

Greens lead on first successful motion to demand government reparations for slavery



15 July 2020

A Green Party councillor has lead the way on the first successful motion to demand government reparations for slavery.

Lambeth Council this evening [Wednesday, 15 July] passed a motion calling on the UK government to establish a commission to study the impact of UK involvement in the transatlantic trafficking of enslaved Africans and to make reparations. [1]

The motion, initiated by Green Party Councillor Scott Ainslie [2], is believed to be the first such motion to be passed by a local authority. Greens councillors in Bristol and Islington have also raised the issue in what is expected to become a national campaign.

Ainslie, who worked with the social movement Stop The Maangamizi campaign [3] and the ruling group on Lambeth Council to ensure the motion would pass, said it was vital the government took seriously the impact slavery has had on current racial inequalities in the UK.

He said: "This is an historic motion, and long overdue. The repercussions of hundreds of years of slavery are still all too visible in the inequalities and prejudice which exist in our society today.

"I was delighted that we were able to work together and cross party on this important motion calling on the national government to act. I hope other councils throughout England and the devolved administrations will follow this lead, so we can begin to rid this country from the shameful legacy of its colonial past."

The motion draws direct links between the legacy of slavery and current issues of racial discrimination. It states:

"The legacy of slavery is responsible for ingraining racial inequality within Western society, that manifests itself both in overt acts of violent racism, such as the death of George Floyd at the hands of American police, Black deaths in police, prison, psychiatric custody and immigration detention in the UK, or in institutional failings to provide sufficient support and care for Black communities, such as the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on Black people in the UK."

Greens of Colour chairperson Azzees Minott said:

"Black people have had to work hard to contribute, be great leaders, curators

and innovators in spite of the unequal conditions we have had to deal with for centuries. I'm glad that the Green Party has worked with campaigners to lead the way and address the social injustices that Black people have had to live with for far too long. This motion is the start of something new and it is really exciting."

The motion calls on the UK government to establish a commission to study the impact of UK involvement in the transatlantic trafficking of enslaved Africans.

It also calls for the UK government to establish an All-Party Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry for Truth and Reparatory Justice to commit the UK government to atone and make reparations to the descendants of enslaved African people, in accordance with international human rights law. Lambeth Council will also commit to supporting a more inclusive historical curriculum in schools.

ENDS

Notes

1

The Council Meeting and full motion text is publicly available:
<https://moderngov.lambeth.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=142&MId=13766>

2

Scott Ainslie is one of five Green Party Councillors in Lambeth, and former MEP for London. The Green Party is the official opposition group on Lambeth Council.

3

Since 2015, the Stop the Maangamizi Campaign (The Maangamizi is the African Holocaust of chattel, colonial and neocolonial forms of enslavement) in association with the Afrikan Emancipation Day Reparations March Committee have been organising the annual Afrikan Emancipation Day Reparations March. The campaign presented the Stop the Maangamizi Petition to the Office of the UK Prime Minister calling for the establishment of an All-Party Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry for Truth and Reparatory Justice:

<https://stopthemaangamizi.com/2015/10/12/about-the-commission-of-inquiry-appcitarj/>

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Caroline Lucas MP response to Rishi Sunak's summer statement on stimulus



8 July 2020

Caroline Lucas response to Sunak statement

"This was yet another Government statement which didn't live up the hype and does very little in the face of the huge challenges we face.

"For all the promises, repeated again, that this would be a green recovery with concern for the environment at its heart, all we got was a rehash of announcements made earlier this week on a voucher scheme for home insulation – covering less than 3% of homes in England.

"While this is work that desperately needs to be done to tackle emissions from buildings, the scale of what the Government is proposing will have a minimal impact, cutting just 0.14% of UK emissions. It's a pittance in the face of what's needed.

"The can is being kicked down the road to the Autumn Budget when we need to be accelerating action on the climate and nature crises, not delaying it. The Committee on Climate Change said the recovery from Covid needed to be a defining moment in the fight against climate change". All that Rishi Sunak's statement defined was a lack of ambition.

"It was also hugely disappointing that the Chancellor failed to recognise the unfairness of the self-employed support scheme which has far too many gaps to cover all those who are self-employed. He could have done something about that and he failed, washing his hands of millions who've lost their livelihoods.

"I have been campaigning for a cut in VAT for years, doubling down on those calls in recent months because of the terrible impact of coronavirus on the hospitality sector – most recently asking ministers in mid-June to cut the rate to 5%.

"So I'm glad the Chancellor has listened and done exactly that – but it needs to be made permanent. A lower rate of VAT for the next six months could be a lifeline for restaurants, hotels and other businesses in Brighton and Hove, where tourism and hospitality is worth about £900 million to the local economy.

"This industry will not fully recover by itself. The cut in VAT is a good place to start. But as the Chancellor said himself, what is deterring people going out is the lack of public confidence about visiting pubs, restaurants and other venues. Without an effective track and trace system for Covid, people will be reluctant to go out and spend. The Government has had months to sort this, with money being thrown around with no coherent policy or

results.

“This has to be sorted or we will risk new outbreaks of coronavirus and more lockdowns, with potentially devastating impacts on Brighton and Hove’s economy.”

