

# The future WE choose

Read, listen and enjoy, but most of all **take action to build a green future** today...

**UCU has been developing policy and building alliances to address climate change for over 10 years.** We have created a huge network of green reps and pushed tertiary education employers and pension funds to divest from fossil fuels and other environmentally damaging industries. Radical action on the climate is needed now – not just to secure a future for the entire planet but to win justice for people in the global south whose lives are already drastically affected by climate change. Our 2020 wall chart presents a snapshot of climate activism and the solidarity we will need to build across borders to achieve climate justice. **THIS is the future we choose.**

**Dr. Jo Grady, UCU General Secretary**



@aoc see below, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez

@gretathunberg see below @madagsforfuture

@autumn.peltier 15-year-old Indigenous water warrior and Chief Water Commissioner for Anishinabek Nation

@naturalistdara Dara McAnulty - Irish teen environmentalist & author of *Diary of a Young Naturalist*

@namugerwaLeah Leah Namugerwa - Advocate for climate justice in Uganda

## Climate Change is a Trade Union Issue

University and College Union (UCU) provides training and resources for reps and members on climate change. We have an established network of Green Reps. For further information contact [environment@ucu.org.uk](mailto:environment@ucu.org.uk) or via [www.ucu.org.uk/environment](http://www.ucu.org.uk/environment)

International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) campaigns at a global level on behalf of its 207 million members [www.ituc-csi.org/environment](http://www.ituc-csi.org/environment)

The Lucas Alternative Corporate Plan represented first attempts by the trade union movement to develop a plan that went beyond defending the existing production model. [lucasplan.org.uk/story-of-the-lucas-plan/](http://lucasplan.org.uk/story-of-the-lucas-plan/)

The Vestas dispute in 2009, was one of the first coalitions of unions and environmental activists to support workers at a wind turbine production facility on the Isle of Wight facing closure.

## Just transition

**Just Transition is a social justice term that advocates that workers, the socially disadvantaged, and communities do not suffer adverse consequences from policies to deal with climate change.** Putting people at the heart of climate policy is essential to how we manage the move to a low-carbon future.

In Spain, coal miners' unions agreed a landmark settlement with the Spanish government whereby the communities where economically inefficient mines had been earmarked for closure were invested in. This is to ensure that work needed to make the mines safe, went to former miners; infrastructure investment is made to those communities; and new jobs in the sustainable energy sectors were created.

## #Build back better

"The Covid-19 pandemic is a reminder that our existence on Earth is fragile," said Dr Karen O'Neill, from Rutgers University. "...degraded environments and pollution make us more likely to encounter novel viruses..."

There are a lot of similarities between the climate crisis and the coronavirus crisis. **In both cases, there has been a refusal to listen to scientists, to the academic community, or to the wider communities of people who are most affected.**

If we want to create a better world emerging from the lockdown, the Trade Union movement must sit at the heart of implementing a Green New Deal founded on social justice and workers' rights.

## Green New Deal

A Green New Deal, agreed between the state and representatives of workers, can ensure a sustainable and viable 21<sup>st</sup> century economy based on five principles:

- Reduction of social and economic **inequality**
- Creation of millions of new, well-paid, meaningful, secure green **jobs**
- Decarbonising the economy
- Build a resilient society prepared for climate change, protective of the vulnerable
- Protect and restore vital **habitats** and securing a safe and healthy environment for all

## Get to know... the future

Discover even more - download the podcast: [www.ucu.org.uk/environment](http://www.ucu.org.uk/environment)

- Artemisa Xakriabá** - Indigenous teen stopping destruction across the Amazon
- @israhirsi** - 17yo Environmental Activist and founder of US Youth Climate Strike
- @fortuashla** Fatima-Zahra Ibrahim - Somali Climate Change Activist
- @xiyebastida** 18yo Indigenous Climate Justice Activist
- @Joe\_UKSCN** 17yo Joe Brindle, Teach The Future Campaign Co-ordinator
- Ron Finley**: a guerrilla gardener TED Talk
- Working-Class Environmentalism by **Karen Bell**
- The Future WE Choose by **Christiana Figueres** and **Tom Rivett-Carnac**
- One million climate jobs pamphlet, now in its 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, supported by the UCU
- Join:** local climate action groups
- Look out for:** Lord Bird's Future Generations Bill #todayfortomorrow

