Just Transition events at COP26 in Glasgow

The Just Transition Partnership was launched by the Scottish Trades Union Congress and Friends of the Earth Scotland in 2016 in a joint statement also signed by various trade unions and environment campaigns. It highlights the need for action by governments to secure a just transition for workers in the decarbonisation of employment. The Partnership is helping organise a series of events aimed at trade union and worker organisations at the **Glasgow COP26**. These are detailed in a JTP mailing from which we have extracted the following list of events below. You can contact the Just Transition Partnership here.

JUST TRANSITION HUB

9.30 – 19.30 Monday 8 November, Govan Parish Church, 796 Govan Road G51 2YL

Hosted by STUC, Friends of the Earth Scotland, War on Want, Platform, TUC & the Just Transition Partnership – this will be one of the most comprehensive events yet on what just transition really means. It's part of the People's Summit. There will be loads of top speakers bringing great depth of experience from Scotland and around the world. Read about all the sessions here:

https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/just-transition-hub-at-the-peoples-summit-tickets-189587420077

PEOPLE'S SUMMIT – OTHER RELEVANT EVENTS

Sunday 7 – Wednesday 10 November

Among the other enormous number of other events there are many which are about specific aspects of the just transition. A few are listed below but you can do your own search of the programme by checking the just transition box on the left. You might also do a search using topics like 'climate jobs' or 'green new deal'.

See and search all events Events – COP26 Coalition

GLOBAL DAY OF ACTION FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE 6 NOVEMBER:

TRADE UNION BLOC ON THE GLASGOW MARCH – CLIMATE, JOBS JUSTICE

Assemble Kelvingrove Park: 11.30 pm March off: 12.45 pm Rally at Glasgow Green: 3 – 4 pm Saturday 6 November

The trade union and workers bloc of the march will be headed by an STUC banner: ***Climate:Jobs:Justice*** *(you'll have seen that headline before!). To see where is the assembly point for trade unions, go to Global Day of Action – STUC*

OTHER EVENTS RELATING TO JUST TRANSITION

- *Events supported by Scottish Trade Union Congress: Public Events & Conferences – STUC*
- *Trade Unions for Energy Democracy: TUED Events at COP26 – Google Docs*
- *Just Transition events at COP26 mapped by WWF 1 – 6 November: Just Transition events at COP mapping – Google Shee*

Monday 1 November

13.30 *Glasgow Climate Dialogues: Elevating the Voice of the Global South (with section on just transition).*

Wednesday 3 November

13.30 *The imperative of a Just Transition for the workforce to save our climate* *International Trade Union Confederation*

18.30 *Just Transition: Transforming public transport to fight climate change*

Thursday 4 November

12.30 ***Beyond Energy: A Just transition for all*** *– WWF*

17.00 *Work and Unions Movement Assembly – COP26 Coalition*

Friday 5 November

17.00 *Climate Action – Strike Action-* ***People's Assembly COP26 Rally***

LINK TO THE RECORDING OF THE JUST TRANSITION ONLINE CONFERENCE IN SEPTEMBER 2021 – Climate, Jobs, Justice: Making the Just Transition Happen (jtp.scot)

JUST TRANSITION PARTNERSHIP

Scottish council strikes suspended as government and councils make new offer

The Scottish council strikes due to take place during COP26 have been suspended due to the Scottish government and Scottish councils' umbrella body COSLA, making a new pay offer, *reports Mike Picken for ecosocialist.scot.*

The new offer came at the eleventh hour as council workers in Glasgow were preparing to strike from Monday 1 November, with members of the GMB union threatening to cease all refuse collection and severely disrupt schools in the City as it hosts the world leaders attending COP26.

The revised pay offer came after months of stalling by the employers and government saying there was no further money to afford a better offer than that rejected by the three unions representing the 120,000 council workers affected by the pay award. Negotiations have stalled for 18 months as essential workers continued to work throughout the pandemic without any pay increase.

According to unions and media reports, the new money came in the form of an additional last minute £30 million funding from the Scottish government and £18.5 million from within existing council budgets. The new offer amounts to a flat rate rise of £1,062 for those earning below £25,000 per year (the majority of workers), representing a 5.89% percent pay rise for those on the lowest pay. The pay award is backdated to April 2021 and runs for 12 months.

The unions have suspended the threatened strikes, including those in Glasgow due to start on Monday 1 November, and will now consult members about whether to accept the pay award over the next fortnight. Unions will also almost immediately begin

negotiations over a new pay award from April 2022 at a time when the cost-of-living is spiralling upwards across Britain, particularly energy costs which are a higher burden in Scotland due to the colder climate. Official UK inflation is already over 4% and set to rise in coming months.

The offer falls well short of the joint demand by the unions for a £2,000/£10 per hour minimum pay award, but by winning a mandate for industrial action, despite the legal obstacles, and effective public campaigning the unions have shown how employers can be challenged on pay by the threat of strike action. The funding of the revised offer also indicates that despite trying to wash its hands of the dispute the Scottish government of the SNP, in alliance with the Scottish Green Party, is a key player in council finances and pressure needs to be kept up on them for decent public services at council level and a reversal of all cuts.

#RisingClyde – Action at COP26 in Glasgow

*Two of the most vibrant and active components of the environmental movement in Scotland – Glasgow Calls Out Polluters and Climate Camp Scotland – have teamed up to launch **#RisingClyde**, a compendium of public actions happening in Glasgow during the COP26. Below ecosocialist.scot is publishing the first of their newsletters. We urge our readers to give support and solidarity.*



Hello friends,
Climate Camp Scotland has teamed up with Glasgow Calls Out Polluters to bring you **#RisingClyde** – a roundup of public actions happening at the COP26 climate conference in and around Glasgow over the next two weeks. We will be providing:
>> Action call-outs on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.
>> Regularly updated **Glasgow actions calendar**
>> Press office for radical actions, call us for help!
>> Tonnes of cool videos, comics, explainers, zines and fun on our socials.
>> 'Town Crier' to attend actions on request to announce useful info.
[There is a] Signal Group as an open, non-secure notice board for action call outs – [Contact GCOP or CCS for further info on how to join].
In solidarity,
GCOP and CCS Comms Team #RisingClyde

Public Actions at COP26

29th Oct

• **#DefundClimateChaos Climate Memorial** 10am, Clydeside Amphitheatre, Glasgow [details]

31st Oct

• **The Era of Injustice is Over: Opening Event** 2pm, Landing Hub – Entrances on McAlpine Street x Broomielaw & Carrick Street, Glasgow [details]
• **Stop Climate Horror – march through Edinburgh before COP26** 11am, Middle Meadow Walk, Edinburgh [details]

1st Nov

• **Raise the Banners for Climate Justice** All day, Glasgow-wide [details]

3rd Nov

• **Divest Discobedience** 3pm, Donald Dewar Statue, Glasgow [details]

4th Nov

• **Toxic Tour of Glasgow** 10.30am, George Sq., Glasgow [eventbrite]
• **Green State Vision: West Papua's Struggle for Climate Justice** 12pm, 220 Broomielaw [details]
• **Day of Action against Militarism and the Climate** Global [details]

5th Nov

• **Youth Climate Strike + rally** 11am, Kelvingrove Park, Glasgow [details] [facebook event]

6th Nov

• **Global Day of Action for Climate Justice – Glasgow March** 11am @ Kelvingrove Park, Glasgow [facebook event] [action network] [coach tickets from Edinburgh]
• **Global Day of Action for Climate Justice – digital rally** 6pm, online [details]

7th Nov

• **Living Rent Tour** Glasgow [details]

8th Nov

• **Toxic Tour of Glasgow** 1pm, George Sq., Glasgow [eventbrite]
• **Introduction to Direct Action** 6.30pm, CCA Glasgow [details]

11th Nov

• **Migrant Justice March** 10am, Kenmure St, Glasgow





“Net Zero” – Still a Big Con!

Earlier on in the year, ecosocialist.scot reported on “The Big Con”, a report by Friends of the Earth International and other organisations on “net zero” – [The Big Con: ‘Net zero’]

emissions is a dangerous hoax.

Now we have further evidence of the way that "net zero" is being used by corporations to block climate policy with the publication of an set of case studies compiled by four campaigns listed below.

"Net Zero" is a significant policy campaign of both the Scottish government and the UK government, the Scottish government even has a dedicated website called "Net Zero Nation" with the slogan "Scotland. Let's do net zero".

But this research shows how "net zero" is an empty slogan and is being used as greenwashing by six major corporate players – BP, Microsoft, Drax, IETA, BlackRock and Shell.

One of the essential slogans of the COP26 Coalition call for a Global Day for Climate Justice on 6 November is

"**We Need Real Zero, Not Net Zero**".

This needs to ring and loudly and clearly across Glasgow and Scotland on 6 November!

We reproduce the press report from the Corporate Europe Observatory that links to the new evidence.

> *On the road to COP26, corporations are using "net zero" to block effective climate policy and greenwash their image while maintaining business-as-usual. Alongside Corporate Accountability, Friends of the Earth International and Global Forest Coalition, CEO has looked into the "net zero" conning and COP26 greenwashing of six major corporate players, but they're not alone.*
>
> *In June 2021, more than 70 climate justice groups around the world launched a report, "The Big Con". This report built on previous reports and analysis of "net zero" and revealed how*

Big Polluters across various economic sectors are advancing a "net zero" agenda to delay climate action, deceive the public, and deny the need for real, urgent, and meaningful action. This fact file builds on "The Big Con" by providing more detail on the "net zero" agendas of six major corporate players. These corporate actors include COP26 sponsors, Big Oil and Gas majors, and key influencers in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), as well as in other "net zero" related initiatives such as the Taskforce on Scaling Voluntary Carbon Markets (TSVCM) and the Race to Zero.

