



Photo: Christian Lue on Unsplash

Editorial: A King's speech for fossils

The [latest scientific assessment](#) on the pace of climate breakdown should make everyone stop, take a deep breath and ring alarm bells loudly. Keeping below 1.5C now requires us to get to net zero by 2034. That makes the present government's slow down criminally irresponsible.

Far from rising to the level of the challenge, as Elon Musk spun fantasies of a fully automated luxury capitalism at the AI convention at Bletchley Park, Rishi Sunak's speech highlighted nuclear war and pandemics as the two major threats to humanity; and the climate crisis fell off his list - as it always does. None so blind as those that will not see.

His aim to have annual sell offs for new oil and gas fields in the North Sea, in the core of his King's Speech, underlines the importance of maintaining Labour's commitment to stop them, but also block any deals done in the meantime, like Rosebank. If you are in the Labour Party or affiliated union please [sign up to this campaign here](#).

Sunak's attempt to make a retreat on climate commitments a "*wedge issue*" is not primarily electoral opportunism, and it didn't do them a lot of good in Tamworth or Mid Bedfordshire. His aim is to align the Conservatives with fossil fuel interests as they dig into sabotaging the energy transition in defence of their profits.

Commenting on the IEAs projection that fossil fuel demand will peak this decade, Mike Wirth, the Chief Executive of Chevron opined "*You can build scenarios, but we live in the real world and have to allocate capital to meet real world demands*".

For Chevron and Exxon Mobil, that means snapping up smaller companies with rights over the most lucrative new oil fields, primarily in Guyana. It will also mean pulling every string, pressing every button, and greasing every palm to slow down the transition, not least at the COP next month.

What Wirth tries to skid over is that the IEAs projections are based on extrapolations of the way things are actually moving, not wishful thinking, and they have tended to underestimate the rapidity of the shift to renewables.

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His braggadocio about “*real world demands*” is likely to turn around and bite him; as the pace of renewable installations keeps accelerating, and the bottom drops out of the market for fossil fuels. At this point they will face a cliff edge collapse, holding vast quantities of stranded assets in the same way that the similarly over confident banks were in 2008; requiring a similar level of emergency response.

This time, we will have to make sure that this is about managing their decline with a just transition for their workers, not a bail out for the chief executives and shareholders at our collective expense, as was done with the banks.

In this context, with OPEC producers able to continue production at relatively low cost, the moves from Chevron and Exxon look more like an attempt by the biggest US companies to grab the most lucrative sites in a shrinking market at the expense of their smaller rivals, like BP and Shell; whose bet on sustaining fossil fuel production, and slowing their tentative transition into renewable energy, now looks like suicidal short term thinking, for them as well as us.

With 130 companies, including IKEA, Unilever, Volvo, ebay, BT, Bayer, Godrej and Heineken writing to the COP asking for a date for full fossil fuel phase out, there is a clear split in the business class.

The fossil fuel fraction will have more traction if there is a second coming of Donald Trump at the US Presidential election next year; in which case the US will make a screaming u turn back out of the Paris Agreement and go full on rogue state.

If we get a second term Biden Presidency proceeding with its America First transition through the Inflation Reduction Act, sucking most transition capital across the Atlantic, there will be challenges for a likely incoming Labour, or Labour led, government either way.

Our [letters to Rachel Reeves and Angela Rayner](#) are an attempt to set the best conditions to make the transition to prepare the movement for the struggles ahead.

Paul Atkin Ed



Abandoned and vandalised electric rental bike: a metaphor for Rishi Sunak's climate policy. Photo Paul Atkin.

IEA Energy Outlook



Photo US Army Band / creative commons

On the high speed train to electrification

Under today's policy settings, clean energy technologies are set to play a much greater role in 2030 than they do today. These projections see:

- Nearly 10 times as many electric cars on the road
- Renewables accounting for nearly 50% of the global electricity mix, up from around 30% today
- Heat pumps and other electric heating systems outselling gas boilers globally
- Peaks in demand for oil, gas and coal by 2030

The World Energy Outlook 2023 finds that despite the impressive clean energy growth we're now seeing, emissions are still set to push up global average temperatures by around 2.4 °C this century, based on today's policy settings.

