

Alberta Greens

50 cents for non-members

Newsletter

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1994 Alberta Greens Annual General Meeting

The Alberta Greens Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday, April 9th at the Red Deer Lodge in Red Deer. The meeting will commence at 9am. Everyone is welcome to attend. Phone the office at 269-2384 for further information or to arrange car pooling from Calgary or Edmonton.

Rocky Mountain Ecosystem Coalition

Included with this newsletter is a newsletter from a new environmental group, the Rocky Mountain Ecosystem Coalition. The head of this group is Mike Sawyer, who was an Alberta Greens candidate in the 1993 Alberta general election. Although this group is relatively new it is making its presence felt, having recently forced the National Energy Board into considering an environmental impact assessment for all Natural Gas exports, based on a Supreme Court decision that forced an EIA of electricity exports from the proposed James Bay hydro projects.

We encourage you to support this dynamic new group as they fight for environmental sanity in Alberta's wilderness areas!

Green Wins Big in Santa Fe, New Mexico

Cris Moore, a Green, now represents about 12,000 people on the Santa Fe, NM City Council. He received 33%, or 1855 out of about 5500 votes --- 8% more than his nearest competitor.

Cris attributed his success to being the only candidate to attract both Hispanic and Anglo votes. Major themes in his campaign were Grass-Roots Democracy, Ecological Wisdom, and Community-Based Economics. Cris's campaign involved about 100 volunteers. Many, though not all, of the central organizers were Greens. Cris was part of a "clean sweep" towards a progressive city government, with Debbie Jaramillo, a Chicana activist, elected mayor.

European Green Manifesto

The last European elections in 1989 are best remembered for the spectacular impact of the Green vote on the national and European political agenda. Since then we have seen great changes in Europe. The collapse of the old regimes in Eastern Europe gave us new opportunities to unite our divided continent. Real cooperation and security should

have been built on the basis of a better understanding of our shared environmental and social problems. But those opportunities were squandered as Europe plunged into a deepening social, economic and ecological crisis.

In an increasingly interdependent world, new priorities and a new direction are needed. The Green vision for Europe is based on: economic security, not economic growth; environmental protection not environmental destruction; and cooperation not insularity and division. This has been the focus for the actions of Greens in the European parliament for the past decade. Green representation is currently the fourth largest in the European parliament. Green Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) have achieved much by promoting policies for ecological sustainability, democracy and human rights.

ECONOMIC SECURITY

Rising unemployment and increasing economic instability should have promoted a reassessment of the conventional economic approach. Instead, the signatories to the Maastricht treaty have gambled on economic growth through free market competition, regardless of the social and environmental costs.

The result will be a Western European economy which benefits international banks and multinational corporations, not individual citizens, communities or the environment. The abilities of member nations, and of regions and communities within them, to manage their economies in ways which are locally appropriate will be diminished still further. Rich regions may become more prosperous, but at great ecological cost. Poorer regions will become poorer and more marginalised.

In contrast, Green economics promotes security and cooperation, not competition and growth. European Greens seek an economic policy based on production for human need, not on exploitation of people and the environment for private profit. Greens demand an end to the present hyper-competitive global market. That market gives control of the economy to multinational corporations, permits poverty in the midst of plenty, and rewards those who destroy our shared environment.

"Protectionism" has become a dirty word. But "protecting" is what we do for those things we cherish: our families, homes, and communities. Both in Europe and world wide we need diverse self-

reliant local and regional economies which enable communities to meet their own needs locally. Strong local economies are less vulnerable to the fluctuations of global markets, and will guarantee basic economic security for all.

Greens will encourage localised, labour-intensive production making the best use of environmentally friendly and socially responsible technologies. Quality of life and environmental protection indicators will be integrated into measures of economic success.

Free trade and the free market can only increase the suffering of the poor, the environment and developing countries. The GATT agreement will encourage multinationals to set up where environmental protection is weakest, and where labour costs and health and safety standards are lowest. The ability of signatory countries to pursue policies for ecological sustainability and local self-reliance will be undermined.

Developing countries are exploited mercilessly by the rich North. They are forced to export food to pay debts whilst their people starve and their environment deteriorates. Greens seek cooperation with the peoples of the South to end their exploitation and marginalisation.

We advocate cancellation of debts, and aid tied to sustainable development, not to economic restructuring to meet the needs of the global market. We seek a renegotiation of trade agreements, to promote ecological sustainability, social justice and self-reliant local economies worldwide.

