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1. Strong green manifestos, poorly debated

Caroline Lucas said, *"It beggars belief that this election has been almost environment-free when we face an air pollution crisis, a climate denier in the White House, the threat of an extreme Brexit and accelerating climate change."*

<http://ind.pn/2rCWPVc>

She's right of course. Both Labour and the Green Party manifestos presented voters with some of the most progressive and democratic environmental choices ever. Yet in reality the issue disappeared from the debate.

But that was then. This weak government, made more fragile by its response, it must be said, to the terrible tragedy at Grenfell Tower, means that the best that the political parties were offering to tackle climate change and build a green economy for all are still within reach.

For the Greens, it was a new Environmental Protection Act to safeguard and restore our environment. Replacing fracking, coal power stations, and subsidies to fossil fuels and nuclear with the clean green efficient renewable energy of the future. And investing in community owned energy.

For Labour, Jeremy Corbyn said the launch of its 2017 manifesto was the 'turning point' in the election campaign. *For the many not the few* is a true breath of fresh air. With a listening ear to progressive community and trade union demands, it commits to 'publicly owned, locally accountable energy companies and cooperatives.' Labour sees a huge leap forward in low carbon energy by 2030. An industrial and skills strategy to drive investment in electric vehicles, home insulation, new low carbon technologies for heavy industries like steel, and a ban on fracking. For many in the trade union and community energy movements, the icing on the cake is its belief in 'energy democracy' through municipal and cooperative energy projects.

<http://www.labour.org.uk/index.php/manifesto2017>

<https://www.greenparty.org.uk/green-guarantee/protecting-our-environment.html>

Here, we also report first reactions to the election from PCS, Unison and the NUS. Looking ahead, trade union conferences this summer are shaping up their demands for the TUC in Brighton this September. The UCU's conference agreed a major new statement on the environment (see below) placing democratic values and workers' interests at the heart of a modern era Just Transition strategy.



2. Michael Gove - a fox in the hen house!

In the alternative reality that is Theresa May's government, she has appointed climate wobbly Michael Gove as Environment Secretary of State. As someone said, it's like putting a fox in charge of the hen house. His anti-climate change reputation has form, but his best shot thankfully missed: to get climate change off the schools' geography curriculum <http://bit.ly/2rlpppo> What else? Apart from being in a government starving schools of resources? He voted to sell off our woodlands and forests. Voted to cull badgers. Missed key votes on the environment and carbon targets. Voted against explicitly requiring an environmental permit for hydraulic fracturing activities.

<http://bit.ly/2rks5Uc>

As Caroline Lucas MP commented: 'As we enter Brexit negotiations, Gove's past suggestion we scrap vital EU environmental protections becomes ever more concerning.'



3. What did you think of the election? Some personal reactions...

Sam Mason, Policy Officer, PCS

Analysing the various party manifestos for the election, the UK Energy Research Council said "Labour's plans for energy renationalisation are puzzling". That may be because renationalisation wasn't mentioned in their manifesto but rather public ownership and democratic control of the energy system, including the establishment of a public energy company in every region. What we would call energy democracy and which PCS see as essential for a just energy transition.

Public control of energy can be achieved beyond who holds the seat of government in Westminster at a local authority level as we have seen in the pioneering Robin Hood Energy project. However, more thinking needs to be done on energy as a public good, and how it can be used to build a fresh vision for our public services.

PCS advocates, in its new pamphlet, *Just transition and energy democracy*, for a new worker-public partnership. This means worker involvement through their trade unions in building the public services of the future based on social need and not private greed. Equally the establishment of a commission to look at the regulatory and legal frameworks required to create the institutions of democratic control at a community, regional and central level.

Whilst Theresa May clutches at fragile and dangerous straws to form a government, Corbyn and his leadership has changed the discourse. Unions are therefore ideally placed to harness this to start discussions, as PCS will be doing with members, on their part in the energy transition jigsaw.

Rob Young, NUS Vice President

#GenerationVote – the NUS campaign to increase student voter registration and turnout – showed that young voters refuse to be silenced. The youth vote was particularly powerful in this election, not to mention in the tireless grassroots activism that preceded it.

