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1. Editorial: Just Transition – What Just Transition?

News that the Scottish Government has awarded most of a multi-billion contract for offshore wind manufacture to firms in Belgium and Spain questions why Scotland ever set up the world's first Just Transition Commission? The offended unions Unite and the GMB, whose members have lost jobs and skills opportunities, rightly say, *'There's no 'just transition' or 'green jobs revolution' here. Just a future that looks heavily rigged against their hopes for employment and prosperity.'*



The prospectus for Scotland's Just Transition Commission asserts: *'We are committed to growing a low-carbon, inclusive economy. Scotland's Economic Strategy sets out the ambition to create a more cohesive and resilient economy that improves the opportunities, life chances, and wellbeing of every citizen in our country, and the Climate Change Bill commits Scotland to being carbon-neutral by 2050.'*

The GMB is also sceptical about another topical issue: the implications for its members of a report on decarbonising the UK's wasteful housing stock, not least because it wasn't consulted.

Likewise, across the trade union

movement as a whole, as the 2018 TUC Congress showed, there's an appetite for unions to have a voice in making the UK's industrial and energy strategy fit for a low carbon future. At least Labour gets the message, as we report below.

2. Union fury as £2.8 billion wind turbine contract goes overseas

The GMB and Unite have reacted badly to the Scottish Government's decisions to award most of a £2.8 Billion Offshore Wind contract to firms in Belgium, Spain and the United Arab Emirates. The decision leaves Burntisland Fabrication (BiFab) with two construction yards in Fife 'empty handed.'



BiFab trade unions GMB and Unite are calling on the First Minister and the Scottish Parliament to intervene. GMB Scotland Secretary, Gary Smith and Unite Scotland Secretary Pat Rafferty said: "Ten years ago we were promised a 'Saudi Arabia of Renewables' but today we need political intervention to help level the playing field. State funded European energy and engineering firms are carving-up thousands of jobs and billions of pounds from our renewables sector. Firms like BiFab are left fighting for scraps off our own table.

No way to a Just Transition

'To working class communities in Burntisland and Methil there's no 'just transition' or 'green jobs revolution' here, just a future that looks heavily rigged against their hopes for employment and prosperity. That's the real cost of long-term political failure at all levels of government.'

On the day of this decision, the UK Government also launched a *New Offshore Wind Sector Deal* <https://www.offshorewind.biz/2019/03/06/uk-offshore-wind-sector-deal-out-thursday/> with aspirations of tripling employment in the sector.

- The new Sector Deal set targets of reaching offshore wind capacity of 30GW and delivering one-third of the UK's electricity by 2030. Through a new skills package for offshore wind employees, the new deal will aim to increase the number of jobs in the industry to 27,000 by 2030, up from 7,200 today.

Elsewhere, BiFab's Arnish yard, Isle of Lewis, was back to work yesterday as the first steel was cut on a £26.5 million offshore piles contract. DF Barnes said its first contract win since it acquired the Fife-based fabricator would add 82 jobs to the BiFab operation. That's one-tenth of the multibillion contracts by value, so presumably over 800 jobs have been lost to overseas firms.

Unions say the empty yards in Fife are a sobering reminder of long-term political failure at both Holyrood and Westminster. *'The Scottish Government and the public have a stake in BiFab and with it our renewables manufacturing future. We owe it to our communities to tackle the spaghetti bowl of vested interest groups that's dominating our renewables sector and to fight for Scotland's share'*.

3. Why UNITE demands a Just Transition

Jim Mowatt, Director of Education for UNITE:

'Dispiritingly, we receive daily reports of job losses in the energy sector. Recently, Cottam Power Station, Nottinghamshire, announced 150 jobs were at risk and the station closing after 50 years of generating electricity from coal. The company blamed challenging market conditions and 'the drive to decarbonise electricity generation'. The 2GW power station was opened in 1969. Our negotiators had anticipated a further six years life, even though Cottam was originally designed to operate for 30 years.