Given this trajectory, WEO-2023 proposes an urgent global strategy to ensure the 1.5 °C target remains on the table. By 2030, the world needs to:

- Triple global renewable energy capacity
- Double the rate of energy efficiency improvements
- Double investment in grid connectivity
- Slash methane emissions from fossil fuel operations by 75%
- Develop innovative, large-scale financing mechanisms to triple clean energy investments in emerging and developing economies
- Pursue measures to ensure an orderly decline in the use of fossil fuels

Concrete plans to meet these objectives can form a basis for success at the COP28 climate change conference in Dubai in late November and early December.

This is an extract from a recent IEA mailing in their own words. For their full analysis of all the key parts of the global energy system, read [World Energy Outlook 2023](#). Ed

UK U-Turn on Deep Sea Mining

Britain has shifted its position and now backs a moratorium on commercial deep-sea mining, after criticism from scientists, MPs and environmentalists of its previous stance in support of the emerging industry.

According to the **Only One campaign**:

“Despite formidable lobbying from the mining sector, the previous International Seabed Authority meeting in July 2023 yielded a positive outcome, with no mining regulations adopted that would allow operations to commence. Discussion on the moratorium was officially on the meeting’s agenda for the first time in its history.”

On 30 October 2023, the UK government announced it would back a temporary suspension on supporting or sponsoring any exploitation licences to mine metals from the sea floor until ‘*enough scientific evidence*’ was available to understand the impact on ecosystems.

The threats to deep marine ecosystems are immense and irrecoverable damage is forecast. Last month, dozens of scientists warned the prime minister, Rishi Sunak, that allowing industrial-scale exploitation of the seabed could have grave consequences, both for marine life and for the ability of the ocean – one of the planet’s greatest carbon sinks – to absorb carbon dioxide.

You can see what we’re up against with this anti wokery headline from the Telegraph:

“Banning it before we explore it? That’s Britain alright.”

They claim deep sea mining could supply critical minerals that we will need for a green energy transition. It will enable us to massively increase our production of raw materials without creating any ugly eyesores or using up precious space. Yep, that’s because it takes place at ocean depths of 12,000 feet or more. Out of sight, out of mind?

Philip Pearson

Transport

Rishi Sunak’s determination to allow motorists to drive too fast, and do it on bus lanes, while cutting the budget for walking and cycling and running down the railways, is symbolic of the way his government is driving carelessly in the wrong direction.

The Campaign for Better Transport’s **Fair Future for Rail Report** identifies instead clear steps to make rail fares sensible and affordable. Here are four of them:

- Guarantee that regulated rail fares do not rise faster than the cost of running a car
- Commit to a Best Price Guarantee, so that the best-value fare is prominently offered wherever you buy your ticket
- Make it possible to book train tickets more than 12 weeks in advance
- Run regional trials of low-cost public transport passes, inspired by Germany’s 49-euro-a-month Deutschland-Ticket.

And Living Streets are having a **survey on how to improve prospects for walking and cycling here**.



The joys of the open road? Photo Oleksandr P

Local authorities put under the climate spotlight

In October the report on the climate performance of local authorities in the UK was published.

Press Release: UK councils need to step up their action to reach net zero - Climate Emergency UK.

It showed that only 41 councils in the UK scored 50% or more for their climate action, the average score being 32%. It underlined that despite the declarations of climate emergencies, when it comes to policy implementation, the practice is badly lacking. The GJA has been highlighting this gap for many years. While we acknowledge the financial pressures faced by local government it is clear that councils are seriously off-target in meeting their net-zero ambitions.

Another weakness that we have identified is the failure to consult with the recognised unions on the formulation and implementation of these policies. This is also a problem with the methodology of the scorecards. There are 7 sections, including one on '*Collaboration and Engagement*'. The 11 scoring questions refer to things like involving residents, but nothing on unions and the workforce. The GJA has written to Climate Emergency UK pointing out this weakness. They responded with a recognition that the process needs to improve council's engagement with workers acknowledgement, and an offer to discuss the methodology for future scorecards.

