent requires.

The Moral Test of Governments

Richard Doherty

While the UK government kick the weakest in society hardest of all and call their cowardice 'austerity', it is no surprise so many people have expressed disgust about the systematic abuse of our sick and disabled.

The Department for Work and Pensions admit that over half of those stripped of disability benefits after being ruled 'fit for work' were left unemployed and penniless. Already over 1100 people forced on to work-related activity have died before finding work. All at the say-so of French IT firm Atos – hired to slash the benefits bill to fund the bail-out of bankers and amnesty for corporate tax-dodgers.

Green MSP Alison Johnstone said: "Official figures show that 40% of appeals against decisions based on Atos assessments are upheld, and that this figure increases to a staggering 70% if claimants get expert help from groups such as Citizens Advice. Last year's tests cost the taxpayer over £112m.

"People who are assessed as being fit for work have died within months of being tested. These people are not statistics. Their cases provide stark evidence that too many claimants feel bullied and demoralised after being assessed by Atos. The Government cannot secure savings at the expense of those whose lives are a constant struggle."

The Scottish government also appear willing to turn a blind eye to the misdeeds of those they climb into bed with. Alex Salmond has reportedly earmarked £3m of taxpayers' money to build Atos offices in Scotland.

Alison Johnstone said: "SNP members in Parliament have expressed concern, lodging and supporting a motion criticising the awarding of a contract to Atos worth £206m from the Department of Work and Pensions, a contract which has the potential to generate profits of between £16m and £40m. Should the Scottish Government contribute to a new building in Forres for this wealthy multinational while many local businesses struggle for survival?"

Labour MP Michael Meacher spoke out against Atos when his constituent, Colin Traynor, a lifelong epilepsy sufferer whose health deteriorated under the stress of a cut to his benefit, died of a seizure when ruled fit for work. While in power at Westminster though, it was Labour who introduced the Work Capability Assessment. At their conference this year, shadow work and pensions secretary Liam Byrne finally admitted that what Labour inflicted on the public 'is not working' and they themselves calculate cuts to social care and disability benefits for which they paved the way will total £8.6bn before the next election. Given their role in this tragedy, Labour have much to do to show that, a lone voice here or there aside, they stand with the public in this life and death fight against the Tories and their yellow buoyancy-aids in government.

David Cameron recently re-iterated his commitment to 'compassionate Conservatism', saying: "Conservative methods are not just good for the strong and the successful but the best way to help the poor and the weak and the vulnerable."

The response to this, from the inspirational Sue Marsh, bears repeating: "You said you understood, you said you valued our NHS, you said you would protect the vulnerable. You lied. I see people found fit for work dying days after their assessments. I see the stories of profoundly disabled children left in their own filth, their parents wondering how on earth they will pay the rent or buy food. I see the desperate pain of carers simply unable to cope any longer under this onslaught of ignorance and cruelty...the vilification of those who suffer substance or alcohol abuse or mental illness, the hospices closing, the women's refuges shut, the charities folding as you cut their funding. Don't you dare try to reclaim what you never had...Don't you dare tell me about your compassion, I see the effects of your compassion every day."

Photo by Isaac Mao

Photo by Ryan Vaarsli

Is it time to interfere in the energy market?

James MacKessack-Leitch, Moray Greens Convenor

Photo by Taber Andrew Bain

Once again consumers have seen energy bills rise at an eye-watering rate, just in time for the onset of winter. While central government flounders around trying to rein in the profiteering "Big 6", Scottish Greens can offer a real solution to help consumers get the energy they need in a clear, fair manner.

At this year's Conference, we backed the abolition of multi-tiered energy billing and electricity standing charges. We are all dependent on electricity for a range of uses, from basic lighting and refrigeration, to communication, and in many cases, heating. It is an issue that impacts upon every person in the country, and it is time we fundamentally change the provision of our basic needs.

Currently the majority of electricity customers pay a number of different rates for their electricity. Often this takes the form of a high priced rate for the first volume of electricity used, reducing to lower rates for further usage. In other cases it takes the form of a standing charge. This leads to a situation where using large quantities of electricity is proportionally cheaper, and effectively means that smaller consumers subsidise larger. Those who use least, or can least afford electricity, are penalised by high initial rates or standing charges. Unlike other goods, there are no obvious savings to the supplier of customers buying in bulk, nor extra costs involved in supplying smaller volumes, particularly as we move to smart metering.