Read the 2 page summary here

Read the more in-depth factfile here

Published by Corporate Europe Observatory, 28 October 2021

Scottish rail workers win victory as council strikes go ahead

On almost the eve of COP26 in Glasgow, Scottish rail workers have won a stunning victory on pay while council workers still plan to strike. *Mike Picken reports for ecosocialist.scot*

Late on Wednesday 27 October, after an arbitrary deadline set

by the employers had passed, the RMT trade union **accepted a new pay offer** forced out of ScotRail by the threat of a total two week closure of the network during COP26.

The RMT won a 2.5% twelve month pay award backdated to last April, an extra £300 for all ScotRail workers due to the pressures of hosting COP26, and an improvement in terms on working rest days. Following the decisive vote for all out strike action by RMT members and months of action on Sundays that shut most of the network, the employers offered a 4.7% increase over two years coupled with a worsening of terms and conditions. While other rail unions accepted the RMT stuck out and forced a new offer.

> *RMT General Secretary Mick Lynch in hailing the victory has also called on SERCO to resolve the parallel dispute on the Caledonian Sleeper service. Linking the rail workers claims for investment in rail in the light of the COP, Lynch stated: "There can be no climate justice without workplace justice".*

On the same day that the RMT called for the Caledonian Sleeper service between Scotland and London to be transformed into an alternative to air travel, the UK Chancellor Rishi Sunak announced that he would be cutting air passenger taxes on domestic flights and freezing fuel duty, promoting air and road travel at the expense of rail and the climate.



Demonstration 6 November

The victory and calling off of the industrial action means that thousands of environmental activists attending the COP26 and the big demonstration on 6 November will now be able to use the train network to get to Glasgow. It's a victory for all workers in Scotland and shows that strong trade union action can force concessions from reluctant employers, despite the UK government's draconian anti-trade union that make it exceptionally difficult to win a legal postal ballot. Rail workers will now be set to demand further improvements in workers conditions and reinstate rail service cuts when the ScotRail service is transferred from the private Abellio company to a publicly owned service run by the Scottish government in March 2022.

Council Strikes

Despite the victory on rail, the strikes over pay planned by Glasgow City Council workers are still going ahead and will escalate across other parts of Scotland during the COP26, as unions stepped up joint action over local government pay.

A series of ballots have been held in Scotland's 32 councils to reject the miserly pay offer affecting around 120,000 workers offered by the employers' body, COSLA (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities). GMB union members in Glasgow's cleansing and schools departments have already voted for strike action from 1 November that would stop rubbish collection and severely disrupt schools across the City. Further ballots among selected workers for strike action have been successful in a large number of councils. On 25 October the joint union committee for the pay negotiations, comprising the Unite, Unison and GMB unions, wrote to the employers and announced that they were calling further action across the

country from 8 November. The workers coming out on strike cover school cleaning, school catering, school janitorial, waste, recycling and fleet maintenance services, and will have a severe effect on the operations of a majority of Scottish councils.

The joint union pay demand is for a paying increase of at least £2,000 or 6% and a minimum of at least £10.50 per hour. The employers offer of only £850 or 2%, with a minimum pay rate of £9.78 per hour has been decisively rejected by unions.

Council workers in vital public services such as cleansing are demanding to be treated as essential worker, like NHS and care workers during the pandemic. The SNP-led council in Glasgow has been under constant attack in recent weeks for the state of the city's refuse and vermin infestations. While the Council leaders are desperately trying to present the best possible image of a 'clean city' during COP26 when the eyes of the world will be on Glasgow, only a proper investment in council services and workers can produce such an outcome. As if a reminder of the effect of climate change, the City was deluged with torrential rainfall on the evening of 27 October causing floods and mess that had to be sorted by the very same council workers taking strike action the following week.

Workers across Britain face a huge cost-of-living crisis emerging from the pandemic, with spiralling energy costs and price increases due to the road haulage driver shortage exacerbated by the Tories 'hard' Brexit, increases in national insurance and income tax, and cuts in benefits including for those in low paid jobs, while the wealthy avoid paying their fair share through selective tax cuts that benefit them like the reduction in taxes on internal flights. The Tory UK government's Budget and Public Expenditure announcements from the Chancellor on 27 October do little to address the crisis in living standards of working class people. The Tories say they want a high wage economy – but they only raised the minimum wage to £9.50 for those over 23 while private sector

employers squeal about the impact of raising wages on their profits and many public sector budgets face real terms cuts in government funding. The only way to deal with the cost of living crisis is by workers joining unions and demanding pay rises through the threat of industrial action.

SNP, Greens and Labour need to take action

Scottish councils are primarily funded by the Scottish government – now comprising the Scottish Greens in an agreement with the SNP administration. Labour is also making noises in support of increased pay and between them the SNP, Labour and Scottish Greens, all 'left-of-centre' political parties, have over half of all Scottish Councillors influencing the COSLA employers. Both Labour and the SNP lead various administrations in the councils, though Labour to their shame are in coalition with Tories in several councils and a Labour councillor in West Lothian defected to the Tory party earlier this week.

Both the Scottish government and councillors in the three parties (and independents) should put pressure on COSLA to make an immediate improvement in the pay offer and urgently re-open negotiations with the unions.

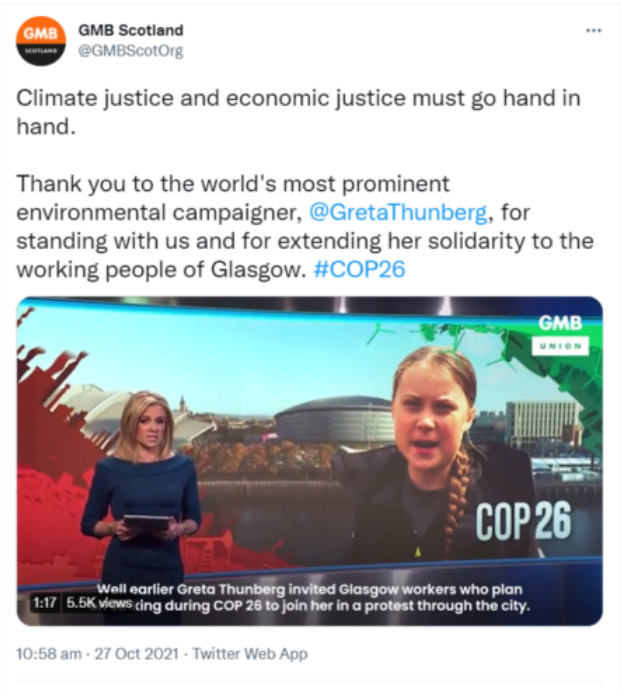
If there are council worker strikes from 1 November, other workers should join picket lines and show solidarity so that the council workers are not isolated.

Thunberg offers solidarity

In an excellent initiative, environmental activist Greta Thunberg has agreed to come to Glasgow for COP26 during the strikes to address the Fridays for the Future school strike

and demonstration on Friday 5 November, and has called for support for striking workers. That this solidarity has been welcomed by GMB Scotland , a union that traditionally has had a defensive attitude towards fossil fuel industries, is a step forward in further linking the environmental and workers movement.





The ‘other’ COP: Biodiversity COP 15 – a virtual conference that achieved virtually nothing?

While COP26 on Climate Change in Glasgow is the focus of attention across the world, it’s also necessary to realise that there are other important aspects of the ecological crisis needing urgent action. The first part of UN’s COP15 on Biodiversity took place online in October. Protection of Biodiversity needs to be an important aspect of our environmental action in Scotland. Sean Thompson of Red Green Labour has posted a report on the COP15 on Biodiversity that ecosocialist.scot is reproducing with kind permission.

The preparations for COP 26 have understandably attracted increasing public and media attention in the run-up to the conference in November. Unfortunately this has tended to overshadow the equally vital COP 15 conference which took place on 11 – 15 October.

The conference, which to be pedantic comprised the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the tenth Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (Cartagena Protocol COP/MOP 10), and the fourth Meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing (Nagoya Protocol COP/MOP 4), had already been postponed three times

because of the Covid 19 pandemic and was finally reconfigured as a two part affair, the first virtual and the second, an actual face-to-face meeting, scheduled for April/May next year in Kunming, China.

Originally signed by 150 countries at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 and later ratified by a further 45, significantly not including the United States, the Convention is designed to protect diversity of plant and animal species and ensure natural resources are used sustainably.

It also aims to achieve 'fair and equitable sharing' of benefits from natural genetic material, used in everything from medicines to new crop species. In practice that means making sure indigenous communities and countries home to biological riches benefit from their use.

Global targets to halt and reverse biodiversity loss have been set before, in both 2002 and 2010, but were largely missed by virtually every country. According to Georgina Chandler of RSPB, a number of countries, including Canada, the European Union, Costa Rica, Colombia and Britain are pushing for greater ambition on nature protection and have the aspiration that the summit will set both long-term goals for 2050 and shorter-term targets for 2030 and, crucially, push for those to be enshrined in national policies.

However, in the event, most of the virtual meeting was taken up with procedural matters, with the secretariat noting "with concern that a number of Parties have not paid their contributions to the core budgets … for 2020 and prior years, including Parties that have never paid their contributions". At the end of the conference, the Kunming Declaration was adopted. This was little more than a statement of good intentions, setting general ambitions for biodiversity protection, but not addressing questions about implementation or further commitments from governments.

Even so, there were some tentative signs of progress. The Declaration did at least note the growing support from countries for '30×30', the aspiration to protect at least 30% of the Earth's land and seas by 2030. At least 20 governments taking part in the meeting stressed the critical importance of the 30×30 goal, making it the most highlighted target by parties in the meeting. Among them was India, which has recently joined the *High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People*, a group of more than 70 countries pushing for the inclusion of 30×30 in the final biodiversity treaty. Significantly, although the USA is not party to the convention, Joe Biden has recently committed to protect at least 30% of his country's land and coastal waters by 2030, as part of the international "30×30" campaign.

In addition, the host of the conference, China, announced a couple of positive, if comparatively modest, initiatives on the sidelines of the event; $230 million to establish the Kunming Biodiversity Fund to support biodiversity protection in developing countries, and the creation of new national parks in China covering an area of 230,000 square kilometres.

