



Economic Mythbusters course

Additional material for Quaker participants: Week 4 (for session Tues 4th June)

Each week QPSW will provide Quaker participants on the Mythbusters course with additional preparatory information to help link the course content to Quaker Concerns and to support independent study, reflection or action. Material will usually consist of extracts from Quaker writings or minutes that QPSW staff consider particularly pertinent to or which may help to provide a useful frame of reference for that week's Mythbusters topic and the general course content provided by nef.

This additional material should be treated as optional (but recommended!) reading. Participants may also have their own ideas about relevant Quaker writings. If so, feel free to use them. We would also encourage you to share your favourite writings with QPSW staff via Mythbusters@quaker.org.uk

Our suggested readings for Week 4 are about Quaker Concerns relating to jobs and employment, just one aspect of the topic of investment that will be discussed in this week's lecture.

We hope that these readings help you reflect on ways in which specific kinds of investment by government may help create a more just and sustainable economy.

Reading 1

Work and economic affairs

We are in a new situation which demands new thinking. Advanced technology is producing techniques which will affect every field of human activity and can displace many people who at present have little opportunity of alternative work. We need to be far more ambitious and resourceful in our thinking. Technology alleviates the repetitive and mundane nature of many people's jobs. We need to approach the situation positively as an opportunity to promote new business and industrial ventures, to back initiatives from workers and trade unions, exploring alternative uses of the intricate technology of armaments to find ways of promoting service jobs related to inner-city renewal, or to help with unmet social needs. The solution of our energy problems may also serve to provide new opportunities for employment. We must look for revolutionary approaches which can promote the sharing of the gains and benefits of new technology and a far greater awareness of the need to accept the concept of equity.

We have been asked to see those in the midst of our community who are suffering from unemployment as well as to look for new solutions. John Bellers reminded Friends that God would not send his angels to solve our problems; it is we who must seek the solutions with God's guidance, and we who must do the job.

Reading 2

Article from QPSW's *Earth & Economy* newsletter, May 2012

Friends call for government investment in jobs for a low-carbon economy.

In May, Friends across the UK joined up with local campaign groups to call for government investment in 'climate jobs'. Over two weeks, the Campaign against Climate Change's Climate Jobs Caravan held events in over 20 cities across the UK, bringing together local climate groups, trade unionists and other supporters including Quakers. As part of Campaign against Climate Change's One million climate jobs campaign, the Climate Jobs Caravan gathered support to call for large-scale government investment in services and infrastructure that would transform Britain in to a low-carbon economy, and provide jobs.

Recently, many activist groups have been calling on the government to tackle the economic and environmental crises by investing in jobs that build towards a low-carbon economy. Climate jobs, argue campaigners, would be an opportunity to tackle high unemployment, produce government revenue through taxes, stimulate the economy, and provide the labour force required for a large-scale national transition to a low-carbon economy. Such jobs would include those in renewable energy, energy efficiency, sustainable transport, industry and education.

The One Million Climate Jobs campaign is supported by four trade unions including Public and Commercial Services Union and the Transport Salaried Staff Association, as well as MPs including Green Party leader Caroline Lucas.

Along with many activists, those that took part in the Caravan criticise the government's lack of action on climate change, inequality and unemployment. Both politicians and grassroots activists have also argued that current austerity policies present a threat rather than a means to economic recovery. Groups calling for climate jobs form part of a wider activist movement calling for an alternative. Activists argue that instead of cuts, the right forms of government investment could lead to not just an economic recovery, but one based on greater equality and sustainability.

Climate Jobs Caravan events were hosted by Friends in Manchester, Liverpool, Westminster and Sheffield, and were attended and supported by Quakers across the country. Enid Pinch from Manchester and Warrington Area Meeting was involved in organising the Manchester event. "I support the Climate jobs caravan because it is a positive response to two serious problems, namely climate change and unemployment," says Enid. "It is also drawing different groups together. It was really good to meet trade unionists at the planning meetings".

To find out more visit www.climate-change-jobs.org/caravan and read the pamphlet *One Million Climate Jobs*.