The current system also penalises those individuals, businesses and community groups who take the responsibility to generate some of their own electricity through small scale renewable energy projects, as the small amount of electricity they may need as a top-up from the national grid is paid at a high rate or is subject to a standing charge.

Abolishing this practice and levelling the rates of electricity will reduce the burden on those who can least afford it, and will make billing far clearer

and fairer for all consumers. It will also encourage those who have taken steps to generate electricity from their own renewable sources, and may act as an incentive for large consumers to adopt better efficiency practices, reduce demand, or even generate their own electricity.

Everyone can see that the energy market does not function in a transparent and free manner, and certainly not in the interests of consumers. By failing to take on the big energy companies, central government condemns the most vulnerable in society to make the choice between heating and eating, and penalises those who take the responsibility to generate their own energy. Perhaps the time has come to "interfere" in the energy market.

"Everyone can see that the energy market does not function in a transparent and free manner, and certainly not in the interests of consumers."

Of course there are those who would suggest that such interference would not be enough, and that our other main utility, and basic necessity, water, is run without the need for making huge profits and satisfying shareholders, an idea that merits serious consideration. Others would suggest that a move to smaller, local energy providers, utilising renewable technology, and perhaps run along social enterprise lines, would be a better way of supplying electricity. There are a range of options available for electricity supply, and the time has come to have a serious debate about how we meet our needs, now and in the future.

One thing is blatantly clear – we cannot continue down the path we are currently on. And while others will try to fix something that obviously does not work, only the Scottish Greens have the vision, and the will, to fundamentally change the system.

October 20: Towards a future that works

Richard Doherty

Well in excess of 100,000 people gathered on 20 October in London, Glasgow and Belfast to call for an end to the government's shameful economic policies.

The Scottish Greens' Ross Greer said: "The Westminster government has made huge cuts to services relied on by the most vulnerable in society, whilst allowing those who can afford it to go free. Their cuts to Disability Living Allowance saved them the same owed by Vodafone alone in unpaid taxes – some £6 billion. We are clearly not all in this together and ordinary working people are still being made to pay for a crisis we did not cause. The numbers at all three marches showed the level of opposition to the government's austerity agenda but we must keep escalating the campaign until the government is defeated."

In London was Welsh marcher Richard Evans, who walked 156 miles from Cardiff to be there. Mr Evans said he hoped that Labour figures like Ed Miliband – who was invited to give a speech but chose not to march – would commit themselves fully to a people's future: "I want to hear from Labour speakers that they will be reversing any cuts." But instead, Mr Miliband recited, almost word-for-word, his speech to the Labour Party conference, stating that "tough choices" would still need to be made by a Labour government. But imploring us to elect Labour anyway because, somehow, they're vaguely different from that other right-wing 'shower'.

A common chant from the crowd was the call for a general strike, but, other than bombastic RMT general secretary Bob Crow, many union leaders in London disappointingly avoided joining in the call. Crow said: "There's only one thing that this rotten government understands as it attempts to batter working-class communities into submission and that is the power and force of numbers as we mobilise sheer physical resistance out on the streets and in the workplace."

On the whole the protests were uplifting, with diverse political groups united, widespread agreement that further protest is needed and that no public service cuts should be tolerated, and many speakers who were genuinely inspirational. The one person markedly out of place was Ed Miliband. It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that much of the trade union movement is desperately lost while they continue to hitch their wagon to the corrupted, treacherous Labour Party.

The leader of the only major party in England & Wales who espouse principles of radical social change was not invited to speak in London, but perhaps it will prove beneficial that the Green Party of England & Wales' Natalie Bennett marched side-by-side with the public, while the sneering Miliband was chauffeured in late before speaking down to every man, woman and child in the audience. Natalie Bennett said: "Hundreds of thousands of people are demonstrating because they understand Britain urgently needs to change direction. Austerity is a disaster. After 33 years of Thatcherite policies, we've returned to Victorian levels of inequality."

Make no mistake, the will is there to carve out a future that works for all in society. But that will only be possible when power is taken out of the hands of those political parties who are under the thumb of the elite and enslaved by corporate bosses.



Greens on board for a positive campaign

Stan Blackley
Deputy Director of Communities, Yes Scotland



At party conference this year, the Scottish Green Party membership voted overwhelmingly to participate in Yes Scotland – the cross-party and no-party campaign for a Yes vote in the referendum on Scottish independence to be held in 2014.