Of course, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. The virtual Part One of COP 15 did little more than set the scene for Part two in Kunming next spring. Between now and 25 April, the 195 countries that are signed up to the Convention will have negotiate the targets for the global biodiversity framework that governments will aim to meet by the end of the decade. The draft text of the framework includes proposals to reduce pesticide use by two-thirds and eliminate plastic pollution by the end of the decade as well as the 30×30 target. Whether those goals end up in the final agreement – and whether they are acted on – remains to be seen.

Originally published on Red Green Labour.

Protection of Scotland’s rich natural wildlife and biodiversity in the midst of the ecological crisis is an important aspect of ecosocialist campaigning



Photo by Gary Ellis on Unsplash

Ecosocialism Not Extinction! COP26 Statement of the Ecosocialist Alliance

A new alliance of ecosocialist organisations has recently been formed. In Britain it was formed by three organisations in England and Wales*.

They have issued a statement "Ecosocialism Not Extinction" published below, which ecosocialist.scot is pleased to endorse. You'll be able to get copies of the Ecosocialist Alliance bulletin and poster from ecosocialist.scot stalls at COP26 in Glasgow.

***These are Anti*Capitalist Resistance (a new revolutionary organisation in England & Wales that supporters of the Fourth International participate in), Left Unity and Green Left (an ecosocialist group within the Green Party of England & Wales).**

> *COP 26 unfolds against a backdrop of growing climate chaos and ecological degradation, after an unprecedented summer of heatwaves, wildfires, and flooding events. Climate change is upon us, and we face multiple interlinked and inseparable crises- of climate, environment, extinction, economy and zoonotic diseases. As ecosocialists we say another world is possible, but a massive social and political transformation is needed, requiring the mobilisation of the mass of working people across the globe. Only the end of capitalism's relentless pursuit of private profit, endless waste, and rapacious drive for growth, can provide the solution not only to climate change, environmental degradation, and mass extinction, but to global poverty, hunger, and hyper exploitation.*

The big issues of climate change will be debated in Glasgow but whatever is agreed, capitalism can at best mitigate climate change, not stop it. Genuine climate solutions cannot be based on the very market system that created the problem. Only the organised working class, and the rural oppressed and First Nations of the global south -women and men — have the power to end capitalism, because their labour produces all wealth and they have no great fortune to lose if the system changes, no vested interests in inequality, exploitation, and private profit.

Action now to halt climate change! We demand:

- *All fossil fuels must stay in the ground – no new gas, coal, or oil!*
- *A rapid move to renewable energy for transport, infrastructure, industry, agriculture, and homes*
- *A massive global programme of public works investing in green jobs, and replacing employment in unsustainable industries.*
- *A globally funded just transition for the global south to develop the necessary sustainable technologies and infrastructure.*
- *A major cut in greenhouse gas emissions of at least 70% by 2030, from a 1990 baseline. This must be comprehensive – including all military, aviation, and shipping emissions – and include mechanisms for transparent accounting, measurement, and popular oversight.*
- *The end of emissions trading schemes.*
- *An immediate end to the encroachment on and destruction of the territories of indigenous peoples through extractivism, deforestation and appropriation of land.*

Sustainability and global justice

The long-term global crisis and the immediate effects of catastrophic events impact more severely on women, children,

elders, LGBTQ+ and disabled people and the people of First Nations. An eco-socialist strategy puts social justice and liberation struggles of the oppressed at its core.

Migration is, and will increasingly be, driven by climate change and conflicts and resource wars resulting from it. Accommodating and supporting free movement of people must be a core policy and necessary part of planning for the future.

We call for:

- *Immediate cancellation of the international debt of the global south.*
- *A rapid shift from massive 'factory' farms and large-scale monoculture agribusiness towards eco-friendly farming methods and investment in green agricultural technology to reduce synthetic fertiliser and pesticide use in agriculture and replace these with organic methods and support for small farmers.*
- *A major reduction in meat and dairy production and consumption through education and provision and promotion of high- quality, affordable plant-based alternatives.*
- *The promotion of agricultural systems based on the right to food and food sovereignty, human rights, and with local control over natural resources, seeds, land, water, forests, knowledge, and technology to end food and nutrition insecurity in the global south.*
- *The end of deforestation in the tropical and boreal forests by reduction of demand for imported food, timber, and biofuels.*
- *An end to ecologically and socially destructive extractivism, especially in the territories of indigenous peoples and First Nations .*
- *Respect for the economic, cultural, political and land rights of indigenous peoples and First Nations.*
- *A massive increase in protected areas for biodiversity conservation.*

- *End fuel poverty through retrofitting energy existing homes and buildings with energy efficient sustainable technologies.*

We demand a just transition:

- *Re-skilling of workers in environmentally damaging industries with well paid alternative jobs in the new economy.*
- *Full and democratic involvement of workers to harness the energy and creativity of the working people to design and implement new sustainable technologies and decommission old unsustainable ones.*
- *Resources for popular education and involvement in implementing and enhancing a just transition, with environmental education embedded at all levels within the curriculum.*
- *Urgent development of sustainable, affordable, and high-quality public transport with a comprehensive integrated plan which meets peoples needs and reduces the requirement for private car use.*
- *A planned eco-socialist economy which eliminates waste, duplication and environmentally harmful practices, reduction in the working week and a corresponding increase in leisure time.*
- *Work practices reorganised with the emphasis on fair flexibility and working closer to home, utilising a free and fast broadband infrastructure.*

As eco-socialists we put forward a vision of a just and sustainable world and fight with every ounce of our energy for every change, however small, which makes such a world possible. We will organise and assist wherever possible worker's and community organisations internationally, raising demands on governments and challenging corporations.

Groups

Green Left (UK)

Left Unity (UK)

Anti-Capitalist Resistance (UK)

Global Ecosocialist Network (International)

ecosocialist.scot (Scotland, UK)

RISE (Ireland)

Red Green Labour (UK)

Green Eco-Socialist Network (USA)

People Before Profit (Ireland)

System Change Not Climate Change (USA/Canada)

An Rabharta Glas (in English Green Left) (Ireland)

Climate and Capitalism (International)

Socialist Project (Canada)

Ecosocialist Independent Group (UK) Lancaster City Council

Socialist Action (Canada)

Anti-Fracking Nanas (UK)

Pittsburgh Green Left (USA)

Breakthrough Party (UK)

One Vote for the Planet (UK)

Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (kctu) (South Korea)

Ecosocialist Alliance (UK)

Parti de Gauche Marseille Nord (France)

Grenzeloos (in English Borderless) (Netherlands)

Individuals

Beatrix Campbell (UK) (OBE, writer and broadcaster)

George Monbiot (UK) (journalist, author & environmental activist)

Victor Wallis (USA) (ecosocialist author and professor of political science at the Berklee College of Music in Boston)

Professor Krista Cowman (UK), (Historian)

Peter Sainsbury (Australia) (Professor, School of Medicine, Sydney, University of Notre Dame)

Professor Julia Steinberger (Social Ecology/Ecological Economics) (Switzerland)

Romayne Phoenix (UK)

Jhon Giyai (West Papua)

David Schwartzman (USA) (Climate/energy scientist Member of the Global Greens COP26 Working Group-International Committee Green Party of the United States)

Dee Searle (UK)

Steve Masters (UK) (Environmental activist; Green Party District Councillor, W Berkshire)

Jim Petersen (USA)

Osver Polo Carraco (Peru)

Sally Lansbury (UK) Labour Party Cllr. Allerdale Borough Council

Rafael Arturo Guariguata (Germany)

Tina Rothery (UK)

Christopher Lozinski (USA)

Pat McCarthy (UK)

Clive Healiss (UK)

Felicity Dowling (UK)

Charles Gate (UK)

Emma Lorraine Coulling (UK)

Ken Barker (UK)

Stephen Hall (UK) (President, Greater Manchester Association of Trades Union Councils)

Lucy Early (UK)

Andrew Francis Robinson (UK)

Kevin Frea (UK) (Deputy Leader, Lancaster City Council)

Richard Finnigan (UK)

John Burr (UK)

Andrea Carey-Fuller (UK)

Paul Hutchens (UK)

Gordon Peters (UK)

Jonathan N Fuller (UK)

Nicole Haydock (UK)

Deborah Fink (UK)

Mary Stuart (UK)

Cathy Slaughter (UK)

Anna Moon (UK)

Oliver Charleston (UK)

William A Richardson (UK)

Tamsin Evans (UK)

Gordon Housley (UK)

Rick Evans (UK)

Geoff Bowman (UK)

Graham Wardrope (UK)

Laurent Garsaud (France)

Erfan Rushidi (Iran)

To support the statement and to keep informed about the Ecosocialist Alliance and these particular actions email eco-socialist-action@protonmail.com

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Glasgow communities march against closures and cuts

Hundreds of protesters marched through the streets of Glasgow city centre on Saturday 16 October to oppose the City Council plans to close community facilities.

The SNP-led City Council has put forward a programme of expenditure cuts in the face of the growing financial crisis of Scotland’s 32 councils.



Central to the cuts programme in Glasgow is the closures of libraries, leisure and community facilities organised through *"Glasgow Life"* – a semi autonomous, undemocratic offshoot of the council (officially called an Arms Length External Organisation or "ALEO", a common feature of Scottish councils).

Council "nasty trick"



Rather than close facilities directly, the Council plans to squeeze funding forcing Glasgow Life to declare facilities are unviable and offer to hand them over instead to "community trusts" through a "Community Asset Transfer". This means that instead of being run by the Council, using professional staff and having municipal-level economies of scale, small groups of volunteers will need to fundraise to support essential facilities like libraries and community centres. It's a nasty trick that's long been used by the Tories in England, aided and abetted by Labour councils like those in Birmingham and Waltham Forest. The elected

politicians wash their hands of the services by handing control over which stay open or go to unelected officers, and rely on the "goodwill" and voluntary efforts of community groups to keep services going.

Trade unions and communities using the facilities currently under threat by the cuts by Glasgow Life have banded together to form the new **"Glasgow Against Closures"** protest movement.