According to YouGov, 66% of 18-19-year-olds and 62% of 20-24-year-olds voted Labour. The election results – leaving the Tories clutching at power, and Labour with burgeoning support – mark a turning point in UK politics. The state of government reflects the fact that society will no longer accept the rich and powerful having a monopoly on our future. This includes the environment. But the energy the election has built will have to be maintained if we are to counter the stark realities we still face.

The UK has shown leadership on climate change,

but since Brexit, commitments are shaky. And the Conservatives' fledgling coalition with the Democratic Unionist Party (which James Orr, Friends of the Earth Northern Ireland Director, calls a "pro-fracking... climate pariah") throws the UK into an ever more unstable position on climate and the environment.

The DUP once appointed an environment minister who does not believe in climate change. To add insult to injury, Theresa May has now appointed Michael Gove – a man opposed key elements of EU environmental legislation - to run the Department of the Environment.

A failure to act decisively on climate change, and to safeguard the planet, is an affront to everyone. The student movement has shown trailblazing leadership in the fossil fuel divestment movement, and it will continue to fight for justice at this critical political time.

Allison Roche, Policy and Public Affairs, Unison
 'Energy democracy' was the most exciting and radical of Labour's 'green' pledges. Unison supports taking energy back into public and community ownership to deliver affordable, renewable democratically owned energy. This includes renationalising the grid over time, and allowing direct access to the grid for locally owned energy companies.

These were all good for UNISON, and were a welcome 'fresh of breath air.' They demonstrate how Labour is now leading and winning on progressive green policies that will put the UK back on track to meet its Paris Climate Change commitments.

We'd highlight these promising commitments from Labour's manifesto:

- Energy efficiency refurbishment of 4 million homes
- Tackling fuel poverty, improving landlord obligations
- Banning fracking so that the UK was ready to meet 2030 targets
- Tackling air pollution with a new Clean Air Act
- Investment in sustainable long term farming, fishing, and food industries, and protection of bees with a Science Innovation Fund
- Properly funded flood resistance schemes
- Protect and advance environmental quality standards
- Providing new renewable technologies and green energy jobs
- Energy workers' protection in a Just Transition to climate change commitments.

That said, energy and climate change didn't feature much in the wider general election debate, which is a real shame. The Conservative's record on energy, climate change and environmental protection has been abysmal since 2010:

- No UK coherent climate change and energy strategy.
- No open dialogue on a Just Transition or mapping green skills for the future.
- Fuel poverty targets missed.
- Unpopular fracking fast-tracked.
- National Grid and Green Investment Bank sold to hedge funds.
- Energy efficiency programmes cut, with no replacement.

If we just take a quick snapshot at the Environment Agency, where UNISON has a big membership, we see 2000 job losses in 2016, its budget slashed by over 25% since 2010. Just one instance of how austerity has impacted on public and environmental services.

4. UCU aims to persuade TUC for new climate strategy

The UCU's annual conference in June supported a comprehensive motion on the environment which may find its way to the TUC Congress in September 2017.

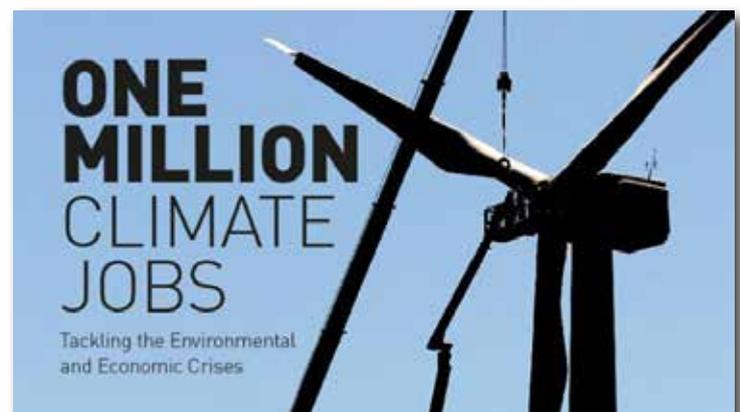
<http://bit.ly/2shdqgF>

It states:

"To halt climate change we need to leave most of the reserves of carbon fuels in the ground. We need workers to insulate homes and buildings to conserve energy. Workers to build enough renewable power to meet all our energy needs. Workers to maintain the new systems the future of humanity depends on. The conversion to a sustainable energy policy will provide millions of jobs world-wide as the pamphlet *One Million Climate Jobs* demonstrates."