The Scottish Greens will now send a representative to meetings of the Yes Scotland advisory board, which has already agreed to take a constructive and collaborative approach to promote positive dialogue and discussion, and provide high quality information about the potential benefits of Scottish independence.

Yes Scotland aims to enable and support the largest community-led, grassroots campaign in recent Scottish history. SGP involvement has now added another welcome, distinctive and important voice to the Yes campaign.

We recognise that constitutional change is not necessarily a primary concern for many SGP members – rather, that it is viewed by some as a means of delivering more important green concerns, such as greater sustainability, equality and subsidiarity.

Patrick Harvie said: "Greens are not nationalists, but we can see huge opportunities to make our country fairer and greener through independence. We look forward to working within the Yes Scotland campaign to set out a transformational vision for Scotland's society, economy and environment, and build a campaign to win."

How can you get involved in the Yes Scotland campaign?

1. Show your support. Sign the Yes Declaration. You can register your support at www.yesscotland.net/declaration. The declaration states "...it is

fundamentally better for us all if decisions about Scotland's future are taken by the people who care most about Scotland, that is, by the people of Scotland."

2. Get active locally. Join a Yes Scotland group. If you would like to join or set up a Yes Scotland local group, please contact info@yesscotland.net.

3. Join the debate. Sign up as an EcoScot. EcoScots is the space within Yes Scotland where those with an interest in green politics, environmental protection, sustainability and other green issues can discuss and debate. An EcoScots conference will take place in spring 2013. See: www.ecoscots.net.

4. Get trained. Sign up as a Green Ambassador. Find out more at: www.yesscotland.net/participate.

5. Follow us on social media. We can be found on Twitter at [@YesScotland](https://twitter.com/YesScotland) and at facebook.com/YesScotland.

6. Make a donation to the campaign. Yes Scotland is wholly funded by public donation. You can make a one-off donation, or set up a regular/monthly payment to the campaign, at www.yesscotland.net/donate.

If there is any other way that you would like to get involved, please contact us on info@yesscotland.net, by calling or head office on 0141 221 4767, or by using the contact form at www.yesscotland.net.

Radical Independence Conference

Activists and intellectuals from across Scotland united to create an event in support of Scottish independence.

Held in November, The Radical Independence Conference (RIC) marked a significant step on the road to 2014, giving the opportunity for anyone with a progressive vision of independence to gather and discuss the launch of a movement for social change.

Unsurprisingly, given the natural affinity with so many of the over-arching, transformational aspirations on show at RIC, many Greens were in attendance.

"The Radical Independence Conference was a terrific event. The energy and the enthusiasm were tangible. It shows the enormous demand in Scotland for a real alternative to our failed state and economy. I came away with a renewed belief that another Scotland is possible. And that is a Scotland that has social justice at its core."

~ Peter McColl, SGP activist and Rector of the University of Edinburgh

"Against the backdrop of the austerity agenda, the independence referendum provides a timely opportunity to have a meaningful debate about the alternatives - and RIC provides an ideal forum for this debate. As a socialist, I hope the fight for a better Scotland is a fight which places democracy, ecology and the needs of the many before profits for the few."

~ Lucy Brown, PhD student from Galloway

"There is one sadness in this coming-together; the issue which has united most of the left is one which does not yet unite it all. It is important that those on the left who do not support independence recognise the strength of feeling and genuine commitment to change of those congregating around RIC and do not in turn see them as the enemy. This is a movement which we want to lead to the government of Scotland along green/socialist principles. That means we are no longer opposing things but offering things."

~ Robin McAlpine, Jimmy Reid Foundation and Scottish Left Review

RIC proved one of the more inspirational events in post-devolution politics. While usually such a thing is rare, not only does this appear to be the start of a lasting movement, there is another Radical Independence Conference taking place next year. Book your tickets early!

Reflecting on RIC

For those of us pushing for a radical transformation of society, the debate over Scotland's constitutional future – set to dominate over the next two years – presents a huge opportunity.

Independence should, by its nature, represent a break with the status quo. There have been positive signs from the SNP about protecting welfare and the NHS, and on reindustrialising Scotland with the expansion of the renewables sector.

