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1. Editorial – Building a UK climate movement



We have 10 months to go until the United Nation's 26th international climate conference opens in Glasgow on 9th November 2020, and an awful lot to do in that time. But, taking inspiration from the half million people on the streets of Madrid in December and the fantastic People's Summit and other activities organised there, we know that together we can do it!

The Scottish TUC is playing a leading role in the new civil society Coalition. As Francis Stuart writes in this newsletter, 'When COP 26 comes to Glasgow, trade unions and civil society groups will need to exert real pressure from below to change the narrative and the power dynamics at play.' The Scottish TUC (STUC) will be working with partners across the UK and internationally, including the TUC, the ITUC, the Greener jobs Alliance and Trade Unions for Energy Democracy to ensure that COP is used as an opportunity to leverage Government and build the trade union movements.

Events already planned include a People's Summit, a meeting space for civil society events, and a mass civil society rally and march. Meanwhile, the Wales TUC is launching a new network of green reps, working with the Welsh Government to ensure that workers' voices are central to the transition to a net-zero economy. It's all to play for if we get ourselves organised.

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

Explainer: 'COP26' is shorthand for the United Nations' 26th Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UN's Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). 'Parties' is UN speak for Governments.

COP26 Coalition Structure

The COP26 Coalition will have a Coordinating Committee acting as the decision making body, composed of Scotland-based and UK-level Coordinating Groups which themselves are composed of nominated representatives from trade unions, NGOs, faith groups, direct action groups, students and youth, regional and local parties, government and international climate justice networks. The Coordinating Committee will meet face-to-face in both London and Scotland as well as communicate via conference call and email. Any Coalition staff will be responsible to the Coordinating Committee.



2. Greener Jobs Alliance AGM to debate climate justice

The Greener Jobs Alliance AGM takes place on,

Monday 24 February from 11.00 am - 2.00 pm
UCU Head Office
London

It will focus on mobilising for COP26 and a debate on 'Climate justice: from the workplace to global challenges'.

It is an open meeting, so all welcome.

Registration information can be found here:
<http://www.greenerjobsalliance.co.uk/annual-general-meeting/>

3. UN climate talks November 2020. This year must be different!

Francis Stuart writes:

Trade unions and civil society partners attending the UN's 25th international climate change talks in Madrid (December 2019) were hoping to see governments agree ambitious climate justice policies that responded to the climate emergency threatening our lives, jobs, livelihoods, communities and dignity. What we got was the polar opposite. This coming December, the UN meets in Glasgow. It's a unique opportunity for unions to use our labour power to make a real difference this time round.

Civil society was thrown out – quite literally after a protest – while Governments dismantled the 2015 Paris Agreement to limit global warming. It seems the rich Northern countries are much more interested in trading their emissions for money than actually reducing them. There is no respect for the science, no respect for human rights, no social justice, no ambition and no commitments to action.

Given the polarisation of politics around the world, I have to admit to having limited faith in a multilateral consensus process involving right-wing Governments like the USA, Australia and Brazil.

Rather, it may be that change will have to come from below. Policies at city, regional and national level could all help tackle the climate emergency – universal home insulation and green heating schemes, free and improved public transport, and a green industrial

revolution led through public ownership. And they also address the scars of poverty, inequality and alienation in many of our communities.

But such policies will not magically appear. Power has never conceded anything without a demand. Extinction Rebellion may have displayed an absence of class analysis but they, along with the youth climate strikers, have shown that disruption and sacrifice can change the narrative and push those in power into more ambitious positions.

As COP 26 comes to Glasgow in 2020, trade unions and civil society groups will need to exert real pressure from below to change the narrative and the power dynamics at play.

The Scottish TUC (STUC) will be working with partners across the UK and internationally, including the TUC, the ITUC, the Greener jobs Alliance and Trade Unions for Energy Democracy to ensure that COP is used as an opportunity to leverage Government and build the trade union movements.

Plans are afoot for a Trade Union Assembly in Glasgow. There is likely to be a real focus on organising agenda around climate change which enables workers to use their labour power to exert real influence. Public ownership of the energy is essential to making progress on climate breakdown. We will also be participating in the civil society coalition now beginning to mobilise.