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[Green Party announces leadership candidates as campaign gets underway](#)



2 July 2020

The Green Party has today announced the list of candidates running to be the next leaders of the party before voting gets underway next month.

Three candidates have been nominated for leader, while six candidates have been nominated for the position of deputy leader. Nine other positions on the Green Party Executive are also up for election.

With nominations announced the campaign period has begun with national, regional and special interest hustings being held online through July. Members will then be able to vote between 3 and 31 August and the results will be announced shortly after.

All fully paid-up members are eligible to vote by single transferable vote, with ballots issued by email and, where required, paper copies.

The candidates for leader are:

Shahrar Ali

Jonathan Bartley and Sian Berry

Rosemary Sexton

The candidates for deputy leader are:

James Booth

Andrea Carey Fuller

Nick Humberstone

Cleo Lake

Tom Pashby

Amelia Womack

Green peer and former leader Natalie Bennett said:

“I’m proud to see such a strong and diverse group of candidates ready to build further on the growing strength of the Green Party, following record-breaking European and council elections last year and a strong performance in the general election.

“As we face environmental collapse and social crisis, Britain needs a strong Green voice now more than ever. Greens will always speak truth to power, offering a wholly different model of a society that provides security for all while caring for this fragile, damaged planet.

“I know the whole parliamentary team is looking forward to working with those elected, and the whole of the party as it gathers strength in all of the nations.”

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[Green Party MP Caroline Lucas responds to Boris Johnson’s infrastructure speech](#)



30 June 2020

Green Party MP Caroline Lucas has responded to what Boris Johnson is expected to say later today in his Rebuilding after Covid speech.

Lucas said:

“Boris Johnson had the chance – for once in his life – to show some real leadership and he’s blown it. The only ‘bounce’ these plans give us is a bounce straight into an accelerating climate crisis which he does next to nothing to address.

"The point about Roosevelt's New Deal was that it was visionary – for the 1930s. Ninety years on, we need a different vision so not a New Deal, but a Green New Deal and that has to go far beyond tree-planting, welcome though that is.

"There is nothing here which suggests that the PM has understood the size and the scale of the transformation that's needed at this pivotal moment.

"We need a new approach to managing our economy, abandoning the fixation with endless GDP growth and focusing instead on an economy which delivers health, personal well-being, and a restored and thriving natural environment.

"That is a society which would stand the test of time – for everyone."

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[Greens demand no one is left behind as Government support starts to wind down](#)



29 June 2020

- **Green Party publishes comprehensive plan to ensure we avoid cliff edge as Government support starts to taper off**
- **Furlough scheme starts to wind down this week, eviction ban ends in August**
- **Jonathan Bartley: "The time has come to ask who the economy is for"**

The Green Party has today published a series of demands to guarantee nobody is left behind as the Government's coronavirus support packages start to wind down. [1]

From this week [w/c 29 June], the Government's furlough scheme will no longer be open to new applicants or additional employees and businesses will be able to bring staff back part-time before the level of support falls to 60% in October. [2].

Meanwhile, the ban on evictions for those renting will be lifted at the end of August [3], and the Government's test and trace may not be fully operational until September. [4]

It means millions across the country are facing the prospect of becoming impoverished, losing their home or falling ill unless the Government ensures

proper protections.

The Greens have now put together a series of bold proposals which would provide everybody with security as the economic, social and health consequences of the coronavirus crisis become clearer.

Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley said:

“Whether it be in the face of Coronavirus or the climate emergency, the Government’s first duty is to protect. But the last few months have seen a scattergun approach that has offered limited support to some while others have been left to fend for themselves. Soon, even these protections will disappear.

“The time has come to ask who the economy is for. The economic impact of coronavirus will last for generations and we know that the economy must be transformed if we are to prevent catastrophic climate breakdown.

“This is the moment for the Government to raise its ambition, establish real social security and not cut support. The Government’s success or failure will be judged by whether it provides people with what they need to thrive, not just survive.”

The paper, *Whatever It Takes: Our plan to leave no one behind in this crisis*, sets out a number of proposals in three main areas to ensure no one is left destitute, no one is left in danger and no one is left without a home.

Key policy proposals include a Universal Basic Income, an acceleration of a fully effective test and trace system with the highest data standards and ring-fenced funding for local authorities to provide shelter for every rough sleeper who wants it.

Bartley said:

“The coronavirus crisis has highlighted in starker terms than ever before the importance of building security, resilience and basic dignity across our society.

“The policies we are putting forward aren’t just common sense, they are essential to ensure people have the security they need as we build back better from coronavirus and transform the economy in the face of the climate crisis.”

ENDS

Notes

1

The paper, *Whatever It Takes: Our plan to leave no one behind in this crisis*, will be published at 00.01 on Monday 29 June

2

The Government has announced that from 30 June, companies will no longer be able to apply for the job retention scheme or furlough additional employees.

Businesses will be able to start bringing staff back part-time from 1 July, while from August they will be expected to contribute to furloughed salaries.

From October, the Government will only pay 60% of wages and employees will pay 20% to make up 80% of the total salary.

3

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ban-on-evictions-extended-by-2-months-to-further-protect-renters>

4

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/jun/04/nhs-track-and-trace-system-not-expected-to-be-operating-fully-until-september-coronavirus>

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