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1. Editorial – The Climate Election

The UK general election is the chance to put the climate crisis centre stage and Labour has risen to the occasion. Launching Labour's election manifesto, Jeremy Corbyn promised to release a green industrial revolution creating a million green jobs, revive the UK's manufacturing heartlands and put the UK on track for a zero carbon energy system in the 2030s.

<https://labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Real-Change-Labour-Manifesto-2019.pdf>



Corbyn committed to directly involve trade unions in plans to invest billions in green energy, home insulation, electric vehicles and our heavy industries like steel and glass. An £11 billion windfall tax on oil and gas companies will form part of a wider £250 billion Green Transformation Fund.

Labour promises a new Clean Air Act, with a vehicle scrappage scheme and clean air zones.

And at the Green Party's Manifesto launch, the climate emergency also took centre stage, with pledges to borrow £100bn to cut emissions and protect against the impacts of global heating:

<https://bit.ly/33bKLbY>

The promise to crack down on oil and gas firms was compounded by a pledge revealed earlier this week, and included in the manifesto, to delist any company from the London Stock Exchange that 'fails to contribute to tackling the climate and environmental emergency.' <https://bit.ly/2KKh7UV>

Just 100 companies globally are responsible for the majority of carbon emissions.

Trade unions have insisted that progress towards 'net zero' carbon emissions by 2030 must be backed by strong protection for workers – including the creation of a million jobs in green industries. Labour says it will 'work in partnership with the workforce and their trade unions in every sector of our economy, so that they lead the transition in their industries, creating new, good-quality jobs.'

The Greener Jobs Alliance welcomes Labour's big three commitments to a 'just transition,' a Climate Apprenticeships programme and tackling the UK's air pollution through a new Clean Air Act, three of our longstanding campaign priorities.

2. Labour's 'Green Industrial Revolution'

The next Labour government intends to 'lead the world in fighting the climate crisis' with a plan to drive up living standards by transforming our economy into one low in carbon, rich in good jobs, radically fairer and more democratic. Unions are offered a unique opportunity to play an active part in these plans at all levels - from the workplace, in new regional development boards, in new sector councils, and at the highest levels with government and other stakeholders.

Labour's commitments:



Funding: A Green Industrial Revolution funded by a £250 billion Green Transformation Fund. Over five years the Fund will create one million jobs across industry, energy, transport, agriculture and our buildings. This will achieve 'the substantial majority of our emissions reductions by 2030.'

Consultation: In every region, new Regional Development Boards will drive up investment, made up of key local stakeholders - local chambers of commerce, trade unions and councillors.

Energy: A 'net-zero-carbon' energy system by the 2030s, with nearly 90% of electricity and 50% of heat from renewable and low-carbon sources by 2030 itself. Labour will trial and expand tidal energy and invest to reduce the costs of renewable and low-carbon hydrogen production.

Union rights and consultation: Support energy workers through the transition and 'guarantee them retraining and a new, unionised job on equivalent terms and conditions.' Labour will:

- Simplify the law around union recognition.
- Give union reps adequate time off for union duties.
- Consult with unions through direct representation on regional development and energy bodies

Steel and other heavy industries: A new *Foundation Industries Sector Council* will provide a clean and long-term future for our existing heavy industries like steel and glass. 'A thriving steel industry will be vital to the Green Industrial Revolution. Labour will support our steel through public procurement, building three new steel recycling plants and upgrading existing production sites.'

Car industry: Labour to ensure the UK's automotive sector isn't left behind by the electric revolution by investing in three new gigafactories and four metal reprocessing plants. By supporting UK-made electrical steel we will ensure robust support for an end to end UK supply chain.

Plastics: Tackle the global plastics crisis by investing in a new plastics remanufacturing industry.

Public house building: Within five years, building at an annual rate of at least 150,000 council and social homes, with 100,000 of these built by councils for social rent. The biggest council housebuilding programme in more than a generation.

Zero carbon homes: Tackle the climate crisis and cut energy bills by introducing a tough, new zero-carbon homes standard for all new homes, and upgrading millions of existing homes to make them more energy efficient.

Home insulation and fuel poverty: Upgrade almost all of the UK's 27 million homes to the highest energy-efficiency standards, reducing the average household energy bill by £417 per household per year by 2030, and eliminating fuel poverty.

Skills and Apprenticeships: A Green Industrial Revolution will create at least one million well-paid, unionised jobs in the UK. 'We will train people in the skills they need to access these jobs of the future.'

- A Climate Apprenticeship programme to enable employers to develop the skills needed to lead the world in clean technology.

Public ownership: To secure democratic control over nationally strategic infrastructure and provide collective stewardship for key natural resources.

Environment:

- A new Clean Air Act, with a vehicle scrappage scheme and clean air zones, complying with World Health Organisation limits for fine particles and nitrous oxides.
- An extra £5.6 billion to improve the standard of flood defences and respond to the increased risk of flooding, prioritising areas at risk in North West England, Yorkshire and the East Midlands, neglected by the Conservatives.
- A maximum workplace temperature to protect workers and require employers to take counteracting measures.