Get involved, get active!

Francis Stuart, Policy Officer at the Scottish TUC, represented the STUC at the Madrid climate conference fstuart@stuc.org.uk



4. Government must present a 'climate change budget' in March



West Cumbria Coal Mine

Just as the Government approves plans for a new deep coal mine, its independent advisers tell it to deliver a 'climate change budget' in March. Four demands, including ending the sale of petrol and diesel cars and incentives to remove gas boilers, are set out in a letter to Prime Minister Johnson from the independent Committee on Climate Change: <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/letter-ccc-writes-to-the-new-prime-minister/>

- Support for industry. New incentives to pay for emissions reductions from heavy industry and encourage investment in low carbon industrial processes. Support new infrastructure to capture and store carbon emissions from industry.
- Earlier phase-out of petrol and diesel cars, ideally by 2030.
- Offshore wind. Delivering on the Tories manifesto commitment for 40GW of offshore wind by 2030.
- Gas fired boilers. An ambitious and properly funded strategy for entirely removing fossil fuels from the UK's building stock, with action beginning immediately to incentive replacing gas fired boilers.

However, fracking, flying and coal mining seem to be the Government's policies of choice...

Cutting aviation's only green tax

The Government intends to cut the £13 green tax levied on each domestic flight to prevent the collapse of Flybe. The domestic airline apparently owes the Treasury tens of millions in unpaid tax. Air Passenger Duty (APD) raised over £3.7 billion in 2018-2019. Higher rates apply to long haul flights. It was first levied in 1994 to tax the pollution caused by aviation.

Fracking comeback?

Anti-fracking campaigners in Brokham, Surrey, have warned that the [fracking moratorium announced by the UK government](#) does not apply to acid fracking, a process that involves injecting acid into the earth to dissolve and fracture rock. More than 500 academics, politicians and campaigners have signed an [open letter initiated by Brockham Oil Watch](#) calling on the government to ban the practice over fears companies may use it to get around the moratorium.

New deep coal mine

Plans for the UK's first deep coal mine in decades will go ahead after the Government decided not to intervene. West Cumbria Mining said the new mine - near the site of the former Haig Colliery in Whitehaven which shut in 1986 - would create 500 jobs.

But the new mine is 'incompatible with UK climate ambitions,' and by providing more cheap coal, will hold back the development of low carbon steel making and undermine the long term future of the steel industry.

The mine would produce 8.4m tonnes of CO2 per year, equivalent to the emissions from more than 1 million households.

The UK has set a target to reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, and has committed to switch to lower carbon steel production, announcing a clean steel fund in August 2019. But the Green Alliance report says the proposed mine, expected to begin production in two years, will jeopardise these ambitions.

Recommendations made in the report include using less steel, using recycled steel, improving the efficiency of steel production with conventional blast furnaces, and producing steel with new processes such as renewable energy.

More information:

<https://bit.ly/3anPrAc>

<https://bbc.in/37aSw4y>

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.

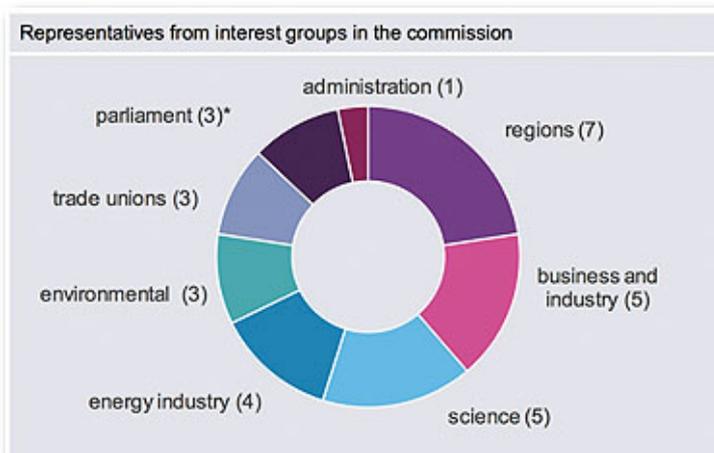
5. How Germany plans for a just transition

The German government is supporting a 'just transition' plan for vulnerable coal-mining communities, with 40 billion euros available for investment in sustainable, high-quality jobs, as Germany phases out the use of coal.



