

London Newsletter

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Welcome

Welcome to the first WDM London Newsletter of 2010! The end of last year was very busy for many London group members, with a wide range of campaigning activities. We report on a few of these below.

We begin 2010 with our annual teach-in on the afternoon of 30th January, to get us set for a fantastic campaigning year ahead. This will be held at the WDM offices in the Oval, 1-5.30pm, and will include a session to improve our knowledge of commodity speculation for the exciting new WDM campaign to be launched later this year, and workshops to help us make the most of social networking tools for our campaigning. It will also be a great chance to meet other London members and activists, particularly as we start with a bring-and-share lunch. All welcome.

To register, please email kn_etheridge@yahoo.co.uk.

Also, 2010 is 40th anniversary of WDM, so look out for the events being organised to celebrate this landmark.

If you have anything you'd like to report on or publicise in our next newsletter (in about 3 months' time), please let us know.

Updates

A financial system for a just and sustainable world?

On 7 October, Vince Cable, MP for Twickenham, Canon Peter Challen Chair of the Christian Council for Monetary Justice and Tarek El Diwany, writer on Islamic finance spoke at a meeting organised by Richmond and Kingston WDM which considered ideas for a more just and sustainable financial system. While Peter Challen and Tarek El Diwany proposed that bank lending practices produce exploitation and inequality, Vince Cable's analysis was rooted in the way that banking is regulated. Around 100 people attended the meeting at the YMCA Surbiton, which was also addressed by WDM director, Deborah Doane.



Vince Cable speaking at the meeting

Yes Men Fix the World

Riverside Studios in Hammersmith screened the new Yes Men film, *Yes Men Fix the World*, in October. WDM were invited by the Yes Men team to give a talk to introduce the film, which provided an excellent opportunity to make people aware of WDM's current campaigns. We also ran a stall at the event, and a lot of people were keen to sign the 'clean up the banks' action cards.



WTO Tug-of-War, South Bank

On 28th November London groups staged a tug-of-war between farmers and corporations to highlight the power imbalance at the WTO. This was timed to coincide with the WTO meeting in Geneva, which it has sought to keep out of the spotlight. Members of many London groups were joined by WDM council members, who were meeting the same day.



WTO Tug-of-War

The Wave

Many London group members participated alongside tens of thousands of others in the Wave, a blue-themed march through central London on 6 December, calling for a deal ensuring climate justice at the United Nations conference in Copenhagen which was due to start the following week.



The Wave

Lobbying of local MPs

In the run-up to the Copenhagen conference, London groups also lobbied their local MPs, to put pressure on the government to work for a deal in the interests of climate justice. Five members of South East London WDM lobbied Jim Dowd, MP for Lewisham West and Penge, which was reported with a picture in the local paper, and also the local Labour Newsletter.



Lobbying Jim Dowd, MP

South West London group also organised a successful pre-Copenhagen lobby with Keith Hill, MP for Streatham at the end of November.

Copenhagen

A number of members from several London groups made the journey to Copenhagen to join the protests around the climate conference. This proved to be a rather mixed experience, particularly given the unsatisfactory outcome, and one group member was actually arrested, for nothing more than standing on the street waiting for another group member.



Climate march in Copenhagen

Vicki Lesley from south-west London group wrote in her blog:

“After an enjoyably civilised rail journey – including an overnight stopover in Cologne, and the unusual experience of the train actually driving on to the ferry for the short sea crossing – we arrived safely in Copenhagen on Friday evening. Despite the chill in the air – Copenhagen in December is definitely as cold as you’d expect! - it was a great feeling to finally be here, in spitting distance of the negotiations, after all those months of vigorous campaigning and anticipation back home.

...

‘The main event was, of course, the mass march to the Bella Centre, where delegates from 192 countries are gathered for the UNFCCC conference. The march was big – I’ve heard reports of up to 100,000 people, which I can well believe. Certainly, compared to The Wave in London the Saturday before, which was comparatively sedate, this felt like an event with enormous vibrancy, energy and passion.

“We were marching with the Climate Justice block with campaigners from around the global South, including the legendary La Via Campesina. With our own Climate Justice truck pumping out tunes and hosting inspiring speakers from around the world, we were a force to be reckoned with!”

‘The End of Poverty?’

On 12 December, the BFI screened the new feature length documentary ‘The End of Poverty?’, which explores why poverty still exists. The film was followed by a panel discussion, with prominent speakers including the film’s director, Philippe Diaz. A number of organisations ran stalls at the BFI to enable the film’s audience to learn about ways to challenge global poverty. Several members of London groups, along with a member of WDM staff ran a stall for WDM. The film was surprisingly well attended, for a Saturday so close to Christmas and many of the audience visited the stalls afterwards.

Festive Social

On a snowy evening a week or so before Christmas members of several London groups gathered upstairs at the Canal125 bar near Kings Cross for drinks, chips and Christmas cake. Some had recently returned from Copenhagen, and shared their stories of the events there.

Regional groups

East London

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Website: <http://www.wdm.org.uk/groups/contacts/eastlondon.htm>

North London

Contact: Steve Huxton [E shuxton@mac.com; T 07980 593819]

Website: <http://www.wdm.org.uk/northlondon/index.php>

Richmond and Kingston

Contact: Mary Holmes [E justicemh@talk21.com; T 020 8892 3271]

Website: <http://www.wdm.org.uk/richmondkingston/index.php>

Southeast London

Contact: John Strange [E selondonwdm@googlemail.com; T 020 8695 6976] **Website:** <http://selondonwdm.org.uk/>

Southwest London

Contact: David Johnstone [E dmjohnstone@gmail.com; T 07951 007429]

Website: <http://www.wdm.org.uk/southwestlondon/index.php>

London Groups website: <http://www.wdm.me.uk/groups/contacts/london.htm>