

Seeking the Red in the Green – some provocations & questions

a. Common ownership?

The common ownership of land has been central to the political traditions in which the Mass Trespass positioned itself. Clearly common ownership can take many forms – from state nationalisation and large-scale collectivisation, through to small-scale community ownership.

- Is the Green movement still carrying forward the broad aspiration of the Diggers and Trespassers for land to be a Common Treasury?
- What do you understand by 'The Commons' and how is it related to the issue of common ownership?
- What is the relationship between the politics of 'common ownership' across the global north and the preservation of ancient wisdoms of land use and occupation, particularly across the global south?
- In what ways can we make sense and a reality of a global Common Treasury?

b. Dethroning capitalism?

It is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism. (Slavoj Zizek and/or Fredric Jameson)

Eco-Socialism or Eco-Barbarism? (Rosa Luxemburg [1919] modified by Julian Batsleer [2022])

The Mass Trespass set itself within the political traditions of socialism and communism and the ending of capitalism.

- Is there a feasible sustainable ecology which retains capitalism?
- What sense are we to make of the varying political orientations / choices of the De-growth -v- Green New Deal debates?
- Or indeed, are these no longer relevant or appropriate ways of framing the political strategies which exercise the land and climate justice movements?

c. Walking, Nature and Identity?

Feeling you belong to a place in no way necessarily entails that it belongs to you. And the latter sense of belonging poses the bigger political question. . . . Ask not 'do you belong to this landscape?' but 'does this landscape belong to you?'.

Those who approach the engagement with the countryside from the starting-point of the politics of landscape and belonging generate new perspectives on the issues of nature and walking. They also highlight some pervasive commonalities between the experience of exclusion from and identification within urban and rural landscapes.

- Are the contemporary politics and cultures of walking and belonging capable of being scaled up / generalised into a newer set of organising principles for a Green politics?
- How are the traditional 'access debates' of the outdoor movement being re-framed by the politics of identity and belonging in the 2020s.

- How are the cultural politics of landscape, countryside and nature to be taken forward within an over-arching land and climate justice agenda? What options and opportunities does this open up? What may be the trade-offs? What may be the necessary constraints?

d. What is the countryside for?

- How are the various roles of the countryside to be balanced – sustainable agriculture, biodiversity, tourism industry, democratic recreational access, desirable place to live and work for those with sufficiently high incomes, rewilding, carbon capture?
- What should be the appropriate balance between urban and rural living? Are urban ways of life inherently problematic?
- What are the imperatives of the climate emergency in relation to the ways in which a society inhabits and engages with the countryside? Can the historic ideological constructions of 'countryside' be reconfigured?

e. Building / Co-creating Common Cause?

The Mass Trespassers' day on Kinder Scout was an integral part of a wider process of building a socialist movement in the 1930s and developing a political constituency (in their case the working class)

- Is movement building and creating 'common cause' any longer an underlying drive for Green politics – or is it inherently a sort of networked localism?
- How are democratic accountabilities and governance to be operated?
- Lurking behind this is, perhaps, a wider question. The Mass Trespass drew on the state-oriented politics and traditions of socialist transformation. Are the traditions of political anarchism more relevant in the context of the climate emergency?

f. Direct Action?

Both the Diggers and the Mass Trespassers engaged in the politics of pre-figurative Direct Action.

- How is the practice of Direct Action currently perceived and undertaken across the Green movement – beyond the current headlines of Extinction Rebellion?
- I recently came across the writings of Andreas Malm. Why is his analysis of green Direct Action and practice widely rejected? It strikes me that a bit of Neo-Ludditism would not come amiss and actually help to keep the carbon in the ground.

