

Notes from Brighton and Hove Compass Coffee Morning, 16 September 2023

What Kind of Green New Deal Should We Expect from a Newly Elected Progressive Government?

‘What does it take to organise a revolution’, asked **Charles Secrett**, former Director of Friends of the Earth, kicking off September’s coffee morning. A Green New Deal requires a new political economy fit for nature, fit for people, fit for life. In 2017, the UK New Deal Group proposed a practical plan with five pillars:

- Clean energy
- Jobs
- Just transition
- Fair tax system
- Allowing nature to regenerate

“How are we going to pay for it?” is the wrong question, said our other speaker, **Cathy Shutt**, who helped shape the GND resolution at the 2019 Labour Party Conference. The current Labour leadership must debunk the myth that the national economy is in any way analogous to a household budget. If it wins the next election, it should

- (1) Take an *economy-wide approach*, not just tweak separate sectors.
- (2) Change our *measures of value and progress*. Our current model is fixated with economic growth without looking at the quality of that growth and the energy needed to produce it
- (3) Give *government a greater role in the economy* by steering it towards investment -led growth with patient, long-term, high quality financing including green bonds, public procurement requirements, financing local-level energy projects etc
- (4) Revise *tax structures to reward long-run investments, particularly in labour and R&D*.

Back to **Charles**: How are we going to persuade the next government to do what’s required?

It means building a broad movement. When with FoE he experienced three successful advocacy campaigns including the Climate Change Act (2008). These started with no hope but succeeded because of the approach to building support in parliament through

- Local non tribal inclusive organising including women's institute, local business associations, church groups etc.

- Focus on tangible issue people could get the heads around

Framings and words matter: framings that have worked in the past with UK voters include the idea of recycling carbon taxes and fairness. Does 'Green' carry too many associations with a fringe, radical movement? And 'climate justice' appeals to younger people. Then let's do some social research on what language we should be using to mobilise mainstream civil society. National Compass could secure funding to do some focus group work.

Discussion

A progressive government needs a progressive opposition to help shift the Overton window to make possible strategic climate policy action.

Framing matters: General consensus that Biden has been really clever - framing of Inflation Reduction Act which appears to have had massive impact 170,000 new jobs. Change GND to "Fairer Future Bill" ?

Starmer and Khan both mishandled the ULEZ issue

Assumption Tory Party is dead and a new Party including some of the One Nation Tories will emerge in time

Introduce carbon taxation (Rachel Reeves has not ruled this out). 'Polluter pays' has popular support.

Right wing media a real challenge - time to shame

Need to find simple ways to communicate heterodox economics

We are all hoping young people step up to the plate and are more effective communicators than we are!

New climate change think tank starting in Brighton next week headed by Simon Maxwell