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### 1. Editorial: Budget. Where are the Green Jobs?

Speaking at the annual conference of the Association of British Insurers in February, the Chief Executive of the Environment Agency Sir James Bevan said, *“What they teach you at Harvard Business School is that the main thing is to make sure the main thing really is the main thing. There is only one main thing: the climate emergency.”*

Although this speech is on the government web site, no one sent that memo to the Chancellor. For him, the climate emergency is not the framework which determines everything else – the main thing – but just one of many things on a list that can be addressed with a gesture here and limited investment there. Moreover, even these gestures are limited in scale and form to a framework determined by the immediate needs and pressures of business – his main thing. This means that the views and actions of this government clash with reality.

This budget - that overall seeks to subsidise business investment with no environmental transition guidelines or criteria, that dumps the costs of the COVID emergency firmly downwards with a public sector pay freeze and frozen tax thresholds, and postpones a much trumpeted Corporation tax increase far enough into the future for it to quietly disappear in the fullness of time - provides no strategy at all for green transition other than a tweak to the guidelines for the Bank of England to take the environment into account as one of its investment criteria – one thing on a list, not the main thing – and a green investment bank with an initial capitalisation of £12 billion, less than a third of the amount they propose to spend on extending the road network.

The fact is that thousands of workers are losing their jobs. The TUC has presented a plan for investment

that would create 1.2 million jobs in the next two years and presented it to the government on a plate. Green New Deal have produced a similar plan. Friends of the Earth have just produced a report pointing out that youth unemployment could be halved by a £10 billion investment in green apprenticeships. All of this isn't just preferable, it's *necessary* if we are to move fast enough to limit the damage of climate breakdown. Failure to take it up ensures short term poverty for hundreds of thousands and helps make Keynes's prophecy - "in the long run we're all dead" all too true. Its later than they think.

We need a huge campaign on green jobs this year.

The FOE Report can be seen here. [Breaking News – Greener Jobs Alliance](#) It provides useful projections on the long term economic scarring that hits an individual, and an area, after one year of unemployment. It provides persuasive and useful analysis for green investment, tackling unemployment, creating centres of excellence in further education, life long learning and the co-benefits that we all gain from green jobs. It can provide useful campaigning material for local activity and for local and metro mayoral elections as the scarring impact is broken down into metro mayor/ local authority areas at the end.

Green New Deal jobs actions in March and April can be seen [here](#).



Deals' by pointing out that 'Pizza delivery and steel mill work are not green jobs, but we need food and steel. To imply that a job has to be green is to insult all the people who deliver pizzas and work in steel'. The Greener Jobs Alliance was named because we took the view that all jobs can be made greener. Steel jobs are greener jobs if the sector is repurposed to support a Green New Deal. Steel will be vital for an expansion of the wind energy sector. In that sense steel worker jobs are as much a green or climate job as wind turbine installers. Equally pizza delivery jobs can be made greener by changing vehicle types.

Restricting climate jobs to those that deal purely with reducing carbon emissions is too rigid an approach. For example, a fire fighter can be classified as a green / climate occupation because they both mitigate emissions by fighting fires, and are adaptive because they deal with the consequences of climate change like flooding.

**Net-Zero v Zero Carbon** – Fight the Fire also sparks another much-needed debate. The book highlights the concerns about the limitations of policies that build-in polluting practices like carbon trading schemes. It says there 'is a danger in the climate movement calling for net-zero' and 'if activists ask a government or an employer to promise net-zero by 2030 they are deceiving themselves'. Now while it is true that many net-zero policies have clear limitations it doesn't mean we shouldn't call for them as a transitional measure. An obvious example is carbon offset schemes that allow an employer to pay into a fund that will reduce emissions as compensation for their own emissions. Where these are part of an employer's carbon management policy, unions need to evaluate the details as some schemes are much better than others.