We campaign for:

1. energy democracy and a rapid transition from fossil fuels;
2. stop all airport expansion;
3. government funding for green jobs training;
4. no fracking;
5. promote alternatives to short-haul flights, including publicly owned rail services;
6. a genuine commitment to reducing lethal air pollutants;
7. a just transition employment strategy to climate jobs and well-paid, skilled, sustainable employment;
8. support for improved links between anti-war, refugee and climate campaign movements;
9. action against TTIP, CETA and other trade treaties threatening climate justice; and
10. a Climate Justice Fund funded by wealthy nations and polluting companies.



5. Air Quality campaigning - latest updates

The GJA's response to the Government's air quality public consultation ticked 'Very Dissatisfied' when asked 'Are you satisfied with the government's measures?' Our full submission sets out a comprehensive case for urgent action:

<http://www.greenerjobsalliance.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Response-to-GOV-AQ-Consultation-2017.pdf>

The GJA is joining forces with London Sustainability Exchange to run training for trade union and community activists in the summer. Dates will be announced soon in our Breaking News section. We are keen to run training outside of London so please contact us if you would like to work with us on this.

Jeremy Corbyn raised the issue of Air Pollution during the leaders' debate in June 2017, and we need to step up the campaign for a new Clean Air Act – in line with an air quality motion to the UCU's annual conference this year.

UCU General Secretary, Sally Hunt, threw her union's weight behind the campaign: *'UCU is deeply concerned about the impact of poor air quality on people's health. We fully support the call for a Clean Air Act to tackle the air pollution health emergency in the UK. We're also encouraging branches to raise awareness about the harmful impact of air pollution, using the helpful online resources from the Greener Jobs Alliance launched at UCU's annual congress this year.'*

Rob Young, NUS Vice President, said the NUS is a GJA supporter and we encourage students to check the web site to find out more: *"Thousands of students are studying, working, and living in areas with high levels of air pollution. They need to know the extent of the risk and what can be done about it. The Greener Jobs Alliance has just launched a set of on line modules to help answer those questions."*

http://www.greenerjobsalliance.co.uk/?page_id=714
To help you organise events in your workplace or community we have produced our latest set of on line modules.

http://www.greenerjobsalliance.co.uk/?page_id=714

6. PCS publishes *Just transition and energy democracy*

'If unions exist to regulate relations between employers and workers, and get the most favourable working conditions possible, why should precious time and resources be devoted to climate change?' PCS throws out this hefty challenge in its new report, *Just transition and energy democracy*, not just to its 180,000 members, but to workers and their unions across the economy.

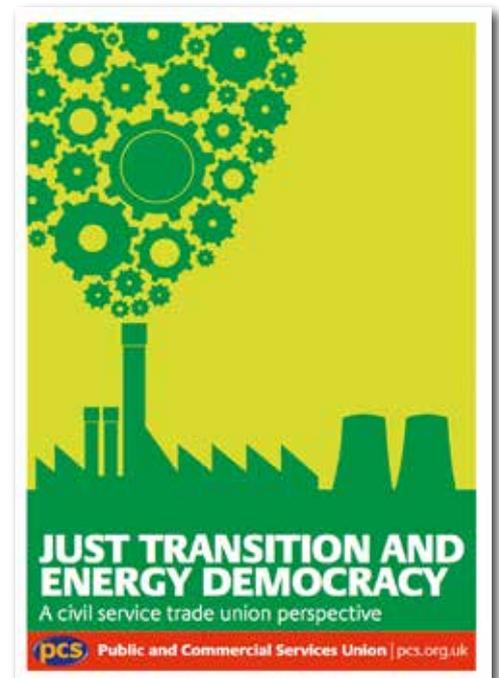
<http://bit.ly/2tirRL>

PCS believes the growing threat of climate change and our persistent reliance on polluting fossil fuels is an issue for all trade unionists and workers. Far from being a distraction, climate change work can reinforce trade union organisation, through greenworkplace projects and low carbon industrial strategies, showing that unions have contemporary relevance, 'particularly to young workers'. Here, PCS has surely hit the right note, for young people (and returning Labour voters) combined to ensure Labour's winning form.

