

Note to Hilary Benn from Jim Adams

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This note discusses in order of significance, with long-term effects first

- Climate catastrophe.
- The world fossil fuel ‘energy plateau’.
- The world financial crisis.
- Political comments.

- The ‘climate catastrophe’ to which we are now heading is more significant than the fossil fuel ‘energy plateau’. I think that by 2050 – beyond a reasonable estimate of my lifetime – it will be generally acknowledged that this is the most severe test for humanity that the human race has ever experienced. I am a dissident on climate change projections – I think these effects will be more severe than given in the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report in my flat. By 2100 it is very feasible that surface oceanic temperatures will have increased by 6°C – and parts of Brazil and Central Africa by 10°C. As a scenario without Gulf Stream reversal we can expect
 - World population displacements.
 - A world food crisis.
 - Over the next 150 years mankind will see very large increases in sea levels.
 - Markedly after 2080, emissions of methyl clathrates from shallow oceans, and methane from permafrost areas, will lead to final temperature rises of ~ 35°C.

To quote a phrase from Lenin: ‘What is to be Done?’.

- Absorb carbon dioxide.
- Reforest tropical rainforests and forest the Sahara – actually, over human history, this means to reforest it.
- Introduce new varieties of trees that can grow quicker and are the most efficient at photosynthesis.
- Use ‘bio-char’ – agricultural and other biomass converted to charcoal and tilled into the soil – which keeps carbon sequestered for centuries, and absorbs nutrients which keeps them available for new crops.
- Reduce world fossil fuel consumption to as close to zero as possible.
- Introduce financial schemes to encourage the above.

- More significant than the financial crisis, and over a longer time span, are the approximately 6 – 10 year long ‘energy plateaux’, of oil, gas and coal, to be followed by fossil fuel ‘energy descents’. This is part of a more general world ‘resource depletion’ process.

I include our submission on the Government Renewable Energy consultation. As a coordinator of the Transition Brighton & Hove Energy Group, I was a co-author of this report.

My take on this includes:

- We see an ‘energy gap’.
 - Nuclear is a distraction. Its rationale is military rather than economic.
 - Coal is a disaster (Climate Change), and terrible example to other nations. No coal without secure 100% carbon capture and disposal.
 - The wind farm electricity generation ‘ramp up’ must be massive, and provides opportunities for British Industry.
 - Energy storage for wind generation is important – see suggestions in our report.
 - Projections for world growth, particularly for China and India, are not compatible with fossil fuel availability.
- We were discussing two impending world financial crises two years ago. The first – toxic assets – has already hit us. I am a very firm supporter of the way and the speed with which the government has responded. Things could have gone so wrong, and I am almost emotional about my belief in the correctness of what the government has been able to do. The other is US Treasury bills – the US may become effectively bankrupt next year. We have seen earlier this month in the case of Iceland, what can happen when a country’s liabilities exceed its financial assets.
 - On humanitarian grounds, British troops should withdraw from Afghanistan. The war is effectively lost. We make 12 or more bombing raids a day, so the US loses wars in which it engages to intimidate states economically and politically, and justify its colossal military expenditure, by ‘testing out’ weapons systems. What do you think would have been the situation in Northern Ireland if we had done the same there? It would no longer be part of the British state.
 - I appreciate what Gordon Brown is doing, much more than what I thought finally of Tony Blair. I welcome the dropping of 42 day detention without charge. I continue to rant about ID cards and the ‘Stasi State’, and increasing surveillance of the general population.