In these discussions if unions adopted a position of only calling for zero carbon policies it would mean there could be no meaningful discussion of short-term reduction targets. **Demands** and **Timescales** are crucial to maintain a balance between both what is achievable and still provide a radical policy shift. This is a reason why many people believe that the Extinction Rebellion demand for **net-zero** by **2025** is not realistic. Equally to reject net-zero as a negotiating demand will limit a unions ability to respond to an employer dealing with Scope 3 emissions that they are responsible for but that come from outside their immediate control.

Jonathan points out that low carbon emission zones in city centres are an example of carbon off-setting. Despite their limitations most campaigners continue to advocate them as a legitimate transitional measure prior to electrification of all vehicles and a focus on public transport. Although zero-carbon remains an overall objective it can't be used as the basis for immediate discussions needed to agree interim targets at workplace, sector, regional and national levels for the next decade.

This book is a much-needed contribution on climate strategy to be mainstreamed into the progressive and trade union movement. It is essential reading and needed now more than ever.

**Fight the Fire | The Ecologist** The Ecologist has published Fight the Fire for free so that it is accessible to all. But if you can help with the £1,000 costs of publishing and promoting this climate guide please do donate.

★ *This review is written by Graham Petersen and doesn't reflect the views of all GJA supporters. We would welcome comments and a debate about some of the crucial issues raised by Jonathan's book.*



## 5. Challenging bad air inside and outside the workplace

The Trade Union Clean Air Network (TUCAN) held a conference in February to plan further support for workers exposed to high levels of pollution.



[Hazards Campaign Thursday Talk - Challenging Bad air inside and outside the workplace - YouTube](#)

As a result a number of workplaces have been identified to conduct air monitoring exercises. This work will begin in the spring and will build recent studies showing the extent of the problem in some sectors.

[Taxi drivers' exposure to black carbon and nitrogen dioxide in electric and diesel vehicles: A case study in London - ScienceDirect](#)

Further information about standards we expect employers to reach can be found on the TUCAN site here, including this report - **Setting standards for employers to meet isn't an unreachable burden – London's low emission zone** – which starts,

*"In an era when de-regulation and a laissez-faire attitude to health and safety laws and standards has been predominant there has been a success story that flies in the face of this. It is doubly important as we endure unhealthy air quality and power towards the crisis that is climate change as it is an example of how setting a standard for industry and employers to achieve can be met if the requirement to achieve it is set in stone rather than voluntary."*

Read on at [TUCAN – Greener Jobs Alliance](#)



Photo: [harry\\_nl www.flickr.com/photos/harry\\_nl/](#)

## 6. Leeds Bradford Airport: Fight the expansion

Airport expansion is a contentious issue from a trade union perspective, setting aviation workers jobs in direct conflict with ensuring our climate targets are met. In presenting this article we recognise trade union views on both sides of the equation: those supporting expansion to provide job security and those seeking alternative employment opportunities because the proposed expansion is unsustainable.

The [Group for Action on Leeds Bradford Airport](#) (GALBA) has been campaigning for two years to defeat the proposed expansion of the airport and has widespread support including from Leeds TUC.



Photo: [Trey Ratcliff www.flickr.com/photos/stuckincustoms/](#)

Leeds Bradford is owned by a finance company in Australia. They wish to increase passengers from the current 4 million to 7 million a year by 2030. While Leeds City Council has a laudable aim of reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2030 it shamefully supported the application to expand the airport at a plans panel on February 11. The expansion would wipe out all the gains deriving from its net zero strategy and establish a dangerous precedent for other airports.

Rational arguments backed up with legal advice and a [report commissioned](#) from the New Economics Foundation have proved to no avail. However, we fight on. We have [written a letter](#) to the Secretary of State requesting that the application be called in.

The subsequent public enquiry will be expensive and we need to raise £30,000 to pay for further legal advice and more technical support. Your donation will help stop the expansion and the consequent rise in greenhouse gas emissions.

