



Ecosocialism: Strategy and ideas document

This is based on discussions held by ecosocialists at the Ecosocialism strategy seminar held on 13 July 2024. As such there is some repetition in some of the points that the different groups discussed.

Group A: Growing the movement

Crucial to link to social justice - reflected in organisations like the national climate justice coalition and make the connection between social justice and environmental justice.

In terms of fundamental change we have to build a mass movement that popularises the ideas of eco-socialism.

It is important to push back against neo liberalism and individualism such as fixation on individual carbon footprints or green lifestyle individualism.

There is an urgent need to tackle growth mantra. We have a critique of the idea of capitalist growth but we need growth in education and other social resources such as health service and social housing. We need a better concept than degrowth as it presents an unnecessary binary between capitalist growth and 'degrowth'

We need to reach out to new layers

At this stage it is just trying to link up with the people.

- Youth and students have shown themselves to be very engaged and active around climate politics. However all generations are important. Most youth and students have parents or guardians who may be worried about what the future holds for their children and grandchildren.

- Those worried about the environmental crisis who do not see themselves as 'environmentalists'
- Those who have issues that intersect with the environmental crisis (e.g. the need for public transport in the countryside - overlap with disability movement).

Other organisations:

XR has recently moved to the left - a bit There were brief comments about how XR comes across as more Middle class - it has a different emphasis.

GMB and Unite policy on the climate needs to be tackled. Unite policy around Port Talbot does not mention the environmental crisis - this is an issue. They still often advocate a jobs first approach that ignores climate considerations.

The idea of public transport and the countryside was linked to the history of disabled people and their transport needs - build an alliance with them. Eco socialist transport position. Disability activists would get this. Need to develop common solutions.

Another example: Eg. Water: We need to make the case for decommodifying water. We can do that and argue for it. These are the sorts of interventions we have got to be making.

Develop a methodology of bringing people together via their building blocks that take them towards eco-socialism - seeing the connections between them and then work collectively to make that happen.

We have to look at very practical interventions alongside eco-socialist ideas if we want to develop an eco-socialist pole within the environmental movement

How are we going to broaden the number of people involved in this eco-socialist project?

Discussions on work to connect with

- Eco-socialists the Labour Party in the UK
- New groups on the left of the Labour Party
- Also beyond the UK as there are eco-socialist all over the world, link up with people in other countries

Environmentalism covers quite a broad spectrum yet the messaging around the crisis can be exclusionary. We need to be inclusive and think about how to make our messaging inclusive.

Make the connection between social justice and environmental justice.

It is about targeting the mind set of the campaign groups on both sides.

Where do the people we need to reach gather? Have a presence at different events.

We need to challenge fatalism that can lead to paralysis

We have to do a balancing act that highlights both the threat and also what can be done to resolve the threat. Give people a vision that allows people to work together to find common ground.

Eco socialism has to run through every element of the campaigning - the possibility of a socialist future

Workers and Environmentalists

We need to liaise better with those separate environmental groups and bring them into the sphere of anti-capitalism eg XR Rebellion, Just Stop Oil, Green Party, Campaign Against Climate Change Trade Union Group (CACCTUG), Greener Jobs Alliance, Greenpeace? Friends of the Earth? Others that may not necessarily see the need for system change to achieve ecosocialism. Also The GKN occupation in Florence is a good start around workers involvement and participatory democracy against the tyranny of bosses and the chaos and disorder of the market system.

Group B: Responding to right-wing/individualist messaging

Need to clearly challenge the nonsense that environmental concerns are 'woke'. Can we steal 'anti-establishment' away from populist demagogues and conspiracy theorists and say 'we are the real anti-establishment, we want participatory democracy'

Far right have always been anti science, so much is based on emotion. It's not just a question of challenging, we need to offer a positive solution to fill the space with progressive ideas. Need to talk about 'post truth culture' and far right attitude to science and facts.

Need to stress distinction between environmentalism and climate change - far right often care about environmentalism (conservation, green belt etc.) but climate change is establishment, based in science, highly politicised hence populist's aversion to it. Have to be tech savvy and use old fashioned channels of communication. E.g far right constantly get their letters in local paper columns. Use all communication methods at our disposal. Younger people voted for National Rally because they advertised on Tik Tok. Farage was playing Minecraft on tik tok during the election campaign.

Need to look into tackling the contradiction with how you support the farmers and how you do not support detrimental ecological systems like dairy and meat farming. Push trade unions on retraining and agribusiness jobs.

Right blame immigrants - we need to clearly put blame where it's due and offer an answer to fight against blame put onto marginalised groups.

How do you talk to people who don't agree under the same labels? Some may be in favour of the same things but they don't identify with the same language around it.

We need to engage with those not in favour to encourage discussions. Be prepared to engage on common ground that goes beyond the labels. Stress that we're arguing for the same things and you won't get the answers from the right wing demagogues.

Right wing uses leading questions and language. If we don't engage with people, the far right will. Not all farmers are reactionary and some are re-wilding. They've always been seen as suspicious by other farmers but eventually they can come round and can start to adopt more ecological practices.

How do we decide what is unnecessary consumption and production? It's not just about individual need, it's about collective need. Showing people examples of where participatory democracy/citizens assemblies can work e.g. Porta Alegre and say we can apply this to decisions like deeming what is necessary.

