

## **Global Justice Cleveland Annual Report for 2017**

During the course of the year it has become apparent how challenging it is going to be to leave the EU and, while doing so, retain good trade links with Europe. It has also become clearer how very divisive the remain/leave issue is. As a result our campaigning is more important than ever as we try to raise issues around the subject of trade transparency.

The other memorable surprise was the improved performance of Labour in the snap general election. This result gives our organisation the chance to feed into what we hope will be a more enlightened Labour manifesto with a greater emphasis on issues of social justice.

Our group has remained the same size with a dozen active members. We have met 6 times during the year on approximately a two monthly basis and have taken action on a number of campaigns.

### **Climate Change**

Four of our members travelled to Newcastle to support a Climate Justice event. We joined a huge crowd to hear Nicholas Stern talk about the current situation with climate change, ten years after the publication of his report. He gave a fairly positive presentation despite the fact that the US had recently opted out of the world climate change agreement. He said that it is still possible to achieve the necessary changes within the timescales. It is disappointing to see how the issue of climate change has now slipped down the political agenda so we need to seek opportunities to draw attention to it.

### **Trade Campaign**

It is encouraging to note that several of the trade deals that we were taking action on are not now going to be ratified, in particular, TTIP. Campaigning groups are taking this as confirmation of our lobbying power but it is also worth noting that the change of US president also had an effect. Trump called TISA a 'horrible deal', so we have strange bed fellows now.

Our group wrote letters and signed action cards to MEPs about CETA. Disappointingly this was ratified by the EU parliament despite all of our lobbying. It was then presented to the UK parliament where it was accepted. In the past all of our lobbying on trade has been with MEPs but we will now have to get used to talking to our MPs about this subject in the future.

As a group we watched the Trade power point talk that National had sent us, in an effort to understand the issues better.

One of members spoke to a local Labour Party branch about the impact of Brexit on agriculture. No one took issue with the negative scenario that he described, although it seems that many of the audience had actually voted to leave.

One of our group took part in the GJN webinar in November. It was the first time this has been tried. She thought it was a worthwhile exercise and it gave an opportunity to link with other groups.

## **Food Sovereignty**

We supported the UN declaration of rights of small-scale producers. Small farmers feed about 70% of the world but they are experiencing increasing levels of violence and oppression. The campaign was focussed on persuading the UK representatives to support this declaration.

We did a stall at the June Farmers Market in Saltburn. It was a very cold and miserable day but we got about 150 action cards given out, 37 of which were signed on the day and we also had a number of conversations with shoppers. We tweeted about the event and Jude Kirton-Darling retweeted it which meant that it had over 2,000 views. We considered it a success considering the weather and how few of us there were. We once again shared a stall with the Allotment Association.

## **Social Events**

In addition to six meetings we enjoyed a summer walk which included a cliff top section and a visit to the old Grinkle ironstone mine. We also had a Christmas meal at the new Thai restaurant.

## **Additional Actions**

Two of us attended the Teesside Mayoral Question Time debate which was shown on regional BBC. We were asked to submit a question but unfortunately our question was not selected and there was no opportunity to get involved in the debate as the issues were all local ones.

Several of us attended a very good play called 'Made in India' which was performed in our local area. It explored issues around fertility and surrogacy in India.

One of us attended the Community Day at Mima in Middlesbrough. This art gallery is now run by the University. Every Thursday it runs a Community Day which provides a free meal to anyone who turns up. It has been suggested that this would be a good place to promote some of our campaigns in the future. It had been suggested that we might be able to use some of our photographs about the Monsanto Indian cotton problem but this was not feasible. The best time to do an action might be in the school holidays when parents attend with their children and they have more time to engage.

There was a local event to celebrate 100 years of the Labour Party in Saltburn. We had a small stall and put some of our campaigning materials out for people to see.