A copy of the manifesto is available here:

<https://labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Real-Change-Labour-Manifesto-2019.pdf>

3. The Greens' manifesto - key points:



A Green New Deal: founded on investment and support for expanding new technologies to create new jobs to make a positive impact on both society and the planet.

Ending workplace exploitation: Every workplace, including in the gig economy, should be a place of safety where every worker's rights are upheld.

Tackling air pollution: one of our biggest health crises, causing an estimated 40,000 premature deaths each year in the UK. We will tackle this by publishing a new Clean Air Act fit for the 21st century.

Strengthening international agreements on climate change: Britain led the Industrial Revolution two hundred years ago, it falls to us now to lead the Green Response. We should lead the world in implementing the Paris Climate Agreement, made in 2015 to keep global temperature rises below 2 degrees.

Rapidly accelerate renewable energy: Driving forward the renewable energy revolution presents incredible opportunities to secure our power supplies, localise energy production and create high-quality jobs.

Reducing energy consumption: Everyone deserves to live in a warm home, and to have affordable energy bills. To help achieve this we will roll out a nationwide retrofit insulation programme.

Banning fracking: With so much potential for clean renewable energy to be captured from the sun, wind and our coastline, there is just no reason to be fracking for shale gas.

The manifesto takes strong progressive positions on much more than climate crisis, such as Standing up for migrants and refugees, free movement and migrants rights.

4. Tories 'systematically weakened' green policies

Reports from leading scientists and government advisers reveal <https://bit.ly/2OyaF4u> that the Conservative government will miss targets to cut greenhouse gas emissions. One adviser said: 'The current government has systematically weakened the capacity of this country to manage its environment. It's been done by stealth.'

Not only has the government cut the budgets of the Environment Agency and Natural England, and systematically reduced their independence, but 'green' policy failures include:

- The lack serious plan to decarbonise the UK's domestic heating systems
- Missing a tree planting target of 20,000 hectares a year.
- Failing to tackle illegal levels of air pollution, which the latest government data shows covers 83% of the country.
- Missing targets for renewable energy such as onshore wind and solar.
- Boosting road building at the expense of electric vehicle investment, so carbon emissions from road transport are rising.
- Cutting home insulation programmes.

5. Corporates busting Paris climate agreement

Of course, it's not just politicians who are guilty of greenwashing. A recent Carbon Tracker Report reveals that none of the large oil companies are in line with the 2015 Paris agreement.

<https://bit.ly/34aS70D>

These companies, financed by the top three Asset Managers who oversee \$300 billion of fossil fuel investments (BlackRock, Vanguard and State Street), own assets worth more than China's entire economy. They have continued to grow billion-dollar stakes in some of the most carbon-intensive companies since the Paris agreement in 2015, financial data shows.

The two largest asset managers, BlackRock and Vanguard, have also routinely opposed motions at fossil fuel companies' annual meetings that would have forced directors to take more action on climate change:

<https://bit.ly/35qzYfr>

This view is reinforced by Mark Carney, the governor of the Bank of England, who has warned that the global financial system is backing carbon-producing projects that will raise the temperature of the planet by over 4C – more than double the pledge to limit increases to well below 2C contained in the Paris Agreement.

6. Make climate crisis a negotiating issue

The failure of employers to address climate change doesn't stop with the large fossil fuel companies.

From 1 April 2019, quoted companies must report on their global energy use and large businesses must disclose their UK annual energy use and greenhouse gas emissions. This is required by the Companies (Directors' Report) and Limited Liability Partnerships (Energy and Carbon Report) Regulations 2018.

<https://bit.ly/2OC4X1d>

The government encourages all other companies to report similarly, although this remains voluntary. The problem is that even most of those companies that do report have failed to produce carbon plans in line with UK carbon targets. The GJA is supporting the call for unions to make this a negotiating issue. At the November GJA Steering group meeting we agreed to produce guidance for reps on how to factor the climate and environmental issues into workplace negotiations. Work has started with the UCU and other union branches and we will be producing a new online course in the new year.

7. Air Pollution needs a workplace solution

TUCAN (The Trade Union Clean Air Network) has issued its first newsletter <https://bit.ly/2XEql4x>

The lack of attention paid to the occupational hazards from air pollution faced by workers is a disgrace and TUCAN has been

trying to address this. Recently we held a meeting with representatives from Brent Council where they expressed a willingness to act on this. TUCAN will be following this up and contacting other local authorities and trades councils in an attempt to get them to raise their game.

TUCAN members attended the WHO International Clean Air Summit hosted by the London Mayor on October 23rd. Unfortunately, we were not allowed to distribute the newsletter either inside or outside the event.

TUCAN is broadly supportive of the Greater London Authority's (GLA) efforts to address air pollution. But we will continue to press for far more to be done to highlight the failure of employers, local authorities and governments to address the hazards faced by indoor and outdoor workers and the general public. The fact that none of the speakers at the WHO conference referred to occupational health risks reinforces the points we make in the newsletter. Following a TUCAN



question, the WHO director for Public Health, Dr Maria Neira, told us to say she agreed with the point we were making.



