

# Some reflections on living wage campaigns

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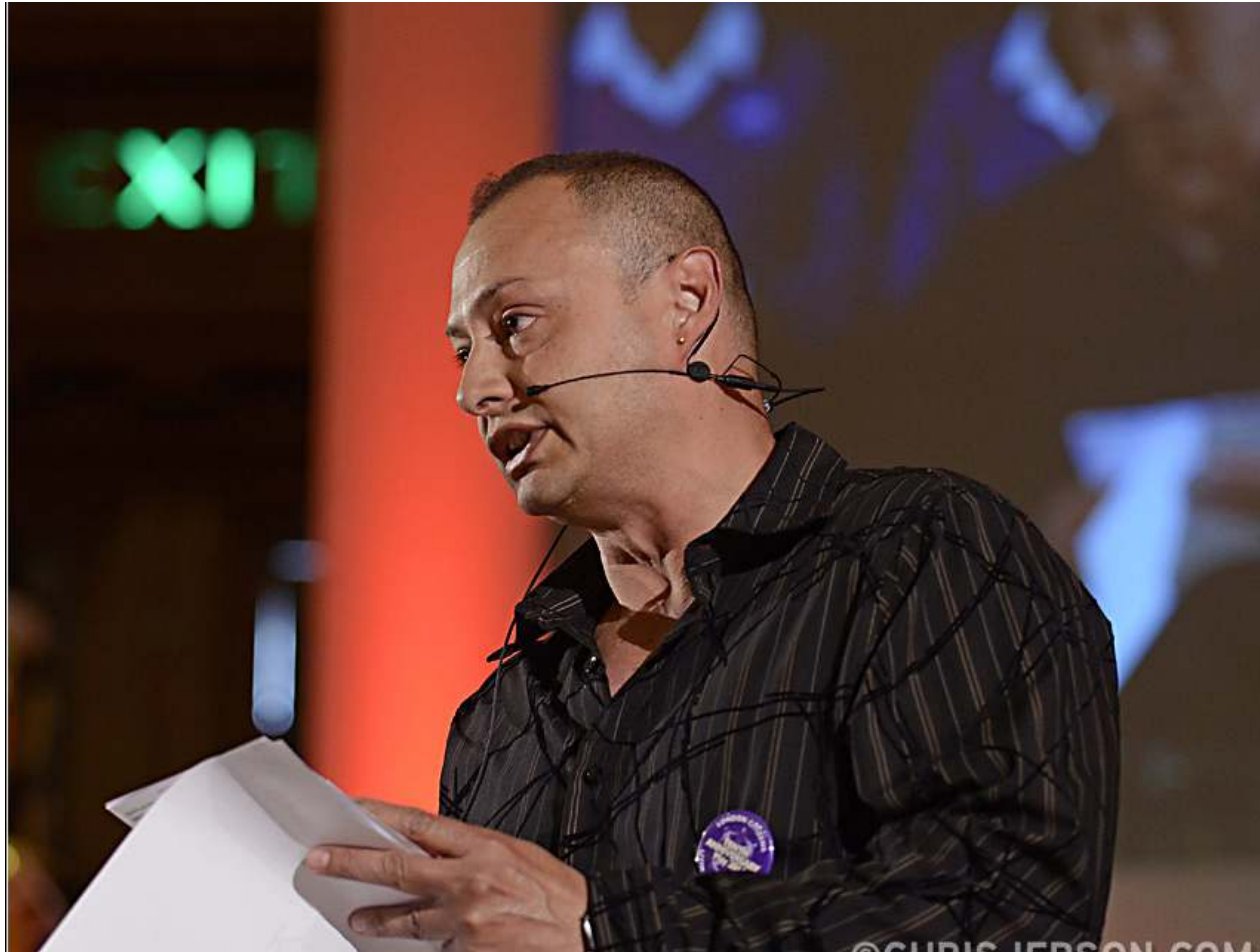


**LW campaign meeting September 2010**



**VC Patrick McGhee at TELCO Assembly  
2010**





**London Citizens Assembly marking the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Living Wage Campaign**

# Fair credit campaign: 'Canada day' action on the Money Shop



**Owned by Dollar Financial Corporation**

**Don't 'rollover' loans**

**Don't sell multiple loans to customers**

**Display information on free credit  
counselling services**

**Let's learn from Canada!**

**Sign this flyer to ask Dollar Financial Corporation to bring its Canadian  
rules to the UK**





**Calling on Newham Council to ban  
advertising from payday lenders 10/2/14**

# Background

- LW campaign launched in 2001 by Citizens UK
- Community Organisations (COs) comprised of 'chapters' e.g. The East London Communities Organisation (TELCO)
- Chapters comprised of Civil Society Organisations
- Affiliated to the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF)



# Background

- *COs organise CSOs:*
  - professional organisers paid by membership dues
  - provide access to training for leaders in member institutions
  - Co-ordinate delegates assemblies to establish agendas
  - Mount campaigns in pursuit of this agenda
- LW campaign: £210 million; 40,000 families lifted out of working poverty





# What is new about LW campaigns?

- The political main stream?
- A re-emergence of civic politics;
  - The turn to the community, rather than the workplace, as the primary site of mobilisation.
  - The success with which Citizens UK have met in organising faith groups
  - The appeal to the notion of the common good in justifying and elaborating the significance of campaigns

# The community-turn in organising

- Industrial/community organising
- Not simply strategic (Wills)
- The community rather than the workplace is the focal point for a range of issues pertaining to urban life
- ‘Zonal’ organising and the creation of community
- Community creating ‘methods’ of CO: the one-to-one; bearing witness etc.



# Mobilising faith groups in campaigns for social justice

- Faith groups in the LW campaign
- Re-entry of faith groups into the public sphere
- Campaign on issues of social justice
- Not co-opted by the state (e.g. post 2005 engagement of Muslim community)
- Tensions in alliance between secular and faith based groups. (Holgate)

# Organising for the common good

- Broad-based organising for common good
- Avoidance of ‘wedge issues’
- Robust yet respectful exchange between divergent groups
- A politics of the common good? (Sandel)
- Yes in respect of the rejection of what Kymilca calls the liberal ‘state-neutrality’ thesis



# Organising for the common good

- Yet needn't result in an essentialist account of human flourishing
- Hegel's account of 'Sittlichkeit' ethical life
- Offers 'thick' context for ethical deliberation while remaining consistent with the modern subject's demand that the authority of a reason/practice be demonstrated
- The good life open to historical mediation yet holds open the possibility of reconciliation with the socio-natural world (i.e. this world not ineluctably other/compromised/fallen).



# In summary:

- LW campaigns led by COs offer a new mode of politics enabling range of civic actors to engage in the issue of what constitutes the good life and what is needed to support it
- The public space opened up is more fundamental than the legal-constitutional order of the liberal state and represents, in my view, a more fruitful way of thinking about the role of civil society in mediating market-state relations.