The demonstration on Saturday marched from the City's shopping area, under the watchful gaze of the statue of Labour politician Donald Dewar, to the People's Palace in Glasgow Green to hear speakers protesting against the cuts. While there were a lot of lefty paper sellers selling their wares to each other, the important element in the protest was the engagement from local community activists like the campaigns in Drumchapel, Ruchill, Maryhill and Whiteinch parts of the City, alongside support from union members especially members of Unite the union who were prominent on the march.

Municipal Financial Crisis

The municipal financial crisis has been exacerbated by the pandemic, but it has long been a problem that the Scottish devolved government is responsible for central funding of local government alongside the priorities of other directly funded central government services, the NHS in particular. As the demands on NHS Scotland grow and the 'national' services delivered by councils, like schools and social care, are under

pressure with protected funding, the SNP Scottish government has slashed the block grant for other local services run by councils. Councils have very little source of revenue to run local services independent of their Scottish government block grant. The Council Tax is a thoroughly discredited and regressive 30 year old tax system introduced by the Tories, which both the SNP and Labour before them have criticised but failed to replace when in office. While Glasgow is the largest council and faces a particular crisis because of the cost of the equal pay settlement, all Scottish councils face the same challenges.

The SNP argue that the Scottish government, unlike the UK government for England, is forced to depend on a fixed budget with little ability to tax and raise revenue. The SNP answer to this is that rather than resist the austerity imposed on them by the Tories, we should wait for "Jam Tomorrow" in the shape of independence. The Tory UK government Spending Review on 27 October will unleash another wave of cuts in public services across the UK state with budgets in Scotland largely tied to how much is spent by the Tories in England through the 'Barnett formula'. The reality is that Scotland is not going to achieve independence from the Tory UK government if it just means the 'same old Tory austerity' in new SNP clothes and a fightback to defend council services is an essential element of the battle for independence.

We urge everyone to support the union and community campaigns in their street protests and activities against the cuts today, as an essential part of the struggle for an independent and ecosocialist Scotland in future. Glasgow is the start but action needs to be built across Scotland. Five yearly 'all-out'council elections are also due in May 2022 and there should be discussions now about a concerted united electoral challenge in local communities, to highlight the fight against the cuts and closures and build resistance across Scotland. While support from individual Labour Party members and

supporters is very much welcome, we should beware the Scottish Labour Party leadership's record of empty rhetoric against the SNP – savage cuts were also implemented during periods of Labour control of councils and the UK and Scottish governments and Labour's support for the union saddles Scotland with Tory governments it has never voted for.



Drumchapel residents protest under the watchful eye of Donald Dewar

Get Involved

To get involved in Glasgow Against Closures, visit the Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/groups/glasgowagainstclosures/ follow the campaign on Twitter, **@glasgowclosures** (https://twitter.com/glasgowclosures) and get involved in local groups.

(All photographs and words by Mike Picken, ecosocialist.scot)



Unite Community West of Scotland puts the case against Closures

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A Long March for Wales

One of the positive developments in British politics over the last few years has been the rising support for Welsh Independence which according to polls now stands at a record high among the general population. This has also led to a rise in organisations supporting Welsh Independence, including Yes Cymru *(a broad based mass campaign for independence),* Undod *(which means 'Solidarity' and is a new bilingual broad socialist organisation), and the* Welsh Underground Network

(previously Valleys Underground and explicitly a Marxist organisation). Contacts between Scottish and Welsh activists are growing and in this interview with a Welsh Underground Network activist, Paul Inglis of ecosocialist.scot discusses the new politics of Wales. [This article was previously published on the Bella Caledonia website and is republished with their kind permission.]

A Long March for Wales

It was a drab Autumn evening when my friend Joe picked up the phone for our interview. As we spoke he was sitting in a tent near Gloucester, enduring the rain and wind with a good portion of his clothes soaked, but happy to chat politics with a fellow socialist for a while. The weather would have been a nightmare if this were just a weekend camping trip, but by this point Joe was quite used to this sort of thing – he had been on the road since August. His route: An 876-mile trek from Lands' End in Cornwall to John o' Groats here in Scotland – a long camping trip indeed, and one scarcely improved by typical British rain! And the reason for the journey? A rather unusual one, because Joe's goal isn't to raise money for charity, but for the activities of a Welsh Marxist organisation.

The name of this group, for which Joe is exerting his limbs and braving the elements, is the Welsh Underground Network (WUN). They are relatively new on the political scene in Wales, having formed just before the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. The WUN, as previously mentioned, is a Marxist organisation, with the ultimate aim of an independent Welsh socialist republic. But in order to achieve this, they take a different tack from your usual paper-selling, protest-chasing leftie group. The WUN firmly believe that you cannot have lofty political ideals without building an actual power base in communities, without putting in work on the ground to make

your neighbourhood, village or town a more united and better place to live in. Joe summed up this ethos for me in a couple of sentences: “You have to start from home, and you actually have to start. Online activism is good to a degree, but real change comes from getting things done and interacting with people.”

“Serving the People”

To this end, the WUN’s political work consciously takes a form that might be familiar to those who know of the Black Panther Party of the 1960’s and their strategy of building power in communities by “serving the people”. The Network’s activity so far has involved things like local litter pickups, free food events in towns like Merthyr Tydfil, Wrexham, Blackwood, Mountain Ash and Caerphilly, clearing out the Fernhill allotments for restored community use, and helping the Foundation for Jewish Heritage clear out and tidy the site of Merthyr Synagogue, the oldest synagogue in Wales, so that it can be renovated. Joe explained that the WUN do not believe in more “official” forms of political organising like canvassing and doorknocking for elections. They think that socialists must have a more active and meaningful presence in everyday working class life, not just coming round every few years with a yarn about policies and then disappearing until next time. That kind of presence, politics that has deep roots in neighbourhood and class, did once exist in Wales, as Joe pointed out: The old miners’ unions had their own libraries, hospitals, clubs and concert halls, and were a focal point in Welsh working class life. As is well known, that intertwining of politics and the everyday has been severely eroded since the 1980’s, but Joe and his comrades look to rebuild it- They feel that only by doing this can the working class actually have the strength and energy to take an active, fighting part in the battle for both independence and socialism. Of course, the pandemic has hindered the ability of the WUN to do more than they already have, but they are excited to expand their

community programmes even further now that the prospects are opening up for more public political work. Starting from Merthyr Tydfil, the WUN has recently set up a new branch in Wrexham, and are looking to gain more across Wales in the next few months, building towards a national organisation.

It's for this "serve the people" work that Joe, chairman of the WUN, is walking across the island of Britain to raise money. Referred to by the WUN as the "Long March", a nod to the Chinese Red Army's epic year-long march across China that is only slightly tongue-in-cheek, Joe's trek aims to supply the basis for more free food events, more litter-picks, and all the equipment needed for these. He was explicit that the money from this fundraiser will not be going towards leaflets or banners- It is for helping people directly, not for propagandising. The reason the fundraiser has taken on the specific form of a walk underlines the WUN's emphasis on socialists getting out and actually doing things. Joe was eager to dispel the stereotype of "socialists, particularly in the West, being permanently online activists doing nothing but spending all day arguing with each other over semantics while the world burns." Robust physical activity is certainly one way to fight the cliché of the "three-times-a-week book club and nothing else" leftie. In addition, Joe was enthusiastic about the potential of a journey like this for communicating the WUN's ideas and for making links with activists throughout England and Scotland: "It gives us a chance to talk to people across the UK and say that, while we are for national independence, we are still internationalists and want to communicate that solidarity."

Now, while this particular Long March might not be as high-stakes as the original, it has nevertheless been beset by an enemy even more determined than the Kuomintang: British weather. This has been Joe's main challenge so far. From heatstroke-inducing late Summer sun in Cornwall to all the leaks and soaked clothes that rain brings, Joe has been

experiencing nature’s climatic variety first hand, and soon he will be meeting with the chill of Scotland in late Autumn and early Winter. These obstacles however, and the random aches and bruises of nomadic life, are being borne by Joe with courage and good humour, an example of the sort of socialist fighting spirit that is often parodied and mythologised, but which is inspiring to see in genuine motion. Of course, the path isn’t just filled with struggle. Joe has also found great kindness in the areas he has walked, with free meals and places to stay being offered him again and again.

Socialist Ideals

Moving from the immediate topic of the march, I asked Joe about his own socialist ideals. It’s the case that the Panther-style organising discussed earlier isn’t the only way in which the WUN calls on the legacy of the 60’s. Indeed, the group takes up the language and the ideas of the old black revolutionaries in talking of the WUN’s own “ten-point programme” for an independent Wales based on working class unity and socialist principles. At the heart of the beliefs of the Panthers and the WUN is a demand for self-determination in its broadest sense. With that in mind, I wanted to know why Joe, as a socialist, believes in Welsh independence.

For Joe, as for many of us, James Connolly’s famous remarks on Irish independence are a guiding light, so it was no surprise that he began by referencing them. They bear quoting in full:

“If you remove the English Army tomorrow and hoist the green flag over Dublin Castle, unless you set about the organization of the Socialist Republic your efforts will be in vain. England will still rule you. She would rule you through her capitalists, through her landlords, through her financiers, through the whole array of commercial and individualist institutions she has planted in this country and watered with the tears of our mothers and the blood of our martyrs.”

Those lines underpin the classic contention of socialists involved in independence movements the world over, past and present, who have argued that there can be no real change unless there is socialist change. Nevertheless, Connolly *did* still fight for Irish independence, and the WUN and their counterparts here in Scotland do the same. For Joe, it's a point familiar to us Scots that leads him to support independence – the barrier the British state poses to progressive change in Wales. The democratic deficit that is so often the meat of political issues here also exists in Wales, in a similarly potent form. Joe pointed to the limited remit of the Senedd, and the fact that Welsh institutions are largely run from Westminster. He also spoke about how Wales has voted for social democratic government for over a century, as long as Labour has been in existence, and how it has only really had an impact in a national election twice. I'm sure that disappointing feeling, of not getting what your country actually votes for, will resonate with readers here in Scotland.