The battlelines of the debate became starker with Scottish Labour's recent abandonment of universalism. Yet at the same time, many in the SNP's leadership have caught themselves in a trap of believing that the Scottish population are scared of change – leading to the situation where we're constantly reassured that with independence, we can keep the pound and the financial misrule of the City of London, still have the monarchy and all its trappings, and even stay in NATO and remain part of the brutal Anglo-American military axis.

It's for this reason that a broad range of progressive forces have come together for the Radical Independence Conference. We want to articulate an alternative vision of Scotland – of a country that puts its people and environment before corporate interests that invests in public services and education, and promotes peace and internationalism. Those defending the status quo will have a tough job over the next two years, with the Coalition's war on welfare set to intensify with the introduction of the Universal Credit and continued austerity and cutbacks across the board.

If the Yes campaign is to win, we will need to solidify the notion that independence is our best chance of creating a fairer and more socially just Scotland. Polling already shows a majority of Scots would favour independence if it meant an end to Tory rule. Let's seize on this and ensure that independence is a radical break from the failed, corporate-dominated model that is the British state.

Liam Turbett

Cauldhall mine: Planned destruction in Midlothian

Malcolm Spaven

A proposal for the biggest open cast coal development in Scotland for decades is expected to land on the desk of planners in Midlothian early in 2013.

Scottish Coal's Cauldhall Moor proposal would involve extracting ten million tonnes of coal from an area bigger than 450 football pitches, and taking it by road to Longannet Power Station – securing Longannet's status as Scotland's biggest single source of pollution. It would match the massive Ffos-y-fran mine in South Wales in terms of coal extracted, and would be the biggest single open cast site in Scotland.

Transporting the coal to Longannet would require 44-tonne lorries travelling every three minutes on the local road network, and the coal going up in smoke would add 27 million tonnes of CO₂ to the atmosphere – roughly four years' worth of CO₂ emissions from the whole of Scotland's business and industrial activity combined.

The Scottish government has made great play of its commitment to a "low carbon economy", but in relation to electricity production, this depended on fitting Longannet with carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology, which has been claimed to be capable of reducing Longannet's emissions by a

sixth. But the UK government pulled the plug on the Longannet CCS project in October 2011, so even that claimed modest reduction in emissions won't happen. CCS remains an unproven technology and the £1bn the UK was prepared to commit to it would be far better spent on energy conservation and demand reduction measures, as well as promotion of renewables.

Local communities around the Cauldhall site are already waking up to the scale of this proposal. A previous attempt by the same company – Scottish Coal – to open a new open cast site near Gorebridge was rebuffed after a vigorous and well-informed local campaign, supported by the Midlothian Green Party.

It is going to take just as much of an effort from the public and local Green activists if we are to defend ourselves against this latest proposal.

For more information and to help defend Cauldhall Moor, contact malcolmgspaven@gmail.com or visit Coal Action Scotland at coalactionscotland.org.uk



Help us grow the Green voice in the Garden of Scotland

Jason Rose

East Lothian is known as "the garden of Scotland". It certainly farms a huge amount of food for the nation's plates – mainly using industrial methods dependent on chemicals, but there is a growing appetite for organic produce, farmers' markets and allotments.

East Lothian is also the powerhouse of Scotland with the Cockerzie coal plant and Torness nuclear power station generating half the country's electricity. Both these facilities are approaching the end of their useful lives but the fossil fuel and nuclear industries are lobbying hard for conversions and extensions. Little wonder then that the local branch of the Scottish Green Party wants to increase its activities and boost its profile.

During the last Holyrood election East Lothian was the South of Scotland constituency with the highest percentage of Green votes. Now, existing members are asked to consider ways they can become more active, and if they can help identify potential new recruits. Members of the much larger Edinburgh branch are also invited to consider ways of supporting their eastern neighbours.

I moved back to my home county from the Highlands almost a year ago and can see plenty of issues where a Green voice is needed. Certainly at a council level all people are currently getting is tribal bickering between the SNP and Labour.

East Lothian branch convener Eurig Scandrett said: "This is prime Green territory and our aim

is to contest the next council elections in 2017. We're looking to recruit new members and hope to capitalise on an increased interest in our policies due to the Yes Scotland campaign for independence.

"There are pockets of East Lothian where the Green vote is strong and with a bit of work we stand a good chance of getting a councillor elected. With the Greens' strong position on social justice and local job creation, and against polluting incinerators, coal and nuclear power, we have an opportunity to communicate our distinctive stance even in areas where the Labour vote is ingrained."

