

Unemployment figures are a “convenient camouflage” says Green Co-Leader



12 July 2017

Responding to today's release of labour market statistics from the Office for National Statistics [1], Co-Leader of the Green Party Jonathan Bartley said:

“The government must not use headline unemployment figures as a convenient camouflage to hide the fact that our economy is fundamentally failing.

“Today's figures show that both actual hours worked and average weekly earnings fell in real terms. The economy is not meeting the needs of the very people it should be serving.

“More and more workers are being trapped in precarious informal employment or part-time work.

“Yesterday's Taylor report did not propose the bold ideas we need. We need to go back to basics and ask who the economy is really for.

“What good are low unemployment figures if your income isn't enough to build a life upon? What good is it being forced to take up a job that gives you no security, no stability, and no sense of satisfaction?

“We need to make the economy work for everyone. That means a decent living wage, ensuring everyone is paid a basic income, providing a footing from which to pursue a career that is rewarding and inspiring. It means transitioning and rebalancing our hollowed out economy to invest in the jobs we need for a resilient and secure future, such as in the renewables sector. And it means exploring ideas such as a four-day working week.”

Notes

[1] <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/uklabourmarket/latest>

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[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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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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