Community Power

On the other hand, Joe doesn't have any illusions that Welsh-run institutions would *necessarily* be more progressive than English-run ones. Given his quoting of Connolly, it would be a surprise if he did. It's just that, with the current direction of English politics, he doesn't see a path for socialism in Wales that can be followed while the British state still has a grip over the political life of the country. His scepticism about a progressive future for Wales within the United Kingdom is especially pertinent given the recent crushing failure of Corbynism and the return to British statist reformism it signified. It's a scepticism that is sure to be shared by many across these islands as the gulfs between the distinct political worlds of the home nations widen more with every passing month.

As our call drew to a close, I wanted to know what Joe would

say to anyone reading this article who would like to set up their own community-power type organisation. Joe was immediately enthusiastic: “Absolutely do it! Don’t think that you need a million people to start it. You don’t.” He continued, explaining that when the WUN started out it was just him for the first couple of weeks, doing a litter-pick in the local area and posting about it on the group’s social media. From there, with people seeing the posts and asking to join, the group was able to expand its work and further grow in size. In Joe’s opinion, people tend to overestimate the effort that goes into starting an organisation, when in actual fact the real struggle comes with *maintaining* an organisation. “If you want to start it, go out and do something, and even if you fail it is okay because you can pick yourself up and start again.” For him, consistency and dedication are the important things, even if they take a while to bear fruit.

I finished by asking Joe how readers in Scotland could show support. Given our shared fight for self-determination and the fact that at time of writing it won’t be long before he enters the country, I was excited to bring news of Joe’s march to a Scottish audience. Naturally, he pointed to the WUN’s fundraiser as a key way of lending a hand, emphasising that even the smallest amounts would go a long way towards helping the group’s work in neighbourhoods across Wales. In addition to this, Joe once again expressed his desire to make links with activists in Scotland, asking that any interested readers reach out and get in contact with him and the WUN via their social media. If you can keep him supplied, give him a place to stay, or just want a chat with a comrade from Wales, give him a shout! Beyond all that, Joe simply wants more people to do what the WUN are doing. If they can encourage more people to get organised and have a go in their own communities, it’ll be a victory for the working class.

You can donate to the WUN crowdfunder

at: https://www.gofundme.com/f/wun-walks-britain?utm_source=customer&utm_medium=copy_link_all&utm_campaign=p_cp%20share-sheet&fbclid=IwAR0NBfXKyR2ZeytW7jvsSO1lVtvR0Y_hWWlKBbTiiwBDpIor_h-6KOT3s_Y

Get in contact with Joe and keep up to date with the Long March at: https://twitter.com/cawsabara

And get in contact with the Welsh Underground Network at:

https://twitter.com/WelshUGN

https://www.facebook.com/WelshUGN

https://welshundergroundnetwork.com/



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Footnote: ecosocialist.scot stands in the tradition of the

Fourth International in Britain which for a long time been one of the few left wing British organisations consistently supporting both Scottish and Welsh independence. You can read about our position on ***Scottish Independence*** *here: https://www.ecosocialist.scot/?page_id=52, and in order to learn more about the marxist position on Welsh Nationalism and nationalism in general, we would particularly recommend a compendium of writings called* ***'Whispers of a Forgotten Nation'*** *by* ***Ceri Evans****, which can be found here: https://valleysunderground.files.wordpress.com/2020/04/whispers_of_a_forgotten_nation_-_the_wri-2.pdf Ceri Evans was a Welsh writer and academic, a longstanding member of the Fourth International, who sadly died in 2002.*

Scottish workers vote to strike during COP26

Scottish trade union members in two unions – RMT members on ScotRail and the Caledonian Sleeper, and GMB members in Glasgow City Council – have voted overwhelmingly to strike during COP26 in November. Industrial action is also likely at the Stagecoach bus company by Unite the Union members. *Mike Picken* reports for *ecosocialist.scot* on what could be a forthcoming 'Scottish Winter of Discontent'.

Further strikes threatened on ScotRail network

84% of the 2,000 members of the RMT working on ScotRail voted

to hold strike action across Scotland over a pay claim. The strikes could be held during the COP26 in Glasgow from 1-11 November when transport systems will already be under severe pressure.

The dispute has provoked the SNP government transport minister, Graeme Dey, into trying to challenge the RMT union and the legitimacy of the ballot vote. In an interview on BBC Radio Scotland, Dey claimed the dispute was 'no longer valid' as a new pay offer had been made. ScotRail had announced after the ballot had commenced that they would make a miserly two year 4.7% pay offer. This is likely to be well below inflation rates, given the current Tory cost-of-living crisis across Britain with soaring energy costs and road haulage distribution problems, caused in part by skilled labour shortages because of the Tory pursuit of Brexit at all costs. The Tories are desperately trying to apply sticking plaster to the damage done to the road haulage industriy by the exclusion of EU workers from the Labour force – it doesn't seem to have occured to them to expand rail freight as an alternative to diesel lorries clogging up the roads. The below inflation pay offer from ScotRail was also coupled with major reductions in working conditions and standards. The RMT has responded by ridiculing the offer and demanding that the Scottish government get round the table with ScotRail and the RMT to put forward a reasonable offer.

> *RMT Scotland organiser Michael Hogg, a former miner, said it was a* ***"lousy, rotten offer"*** *of a 4.7% increase [over two years] which was not worthy of consideration because it required* ***"members to sell hard-earned terms and conditions in order to get a pay rise"***



RMT Organiser Michael Hogg

ScotRail has been in dispute with the RMT for many months over conductor and ticket examiner conditions and pay and the RMT have recently been holding strikes on Sundays which has shut much of the network down. Senior figures in the SNP government have already disgraced themselves by trying to claim that the dispute is being manipulated by the RMT leadership in London, despite the fact that the disputes are led by the Scottish leadership of the union and repeatedly supported by rank and file membership in legal ballots. In fact the RMT is one of the few unions in Britain that actually supports the core SNP policy of Scottish Independence and the union called for a vote 'Yes' in the 2014 referendum. The RMT was also disaffiliated by the Labour Party in 2004 after its Scottish section agreed to support and affiliate to the Scottish Socialist Party, a pro independence party standing against Scottish Labour.

A key issue in the framing of the Scottish government's anti-union response to the current dispute will be the attitude taken by the SNP's recent junior governmental partner, the Scottish Green Party. The Scottish Green Party currently support the SNP government in parliament and have two junior governmental ministers including part of the Transport brief.

The Scottish Green Party Trade Union Group immediately issued a statement saying:

> *"Abellio and Serco have let the railways down. Their intransigence has cost Scotland most Sunday services and now*

> *travel during COP26. As lay members and trade unionists we support the RMT, a shining example of leverage, and urge the employers to make a genuine worthy offer.” Scottish Green Party Trade Union Group*

This statement has been retweeted by ecosocialist Scottish Green MSP Maggie Chapman, who had also issued a statement after the SNP attacked the ‘London-based’ RMT with the single word “Solidarity!” in support of the RMT action.

Friends of the Earth Scotland, one of the main environment organisations backing the COP26 Coalition demonstrations and events in Glasgow during the COP also tweeted solidarity with the latest workers’ actions, demonstrating the importance of solidarity between the union and environmental movements built in the recent period.

> *Solidarity with workers who are taking action to defend their jobs & conditions @GMBGlasgowCC @RMTunion @UniteScotland*
>
> *Responding to the climate crisis means we must create decent green jobs but we must also stand alongside those already doing these vital roles.*
> *#COP26*
>
> *— Friends of the Earth Scotland (@FoEScot) October 14, 2021*

ScotRail is the main rail service across Scotland and is currently run by a private company, Abellio. Under Britain’s privatised and fragmented rail system, private train operators are awarded contracts, called ‘franchises’, under rules enacted by the Tory UK government – 13 years of UK Labour government 1997-2010 under Tony Blair and Gordon Brown failed to change the privatised system however. The Scottish government, led by the SNP with an agreement with the Scottish Green Party, subsidises the costs of the franchise. The Scottish government has some legal powers over the franchise

and after much prevarication over poor performance from Abellio finally called time on the franchise by announcing that the government would take over the running of the network from March 2022. This was a big climbdown by the SNP who claim to be social democratic and who repeatedly claimed in the face of demands from the left wing RMT that they did not have the power to nationalise the network. But this hollow claim was exposed when the Welsh Labour-led devolved government nationalised and took over part of the network in Wales last year. However since the announcement that the Scottish government would take over, Abellio announced big cuts to the network services from December leading to protests from all the rail unions and passenger campaign groups.

Caledonian Sleeper dispute

RMT members on the Caledonian Sleeper service have also voted overwhelmingly to strike over pay during COP26. The Caledonian Sleeper is a separate privatised rail franchise for an overnight service between Scotland and London and is currently operated by the SERCO group. SERCO is a private sector outsourcing company run by a Tory grandee with strong links with the UK Tory party and government. It is notorious for getting contracts underhand from the Tory government at Westminster, most notably for the lamentable 'Test and Trace' privatised testing system set up in response to the Covid pandemic and ridiculously given 'NHS' branding by the Tory UK government when it has nothing to do with the state-run NHS systems. RMT has previously held strikes and been in dispute with SERCO over their failure to create safe workplace conditions during the pandemic, ironic given the parent companies propensity to seek billions in contracts from the UK government for public health functions that should have been undertaken by the state.

Glasgow bin and school workers vote to strike – Council heads for crisis

In addition to the likely RMT strikes, Glasgow City Council bin and school workers in the GMB trade union have also voted overwhelmingly to strike over a pay claim during the COP26.

The pay offer had been put forward by the umbrella body representing Scotland's 32 councils – COSLA, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities – and there are a number of ongoing strike ballots among various unions in council workforces across the country.

GMB members in Glasgow City Council represent 900 bin workers and 600 school support staff. They voted by a magnificent 96.9% to reject the pay offer and support strike action during the COP26. This could mean widespread school closures and bins unemptied across the city as it welcomes tens of thousands to the city.



