

Green Party responds to Taylor review



11 July 2017

The Green Party has responded to the Prime Minister's speech on Matthew Taylor's Review of Modern Working Practices [1].

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

"Theresa May says she wants bold ideas but her response is weak. The Prime Minister looks set to under deliver on a review into the gig economy that does not go far enough to empower or protect workers.

"It is inadequate to tinker with the edges of a system that is already broken. Introducing a presumption of employment, with the burden falling on the employer to prove otherwise is a step in the right direction – but it's disappointing to see no moves to get rid of extortionate tribunal fees which stop workers who have been exploited from accessing justice. Proposals for tax and National Insurance reform, meanwhile, lack teeth. Greater 'consistency' between employment and self-employment will only happen in the long term and provide no guarantee of equality.

"Despite talk of addressing insecurity and the impact automation, and aspirations to change the debate about what good work looks like, there is no mention in the report of a shorter working week or a Basic Income. If the Prime Minister is serious about overhauling the world of work to keep up with the demands of the 21st Century she will consider Green calls for a shorter working week, a move which would improve people's quality of life and see productivity rise at the same time. A universal payment to all people in the form of a Basic Income would reward unpaid work, enable people to pursue fulfilling employment, increase people's options and act as a safety net for everyone.

"In her speech the Prime Minister flagged the Brexit vote as an indication that people wanted more control. The question by which this review and the actions of the Prime Minister should be measured is 'will the balance of power in the workplace fundamentally shift?' The resounding answer is 'no'."

1.
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/626772/good-work-taylor-review-modern-working-practices.pdf

Green Party press release

For immediate release – 11 July 2017

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“It is inadequate to tinker with the edges of a system that is already broken. Introducing a presumption of employment, with the burden falling on the employer to prove otherwise is a step in the right direction – but it’s disappointing to see no moves to get rid of extortionate tribunal fees which stop workers who have been exploited from accessing justice. Proposals for tax and National Insurance reform, meanwhile, lack teeth. Greater ‘consistency’ between employment and self-employment will only happen in the long term and provide no guarantee of equality.

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ENDS.

For more information contact: press@greenparty.org.uk / 0203 691 9401

Notes:

1. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/626772/good-work-taylor-review-modern-working-practices.pdf

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Green Party responds to news teachers' pay will remain capped at 1% annual increase



10 July 2017

Responding to the news that the annual increase in teachers' pay in England and Wales will remain capped at 1% [1], the Green Party's Spokesperson for Education Vix Lowthion said:

"The Government's pay review is another betrayal of teachers. Not only is a low pay award set to hinder new entrants to the profession, but it will increase the damage from the teacher retention crisis. Those of us on the front lines of teaching are seeing colleagues leave the profession in droves. Teachers are struggling to make ends meet and juggle the growing pressures of working in schools which are being stripped of the money they need. The government must stop taking teachers for granted, and give them the proper pay rise they deserve.

Notes

[1] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-40557378>

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Lucas: Selling arms to Saudi Arabia is 'utterly unethical'



10 July 2017

Caroline Lucas, the co-leader of the Green Party, has suggested that a change of law is needed to stop arms sales to repressive regimes after the High Court ruled that the Government can continue to sell weapons to Saudi Arabia [1].

Lucas, who has been battling the Government over arms sales to Saudi Arabia for many years, accused the Government of being 'utterly unethical' by selling arms to a regime accused of breaking international law in Yemen. She

is supporting the CAAT appeal against the verdict.

Caroline Lucas MP, Green Party co-leader, said:

“Today’s verdict might mean that the Government is on the right side of the law for now, but it doesn’t give any moral justification for their utterly unethical actions when it comes to arms sales. While the strict legal verdict is that arms sales can continue, the only morally justifiable way forward would be an immediate arms embargo to Saudi Arabia.

“This verdict suggests that a change of law is desperately needed, because the current legal framework is allowing Britain to sell weapons to a repressive regime whose actions in Yemen are causing a humanitarian disaster. This weak Government has said they are looking to work with other parties – they should start by forming a cross-party review into arms sales to repressive regimes.”

Notes:

1. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jul/10/uk-arms-exports-to-saudi-ara-bia-can-continue-high-court-rules?CMP=share_btn_tw

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Caroline Lucas bids for ‘full transparency’ in trade negotiations



5 July 2017

***Lucas tables cross-party Early Day Motion [1] calling for a Parliamentary vote on any new trade deals**

Caroline Lucas MP, Green Party co-leader, is calling on the Government to seek full Parliamentary approval before signing trade deals with the USA, India and others.