We're trying to raise the Green profile with letters to local newspapers, our own blog and Twitter account, but any additional support will make a big difference and be hugely appreciated, particularly with recruitment of new members. Our aim is to give East Lothian the choice of voting Green.

Email us: info@elothiangreens.org
 Blog: eastlothiangreens.blogspot.co.uk
 Follow us on Twitter: [@elothiangreens](https://twitter.com/elothiangreens)

Dumfries by-election

Following the untimely death in September of Labour councillor, Ted Brown, the Annandale North ward in Dumfries & Galloway was forced to hold a by-election in November – won by Tory, Graeme Tait. Alis Ballance, the Scottish Green Party candidate, originally missed out on election in May by the narrowest of margins – 39 votes.

Alis came third this time, well ahead of the SNP, Lib Dems and UKIP respectively, but caught between an understandably strong Labour vote and the Tory campaign machine. David Mundell, the Tory MP for Scotland, distributed letters specifically warning people not to vote SGP – no other party was mentioned. A positive indication of where the Scottish Greens stand on the political spectrum if ever there was one.

Richard Doherty

A modern community generation on Lewis

Amy McKinnon

Renewable energy is most commonly associated with tackling energy security and climate change, but community groups across Scotland are increasingly realising that its power can also be harnessed to provide much needed social benefits.

Be it smaller scale projects such as a ground-source heat-pump to reduce the bills and carbon emissions of a local hall, or a community-owned, revenue generating wind farm, Scottish communities are leading the way in community and locally owned energy generation.

In October, the Western Isles' first community-owned revenue generating wind turbine was commissioned on the Isle of Lewis. The 900kw device generates not only green energy for local use, but also an estimated £100,000 for the community by selling its energy. For a community of 70 houses, this money is set to make a real difference. A full consultation is to be held, but ideas under discussion include spending the money on improved services for young residents and greater public transport.

Not only can such initiatives generate vital revenue streams, a recent survey by Community Energy Scotland found that while projects improve community facilities, reduce bills and generate revenue, they also boost community confidence, resilience, and employment and training opportunities.

Embarking on a community energy project may seem a daunting task, but there is network of support available. Community Energy Scotland has supported over 700 communities across Scotland to develop energy efficiency and generation measures, and also administers a variety of funding programmes to help towards the costs of renewable projects.

To explore the energy efficiency and generation possibilities in your local area, please visit www.communityenergyscotland.org.uk



The Nature of Scotland Awards

After a successful first year and as we enter the Year of Natural Scotland, it is with great pleasure that we bring to you the Nature of Scotland Awards 2013.

These annual awards aim to recognise and celebrate excellence, innovation and outstanding achievement in Scottish nature conservation. The awards will showcase best practise, raise awareness about that which is under real threat and shine the spotlight on those making a difference. Scotland is renowned worldwide for its landscapes and abundant wildlife and we must work hard to preserve this precious natural heritage.

The Nature of Scotland Awards is open for entries until Friday 15 March 2013. Anyone can enter the awards provided they or the project they are working on is linked to Scotland.

In 2011 we received over 90 entries across six categories, making the judges' job a difficult one. This year, entries are welcomed across the following eight categories:

- Marine Conservation
- Sustainable Development
- Politician of the Year
- Innovation
- Outstanding Contribution
- RSPB Species Champion
- Community Initiative (new)
- Youth and Education (new)

The shortlist will be announced on 18 June 2013 at the Garden Lobby of the Scottish Parliament. The conservation community will come together to find out who has reached the final, and reinforce how imperative it is that we work together to preserve Scotland's wildlife and wild places.

The awards ceremony will be a black tie event held in Edinburgh in October 2013. The night will start off with a drinks reception and the chance to meet 300 other key decision makers and supporters from the industry. This will be followed by a three-course dinner, the awards presentation, entertainment and a chance to bid on some amazing lots in our charity auction. All entries that are shortlisted will receive two complimentary seats to this fantastic event.

We look forward to receiving your inspirational entries!

It is free to enter the Nature of Scotland Awards. For more information on how to enter and to download an entry form please visit: www.rspb.org.uk/natureofscotland

Stacey Maden,
Major Events Co-ordinator RSPB Scotland

Hillsborough: The Truth

Phil Scraton (Mainstream Publishing, 2009)

This is a compelling account of the tragedy of 15 April 1989 when football fans attended the FA Cup semi-final between Liverpool and Nottingham Forest at Hillsborough Stadium in Sheffield. English football's worst disaster left 96 men, women, and children dead, hundreds injured, and thousands traumatized.