GMB members protest outside Glasgow City Chambers (photo: GMB)

COSLA say their hands are tied by the lack of funding from the Scottish government, which has found money to pay NHS key

workers more. The GMB rightly argue that their members were also key workers during the pandemic and deserve better pay.

There will be severe pressure on the minority SNP leadership of Glasgow City Council to demand more money is put on the table by COSLA. The seven Scottish Green Party councillors can take the lead in demanding support for council workers and unions. Scottish Labour are also likely to challenge, cynically, the SNP government to solve the crisis. But Scottish Labour have long been part of the problem. Glasgow City Council is Scotland's largest council by far and was under Labour control for over 40 years until 2017, overseeing cuts in services and discriminatory pay systems that eventually resulted in a massive equal pay payout after the Council was found guilty in the courts. The court decision and the subsequent payout costs in the equal pay case against the previous Labour council was a massive victory for women workers, who had been discriminated against by Labour for decades. But the one billion pound cost of the settlement is costing the council dearly, particularly in the faltering system of grant funding coming from the Scottish government and the failings of the 30 year old Council Tax system leading to cuts in services.

> *In Glasgow we have reached the legal threshold in our Industrial Action Ballot.*
>
> *96.9% voted in favour of Industrial Action in response to the latest pay offer from @COSLA*
>
> *Unless there is an improved offer on Monday we will be taking action in Glasgow during COP 26 pic.twitter.com/rEXapaGYHL*
>
> *— Glasgow GMB (@GMBGlasgowCC) October 14, 2021*

Proposed cuts in Glasgow City Council services are threatening the closure of community centres and local libraries. They have been challenged by a new community and trade union campaign – 'Glasgow Against Closures' which has held marches and protests across the city, the next taking place on Saturday 16th October (12.30 Buchanan Galleries). Local council elections take place across Scotland in May 2022 and there is already talk about anti-cuts and socialist candidates challenging the SNP government and local administrations.

It's not good enough for the SNP government to blame UK government funding to Scotland. The SNP at local and national level need to get behind the council and other public workers, and offer solidarity in challenging the UK government to prioritise public services. However, the signs are that the UK Chancellor's public expenditure Budget and Spending Review statement on 27 October is set to unleash massive cuts. Analysis by the Institute for Fiscal Studies and others shows that given the costs of the privatised response to the pandemic, increased Defence, NHS and school spending, all other public services in all parts of the UK are likely to see budgets slashed as the millionaire Tory government unleashes another wave of austerity cuts. It will take a massive defence campaign across the labour movement and communities to resist these cuts in Scotland, and elsewhere in the UK.

The Scottish Socialist Party National Workplace Organiser has offered the solidarity of his party to the workers in dispute.



Scottish Socialist Party National Workplace Organiser Richie Venton gives solidarity to RMT and GMB members

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Exponential Growth on a Finite Planet

Science is telling us that we have less than 10 years in which to hold the global average surface temperature below 1.5degC, *writes Alan Thornett*. After which dangerous and irreversible feedback processes will start to take control.

Those of us who inhabit planet Earth today face an existential problem. Our own species, homo sapiens (modern humans), are trashing the planet at an ever increasing and more destructive rate. We are also the first generation to comprehend the full depth of this crisis, and we could be the last with a the chance to do anything about it. The ability of the planet to sustain human life could be gone within decades, and we could

face major social breakdown by mid-century. Or as Jem Bendall, an XR supporter, puts it in his essay ***Deep Adaptation*** we are facing a "near-term collapse of society with serious ramifications for future of (the planet's) inhabitants".

Temperature records, however, continue to be broken with frightening regularity. Floods, droughts and wild fires are more intense and more frequent every year. The artic sea ice will soon be gone, and parts of Antarctica are warming 5 times faster than the rest of the planet. Both the Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets are destabilising – the melting of which would raise the sea level by up to 20 metres, which would obliterate swathes of the most densely populated parts of the globe. The planets permafrost regions are now melting 50 per cent faster than previously thought – with the potential to release vast quantities of methane, a powerful greenhouse gas. The planets biodiversity, also essential to human life on the planet, is collapsing in front of our eyes.

Economic growth

The most dangerous (and intractable) aspect of the ecological crisis is endless exponential economic growth – which is central the prevailing economic paradigm, and which is driving the planet to catastrophe in just a few decades. As George Monbiot has said recently, as far as I know for the first time: 'Green growth' doesn't exist – less of everything is the only way to avert catastrophe' – and he is absolutely right.

This has been a long-term blind-spot for the left. After WW2 the whole world – on both sides of the iron curtain – emerged fully signed up to growth and productivism – including all sections of the left. In the USSR Stakhanovism was dominant despite the environmental measures taken by the Bolsheviks in the early years of the revolution. Western Marxism – mainstream Marxism in the Global North – was now devoid of any

detectable ecological legacy from classical Marxism. It was as John Bellamy Foster has put it: 'in denial of the dialectic of nature'.

In the car industry – where I worked in the 1960s and 70s – there were strong trade unions, but growth and productivism was rife and unchallenged, including by the left. Environmental issues were dismissed as a middleclass diversion from the 'real' struggles around wages, working conditions.

In the 1980s ***The Alternative Economic Strategy***, the bible of the Bennite left (inside and outside of the Labour Party), was fully signed up. It started with the following statement: "The essential basis for any alternative economic strategy must be a policy for planned economic expansion". The ecology of the planet is not mentioned anywhere in its 45 pages.

There has been some change since then, pushed by the degrowth movement, but degrowth is far from universally accepted. (The degrowth movement emerged in Barcelona in 1987 and became strong in France where collective called Research and Degrowth was founded in Paris n 2008 which held conferences every few years with attendances of three or four thousand.)

Johnathan Neale, for example, in his recent book ***Fight the Fire***, is openly opposed to challenging growth, arguing that we have to defeat poverty first – though he does not rule out doing so longer-term. The problem with this is the damage being done now and the danger that there may be no 'long-term' available to us.

The damage done by productivism in the 20th century, however, is only matched by the scale of the problem itself.

The scale of the problem

The clearest exponent of degrowth, in my view, is Giorgos Kallis, a Greek Professor of economics at the Institute of

Environmental Science and Technology in Barcelona, particularly his 2018 book '***degrowth***'. He points out, for example, that with an exponential growth rate of 3 per cent a year – which has prevailed globally for the past 60 years – the global economy doubles every 24 years. It is four times bigger within 48 years, eight times bigger within 72 years, and so on. The idea that an economy can grow to infinity, he says, is "absurd."

The faster we produce and consume goods, he argues, the more we transform and damage the environment. "There is no way to have our cake and eat it if we are to avoid destroying the planet's life support systems. The global economy will have to slow down. We should extract less and produce less, and we should do it differently. To prosper without growth we have to establish a radically different economic system and way of living."

Jason Hickel (an XR supporter) takes the same view in his 2020 book ***Less is More –how degrowth will save the World***. As the GDP grows, he says "the global economy churns through more energy resources and waste each year, to the point where it is dramatically overshooting what scientists have defined as safe planetary boundaries – with devastating consequences for the living world".

The unavoidable conclusion from this is that with today's growth rate, what-ever else we do to avoid the destruction of the planet – and there are myriad things we have to do – will eventually be swept aside by it.

Rising Population

A major component of global GDP is the rising human population, although not always identified as such.

Many on the radical left avoid (or even object to) discussing it. Others deny that it is happening, often quoting the

falling (global) birth rate. Whilst this is true the death rate is falling as well, and the population, in absolute terms, continues to rise by 80m a year: which means it doubles every 24 years. The UN expects it to reach 9 billion by 2050 and just under 11 billion by 2100. It may then peak, but it would be too late to make any difference.

This increase compounded by rapid urbanisation. There are now 34 mega cities in the world, exceeding 10m people with Tokyo as the biggest with 37 million people. There are three others in excess of 20m – Shanghai with 25m and Chongqing and Beijing with 22m. China is currently planning a super-city with a population of 40 million in the Pearl River Delta.

One recent major study that does identify population as a component of GDP was ***The Dasgupta Review (The Economics of Biodiversity: The Dasgupta Review)***. Which was commissioned by the UK government published in February of this year. Although government sponsored it went seriously off message, arguing, rightly in my view, that economic growth and population growth are indivisible – that you can't, in the end, contain economic growth without containing population growth.

It points to three parallel components of GDP: "population size; per capita GDP, the efficiency with which we convert the biosphere's goods and services into GDP, and the extent to which the biosphere is transformed by global waste disposal". These factors, it insists, "are not independent of one another, and are, in any case, the outcome of our own choices."

After an embarrassing public launch with Boris Johnson, David Attenborough, and many others praising it to the skies, ***the Review*** was banished to the very long grass.

Tim Jackson, a professor of sustainable development at the University of Surrey, says the following on populations in his best-selling book***Prosperity Without Growth*** published in 2009:

“A world in which things simply go on as usual is already inconceivable. But what about a world in which an estimated 9 billion people [the UN projection by 2050] all achieve the level of affluence expected in the OECD nations? Such an economy would need to be 15 times the size of today’s economy (75 times what it was in 1950) by 2050, and 40 times bigger than today’s economy (200 times bigger than 1950) by the end of the century. What on earth does such an economy look like? What does it run on? Does it really offer a credible vision for a shared and lasting prosperity?“

Any attempt to reduce population growth, however, must be based entirely on the empowerment of women to control their own lives and their own fertility through full access to health services, education and employment, and must reject any and all form of coercive control.

Giorgos Kallis supports this approach, including opposition to population control.

The ‘anthropogenic techno-mass’

Another major indicator of human impact is the concept of the ‘anthropogenic techno-mass’(all human made stuff). It includes all roads, factories, houses, vehicles, railways, shipping, aviation, shopping malls, fishing vessels, printing paper, plastic, computers, smartphones and all the other infrastructure of today’s daily life. The world’s plastic alone, for example, now weighs twice as much as all marine and terrestrial animals, and buildings now outweigh all trees and shrubs.