With tens of thousands of energy jobs such as these at risk, the TUC and the four big energy unions (Prospect, GMB, UNISON and ourselves) are demanding a 'just Transition,' so that energy workers and their communities most affected by the move to a lower carbon world are treated fairly.

UNITE is playing its part through the TUC's Trade Union Sustainable Development Advisory Committee, represented by our National Officer, Peter McIntosh, and Research Officer, Colin Potter. I am deeply committed to working with New York-based Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (TUED), to develop and more effectively advocate for policies anchored in public ownership and the democratic restructuring of energy systems based on social needs.

The UN committed to prevent 'dangerous' human interference with the climate system. This ultimate aim impacts on our members across our 21 industrial sectors, their families and communities. These debates demand decisions at policy, sector and company levels and inside the union as an employer.

For Unite, 'Just Transition' means:

- *A balanced low-carbon energy mix*
- *Investment in skills and infrastructure*
- *Protecting and creating high-quality jobs*
- *No community left behind*

But auspiciously, there is often opportunity in adversity. The pattern of Britain's electricity generation is changing dramatically and visibly. Big coal and nuclear power stations, scattered often in remote locations and linked by a National Grid, are giving way to renewables. Wind farms, offshore wind and tidal projects are sprouting up all over the UK, likely to deliver 60% of UK energy supply in ten years' time. Meanwhile, Labour Party policy envisions local energy communities with electricity generated, distributed and supplied locally by elected councils and communities.

These changes present opportunities for trade unions, council estate groups or householders to be the owners and beneficiaries of their power supply. Through UNITE's own estate (the Conference and Education Centre in Birmingham and our local offices), and in our involvement as signatories to construction industry agreements for social housing, we can become exemplars for others to follow in the very near future.'

Jim Mowatt is Director of Education for UNITE, and among his many interests, is a Director of the National Skills Academy.

4. Climate change school strikes at heart of curriculum

Confronting the generations causing climate chaos, over 10,000 young people in 60 towns and cities across the UK joined the climate change school strike on 15 February. When MPs debated climate change in the Commons chamber for the first time in two years, just 40 showed up. As Green MP Caroline Lucas said,

'This absenteeism speaks volumes... Zero carbon homes targets have been scrapped. Onshore wind has been effectively banned. Solar power has been shafted. The Green Investment Bank has been flogged off. Fracking has been forced on communities who have rejected it...'

<https://bit.ly/2N9geFo>

And on 22 February, teachers and educators staged a protest at the Department for Education <https://bit.ly/2V10vzS> demanding that students should be taught the truth about the chaotic world they are inheriting. They called for:

- An immediate overhaul of the current curriculum, in the light of scientific evidence and without political interference.
- Well-founded, evidence-based training for teachers, including the scientific and economic causes of the climate crisis, and what governments and society need to do about it.

<https://bit.ly/2EYDp2o>

The global union federation for teachers, Education International, has issued this statement of support in the lead up to the next day of action on March 15:

<https://bit.ly/2ToLMNE>

5. GJA elects new chair and sets 2019 targets



Quinn Runkle (NUS) was elected Greener Jobs Alliance chair at our AGM (January 29, 2019), where we decided to focus this year on building partnerships on air quality and just transition campaigns. The GJA has played a leading role in setting up the *Trade Union Clean Air Network (TUCAN)* with our partners the Hazards Campaign and the UCU. A Trade Union Charter is now being drafted, supported by a reps training course. We will also be working with our supporting organisations and others to ensure that Just Transition and workers' interests have some real influence on the UK's industrial policies. A practical example is the innovative training programme for union reps which the GJA has helped to pilot with the TUC's Low carbon task force in the Yorkshire and Humber Region.