Phil Scraton brings together the harrowing experiences of the Hillsborough disaster, and the personal stories of the bereaved and the survivors, exposing their appalling treatment. Police statements initially alleging hooliganism and blaming Liverpool fans for the crush within the arena are detailed, along with the national media response.

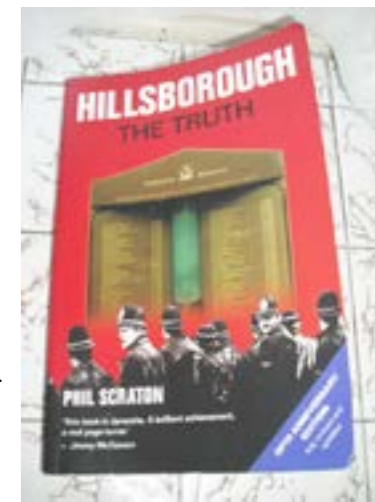
The Taylor Inquiry conducted in the immediate aftermath found the main reason for the disaster to be failure of police control and dismissed "hooliganism" as having played no part. However, there are contradictions exposed about this inquiry, including the controversial inquest system which returned verdicts of accidental death, when negligence had been clearly established.

Scraton's book highlights problems of the emergency response, with only 14 of the 96

who died making it to hospital. Medical evidence is presented with reference to an anaesthetist who treated the first emergency admissions. He treated nine admissions, some of which recovered from asphyxiation. It is explained that if more had been done to rescue and resuscitate the dying earlier, with more efficiency, far fewer people would have died.

The process by which a systematic review and alteration of police statements by South Yorkshire police managers and their solicitors is detailed. It makes it clear that police resources were used to limit criticism of senior officers at the match.

Scraton's book is not only very informative about the tragic events associated with the Hillsborough disaster, but it also provides a deeper understanding of the 23 year campaign for justice for the Hillsborough 96.



Reviewed by Martha Wardrop

Paper Trails:

From trees to trash – the true cost of paper

Mandy Haggith (Virgin Books, 2008) Published on recycled paper

This is the story of paper. It is also the story of Mandy's extraordinary journey to find where the paper she recycles ends up. This odyssey took her to China, through Russia and on to Finland, then south to Indonesia and Vietnam, finding evidence of wholesale destruction of communities and land for the sake of quilted toilet paper. After a trip to Canada, where 90% of logging is from ancient forests, and most of that on First Nation people's territories, she returns to consider forestry in Scotland. Here she finds that many mistakes of the past are being corrected.

Mandy distinguishes between 'hard' illegal logging, which gobbles up acres of trees, laying waste to whole areas, and 'soft' illegal logging where 'community forestry' means locals making a living from their environment, sometimes illegally. While often demonised for that activity, this is not what destroys the world's old forests. She vividly describes witnessing illegal logging on a massive scale in Russia, and compares that with locals using forests

in a more sustainable way in Indonesia. Plantations are far from the answer. Apart from the destruction of the soil and bio-diversity, time and again she came across evidence of land-rights abuses stemming from the paper industry, and makes a direct link between paper-making and poverty. People in communities opposing big logging companies suffer for their stance across the globe.

We must do better, and can start by reconsidering our greedy attitude to paper. This is a must-read in order to be more aware of how the global paper industry operates, and why we really need less paper plus a greater awareness of the impact of our use on the communities which provide us with paper.



Reviewed by Moira Dunworth

Greens In Government: Lessons to be drawn?

Marij van Helmond

Photo by Meri Taylor

At September's parliamentary elections in the Netherlands Groen Links (or 'Green Left') saw its ten seats in the Second Chamber reduced to four. A month later the leader of the parliamentary party, Jolanda Sap, resigned and then so did the entire Party Council. What brought on this disaster?

Although much depends on who you ask, some convergence of opinion about causes seems to emerge – some immediate, some more underlying or historical in nature.

Groen Links (GL) came into being in 1989 as a fusion of four small left wing parties that by themselves had been unable to win parliamentary seats. Their tendencies included communism, pacifism and green values – a heady mix which ever since has dogged GL's development into a credible parliamentary party with a clear programme supported by the full membership. Until the beginning of this year the party operated as part of the opposition in parliament.