This concept was first advanced in 2000 by the Dutch atmospheric chemist Paul J. Crutzen and Eugene F Stoermer, a biologist from the University of Michigan. Their work was and followed up in 2016 by a paper entitled ‘***Scale and Diversity of the Physical Technosphere: A Geological Perspective’***, published in the ***Anthropogenic Review***.

Last year Israeli scientists published a further study of the Anthropogenic techno-mass in the journal ***Nature*** entitled ***Global human-made mass exceeds all living biomass.***

It was timed it to coincide with the point at which the Anthropogenic techno-mass – which now weighs in at a gigantic 1.1 trillion tonnes – has become equal to the total natural global bio-mass – all flora and fauna.

They also point out that creation of human techno-mass has accelerated over the past 120 years and now doubles every 20 years. It has gone from 3 percent of the world's biomass in 1900 to parity with it today.

These findings also consistent with the idea of the Anthropocene, the decision of scientists to rename the current planetary epoch (the Holocene or interglacial period) as the epoch of the Anthropocene – or the epoch of human beings.

As far as I can tell, however, the radical, or indeed Marxist left, have yest to show any interest in it.

The Limits to Growth Report

Debate on growth is not new, of course. In 1972 it was the subject of ***TheLimits to GrowthReport*** published by the Club of Rome and written, principally, by Donella and Dennis Meadows from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. It sold 12 million copies, was translated into 37 languages, and remains the top-selling environmental title of all time. It was highly influential – along with Rachel Carson's ***Silent Spring*** 10 years earlier – in stimulating the emergence of the modern environmental movement that was taking place at the time.

The central message of the ***Report*** was that it is impossible to have exponential growth in a finite system like the Earth without its systems sooner or later collapsing. Its conclusion

was that “if 1970 rates of economic growth, resource use and pollution continued unchanged, then modern civilisation would face environmental and economic collapse sometime in the mid-twenty-first century:” which has turned out to be a remarkable accurate prediction.

It was heavily attacked by the establishment, but the left was deeply divided. The Austrian philosopher and ecologist André Gorz defended the ***Report*** in his 1980 book *Ecology as Politics.* In the end he said: “Physical growth has physical limits, and any attempt to push them back (by recycling and purification) only pushes the problem around.”

In 2009 the legacy of the ***Report*** was strongly defended by Tim Jackson – an ecological economist and professor of sustainable development at the University of Surrey – in his book***Prosperity Without Growth. The Limits to Growth Report***, he says, ‘with all the advantage of hindsight’, has turned out to be a ‘remarkably accurate’ analysis.

Today, he says: “questioning growth is deemed to be the act of lunatics, idealists, and revolutionaries… But question it we must. The idea of a non-growing economy may be an anathema to an economist. But the idea of a continually growing economy is anathema to an ecologist. No subsystem of a finite system can grow indefinitely, in physical terms. Economists have to be able to answer the question of how a continually growing economic system can fit within a finite ecological system.

Jackson says the following on population: “A world in which things go on as usual is already inconceivable. But what about a world in which an estimated 9 billion people all achieve the level of affluence expected in the OECD nations? Such an economy would need to be 15 times the size of today’s economy (75 times what it was in 1950) by 2050, and 40 times bigger than today’s economy (200 times bigger than 1950) by the end of the century. What on earth does such an economy look like? What does it run on? Does it really offer a credible vision

for a shared and lasting prosperity? …”

Naomi Klein puts it this way in ***This Changes Everything:*** ‘steady exponential material growth with no limits on resource consumption and population is the dominant conceptual model used by today’s decision makers.” It is, however, total nonsense. Economic growth, along with population growth, is one of the main drivers of global warming and environmental destruction, and it cannot continue at its current rate without disastrous results.

Even Al Gore in his 2013 book ***The Future*** points out that:

The rapid growth of human civilisation – in the number of people, the power of technology, the size of the global economy – is colliding with approaching limits to the supply of key natural resources on which millions of lives depend, including topsoil and freshwater. It is also seriously damaging to the integrity of crucial planetary ecological systems. Yet ‘growth’ in the peculiar and self-defeating way we define it, continues to be the principal and overriding objective of almost all the global economic policies and the business plans of almost all corporations.

High growth rates, including that of population, were and are highly popular with ruling elites, of course, who see in expanding markets, higher profits, workers for factories and services, and soldiers for the battlefields.

The case for degrowth

Giorgos Kallis concludes his book as follows: “This book has presented the case for a radical social transformation that leads to a significant reduction in societies throughput. I have argued that degrowth is necessary because if growth continues at pace, we will cross planetary boundaries with unforeseen and in all certainty very undesirable consequences. Degrowth is not only ecologically necessary but also socially

desirable. The pursuit of perpetual growth is a major obstacle to the achievement of a more equal society that lives in creative balance with the environment. Growth is fuelled by exploitation and cost-shifting. A sharing sociality cannot, and should not, be one that constantly expands, constantly creates new frontiers that only a few can access… If this is right then the future will be by necessity one of lower throughput – the question is will it be by design or disaster?"

He is right. The planet cannot survive the 20th century model of the throwaway society, particularly in the Global North. Vast amounts of commodities are churned out, driven by the advertising industry, that go from factory to landfill in very short periods of time.

The fashion industry (for example) produces 150 billion garments a year, enough to provide twenty new articles of clothing for every person on the planet. Eighty per cent of all clothing, irrespective of the level of use, including baby clothes that are discarded very quickly, goes into landfill. Every year, consumers in the UK buy 2 million tonnes of clothes, of which more than half – 1.2 million tonnes – ends up in landfill. Religious and other popular festivals, like Christmas, result in the production of vast quantities of stuff that is used very little or even remains entirely unused before reaching a landfill site.

Alongside the clothing industry we have plastic waste. A survey by Greenpeace found that single-use plastic bottles weighing more than 2 million tonnes are sold every year; another study has shown that that by 2050 there will be more plastic waste than fish in the sea.

What kind of new society?

This issue came up in the discussion, and it is very

important.

First, the ecological crisis (in my view) cannot be reduced to the capitalist system, nor the solution reduced to its overthrow – hugely destructive as it is. The environmental crisis is first and foremost anthropogenic and major anthropological damage was inflicted on the ecosphere of the planet long before the arrival of capitalism – and the struggle (hopefully) will continue long after it is gone – depending on the nature of its removal and the alternative that replaces it. The deforestation of Britain, for example, took place in the Neolithic period.

20th century models as to what a post capitalist society would look like have little to offer. The depth of the crisis today redefines the socialist (i.e. ecosocialist) project. It is no longer a struggle 'simply' to replace capitalism with an economically and socially just society. Today we have to go further. A society that (for example) rejects growth from the outset and is capable of constructing a none-exploitative relationship between human beings and the natural world that is sustainable for the long term for both ourselves and the millions of other species with which we share the planet.

This is only achievable if it is pursued and advocated a conscious objective during the revolutionary struggle itself. This is what makes the strategic issues so important today. It is also what makes an ecosocialist world view indispensable: which criticises both the capitalist 'market ecology' and productivist 'socialism' – which ignores the Earth's limits. This involves a shift away from quantitative and toward qualitative economic criteria, and an emphasis on use-value instead of exchange-value.

Can such changes be contained within the capitalist system? No. Growth based economies collapse without growth. We therefore have to fight for such changes, in the here and now, whilst capitalism still exists as part of a longer term

project to replace capitalism with an ecosocialist society. We have just 10 years in which to reach zero carbon, after the revolution will be too late. Socialism can't be built on a dead planet.

Our task, therefore, is to force the elites to make major structural changes, in the here and now, whilst capitalism still exists – including the complete decarbonisation of the global economy and its replacement by renewable energy.

Reforms are not necessarily reformist. The most effective road to revolutionary change is via the struggle for partial and transitional demands. The struggle for such demands generates both self-organisation and ecological consciousness and can take the struggle to a higher and more radical stage. In any case, if we are unable to build the kind of movement capable of forcing capitalism to make big changes, how are we going to build a movement capable of expropriating it by revolutionary means?

William Morris

Few have critiqued growth more effectively, or indeed set out the principles of a future sustainable society, than William Morris – Britain's first ecosocialist.

In his lecture '***Makeshift***', for example, delivered in Manchester in 1894 he said the following:

> *"My friends, a very great many people are employed in producing mere nuisances, like barbed wire, 100 ton guns, sky signs and advertising boards for the disfigurement of the green fields along the railways and so forth. But apart from these nuisances, how many more are employed in making market wares for rich people which are of no use whatever except to enable the said rich to `spend their money' as 'tis called; and again how many more in producing wretched makeshifts for the working classes because they are so poor that they can*

> *afford nothing better?”*

In his lecture ***Useful Work Versus Useless Toil*** delivered in London the same year, he added:

> *“Next there is the mass of people employed in making articles of folly and luxury, the demand for which comes from the rich non-producing classes and which most people would not dream of wanting. These things are not wealth but waste. Wealth is what Nature gives us: sunlight, fresh air, the unspoiled earth, food, clothing and necessary housing; the storing and dissemination of knowledge, the means of communication between humans and works of art created when humans are most aspiring and thoughtful – all the things which serve free people.”*

We can’t go back to the medieval village of course but there are a lot of lesions for us in what Morris had to say.

Action demands

- **A crash programme to decarbonise the economy with a socially just transition to renewable energy. A big reduction in working hours to protect jobs whilst restricting the size of the economy.**
- **Abolish the internal combustion engine. Electrify road transport, including cars, with a big reduction on the number of cars. Severely restrict SUVs. End all road building schemes. End airport expansion. Expand the rail network, no to highspeed rail. Free public transport.**
- **A massive transfer of wealth to the poorest countries to improve their living standards during a green transition. Cancel the third-world debt.**
- **End the throwaway society and built-in obsolescence. Retrofit all homes and buildings, and enforce zero-carbon standards in all new builds.**

- **Abolish industrialised agriculture, end deforestation, and cut meat consumption. For food sovereignty, reclaim the commons.**
- **Tax the polluters: put a heavy tax on carbon emissions, Tax the rich in order to end poverty and reinvest in public services and welfare.**
- **End public investment in carbon based and polluting industries, for green new deals with investment in green jobs.**
- **For a completely new relationship with nature. A national nature service including new national parks and strategic rewilding.**
- **A Universal basic income and universal basic services to protect the standard of living, health and welfare, during the transition.**

Recommended further reading

Giorgos Kallis: *degrowth*, 2018, published by agenda publishing.