PCS calls for:

- A radical new role for the public sector in tackling climate change: a new Ministry for Climate Change to oversee an 'energy democracy transition' to a zero carbon economy.
- A new Commission would bring local communities and workers together as the foundation for the democratic control of our energy system.
- Finance for a green future would come through a new national climate bank, funding research for 'a revived and decarbonised steel industry to support building wind turbines and railway investment.'

PCS has picked up and run with the issue of Just Transition, refreshing it for the modern, post 2017-election era. Suddenly, its demands for post austerity investment in public services and new forms of 'energy democracy' good for the environment find a home in Labour's manifesto commitments. They could actually happen...



7. European Trade Unions for Energy Democracy

Around 40 trade unionists from across Europe, including UK delegates, have agreed to work together to help shape a new grouping of European Trade Unions for Energy Democracy. TUED, <http://unionsforenergydemocracy.org/> the global campaign to advance democratic direction and control of energy in a way that promotes solutions to the climate crisis, hosted the two-day conference in Geneva in June. One delegate argued that 'every union has a stake in this debate,' not just the power sector unions, which of course face some of the biggest changes.

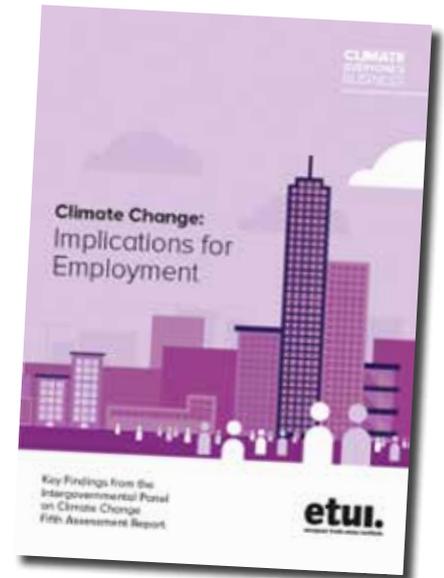
Yuliya Yurchenko from Public Services International <http://bit.ly/2sG2ZUj> argued that the European Union's neo-liberal energy policies, forcing privatisation and supporting energy markets, had run their course. Competitive bidding for renewable energy investments was no longer bringing in the necessary flood of new energy investment needed.

Bela Galgoczi from the European Trade Union Institute <http://bit.ly/2sJ2klQ> said that the EU was missing open opportunities to grow jobs in renewables and low carbon industries. The EU had done ok to create some 3.4 million jobs across green industries and services since 2007, but at the same time it lost over 4 million skilled and often unionised jobs in manufacturing and heavy industries.

TUED is now a global network of over 50 global, regional and national trade unions. Its studies show there's been a growth of renewable energy, but so too has energy consumption, mostly met by fossil fuels. The free market energy model is breaking down, so that even if governments deliver 100% of their carbon cutting commitments under the Paris Agreement, global warming will break through a 2 and even 3 degrees increase in global warming.

<http://ind.pn/1IVXkgJ>

In the next GJA News we'll provide a briefing on TUED Europe as the story develops.



8. Fracking - Stop Press!

Solidarity day in Lancashire

Tuesday 27 June 12:30 – 15:00

at the roadside opposite the Preston New Road site.

Organised by us and local activists, including Friends of the Earth, Central Lancashire.

<http://frack-off.org.uk/blockade/preston-new-road-community-fracking-blockade/>

Meanwhile, the GMB earned a headline in The Sun, *BACK FRACK AND WHACKED*, just three days before the election. Its national conference had reportedly agreed to live in the "real world" and get behind the shale gas revolution as it would cut energy bills – and emissions. A 'snub' to Jeremy Corbyn, apparently.

<http://www.gmb.org.uk/newsroom/fact-based-fracking-review>

