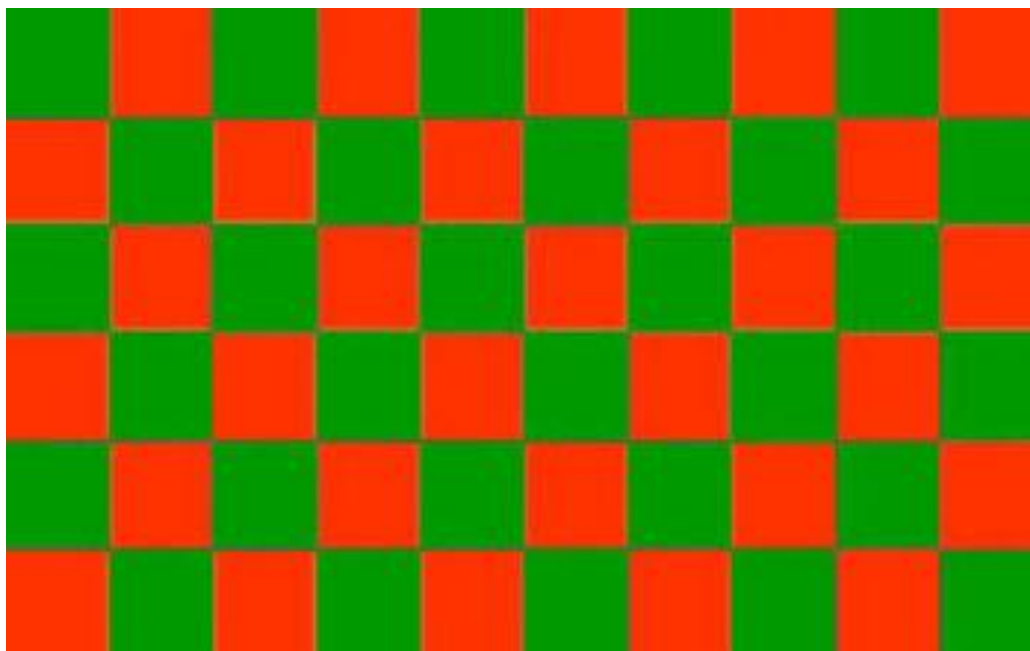


## FEBRUARY 2020 MONTHLY BLOG/ 110

### THE (POLITICAL) RED-GREEN ALLIANCE

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Call it a political RED-GREEN alliance. Call it a loose political RED-GREEN federation. Even a move towards a full-blown RED-GREEN party merger? But enough shilly-shallying. It's time for action.

The global climate emergency makes that clear enough. If there are any continuing doubters, then mark the words of David Attenborough to the World Economic Forum in January 2019.<sup>1</sup> Or study the data provided in the 2019 State of the Global Climate report by the United Nations' World Meteorological Organisation, based in Geneva.<sup>2</sup> Or heed calls from Greta Thunberg and many schoolchildren for urgent action, not distant promises. Or view images of exceptional wildfires in Australia and Spain; abnormally extended droughts in

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.coolearth.org/2019/01/the-garden-of-eden-is-no-more-sir-david-attenborough>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://public.wmo.int/en/our-mandate/climate/wmo-statement-state-of-global-climate>

Somalia and parts of the USA; unseasonal floods and rainfall in Brazil, India, Thailand and many other countries; and melting glaciers in Antarctica.<sup>3</sup>

Everyone needs to take action; and political parties should take a lead. Needless to say, organisations in opposition have less power than those in office. But it is simply not true that those outside Westminster/Whitehall are toothless, fangless lap-poodles. Governments respond to public opinion, public pressure, public lobbying, public agitation, public emergencies. Look at the way that green issues are zooming to the forefront of politics, far ahead of the rate at which Green politicians are gaining control of central government power.<sup>4</sup>

It's more than time for political parties to move out of their traditional comfort-zones. And the defeat of the Left in the 2019 general election shows that the electorate is also changing – and not in favour of the opposition in its current form.

What should the Labour Party in Britain do? Keep its proud red flag and its commitment to redistribution of power to the people and the ending of vast and unproductive economic inequalities. But simultaneously it should ally itself politically with the Green Party. And that means an active alliance, with electoral agreements, locally, regionally and nationally.

What should the Greens in Britain do? Keep their proud green flag and their commitment to ecological transformation and the ending of vast and unproductive economic inequalities. But simultaneously it should ally itself politically with the Labour Party. And that means an active alliance, with electoral agreements, locally, regionally and nationally.

Both parties share great swathes of common ground, so that an alliance is feasible as well as desirable. Changes should be made with reasonable speed, to

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<sup>3</sup> [www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jul/09/glacial-melting-in-antarctica-may-become-irreversible](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jul/09/glacial-melting-in-antarctica-may-become-irreversible).

<sup>4</sup> For a recent overview, see 'Pathways to Power', *Green European Journal* (2020): <https://www.greeneuropeanjournal.eu/pathways-to-power-how-green-parties-join-governments/>

show the electorate and the Tory government that the opposition has woken to the need for fundamental transformation. It's a pledge of sincerity to begin with self-reform at home. And it strengthens campaigns to bring red-green issues together to the political forefront, which can be done firstly from opposition, and later from government.

A PERSONAL NOTE: This BLOG is written by someone who has been a member of the Labour Party since 1959 and remembers the days when the party had millions of card-carrying members. During the years, she has been at times in accord with the Labour leadership; at other times not. But the point of being a persistent grass-root is not to be perfectly happy at every moment.

Instead, party members make whatever personal contribution they can to a long-term movement, which is bigger and more important than them. Keir Starmer is right that the Labour Party needs to be seen as a continuing force for good. And, in these turbulent times, the big next step is to work hand-in-hand with the Greens. In alliance – in federation – in merger: the details matter less than the urgent need to renovate the Left and cope with the climate emergency.