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

The Rio Summit provided new impetus for European leaders to implement initiatives to protect the environment. But those treaties remain sterile. The European Union continues to flout those agreements in its action programme. The new trade agreements will reduce hard-won environmental protection standards to the lowest common denominator. Increased trade produced by the European Single Market and GATT means more transportation of goods. That means more traffic, more road building, more pollution, more ill health and a reduced quality of life for all Europeans.

Greens demand an end to building yet more roads, to generate yet more traffic. We support efficient and subsidised public transport and railways. We seek local production for local needs in integrated communities, to reduce the need to transport goods and people at all.

Energy conservation makes more sense than generating energy to waste. Energy conservation reduces fuel bills, reduces pollution and creates jobs. The practicality of this policy is demonstrated by the support in the British parliament for the Green Party's Energy Conservation Bill. We encourage the development of renewable energy from wind, water and solar power. We will end the use of nuclear power, with its unacceptable risks now and for thousands of years from nuclear waste.

By 1990 there had appeared 160 European directives to improve the environment. Yet despite

considerable efforts by the Greens not a single one has been implemented by all member states. Virtually every member state is guilty of poor observation of environmental directives. Those in power have betrayed us. They have knelt before vested interests and advocates of the free market, not represented the true interests of people, their communities and the environment.

A GREEN EUROPE

The collapse of the communist regimes gave new opportunities to build a Europe of genuine cooperation and understanding. But the hopes which accompanied the fall of the Berlin wall have been dashed. Western European leaders have been concerned not to develop a stable and secure Europe, only to export their own perverted model of economic success.

There is no political architecture for Europe as a whole. The European Union perpetuates an artificial division of Europe which excludes the countries of the East, whose needs are greatest. The original intention of the founders of the European community was to bind together in a common interest the warring states which had twice taken the continent to the brink of destruction. That intention has a new relevance in post-Cold War Europe.

The political structure of the European Union is overcentralised and undemocratic. Decisions are made behind closed doors by the Commission and Councils of Ministers. Greens believe that decisions are best made by those most closely affected by them. Subsidiarity demands that no decision be made at a higher level which cannot be equally or more effectively made at a lower one. This means not only maximum autonomy for nation states within the European framework, but also devolution of decision-making to regions and communities within nations. Greens vigorously oppose the creation of a centralised European superstate.

Greens believe the basic democratic unit should be the region. Our objective is a European confederation of culturally diverse and economically self-reliant regions. Decision-making will be brought as close as possible to the people. The remaining European institutions will be thoroughly

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Meetings

For information on meeting dates, times and locations, call Madeleine Oldershaw in Calgary or Betty Paschen in Edmonton.

Comment

We welcome submissions for the Alberta Greens Newsletter. Please send them to the editor, care of our address above.

democratised. Powers will be transferred from the unelected Commission to the elected parliament. Those powers will be limited to those which must necessarily be exercised at the European level, to guarantee sustainable economic development, human rights and common security.

A binding force between the countries and regions of Europe is our shared environment. The Chernobyl disaster of 1986 showed that the iron curtain did not keep the effects of radiation out of Western Europe. A pan-European approach is needed to solve many major environmental problems. It is necessary if other social and economic problems are to be solved too.

Economic recession and the collapse of the old order have created uncertainty and released long-suppressed resentments and envies. The tribal and economic divisions within societies have been the basis for the rise of racist and nationalist movements. Many bewildered people have been seduced by these simplistic and authoritarian solutions. Born of fear and insecurity, these forces have the potential to devastate

the continent we share. The Greens are committed to turning them back.

THE EURO-GREEN VISION

We have a choice. Do we want a Europe of social, economic and ecological disintegration, or a Green Europe? The Green vision is one of a Europe based on equity, justice and cooperation, which can safeguard peace and remedy environmental damage, and which can provide ecological sustain-ability for our continent and economic security for its peoples. Green parties throughout Europe, both within and outside the current European Union, share that vision. Greens from Ireland to Azerbaijan, from Norway to Malta, are working to make the Green vision of Europe a reality.

Alberta Greens Membership Application

(Mail to: Box 133, Str. M, Calgary, T2P 2H6)

Name _____ Phone(H)_____ (W) _____

Address _____ City _____ Code _____

Interests & Skills _____

Areas I can Help-Elections _ Phoning _ Policy _ Speaking _ Fund Raising _

Membership (\$10) ... \$____.____ (includes newsletter)

T-Shirts (\$15) \$____.____

Donation \$____.____ (75% tax rebate on first \$150)

Total \$____.____