You can donate [here](#) or by bank transfer, (which saves the donation fee) - Name: GALBA. Sort code: 60-83-01. Acc No: [2042 3670](#).

Mike McGrath on behalf of GALBA  
PCS Yorkshire and Humberside ARMs branch, British Museum/  
British Library branch 1969-2001

★ *The views in the article don't necessarily reflect the views of all GJA supporters and is presented as part of the much needed debate on this issue.*

## 7. New resource

### Greener workplaces for a just transition: A Wales TUC toolkit for trade unionists by Jo Rees

*Jo Rees is a Policy and Communications Support Officer at the Wales TUC, contributing to the organisation's work on environment, equality and workplace learning. Before joining the Wales TUC, she worked in local government, the third sector and further education.*

This [new toolkit](#) brings together information to help trade unionists who want to take action on the climate and nature emergency and negotiate for greener and fairer workplaces.

The toolkit aims to ensure that workers, through their unions, have a central voice in planning the changes that will be needed in every workplace to ensure a just transition to a net-zero economy.

Co-written by Graham Petersen of the Greener Jobs Alliance, sustainable travel writer/campaigner Chris Roberts and the Wales TUC, this new resource aims to support the voice of workers and their unions. It provides information, tools and ideas to help union reps to campaign, organise and raise awareness.

See a recent launch event for the toolkit [here](#).

This comprehensive toolkit aims to support grassroots action and includes case studies, bargaining checklists and action plans which reps can adapt to use for their own workplaces. *Check out page 5 to see how to use it.*

The resources in this booklet are designed to be used on [Wales TUC and union training courses](#), as well as to support action in the workplace and at community level. Much of the information easily be adapted for use elsewhere.



## 8. The Roadmap to the COP

**This is not an exhaustive list, but an initial attempt to get the shape of the year in our heads.**

**March:** China's next 5 year plan will show how fast they will be moving to reduce carbon dependency. There are some hopeful signs, in that the proportion of investment in green energy in the belt and road initiative is now up sharply to 57% from just 39% in 2019.

[March 23 Green New Deal Online Jobs day of action](#)

**April:** The US will hold an Earth Day Summit, [April 22](#), to reassert its commitment to tackling climate change - but also to take leadership of it. This is an implicit dig at the incapacity of the UK to do so in the run up to the COP. Past US practice has been to demand more of others than they are prepared to do themselves, so the credibility of this will rest very heavily on what their own Nationally Determined Contribution looks like. Although Biden did not accept the whole Green New Deal pushed by Sanders, this will be in a different universe from the denialist mania we had from Trump and will have to be a step up on the real but minimal moves made by Obama.

[April 24 Green New Deal Jobs action day.](#) GND will be releasing figures of the potential number of green jobs in each constituency

**Spring/Summer:** Union conferences

**May:** Mayoral and local elections. How do we cement transition into local recovery plans and make this an issue with real push behind it?

**June:** The G7 Summit will be held in Cornwall 11-13 June. With India, Australia and South Korea

invited, a key issue is whether this will be more oriented to climate co-operation or cold war? Key demands on the world's wealthiest countries are to make good on the unfulfilled promises of \$100 billion annual technology transfer to developing countries and for all recovery investment to be built around transition.

**September:** TUC and Party Conferences. Global Youth Strike, which, if in the streets not online, could (and needs to) be huge and tumultuous and (if online) needs to be even bigger.

**October:** G20 Summit held in Rome 30-31 October. Last minute knocking heads of state together before the COP.

**November:** Global day of Action Nov 6  
COP 1 -12 November in Glasgow.



Photo: ILO Asia-Pacific [www.flickr.com/photos/iiloasiapacific/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/iiloasiapacific/)

## 9. GJA AGM

60 people attended the annual meeting held in February.

The work plan for 2021 was agreed and new officers appointed. Tahir Latif (PCS) has taken on the Secretary role and Paul Atkin (NEU) is leading on the newsletter.

Details of the event and the plan for the year can be found [here](#).

### **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.