Despite the concerns about how the data has been assembled the scorecards do provide a snapshot of local authority performance and could be referenced by climate unions and climate activists in discussions on priority areas. The **GJA has provided guidance on this** and also **a checklist**.

Graham Petersen

Join Friends of the Earth and Climate Emergency UK for this in-depth exploration of the new Scorecards. Learn how they were produced and how to find out what they tell you about your council's actions, and share top tips for how they can be used creatively in your campaigning locally. Thursday 16 November (6:30 - 8pm)

Register for Council Scorecards

Direct Labour: the key to meeting the retrofit challenge

The construction industry has a crucial role to play in achieving a green economy.

- The building sector accounts for 40% of energy use and 36% of greenhouse gas emissions in Europe.
- Britain has the highest proportion of hard-to-heat houses built before 1945 in Europe.
- In London, the housing stock is responsible for about one-third of all carbon emissions.
- 15% of all households in Britain, (half a million in London) suffer from fuel poverty.

This is a massive challenge to the industry, and it is no wonder that all employment forecasts show the sector set to gain more than any other from the transition to a green economy.

But how can this transition be achieved? Paul Hampton, in his 2015 book *Workers and trade unions for climate solidarity: Tackling climate change in a neoliberal world*, maps out three very different transition pathways:

- market-based, whereby the labour force represents a passive force and any training needed is provided in response to demand;
- ecological modernisation, the standard approach adopted by unions - national and international, associated with a 'just transition' and involving state intervention, the pro-active engagement of private companies, and retraining measures;
- radical transformation, whereby the interests of labour and the environment are intertwined in a labour-centred approach.

In considering how zero carbon and zero energy housing is best achieved, it is apparent that this is not possible without a radical transformation of the construction industry in Britain.

The industry employs over two million people, but

- about half of the workforce is self-employed, under a special tax scheme for construction introduced by government about fifty years ago. This acts as an incentive to employers, equivalent to an employment subsidy, and denies the workers themselves benefits of employment such as pensions or sick pay.
- the industry is extremely fragmented, dominated by small and micro firms, which employ up to 97% of the workforce, and subject to extensive subcontracting, sub-subcontracting etc., so the very large main contractors do not themselves employ the workforce on sites.

This has led to the loss of an infrastructure for work-based training and a dramatic decline in construction apprenticeships, contributing in turn to a massive shortage of qualified construction labour and a reliance on migrant labour.

For instance, of the 1300 construction trainees reported by one north London Further Education (FE) College, only 70 were apprentices, with the majority on full-time courses up to Level 2, who then struggle to gain the necessary work experience, so many drop out.

Continued



Besides labour shortages, the construction workforce remains predominantly white male, with women constituting less than 3% of the site workforce and ethnic minorities 6% (though 14% of the economically active population).

Coupled with often poor employment and working conditions, the prospects for developing a climate and energy literate construction workforce in the private sector of the size and quality needed are low.

Net zero energy building (NZEB) and large-scale retrofitting programmes also entail upgrading current vocational education and training (VET) programmes for construction, as more extensive knowledge (e.g. thermal bridging), know-how (e.g. heat pump installation) and competences (e.g. communication), at Level 3 and beyond, are required.

This means that current occupational profiles – especially for the key occupations of plumbing, electrical work, heating and ventilating, carpentry and insulation – need to be broader and cannot rely on narrow ‘skills’ without giving rise to a serious performance gap between design intent and implementation.

As well as VET, the construction labour process needs also to transform, to allow for the integrated and inclusive teamworking needed, which in turn depends on direct employment and the involvement of the workforce and unions.

One solution to these dilemmas, in particular for retrofitting, advocated by Greener Jobs Alliance and Unite, is to set up taskforces led by local authorities, and including the unions, FE Colleges, environmental groups, women’s and youth organisations, experts, etc.

To ensure good quality employment and working conditions with a unionised and diverse workforce, the authorities’ building departments or Direct Labour Organisations (DLOs) can then be extended, if necessary through further insourcing of repair and maintenance services.