Quinn, who is Education for Sustainable Development Programme Manager at the NUS, takes over from Rachel Drayson, NUS Sustainability Insight Manager. We would like to record our sincere thanks to Rachel for her supportive contribution as chair. Our AGM report is available here:

www.greenerjobsalliance.co.uk/breaking-news/

6. Workplace pollution needs a solution



The GJA AGM in January pledged to make air pollution one of the main pillars of our work in 2019. Finally, after years of campaigning for it to be recognised as a workplace issue, we are starting to get some movement on this. We are pleased to report the following:

- The GJA Air Quality modules will be updated in the summer. This on-line course represents an important resource for trade unions and others to assist their understanding. The course can be accessed at <http://www.greenerjobsalliance.co.uk/courses/>
- Regional 'Air Pollution as a union issue' events have continued with a well-attended workshop organised in Exeter on Feb. 8th. In conjunction with the Hazards Campaign and a range of unions we are planning further events in 2019 including in Scotland and Wales.
- The Trade Union Clean Air Network was launched on February 6th at the ITF Head Office in London. A wide range of unions and other organisations attended. TUCAN posters and stickers have been printed. These are available for anyone who wants to start a campaign in their workplace. Contact [gjacomsg@gmail.com](mailto:gjacoms@gmail.com) if you would like copies. The report of the launch can be found here <http://www.greenerjobsalliance.co.uk/breaking-news/>
- The TUCAN Charter has gone out for further consultation and the final version will be available this month following submissions from various unions. We will be using this at public events and trade union conferences to raise the profile of this issue.
- 'Time to Breathe' campaign. We will be participating in the event in Oxford Circus, London on March 12th organised by the British Safety Council. We are looking to work with them and others like the British Lung Foundation to keep up the pressure on politicians to recognise this as an occupational health emergency <https://www.britsafe.org/campaigns-policy/time-to-breathe-air-pollution-campaign>



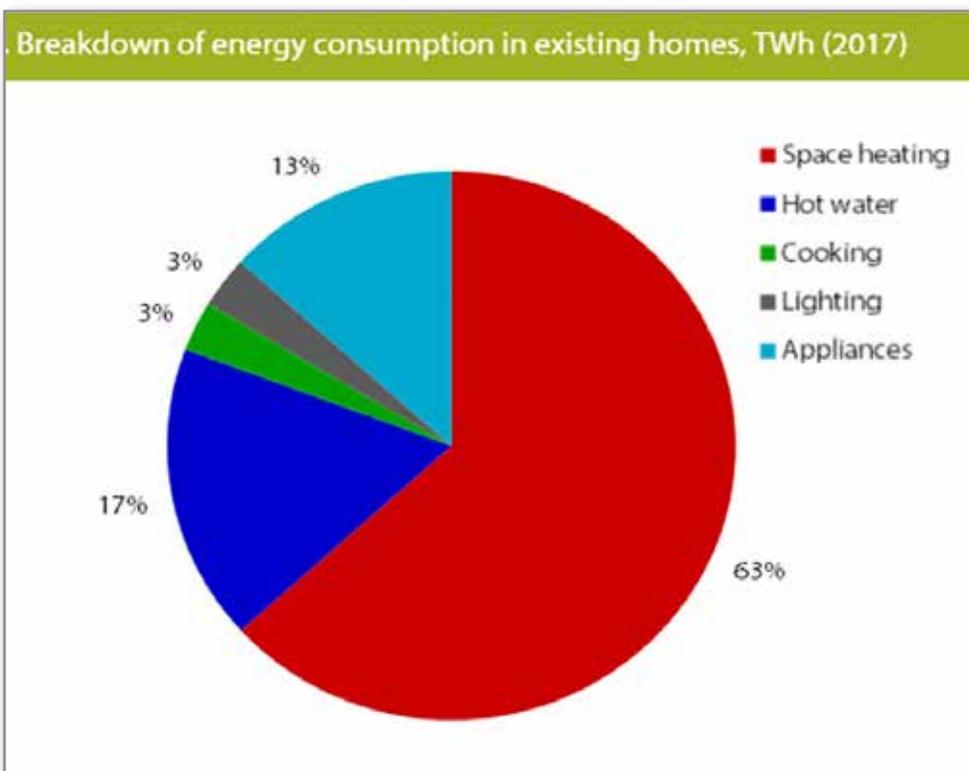
7. UK homes 'unfit for challenges of climate change'

The UK's 29 million homes are so badly insulated, expensive to run and over dependent on gas that they are 'unfit for the challenges of climate change,' says a new report to Ministers. In response, Labour's Alan Whitehead MP slammed the government's 'near criminal' failure to improve the energy efficiency of new-build homes. However, the GMB, defending its members in the domestic gas industry, is urging Ministers to 'ignore the report.'

