



Occupy Economics Working Group

Notes of Meeting on Monday 9th February 2018
at Friends House, 73-177 Euston Rd, Kings Cross, London NW1 2BJ



Present: John Courtneidge, Mary Fee (notes), Steve Burak. Apologies: Janos Abel, Schlacke
Notes from 2nd Feb: <http://occupylondon.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/OEWG-180202.pdf>

John reprised the history of Occupy and the Labour Party, eg the attempt of the right wing to destroy it by backing Tony Blair, who was instructed to ignore protests against going to war in Iraq. Historically, the Labour Party had veered away from co-operative models of organisation, and adopted capitalist models of running London Transport and the National Coal Board. Capitalism implies that resources can be owned, people can profit from their own work, and accumulation is encouraged, in other words it encourages greed.

Kelvin Hopkins, MP, was proposing an Early Day Motion in favour of Co-operative Socialism, which John announced at a well-attended meeting, and hey presto Kelvin was accused of sexual impropriety. If you use a petition and it reaches 100,000, it can trigger a debate in the House of Commons.

A new group, the **Communalists** are proposing a robust system of local face-to-face meetings, from where their decisions are taken to the next level up, the regional meeting. The Spirit Level has demonstrated that inequality is bad for everyone. Meanwhile, the stock-market is falling, possibly due to fear of rising interest rates, with computer algorithms contributing to the process. This follows Trump's massive drop in corporate and individual income tax from 35% to 20%, which has resulted in higher wages for workers.

John's main focus is **Co-operative Socialism** which has been adopted by the Economics Working Group – he is currently working, with Gianne Broughton a book called “Enough - How co-operative socialism can create a peaceful and fair world”

Renegade Inc's programme on 6th February had a strong message: **Digital is Killing Democracy:** “A big assumption we make when talking about the Internet and social media is that it is a power for good and enhances democracy. But what if social media actually narrows the debate and closes down free speech? After a string of recent global political upheavals, we ask whether it is time to re-think where we get our information from and who is pulling the strings? Host Ross Ashcroft travels to The Netherlands to meet political scientist Andre Krouwel, who thinks differently about the power and influence of social media”. Tax-evading corporates who run social media, in particular Facebook, whose main purpose is commercial - can scrape our photos, collate our data and influence public opinion towards a populist, right-wing agenda. Google silenced dissidents in China. The internet also hosts AirBnB, so students can't find affordable accommodation in Amsterdam. What's happening in Europe is that with breakaway groups, Europe has to re-think itself, they set policy in Brussels but try to keep accountability at the local level. Nobody knows who is on the EU parliament, and Andre's view is that the latter should be dissolved to connect up national parliaments in Europe, instead of governments using Europe as a scapegoat – resulting in a lack of control. Both amongst politicians and the general public are ignorant about what is happening and are angry at the loss of control of their politicians. Yessi Bello Perez from UKTech News - <https://www.uktech.news> expanded on the power of Facebook – it holds more data than any government. Tweeted responses were also reported during the programme:
<https://www.rt.com/shows/renegade-inc/417906-digital-democracy-social-media/>

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