Focussing to begin with on the fuel poverty council estates, so helping to tackle the current energy and cost of living crisis, plans can be drawn up for the employment and training of the retrofitting workforce required, ensuring too that women and ethnic minorities are well represented.

The DLOs would, in collaboration with FE Colleges, provide for good quality VET, at least to level 3 and including well-equipped workshops and classrooms and careful monitoring of the work-based element. In this way qualified, climate literate teams could be developed, directly employed by the local authorities, and equipped for the large-scale retrofitting of social housing. Already, though it is early days, some local authorities are leading the way in demonstrating that this dream of municipal socialism can become a reality!

Linda Clarke: Centre for the Study of the Production of the Built Environment (ProBE) University of Westminster
Greener Jobs Alliance Newsletter No:54 November 2023

National Climate Service pamphlet out from PCS

The PCS Union has been doing some ongoing research and discussion on how a National Climate Service might be implemented in practice.

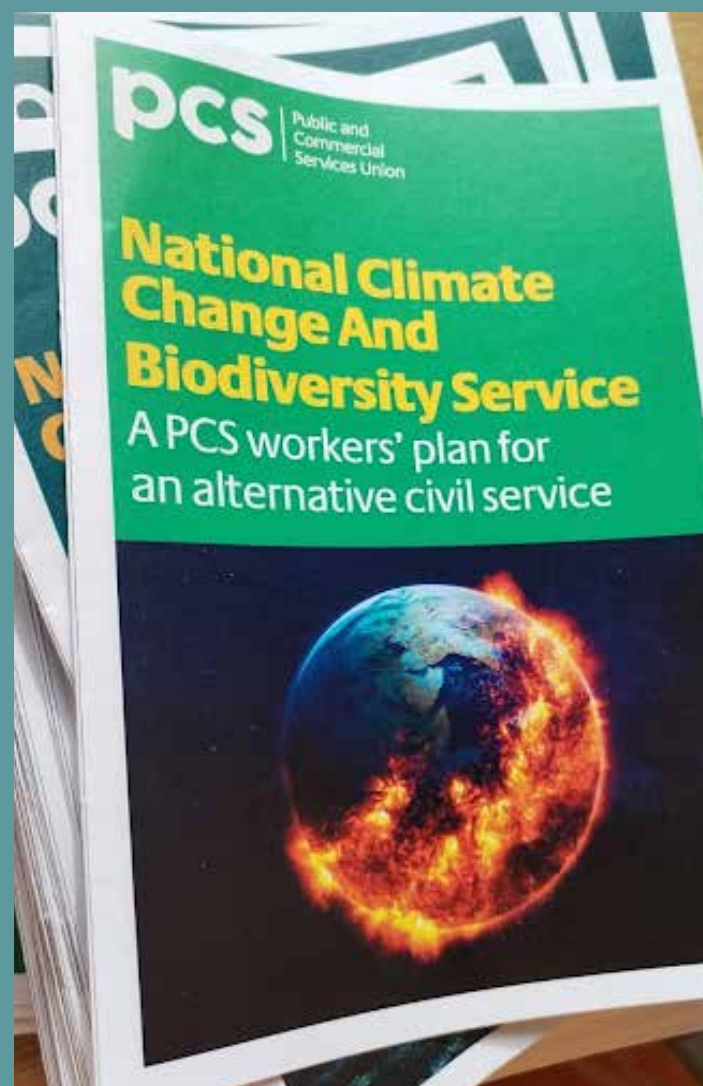
The discussion so far is summarised in their new pamphlet, **National Climate Change and Biodiversity Service: A PCS workers’ plan for an alternative civil service.**

In the era of global boiling the notion that it is business as usual for the Civil Service or society as a whole, clearly is not sustainable. There needs to be a radical overhaul of how the UK Civil Service works. This would only be one element in the solution – you still need political will and a plan – but without effective state mechanisms there is no hope in ensuring net zero.

Now read on...