The structural development plan implements all the recommendations of the independent Commission on Growth, Structural Change and Employment. The main idea is that affected regions should not bear the full brunt of change alone. So, it's 'not only a shut-down plan, but offers credible modernisation and growth, and a just transition for workers.'

The independent, 31-member Commission includes 3 trade union reps, 3 environmental reps, scientists, business, industry and MP membership. Its proposals for new jobs-rich investment include infrastructure, local public transport, broadband and environmental



and landscape conservation.

What the world's fourth largest economy, Germany, is doing today, trade unions and Labour could well campaign for tomorrow. Because in at least two ways, its plans add credibility to Labour policy:

- Long-term, planned investment in sustainable jobs and infrastructure for communities suffering industrial decline from the closure of coal mines, power stations and heavy industries.

- Independent regional advisory bodies to drive up investment, made up of key local stakeholders - local chambers of commerce, trade unions and councillors.

Commenting on the report, Martin Mayer, Unite representative on the Yorkshire & The Humber TUC Executive, said the 'initiative from Germany is something we desperately need here. Our regional low carbon strategy should think about developing a set of demands for similar levels of public investment.'

- **German Plan:** <https://bit.ly/2R7VOjo>
- **Commission Report:** <https://bit.ly/2TDbNYw>

6. News in brief



Climate Learning Week, 10-14 February

Two unions - the University and College Union (UCU) and the National Education Union (NEU) - alongside Students Organising for Sustainability (SOS-UK) are backing the call for schools, colleges and universities across the UK to organise themed learning weeks on climate change, power and society. The Times Education Supplement (TES) and Capital City College Group are also sponsoring the event.

Resources can be found here: <https://bit.ly/36cEEW5>

Green New Deal Guide for branch negotiators

The GJA is working with the UCU to produce a Green New Deal Guide for branch negotiators. It will provide advice on how climate issues can be incorporated in local negotiations with the employer. The content will be discussed on Feb 8th at the 'From Cradle to Grave' conference on the theme 'Climate change, power and society'. The event will be held at the TUC in London.

<https://www.ucu.org.uk/cradletograve2020>

GJA will also be doing a presentation on climate proofing agreements at the event organised by UNITE in Manchester on Thursday 30 January.

<https://bit.ly/2uglu3e>

The next Climate Strike

Called for Tuesday 14 Feb.

Further details <https://ukscn.org/>



Green New Deal for London

Sadiq Khan, the Mayor of London, has promised a Green New Deal to make London carbon neutral by 2030. The GJA has been pressing the Greater London Authority to increase its level of climate ambition for many years. We are working with the TUC London, Eastern and South Eastern Region (LESE) to ensure there is a worker voice in the development of any new strategies. <https://bit.ly/2R88kzp>

Divestment rolls on

Over half of UK universities have signed up to divest from fossil fuels in what campaigners say is a significant blow to the “social licence” of big oil. Seventy eight of the UK’s 154 public universities have joined the divestment campaign, either divesting or pledging to divest hundreds of millions from the fossil fuel industry. <https://bit.ly/2TD9PHC>

The investment decisions of large organisations have been put under the spotlight by Mark Carney, now the UN special envoy on climate action and finance. Speaking to the Today programme, he re-iterated his warning that unless firms woke up to what he called the climate crisis, many of their assets would become worthless.

“If we were to burn all those oil and gas [reserves], there’s no way we would meet carbon budget,” he said. “Up to 80% of coal assets will be stranded, [and] up to half of developed oil reserves.”

“A question for every company, every financial institution, every asset manager, pension fund or insurer: what’s your plan? Four to five years ago, only leading institutions had begun to think about these issues and could report on them. Now \$120tn worth of balance sheets of banks and asset managers are wanting this disclosure [of investments in fossil fuels]. But it’s not moving fast enough.”

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-50868717>