Tim Jackson: *Prosperity without growth – Economics for a Finite Planet*, published in 2009, by Earthscan.

Bill McKibben: Deep Economy, published in 2007 by Holt.

Paper: *Global human-made mass exceeds all living biomass – Nature*, October 2020.

The Dasgupta Review. '*The Economics of Biodiversity: The Dasgupta Review*' published by the UK Treasury in February 2021.
https://redgreenlabour.org/2021/04/24/a-radical-departure-the-dasgupta-review/

My review of Dasgupta – *A Radical Departure – the Dasgupta Review.* https://redgreenlabour.org/2021/04/24/a-radical-depart

ure-the-dasgupta-review/

William Morris *News From Nowhere*.

This article, writes *Alan* Thornett, is from the rough notes I submitted as background for my introduction at the ACR's [Anti Capitalist Resistance] Critical University on the environmental crisis 2 October 2021 in the workshop on growth. It also responds to some of the things raised in the very good discussion – in particular the shape of a future ecosocialist society.

10 October 2021

Reprinted from Anti Capitalist Resistance https://anticapitalistresistance.org/exponential-growth-on-a-finite-planet/

Alan Thornett is a member of the Fourth International and author of several books published by Resistance Books, including 'Facing the Apocalypse: Arguments for Ecosocialism' (2019) . During the 1960s and 1970s, he was a carworker and well known trade union activist, detailed in 'Militant Years'.

Ireland's class history: Online publication is tribute to Rayner Lysaght and the Irish struggle

Our friends at Red Mole Rising have done a great service by republishing online Rayner Lysaght's history: ***"The Republic of Ireland"***.

Originally published in 1970, this is a dense and detailed account of Irish history up to that period from a revolutionary marxist standpoint. Rayner Lysaght recently died at the age of 80, and for most of his life was a revolutionary activist and member of the Fourth International. Born in Wales and descended from a long line going back to Welsh Chartist radicals, Rayner moved to Ireland in his early years to study and stayed there for the rest of his life helping to found the Irish Fourth International group in the 1970s while researching and writing about Irish history. He is particularly well known for his detailed account of the almost-forgotten Limerick Soviet of 1919. ***"The Republic of Ireland"*** is a detailed history of the island, written from the standpoint and understanding of the the centrality of the class struggle rather than a traditional academic focus on governmental and ruling class institutions. As such, it is not as well known or widely read as it should be, so it is a fitting tribute to Rayner's life to have it republished online and made more widely available. For those grappling with the challenges of Scottish independence from the UK state, an understanding of Irish history from a working class marxist standpoint is immensely rewarding.

The book is available as a large PDF and contains a new introduction written in 2021 by Irish revolutionary socialist John McAnulty of Socialist Democracy.

The full book is here.

It is also available broken down by chapters here.

Obituaries of Rayner Lysaght and tributes to his life can be read here: https://internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article7210

ecosocialist.scot October 2021

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Faslane protestors highlight Trident and nuclear weapons impact on climate and environment

Protestors from the Scottish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) gathered at the UK government's Trident submarine base at Faslane in the west of Scotland on Sunday 26 September as part of a series of protest on the United Nations official International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. Mike Picken was there to report for ecosocialist.scot.



CND Protestors hold a marine wildlife themed die-in outside the gates of the Faslane nuclear base (Pic. M Picken)

The protest was part of the Scottish Climate Fringe Week to build momentum towards the COP26 talks due in Glasgow in November. Faslane is 40 km away from where the Glasgow UN Climate talks will take place and houses the totality of the UK government's nuclear weapons system, the Trident nuclear submarines. There have been many protests at Faslane over the decades and there is a permanent peace camp on the road leading to the nuclear base that also supported the 26 September protest. This protest highlighted the impact of nuclear weapons on the environment and climate, particularly marine wildlife. Protestors dressed as marine life and then staged a 'die-in' outside the Faslane North Gate entrance, to symbolise the negative impact of the Trident nuclear submarines on marine wildlife in Scotland and beyond.

The entire military industry is one of the biggest contributors to global climate change and nuclear weapons and nuclear power have a particularly terrible effect on the environment. Uranium that fuels the reactors of nuclear submarines like Trident and nuclear weapons around the world has a devastating impact on the planet, from its extraction through mining, processing and the continuing leak of radioactivity into the environment.

Scottish CND will highlight the impact of nuclear weapons and militarism during COP26 in a day of action on **Thursday 4 November** in Glasgow. You can find out more details shortly here: https://www.banthebomb.org/whats-on/

UK-wide CND are arguing that the UK government are breaking international law in increasing the number of nuclear missiles it holds, yet the UK government is still the UN-appointed official host to the COP26. Read about CND's campaign here: https://cnduk.org/report-the-uk-to-the-un/.

Scottish CND holds its Annual General Meeting online shortly

after the COP26 events to plan and take forward the campaign against Trident and nuclear weapons. The Scottish CND AGM is on **Saturday 20th November 2021** and you can find out more details here: https://www.banthebomb.org/AGM/

Trade union and campaign coalition calls on the First Minister Nicola Sturgeon to block the proposed ScotRail service cuts

"Coalition of unions and passenger, environmental, pensioner and campaign organisations call on the First Minister Nicola Sturgeon to block the proposed ScotRail service cuts" *say the Rail, Maritime & Transport union press office, in a campaign statement from Scottish unions and campaign organisations we are republishing.*

"As the public consultation over Abellio ScotRail's proposed timetable closes today, Friday 1st October, a coalition of unions and passenger, environmental, pensioner and campaign organisations have written to the First Minister Nicola Sturgeon to call on her to intervene and block the service cuts being proposed by Abellio ScotRail.

The proposed timetable, which would be implemented from May 2022, proposes reductions in rail services of around 300 a day, or 100,000 a year compared to the pre-pandemic timetable,

a cut of around 12%.

The letter, which is signed by RMT, Aslef, STUC, TSSA, Unite the Union, Bring Back British Rail, Friends of the Earth Scotland, Get Glasgow Moving, Scottish Pensioners' Forum and We Own It says:

"We believe the proposed service cuts will negatively affect rail passengers and be disastrous for Scotland's railway."

The letter goes on to say:

"With COP26 just weeks away, it is incomprehensible that ScotRail is proposing to slash services, despite rail being a sustainable and low-carbon form of transport. We believe that the cuts will push passengers away from the rail network and into cars – this will do nothing to achieve the Scottish Government's climate change targets and its goal of reducing car km by 20% by 2030."

The signatories are calling on the Scottish Government, which is already managing the ScotRail franchise under its Emergency Measures Agreement and will have taken ScotRail into public ownership before the new timetable is proposed to come into force to "…intervene as a matter of urgency and commit to protecting ScotRail services, jobs and ticket offices."

And concludes:

"With just months to go until ScotRail is taken into public ownership, the Scottish Government has the opportunity to create a sustainable, reliable, accessible and regular rail network for Scotland, and we urge you to take this opportunity rather than allowing short-sighted and damaging cuts to go ahead."

Reproduced from the RMT website https://www.rmt.org.uk/news/coalition-of-unions-and-passenger-environmental-pensioner-and/

The full letter reads:

“Dear First Minister,

ScotRail Timetable Consultation

We are writing to you to raise serious concerns about the proposals to significantly cut ScotRail services and to call on you to block these damaging cuts.

As you will be aware, Abellio ScotRail has been holding a consultation, which closes today, over a proposed timetable for May 2022 onwards, which would mean a reduction of approximately 300 services a day, or around 100,000 services a year. A cut of around 12% compared to the pre-pandemic timetable.

We believe the proposed service cuts will negatively affect rail passengers and be disastrous for Scotland’s railway. With COP26 just weeks away, it is incomprehensible that ScotRail is proposing to slash services, despite rail being a sustainable and low-carbon form of transport. We believe that the cuts will push passengers away from the rail network and into cars – this will do nothing to achieve the Scottish Government’s climate change targets and its goal of reducing car km by 20% by 2030.

ScotRail’s consultation comes off the back of the ‘Docherty report’ which advocated service cuts, job losses and ticket office closures across Scotland’s railway. On the one hand, the Scottish Government has sought to distance itself from this report, yet at the same time it is presiding over the proposed service cuts. It is also absurd that Abellio is consulting on a timetable for May 2022 when it will no longer be the ScotRail operator.

We also believe that the service cuts may be used to try and justify job cuts and ticket office closures across Scotland’s railway in the future. We oppose any such cuts which would

undoubtedly worsen passenger safety, security and accessibility.

The Scottish Government is managing the Abellio ScotRail franchise and it cannot wash its hands over this issue any longer. It is clear that the Scottish Government has the ability to block these damaging proposals and we are calling on you to intervene as a matter of urgency and commit to protecting ScotRail services, jobs and ticket offices. With just months to go until ScotRail is taken into public ownership, the Scottish Government has the opportunity to create a sustainable, reliable, accessible and regular rail network for Scotland, and we urge you to take this opportunity rather than allowing short-sighted and damaging cuts to go ahead.

Yours Sincerely,

Mick Lynch – RMT, General Secretary
Kevin Lindsay – Aslef, Scotland District Organiser
Roz Foyer – STUC, General Secretary
Gary Kelly – TSSA, Organiser – Scotland
Pat McIlvogue – Unite the Union, Lead Industrial Officer – ScotRail
Ellie Harrison – Bring Back British Rail
Gavin Thompson – Friends of the Earth Scotland, Transport Campaigner
Susan Galloway – Get Glasgow Moving
Rose Jackson – Scottish Pensioners Forum, Chairperson
Cat Hobbs – We Own It, Director”