The full text can be read on the **CACCTU site here.**

More information from **green@pcs.org.uk**



Somerset Solidarity Day



Stalls at the Cheese and Grain doing brisk business. Photo Richard Morgan

On 22nd October, the GJA Secretary was very pleased to accept an invitation to join Somerset Solidarity Day, an event organised by Mendip TUC that took place at the Cheese & Grain in Frome. This was the second annual event and proved to be a successful and inspirational gathering of local trade unionists and activists, with stalls full of union and/or climate related materials of all kinds, hosting some great debates and a closing rally at which I was privileged to say a few words.

Having attended similar events in Waveney, East Anglia, the last couple of May Days, such gatherings really bring home the critical role of local activism and concern with developments in local communities. These are just as important as the debate around broad issues of social transformation around workers rights and climate action; we can talk about such things in the abstract but it's their actual manifestation in towns and communities that directly affects the quality of people's lives.

This was brought home vividly in an excellent debate around local bus services in the Frome area, suffering the familiar blight of privatisation, isolation for those who rely on regular services, poor value for money, and the consequent impact of resorting to the private car. Those participating exhibited a deeper understanding of the issues, and the needs of their community and how to service it, than the decision makers for whom privatising the bus service simply counts as a line on a balance sheet.

It's easy when talking about transition of the energy system and overhaul of public transport to lose sight of the specifics in particular areas. That's why the knowledge, commitment and enthusiasm of those who participated in Somerset Solidarity Day, and other events across the country, is so crucial to the struggle for workers, for the public and for the planet. Looking forward to next year!

Tahir Latif GJA Secretary

FOE webinar: What's COP and why does it matter?

Join this webinar to find out about the UN Climate Talks, otherwise known as COP, and why they're important. During the session you'll hear about what happens at the talks and how we, as a movement, can use them to demand climate justice. We'll also explain how Friends of the Earth will be using COP to get the UK government to stick to its pledge to reduce emissions by over two-thirds by 2030.

Thursday 23 November (7 - 8:15pm) **Register for COP training**

NowWeRise local hubs check-in

7-9pm, Wednesday 15
November:

On 15 November, we'll hold an additional local hubs check-in meeting to update on and discuss plans for the 9 December Day of Action.

Join on Zoom here,
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83016590726>.

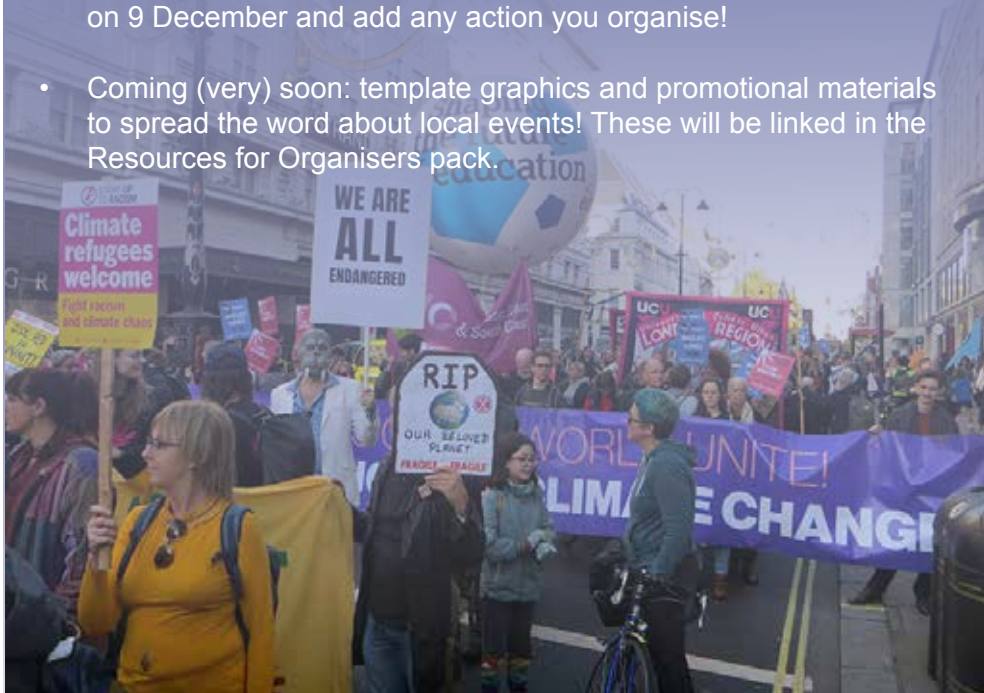
Email info@climatejustice.uk

**Temperatures are rising.
Corporate profits are rising. Now
we're rising.**

Global Day of Action for 9 December

In Britain, the Climate Justice Coalition is coordinating decentralised mobilisations and actions to join this global fight for climate justice and more than 15 actions are already in the works across the country. Here are some resources to help organise more:

- **Our Resources for Organisers pack:** a one-stop shop for everything you need for 9 December, including links to our Action Pack, our shared narrative and more.
- **Our interactive action map:** Find out what's happening near you on 9 December and add any action you organise!
- Coming (very) soon: template graphics and promotional materials to spread the word about local events! These will be linked in the Resources for Organisers pack.



WINNING CLIMATE JUSTICE FOR AUTO WORKERS 10 NOV 18.30 GMT / 13.30 EST ON ZOOM

The United Auto Workers strike is taking on the Big 3 car firms & winning. Join US & UK auto workers to discuss the lessons & hopes for a Just Transition.

Marcelina Pedraza, UAW
Frank Hammer, UAW
John Cooper, Unite The Union



The lessons of the UAW's ground breaking strike against the Big 3 car firms, and hopes for a just transition for auto workers.

[Link here.](#)

For Climate Justice, what struggles do we need to win?

Climate justice is the recognition that climate change is not just about our physical environment and the urgent need to cut emissions: it is a political, ethical, and social issue calling for more fundamental change.

Two weeks before this year's UN climate negotiations start in Dubai, join us to hear from experts and debate the key struggles we face: at a COP28 which is dominated by fossil fuel interests, and here in the UK, where the government is backtracking on climate action and set on draining 'every last drop of oil' from the North Sea.

Against the power of fossil fuel interests and corporate elites, we have to

- centre the voices of those in the Global South worst hit by a crisis they did least to cause.
- heed their warnings about the dangerous greenwash 'solutions' and loopholes allowing rich countries to evade their financial responsibilities.
- And win the crucial argument that it is not climate action that is imposing *"unacceptable costs on hard-pressed British families"* it is the profiteering of energy companies.

With so many battles to fight, where can we best use our energies and how can we win a better world?

Speakers:

Dorothy Guerrero is Head of Policy and Advocacy at Global Justice Now. She has worked in many countries on climate and economic justice issues, including on the UN climate negotiations.

Sam Mason is a Policy Officer at PCS Union, her remit covers climate jobs and a Just Transition for workers, representing the union both in the UK and internationally at organisations such as Trade Unions for Energy Democracy.

Tyrone Scott is Senior Movement Building & Activism Officer at War on Want, an experienced community organiser and campaigner on climate and social justice.

This meeting is hosted by SOAS Unison.

16 November 6.30pm

**Hybrid Meeting: SOAS, room B103 (Brunei Gallery)
Thornhaugh Street, London WC1B**

[Register to join online.](#)



We Make Tomorrow

10 AM – 5 PM

NEU, Hamilton House, Mabledon PI, London WC1H 9BB

The climate crisis is defining politics and economics in this century, affecting working people in countless ways - from rising prices and food shortages, to industrial shifts, and natural disasters. The transition is already underway, but it's primarily led by corporate interests, often at the expense of workers.

Now, more than ever, we must build workers' power, halt industrial pollution, and lead a transition that is fair and worker-led.

The conference will bring together trade unionists and other workers in key sectors with union officials, climate justice activists and experts, providing an honest and open space to discuss the urgently needed strategies and tactics which can build a tomorrow that works for the majority and not the billionaires.

Get your ticket now



Invite a GJA Speaker

If you'd like to invite us to speak at your meeting, conference, training session, demonstration or rally, please contact us here, [gjacom@gmail.com](mailto:gjacoms@gmail.com)

Photo: Tahir Latif speaking at the Somerset Solidarity Day event.