Greens successful in positioning green policies can give you a better life instead of just telling people they need to give things up. What is our vision of life in an ecosocialist society? Degrowth is problematic, D-Growth instead. We need to push an 'alternative hedonism'

Need to have joined up thinking - council bought electric buses however, there are not enough of them and the bus service is already bad making the expense almost pointless. Bring in experiences from other places in the country - e.g. Sheffield, electric buses on hills.

Reliance on cars relates to disability. Push that as you get older, you will not be able to drive. We need infrastructure but this is being blocked by developers who want to keep access to the housing developments.

Jobs - A plan for jobs is the reverse of what we have right now. Back in the day, it was the government's responsibility to provide full time employment. It's now the responsibility of the worker to be 'employable' by being flexible.

Lot of us are fighting to defend jobs, there is no time to plan for more. How do we argue for democratic socialist planning?

There used to be the housing corporation. It had the notion that you had to provide social housing, it was a clear commitment. We need involvement of communities and trade unions right from the start. A grassroots approach, a national plan but not one that is simply determined by bureaucrats at the top.

Lambeth - local council tried to demolish social housing as too expensive to renovate. Pushback campaign against it. Top down decision without considering the views of the tenants who lived there. Good example but we need a bigger, grassroots campaign. Pressure labour for a grassroots approach, not them dictating. We need to keep a very close eye on public/private infrastructure which Starmer is proposing. St Johns Wood hospital provided care for older adults. Building

constructed by public/private agreement pushed by Blair. Since then, it's been sold off with huge loss to the public sector. Where are the rest of those public/private buildings? Have they been sold off?

Port Talbot - No just transition has been arranged. Starmer taking on but likely favourable to owners and not workers. There is wide support not just from steel workers and environmentalists. Shows that it is possible to organise workers around environmental issues in communities.

There is mileage in slogans like 'bring back public utilities'. It is noted that Labour have not committed to public ownership.

Scientists working on the issue of the climate have become more radicalised; In 1992 the Union of Concerned Scientists wrote a public appeal about global warming; "A great change in our stewardship of the Earth and the life on it is required if vast human misery is to be avoided and our global home on this planet is not to be irretrievably mutilated."

In 2019 around 400 scientists issued a public call supporting climate activists' civil disobedience campaign. In 2021 a leaked report of the IPCC reveals that the growth model of capitalism is unsustainable. As the scientists that leaked it reported It says that we need massive investment – to transform energy systems, transport, industry, land use, agriculture, and housing, and to prepare for the accelerating effects of climate breakdown – not the death cult of conservative economics. It shows that we must abandon economic growth, which is the basis of capitalism."

Group C: Internationalism in practice

How useful is COP [Conference of Parties - UN framework for tackling environmental issues]? Is it just window dressing/greenwashing? We need to control the narrative around the climate and challenge the dominant imperialist framing.

Currently the ecosocialist left/climate movement is too small to totally boycott COP because a boycott is only useful if you can organise an alternative. Trade unions and social democrat parties do send delegates so there is a fight there over what they are arguing. Ecosocialists can make the case for these representatives to pose radical demands.

In the book 'Ecocide: Kill the Corporation Before it Kills Us' by David Whyte he argues for putting liability for climate degradation;

- *Corporate structure must be broken*, the activities of any corporation must be limited to doing one thing, abolish cross ownership of each other to limit the damage they can do.
- *Impunity for investors and shareholders must end*. Limited liability is unsustainable. They must be held fully responsible for any activities they profit from. Asset shielding must be ended, and equity fines implemented.

- *Impunity for corporate executives must end.* There is an argument that doing this would affect the *pool of talent* for executives who might flee to other countries that are less likely to hold them responsible if things go wrong. Who cares if this puddle is a little less deep?

We need propaganda about the global governance regime and how international agreements favour corporations and their profits. Workers are pitted against each other to compete over jobs and resources. We need internationalism in practice, social forums or conference that bring together the broadest possible movement.

Challenge green washing under imperialism, point to the reality of global militarism, unfair trade deals. How realistic is it to have green capitalism when capitalism depends on global inequality, extractivism, brutal military force, huge police and state bureaucracies.

Highlighting the contradictions of global economics, the post-industrial north in reaching its climate targets for GHGs is only possibly achievable because the global south has been massively industrialised and most carbon output is from production in countries like China and Vietnam.

Reparations that focus on environmental clean up and infrastructure and with democratic oversight by civil society and workers organisations. Challenge narratives around 'corrupt regimes' that are used as an excuse to do nothing.

Palestine is an example where we can link up issues around war, militarism, destruction of the environment through ecocide. A clear example of genocide not just in terms of killing Palestinians but environmental devastation to make Gaza Strip uninhabitable. Plundering of resources in the region and syphoning off water, stealing land these are both environmental but also social questions.

We cannot support continued under-development in the name of environmentalism. China is a useful example, difference between developing a country to increase people's living standards and the unnecessary waste in 'developed' countries. It is wrong for people to live in poverty just so that people in the west can live in relative comfort. Countries like Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) are structurally under-developed by colonialism and imperialism, they have a right to a decent standard of living, access to clean water, electricity etc. Degrowth in this sense isn't always a useful framing as we have to be specific about what needs to be reduced (e.g. militarism, advertising, food waste) but we will need to develop infrastructure in many parts of the world where capital hasn't deemed it profitable, more schools, railways, hospitals and so on.