

The Nuclear Question and the Election

By Gordon James

When the excellent Eluned Morgan A.M. met a delegation from Pembrokeshire FoE at Bloomfield last year, she told us that one of the reasons she was strongly opposed to the Hinkley nuclear power station was that it would, if built, raise electricity costs for consumers and businesses in Wales. This good sense has been brushed aside in the Labour Party because of the influence of trade unions who want big construction jobs even though such investments would create more jobs in energy conservation, renewable energy and other low carbon technologies. As all parties standing in my constituency now support nuclear power I shall probably abstain at this election.

Hinkley

Britain's main opposition party leader Jeremy Corbyn said Sunday that a Labour government would seek to strengthen ties with China. In an exclusive interview with Xinhua, Corbyn also said a Labour government would continue to back plans for a China-funded nuclear power plant at Hinkley Point. "Labour supports nuclear power as an important part of a low carbon energy mix and would continue to support the construction of Hinkley C," he said. Construction is underway on the main part of the nuclear power project in Britain funded partly by Chinese investment. It will be the first new nuclear power plant in Britain for more than 20 years. As a flagship project of China-Britain cooperation, Hinkley Point C is co-invested by a Chinese consortium led by China General Nuclear Power Group (CGN) and French state-owned power giant EDF, with the Chinese side holding a one-third stake in the project.

ECNS 22nd May 2017

<http://www.ecns.cn/2017/05-22/258487.shtml>

Wylfa

First Minister Carwyn Jones will launch the Welsh Labour manifesto today and back the development of new nuclear station Wylfa Newydd on Anglesey. The manifesto will be unveiled in Delyn and follows speculation that Labour could lose all five of its North Wales seats.

Daily Post 22nd May 2017

<http://www.dailypost.co.uk/news/north-wales-news/carwyn-jones-flintshire-back-wylfa-13070305>

This summary below, from a recent edition of the Ecologist, provides good reasons why all political parties should turn their backs on nuclear power as soon as possible.

It has surely become clear to politicians that nuclear power is in a death spiral, terminally afflicted by:

- very high costs, at least double those of conventional generation, which can only be carried by governments, taxpayers and energy users at the expense of more deserving and productive investments;
- apparently unconstructable reactor designs hit by massive cost overruns and delays in France, Finland and the USA;

- the bankruptcy of the world's biggest nuclear power contractor, the Toshiba-owned Westinghouse - lined up to build a massive new nuclear complex at Moorside in Cumbria with three AP1000 reactors - mainly as a result of these cost overruns and delays on AP1000 projects in the USA;
- the parlous condition of the French parastatals EDF and Areva, which survive only thanks to the inexhaustible largesse of French taxpayers;
- investor reluctance to have anything to do with new nuclear power stations unless returns are guaranteed in cast iron contracts at huge expense to taxpayers;
- the continuing lack of a long term solution for nuclear waste storage / disposal;
- the inflexibility of nuclear power stations, which means that they overproduce when electricity is in surplus, while being unable to keep up with demand when power is desperately needed;
- the continuing precipitous decline in the cost of disruptive 'new energy' technologies such as solar, wind, including offshore wind, grid-scale batteries, power to gas, smart grid, set to continue and gather pace for many years to come.

http://www.theecologist.org/News/news_analysis/2988965/conservative_election_manifesto_signals_the_end_of_new_nuclear_power.html