Photo Richard Morgan

Military vs climate spending

NATO's goal of 2% spending of GDP on the military will accelerate climate breakdown by diverting billions of dollars from climate finance and increasing greenhouse gas emissions.

This year alone, NATO members spent \$1.26 trillion on their militaries. This report shows that this could have paid for 12 years of promised - and still not delivered - climate finance to impoverished countries to help them deal with the climate crisis.

And for the next five years, if NATO members increase their spending to 2% GDP, US\$2.57 trillion will be diverted away from climate spending by 2028. This would be enough to pay for climate adaptation costs for all low- and middle-income countries for seven years.

From the Transnational Institute. [More fully explored here.](#)

A [recent analysis from Monthly Review](#) puts US annual military spending at \$1.5 Trillion, double the reported amount. This is 36 times what they are committing to green transition through the Inflation Reduction Act. Ed



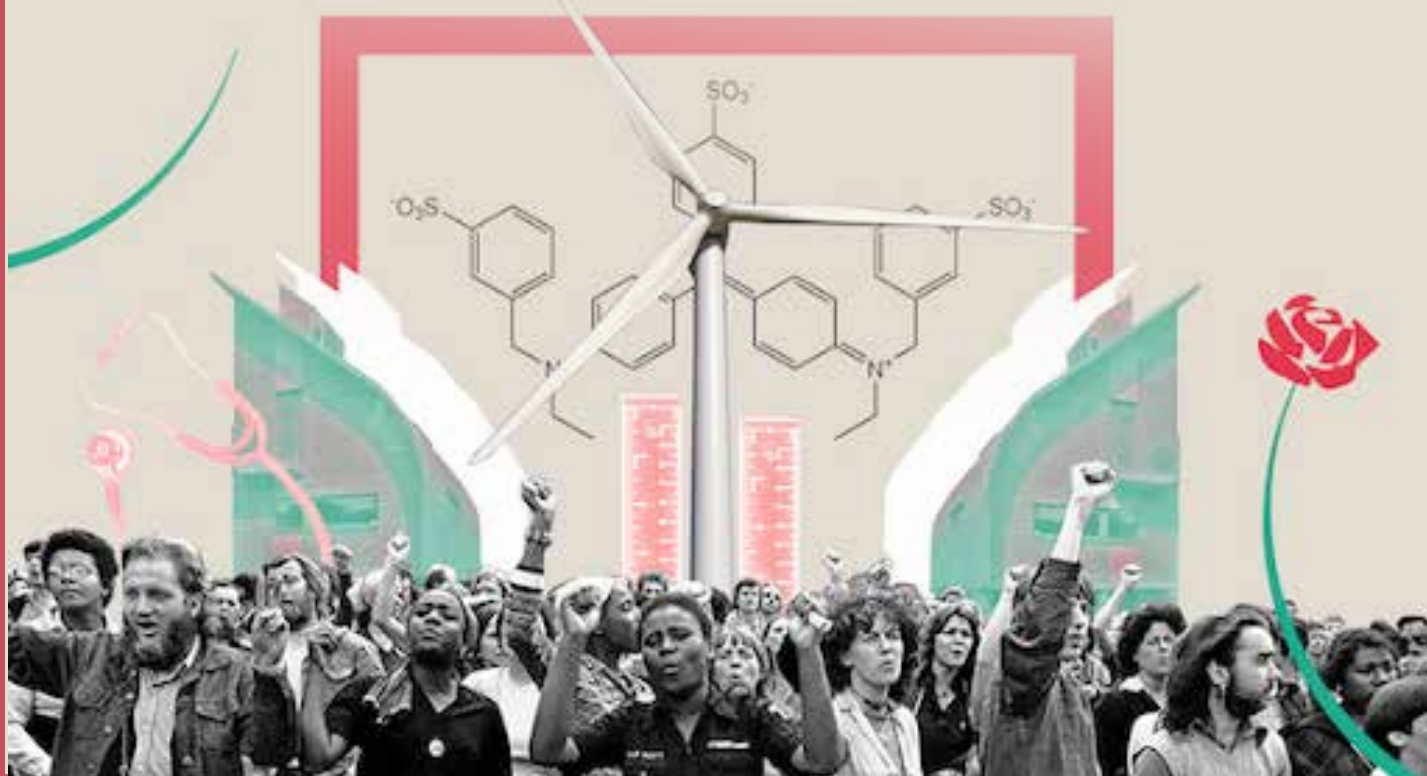
Photo by ev on Unsplash

Workers-Climate survey

You may be interested to support the Workers-Climate project carried out by a team in Labour For a Green New Deal, a grassroots group of activists in the Labour Party and trade unions building a socialist politics of climate and economic justice.