Unfit for the future

The government's independent advisers, the Committee on Climate Change, says in 'UK housing: Fit for the future?':

- Energy use in homes increased between 2016 and 2017, generating over 64 million tonnes of CO2 emissions from gas central heating and electricity use.
- Government policies to support low-carbon measures in the UK's 29 million homes have been weakened or cut.
- The UK's legally-binding climate change targets will not be met without the near-complete elimination of greenhouse gas emissions from UK homes, offices and other buildings.



Domestic heating makes up two-thirds of energy used in existing homes, as our diagram shows. But only 1% of new homes built in 2018 were fully energy efficient, adding an unnecessary burden to energy bills of new occupiers.

What needs to be done? The Committee on Climate Change (CCC) calls on the government to 'Develop a strategy for low-carbon heat uptake beyond 2021,' including new forms of domestic heating:

- Develop low carbon gas for domestic heating, such as feeding hydrogen and biomethane into the existing gas grid.
- Ground source heat pumps in homes that are off the gas grid.
- A major programme to build and extend low-carbon heat networks for 1.5 million homes in cities.
- By 2025 at the latest, no new homes should connect to the gas grid. Instead they should have low-carbon heating systems such as heat pumps and low-carbon heat networks

The GMB union, with 20,000 members in the gas industry, objects to this

last recommendation, on phasing out gas boilers in new homes from 2025. It has written to Ministers 'urging them to ignore' the report.

The GMB also claims the report is, 'Asking the 25m households in the UK with gas central heating to scrap a perfectly good heating system and replace it at a cost of at least £10,000 per property, as well as to then incur future energy bills three times higher than current gas bills.' However, we can find no reference in the report to asking households to 'scrap' their current heating system.

The report makes a series of recommendations which, taken together, have the potential to create tens of thousands of skilled, good paying jobs in the gas and construction industries:

- *Retrofitting existing homes. Ensuring existing homes are low-carbon and resilient to the changing climate is a major UK infrastructure priority, supported by the Treasury.*
- *New homes should be built to be low-carbon, energy and water efficient, and climate resilient.*
- *Finance and funds. Urgent funding gaps must be addressed, including public funding for low-carbon sources of heating beyond 2021, and better resources for local authorities.*
- *Skills gap. The chopping and changing of UK Government policy has led to a skills gap in housing design, construction and in the installation of new technologies. Professional standards and skills across the building, heat and ventilation supply trades need to be reviewed, with a nationwide training programme to upskill the existing workforce.*

The Committee on Climate Change is an independent statutory body established by Parliament to provide expert advice to Government and Devolved Administrations on emissions targets. It reports to Parliament on progress made in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for climate change. In a timely demand, the GMB wants the report to be the subject of 'extensive democratic debate and votes in Parliament.' The GJA also believes that it would help if the Committee were to appoint a Commissioner with knowledge and experience of trade union concerns and industrial relations issues.

The report is available at:
<https://bit.ly/2E5aoki>

8. 50 councils declare climate emergency

Climate Emergency is holding a national conference, backed by the the Campaign Against Climate Change TU Group and Cumbria Action for Sustainability, on 29 March in Lancaster:
<https://bit.ly/2H7NHPA>

Nearly 50 councils and parishes have already declared a climate emergency. Follow up action at council level is essential. Hackney

is one of the latest to declare a 'climate emergency', although local groups in the borough are demanding consultations on a Zero Carbon Action Plan - including 100% divestment of the councils pension fund from fossil fuels.