This changed dramatically in February, when the right-wing coalition government fell, challenged over its proposed austerity budget. When the formation of a new cabinet threatened to drag on, and the pressure on the Netherlands to come up with a budget for 2013 that would meet European requirements mounted, Green MPs together with those of four other left-of-central parties reached the Budget Agreement 2013 – the Lente Akkoord (Spring Agreement). Sap's role in parliament had been significant. It led to the withdrawal of some of the most disliked austerity measures and secured important steps towards the development of a greener economy. However, because it still involved some €16 milliard of cuts, initial plaudits soon turned to criticism, even within GL.

When GL had to turn its mind to putting together its list of candidates for the parliamentary elections, a conflict broke out. The "top of the list" position of Jolanda Sap was challenged by a far less experienced member. After much wrangling, the selection was put to a referendum in which Ms Sap obtained a convincing percentage of members' votes.

However, this internal conflict, fought out in the glare of media attention, did little to benefit the party or its leadership. Instead of spending precious time explaining the positive aspects of the "Lente Akkoord" to the voters, attention was allowed to shift to internal squabbles.

This may sound a straightforward story of cause and effect but politics are never so simple. What appears as the immediate cause of the election set back (participation in setting the budget) was merely another expression of internal frictions that had been there all along. For example, the party has always been uneasy about the participation of the Dutch army in Afghanistan. Instead of voting against it, Green MPs in 2010 agreed to participate – restricted to training of Afghan police. This still angered a great many members.

In situations like that the role of the party leadership should be to manage the disagreement and keep everybody on board – without appearing timid. But GL leadership has never been stable. Plenty of talented and committed people, but confusion over what sort of party it should

"This may sound a straightforward story ... but politics are never so simple."

be – how far to the left, how pacifist, how socialist and indeed how Green. When the parliamentary party took part in the 2013 Budget, without sufficient consultation with the wider membership, Party Congress passed a motion of disappointment. Perhaps an indication that GL is still not very comfortable with taking governmental responsibility.

At the moment the party is kept going by an interim Council whose task it is to organise the next Congress, which will have to elect a new leadership to reinvigorate the Party, giving it new and clear aims supported by a good majority of the membership. What a task!

From Black to Green Forest: Bündnis 90 / die Grünen

Lynne Hunter

In the South West of Germany, bordering France and Switzerland, Baden-Württemberg is a federal state ('Land') containing much that is stereotypically German: Alps, Black Forest, and Rheine. A young Land, it only voted itself into existence in 1952.

Baden-Württemberg has nonetheless lived up to its 'Conservative South' image, with the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) both in government and providing every Minister President in the Land since 1953.

As of May 2011, however, black, the political colour of the CDU, has slowly been replaced by the green of Bündnis 90 / die Grünen in a series of historic milestones. The 2011 Land election created a coalition of SPD (Social Democrats) and Greens, where for the first time ever the Greens were the major partner in a coalition. Admittedly the difference between the two parties was only 1.1%, but nevertheless, this was enough to make Winfried Kretschmann the first ever Green Minister President of a Land.

The German Bundesrat (Upper House) has a one year, rotational presidency, with each of the 16 Länder taking turns at supplying the Bundesrat President. Since 1945, the only exception being 1952, the Bundesrat President has always been an SPD or CDU Minister President. 2012 happens to

be the turn of Baden-Württemberg again and so the first Green Minister President of a Land has also become the first Green Bundesrat President.

From 1945 to 2012 the State capital of Baden-Württemberg, Stuttgart, had only had three Lord Mayors: an independent until 1974 followed by 38 years of CDU. On 21 October of this year, Fritz Kuhn was able to win 52.9% of the vote to become Stuttgart's first Green Lord Mayor. Another historic moment for the German Greens as, before Kuhn's win, the

Greens had never won a mayoral election in a Land capital.

Scandals, destruction of green spaces in Stuttgart, and heavy-handed policing of demonstrations have turned voters against the CDU, but Fritz and 'Kretsch' have shown how even bastions of Conservatism can be won over by Green campaigns. Bündnis 90 / die Grünen will now have Baden-Württemberg to look towards for their inspiration in preparation for the forthcoming 2013 General Election.

"Even bastions of Conservatism can be won over by Green campaigns."



Photo by Bündnis 90/Die Grünen Baden-Württemberg

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See www.scottishgreens.org.uk/publications or ask for a detailed leaflet for information on Scottish Green Party Aims and the Constitution.

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