Following their Worker-Climate conference in October 2022, they are developing a project to strengthen the networks of trade unionists taking climate action in their workplaces, industries and communities.

Please help them do so by [filling in this survey](#) to get to know you and your work better.



Green Bites

3.2 Billion tonnes

Projected **additional annual emissions from exporting LNG** through the 20 new terminals the US is planning; based on research that shows that the methane leaks from all stages of LNG production make it as damaging as using coal.

250 Billion tonnes

Remaining global carbon budget to stay below 1.5C. With current emissions at 40 billion tonnes per year, that's just 6 years left. That would require a net zero target by 2034. This doesn't mean "we're spinning out of control to three or four degrees", but does mean that we need accelerated action, in scale and speed, to limit the degree to which we overshoot and the damage done by doing so.

40%

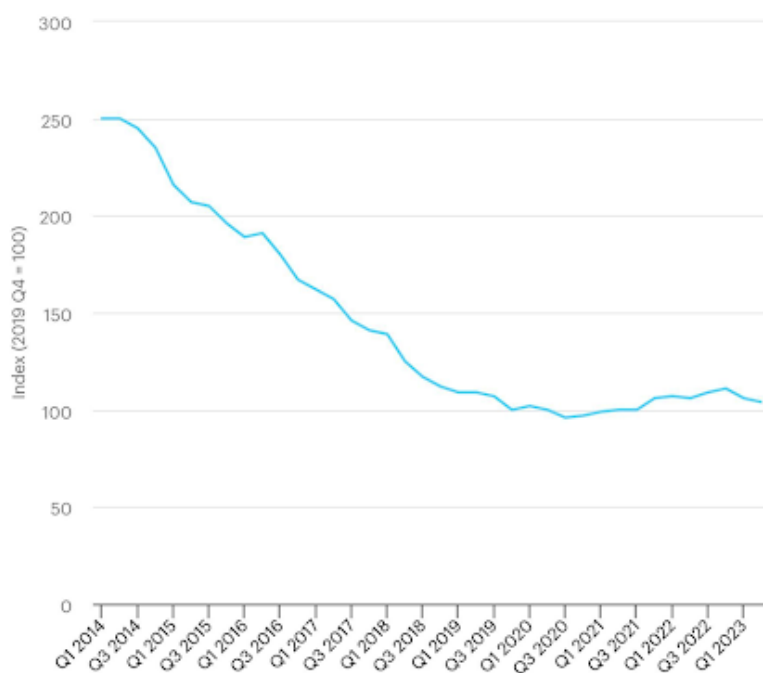
Projected cut in global energy demand through the efficiencies produced by complete electrification.

\$300 Billion

How much **Joseph Stiglitz argues** the IMF should give the Global South every year to combat climate breakdown.

Prices of clean energy equipment are back down to 2019 levels, a **positive sign for energy transitions**

IEA clean energy equipment price index, 2014-2023



International Energy Agency

Quotes of the Month

"The Commission's analysis demonstrates that there is no public policy case for hydrogen to be used to heat individual buildings. It should be ruled out as an option to enable an exclusive focus on switching to electrified heat."

Report on National Infrastructure Commission judgement in [the Guardian](#)

"Our recent analysis shows that just five rich global north countries are responsible for the majority (51%) of planned new oil and gas extraction to 2050: the US, Canada, Australia, Norway and the UK. These countries have the moral and historical responsibility to move first and fastest to phase out fossil fuel production."

Romain Ioualalen, Oil Change International

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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.