Lucas, who sat on the Trade Committee of the European Parliament when she was an MEP, is demanding that Ministers bring any new trade deals to the House of Commons – and submit them to full debates and a vote. Current rules do not give Parliament the power to properly scrutinise trade deals, and Lucas wants a commitment from the Government ahead of likely negotiations with other countries as Britain prepares to leave the European Union.

In an Early Day Motion tabled today Lucas demands the 'right of parliament to amend and to reject trade deals.'

Caroline Lucas said:

"Britain is about to go through a period of monumental change – not least when it comes to our trade deals. We know the risks associated with bad deals – a race to the bottom on regulations, companies suing democratically elected governments and the outsourcing of jobs. These risks are heightened if such deals are rushed through without any proper scrutiny.

"The Government must give Parliament proper oversight of any new deals – whether that's the touted deal with Trump or any new deal with [Europe](#). At present deals are snuck through without a proper debate or yes/no vote – it's time for an urgent democratic upgrade."

Nick Dearden, director of Global Justice Now, said:

"If the UK wants to have full control of its trade policy, it needs to develop democratic mechanisms to accompany it. The alternative, will not be taking back power, as was promised by Brexiteers, but losing power to a Trade Secretary who believes the rule of the market is the answer to every problem

"Modern trade agreements are increasingly not about tariffs but about making sure laws and regulations don't obstruct the free flow of capital. Such 'obstructions' are likely to include public services like the NHS, labour rights, consumer standards and environmental protection. So it's crucial that there is proper parliamentary oversight of these deals or we run the risk of free-market fundamentalists like Liam Fox junking vast swathes of the UK's important legal protections without anyone being able to do anything about it.

"The fact that Fox is already starting up 'unofficial' trade talks with the US without any sort of parliamentary oversight should ring all sorts of alarm bells. Trump is unequivocal that he will only make trade deals that put the USA first, while May is desperate to ink anything to show that the UK has a trading future outside the European single market. That power imbalance means May is likely to concede all manner of ground to Trump for the sake of trying to shore up her own political credibility – and those concessions will carry a heavy price for British citizens."

Notes:

1. EDM 128: <http://www.parliament.uk/edm/2017-19/128>

Parliamentary scrutiny of trade deals

That this House is concerned about the lack of parliamentary scrutiny and accountability of trade deals to which the UK is a party and calls on the government to ensure the right of parliament to set a thorough mandate to govern each trade negotiation, with a remit for the devolved administrations; the right of the public to be consulted as part of setting that mandate; a presumption of full transparency in negotiations; the right of parliament to

amend and to reject trade deals, with full debates and scrutiny guaranteed and a remit for the devolved administrations and the right of parliament to review trade deals and withdraw from them in a timely manner.

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Home Office 'expansion' of Syrian resettlement scheme fails the most vulnerable, says Green MEP



4 July 2017

Yesterday, the Home Office claimed to have “expanded” its scheme to resettle refugees from Syria and neighbouring countries [1].

In fact, the number of refugees it has committed to resettle from the region under the Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) remains unchanged – capped at 20,000 by the year 2020.

The difference lies in the number of refugees who are eligible for resettlement. The UK will now welcome vulnerable individuals of any nationality – not just Syrian – who have been affected by the country’s ongoing conflict.

Jean Lambert, London’s Green MEP and the Green Party’s migration spokesperson, says:

“I welcome the Government’s decision to widen the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme to non-Syrian citizens. This enables the UK to offer a fresh start to some of the Iraqi refugees who have also fled Syria – many of whom have now been displaced from their homes twice. It also means that families of mixed nationalities will be able to seek refuge in the UK together.

“However, in reality, this change in eligibility won’t make a significant difference so long as the scheme remains capped at resettling just 20,000 people. In fact, it will result in fewer Syrian nationals being welcomed to the UK – broadening the pool of those who qualify for resettlement, without expanding the number who will ultimately be accepted.

“As the Home Secretary, Amber Rudd, declares she is ‘proud’ that the UK is

‘making sure our doors are open to the people who most need our help’, let’s remember her recent move to slam the same door shut in the faces of unaccompanied children in France, Italy and Greece through the recent closure of the ‘Dubs’ scheme [2].

“This announcement is a step in the right direction from the Home Office. However, we must bear in mind that it’s the smallest of concessions, while a humanitarian crisis of enormous proportions continues to unfold both in the Middle East and closer to home.”

Notes:

1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/refugees-of-all-nationalities-fleeing-syria-are-now-eligible-for-resettlement-in-the-uk>
2. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-38912428>

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