**c10,000 years ago**

After the last glacial retreat the Holocene epoch started. This is the period when the climate has been relatively stable

**1273**

A decree was passed in England prohibiting the burning of sea coal because of pollution concerns

**late 18<sup>th</sup> Century**

Revolution – the burning of coal powers the industrialisation of the UK

**1860s**

The so-called Greenhouse Effect analogy stuck. Later Irish scientist John Tyndall explores the idea further

**1958**

Geochemist Charles Keeling outlines ways to record CO<sub>2</sub> levels



**1970**

World Earth Day was first celebrated on April 22nd 1970



**1988**

1988 United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) established

**1997**

Kyoto Protocol contained the first binding emission reduction targets to cut emissions by 5% by 2012. However, no targets were set for developing countries like China, who continued to increase their emissions

**2002**

This year marks the start of the ten hottest years in the UK on record



**2005**

Implementation of the Kyoto Protocol. Russia and USA don't sign



**2008**

UK Climate Change Act – The UK was the first country to set legally binding targets for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions

**2015**

UN Conference of the Parties (COP) in Paris established the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C



**2018**

Extinction Rebellion push the issue of climate catastrophe to the centre of political debate through non violent civil disobedience actions



**2019**

Almost 75% of new electricity capacity was renewable

UCU move Climate Stoppage motion to TUC Annual Congress in support of school strikers. On 20 September workers join school climate strikers for solidarity action



**2020 & beyond**

UCU launches its Green New Deal claim for Colleges and Universities with SOS-UK



**CALL TO ACTION:** It is time to organise and fight for a green future - today. Set up an action group. Audit your workplace. Bargain for a Green New Deal.



**Jean-Baptiste Joseph Fourier** (1768-1830) is generally credited with the discovery of the greenhouse effect.

**James Lovelock** (1919-) is best known for proposing the Gaia hypothesis, seeing the Earth as a self-regulating system.

**Early McLachlan** (1982-) a UCU member, and Director of Tyndall Manchester. They produce world-class agenda-setting research on energy systems, carbon budgets and pathways.

**Wangari Maathai** (1940-2011) used her scientific understanding to launch the Green Belt Movement in Kenya, that linked environmental conservation and women's rights. The Movement has so far planted 51 million plus trees, and trained 30,000 women.

**Greta Thunberg** (2003-) believes humanity is facing an existential crisis because of global warming, and holds the current generation of adults responsible for creating the problem. She has led a series of school strikes that have been hugely influential in raising the profile of the issue.

**Naomi Klein** (1970-) is a writer and social activist known for her criticism of capitalism. She encouraged Trade Union and Occupy movements to join forces, saying the financial crisis and the climate crisis have the same root - unrestrained corporate greed.

**Christiana Figueres** (1956-) was appointed Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in 2010, six months after the failed COP15 in Copenhagen. Subsequently, she worked to rebuild the global climate change negotiating process.

**Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez** (1989-) is a US Democratic Party Congresswoman for New York 14: the Bronx & Queens. She introduced her first piece of legislation, the Green New Deal in 2019. Her plans call for implementing the "social cost of carbon" to address climate change, and in the process, create jobs and boost the economy.

**Caroline Lucas** (1960-) the Green Party MP and climate campaigner helped set up the Green New Deal Group in 2008 putting forward new, greener plans.

**Alan Dalton** (1946-2003) was an environmental campaigner for the British Society for Social Responsibility in Science (BSSRS). He helped set up a new grassroots safety magazine, Hazards Bulletin, created as unions for the first time were given legal rights to participate in workplace safety.

**Sharan Burrow** (1954-) is the General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and a former President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions. The ITUC's first woman General Secretary, she has established action on climate change as a key part of the organisation's strategy.

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