Mick Holder and Graham Petersen

On a more positive note the impact of the introduction of the London Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) reveals the importance of a regulatory approach compared to a voluntary one <https://bit.ly/34cUEXZ> Research from Kings College London showing air pollution triggers hundreds more heart attacks and strokes only serves to illustrate how serious the risk is. <https://bbc.in/2Obaltb>

8. 'Teach the future'



Students Organising for Sustainability (SOS) and the UK Students Climate Network (UKSCN) launched a youth-led campaign to urgently repurpose the entire education system around the climate emergency and ecological crisis. The six campaign demands can be found here <https://www.teachthefuture.uk/>

This campaign is urgently needed particularly in the light of the latest UNESCO report *Education for Sustainable Development beyond 2019*. This reveals the lack of engagement by governments. The failure of the UK education system to address this is something that the annual UCU 'Cradle to Grave' conference will focus on in early 2020. <https://bit.ly/37umuRR>



9. 'Climate strike' named word of the year

The Collins Dictionary has made this announcement in the lead up to the next global strike taking place on November 29th. Details of events can be found here <https://ukscn.org/>

The Sept 20th strike saw hundreds of thousands take to the streets in the UK. There were a number of workplace actions in line with the motion passed at the TUC but unions need to step up their efforts to mobilise members. This won't happen without a concerted campaign to raise awareness in the workplace and the appointment of Green Reps. Some unions like UCU are starting to address this through their training programmes but far more must be done before the trade union movement can deliver the solidarity action needed..



10. 2019 UN climate summit moved to Madrid

The Chilean trade unions have been on strike against the neo-liberal policies and the state of emergency declared by their government. This led to the unprecedented cancellation of the UN's 25th annual climate change conference (COP25) due to take place in Santiago, and now relocated to Madrid in December 2019. The Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA) commented:



'The trade unionism of the Americas will not validate with its presence a repressive government, which aims to demonstrate a normal situation when thousands of people are being repressed, detained and killed in the streets of Santiago and other cities in Chile.'

The GJA will be represented on the trade union delegation now going to Madrid. A detailed report will be sent out in a special pre-Xmas circular to our readers.

During the *Climate Action Summit* in New York on September 23, 43 countries committed to setting up national plans for Just Transition. This is another important step to push our demands higher on the Climate agenda of governments. The commitment by the governments can be found on this site: <https://bit.ly/2QGmkRb>

The ITUC press release is here: <https://bit.ly/2D5w3J1>

11. 2020 UN climate summit, Glasgow: Union call

UK trade unions are beginning to organise for the UN's 26th annual climate change conference (COP26) in Glasgow. A COP26 Coalition is coordinating a wide group of trade union, youth and environmental groups as they plan strategically for the UN summit. Unions have a crucial part to play in this coalition, to turn the 2015 Paris Agreement from words into action.

The Scottish TUC is currently exploring suitable union venues available during the conference. Union priorities include:

- Focussing on the bargaining agenda, and how to drive forward workplace climate emergency action.
- Importance of workplace environmental reps.
- Exploring the best way to bring in wide number of unions and trades councils and other union campaigns who will want to work together on COP.

The Paris Agreement acknowledged the need to take into account the imperatives of a just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs. To make the nice words of the Paris Agreement requires, among other things, the rapid and just transformation of energy systems, replacing fossil fuels with energy from renewable sources. A just transition will only happen if the workers, trade unions and communities affected to turn policy into reality.

Contact the COP26 trade union coordination group at: cop26coalitionuk@riseup.net



12. Upcoming events

Central London BUIRA Seminar:

A Just Transition? trade unions and climate change



Dr Béla Galgóczi
(European Trade Union Institute)
Two faces of a Just Transition: challenges for trade unions in addressing climate change'



Alana Dave
(International Transport Federation)
Towards a social model of public transport – ITF global strategy and policy

Friday 29 November 2019, 10.30am – 12.30pm,
(followed by buffet lunch)

University of Westminster,
35 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5LS
(opposite Madame Tussauds and nearly opposite Baker Street tube)
Room tbc

For further details and to reserve a place, contact Linda Clarke (clarkel@wmin.ac.uk)

This regular monthly seminar is focused on the urgent question of climate change and how this is and can be addressed by trade unions.

For those interested in this subject don't forget to check out the new GJA Just transition on line course <http://www.greenerjobsalliance.co.uk/courses/>

... and finally

The Greener Jobs Alliance AGM

Please make a note in your diary for

Monday, January 27th from 11-1.30
(lunch provided)

UCU Head Office,
Carlow St,
London NW1 7LH.

Speakers to be confirmed depending on the election result.

Contact Graham at [gjacomsg@gmail.com](mailto:gjacoms@gmail.com) to book a place.

Supporting the Greener Jobs Alliance

The GJA is a loose coalition of organisations involved in climate change work.

We wish to make it clear that the views expressed in our publications and activities do not necessarily reflect the position of all the organisations whom we work with.

We will always seek to make that clear by listing the organisations that have specifically signed up to a particular initiative.