Changes to the school curriculum are vital. In Hackney, the local Education for Sustainability (EfS) Network has fruitlessly lobbied the council's Learning Trust for over a year to make Hackney a 'Beacon Borough for education for sustainability.'

Sandra McLeod <https://bit.ly/2tYhTVh> from the local EfS campaign says 'They have made no positive moves toward requiring or even encouraging Hackney schools to teach either the causes, effects or mitigation of climate change.'

Labour's *Sustainable Schools Strategy* was scrapped by the Coalition Government in 2010. However, a few schools in Hackney are working on their own initiative to take on the Eco-schools programme. Letters protesting about this 'censorship' and lack of action by empowered politicians have gone out again to the Learning Trust and all involved politicians, local and national.

9. ITUC calls for global day of climate action

The ITUC has committed to organising a Global Day of Climate Action in the run up to the UN Climate Summit on 23 of September. The international union body wants to build on the progress made in December 2018 when the UN supported a *Just Transition Declaration* in Katowice, Poland.

Over 130 union delegates, including the GJA, joined the ITUC delegation in Poland. A report-back by Bert De Wel, ITUC Climate Policy Officer, says,

'There has never been a time when our demands for Just Transition received so much attention as in Poland. This means we did a good job! At the same time, it is clear that climate policy urgently needs a major boost to step up ambition.'

<https://bit.ly/2EXYpGO>

The 54 governments and the European Commission backing the *Solidarity and Just Transition Silesia Declaration* <https://bit.ly/2XQf9Y3> such including the UK, must now recognise the impact of climate change on working people and their communities. To date, Scotland is the only one of the four UK nations to do so, with its Just Transition Commission. National climate action plans (in the UN's jargon, *Nationally Determined Contributions*) should now ensure that trade unions have a voice in low carbon economic and industrial strategies – with no community left behind.



10. Labour backs Green New Deal

The Labour Opposition has launched a year-long 'unprecedented call for evidence' to build its campaign for a 'green jobs revolution'

<https://bit.ly/2BwqxyE>

According to Shadow Secretary for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Rebecca Long-Bailey MP the [livestream of the Weds 13th Labour Energy Forum](#), Labour will host roundtables across the



country with unions, industry and community groups. A call for evidence will soon be on Labour's website.

<https://bit.ly/2XMAstq>

She argued that a green transformation had to be done *'in partnership with the unions... Because the unions are the Labour party anyway. Our job is to provide a just transition to those industries that might be negatively affected.'*

11. Green New Deal in US Senate

Meanwhile, in the US Congress, newly-elected Senator Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez is creating green waves through the Democratic Party and beyond. Her Green New Deal Resolution tabled in Congress demands good paying unionised jobs and a wide array environmental projects to tackle climate change and environmental degradation.

Her voice echoes President Franklin D Roosevelt's original New Deal of the 1930s as a response to the Great Depression. Ocasio-Cortez calls for a "just transition" for workers in the fossil fuel industries, from coal miners to pipeline workers, through guarantees of healthcare, jobs, and job training.



Rebecca Long-Bailey welcomed the US project for its recognition that *'climate politics is class politics, race politics, gender politics'* and its *commitment to transforming "communities held back for decades.'*

Labour has already decided that renewable energy will form the backbone of the UK's energy mix <https://bit.ly/2EQTI5x> But we are puzzled that climate change isn't at the heart of a recent advisory report to the Labour Party on a 21st Century industrial strategy for Britain's struggling regions. It highlights the challenges faced by heavy energy users like steel, cement and chemicals. It wants them to continue to receive hand-to-mouth relief from carbon taxes. However, the great challenge these industries face, as we are finding in the Yorkshire and the Humber regional project, is a regional strategic plan for investment in new low carbon technologies and energy sources. <https://bit.ly/2TdyLCE>

12. Supporting the Greener Jobs Alliance

The GJA is a loose coalition of organisations involved in climate change work. We wish to make it clear that the views expressed in our publications and activities do not necessarily reflect the position of all the organisations whom we work with. We will always seek to make that clear by listing the organisations that have specifically signed up to a particular initiative.