



Photo: Phil Beard flickr.com

Editorial: Car Wars

This edition of the Newsletter opens up debate on how we make a just transition in transport.

With transport producing just under a quarter of UK emissions and no progress in cutting them for a decade, serious measures are overdue.

This is not so much about simply shifting from fossil fuel to electric powered personally owned vehicles as a deeper shift in how we travel, and what in. This involves

- designing and reconfiguring cities to avoid commutes wherever possible
- shifting to public transport, and making it cheap or free; with more widespread free travel for key workers and more flexible use of travel cards,
- different patterns of vehicle ownership, including community car clubs
- more use of light electric vehicles, and a ban on heavy, resource intense models,
- greening many of the spaces currently occupied by car parks and roads,

These are all vital steps away from the auto dystopias of cities sliced into fragments by urban motorways that were seen as “the future” in the 1970s.

With this vision, the transition to EVs is partly about manufacturing more trams, buses, e-bikes, e-scooters and e-mopeds and fewer cars.

With the far right, and Conservative Party, now mobilising actively against measures to stop our roads becoming clogged with cars, and our lungs clogged with their exhausts, the same irrational coalition that pretends the climate crisis isn't happening is in full cry that quite mild traffic filtering measures are actually a plot to lock people up in their neighbourhoods without hope of escape and - in the words of one very strange Conservative MP - 15 minute neighbourhoods are “an international socialist conspiracy”.

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Quote of the Month

“You cannot exist unless you have the power to alter the future.”

Graham Greene (*The Quiet American*)

Given enough funding from the **usual dark money sources** and the fact that 92% of journeys in the UK are still made by car and there is insufficient investment in alternatives, with **bus services being cut sharply** right across the country, this could have a real and damaging impact if not 1) debunked 2) out mobilised by everyone who wants clean air, liveable cities and decent public transport. See our **debate Blog** on the London ULEZ extension row for more info about this.

One positive bit of news is that the **RMT recently won Free Travel Passes** for all 5,800 outsourced Transport for London cleaners. We need more victories like this.

What Freedom looks like. All key workers should have one.

Paul Atkin Ed



Photo: Sasha Atkin-Wasti

GJA AGM

The Greener Jobs Alliance is holding its Annual General Meeting on **Tuesday 14 March** at UCU HQ, Carlow Street, NW1, and online. As every year we are pleased to present excellent speakers on key issues of relevance to our focus on green skills and jobs, as well as debate and discussion about the year ahead.



GREENER JOBS

JUST TRANSITION

EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

Annual General Meeting, Tuesday 14 March 2023, 11.00-13.00

In person at UCU HQ , Carlow Street, London NW1 or online via Teams link

Labour & Climate:



Clive Lewis MP

Labour MP for
Norwich South

A National Climate Service:



Hannah David

PCS Vice-President
and Chair of PCS
Climate Change
and Environment
Committee

Net Zero Court Victory:



Niall Toru

Senior Lawyer
Friends of the Earth
England, Wales
and Northern
Ireland

Plus Anna Markova (TUC) on Just Transition Officers

- Q and A
- discussion
- debate
- plan of action for 2023

Register for attendance at **Tahirlatif51@icloud.com**

Register for the AGM at tahirlatif51@icloud.com

UNITE: Ending the Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) Age - Winning the Transition to Electric Vehicles



Photo Mario Duran-Ortiz /climate outreach

Nearly half of new cars sold in Norway are electric

The transition from internal combustion engines to electric and alternatively fuelled vehicles is the top priority of the automotive sector. This must defend and advance secure jobs, good pay, and hard-won conditions. The automotive National Industrial Sector Committee has proposed that for a transition to be 'just' it must include:

- A commitment that every step of the transition will be negotiated through collective bargaining.
- Realistic estimates for the numbers of new green jobs, the quality of those jobs, their likely locations and timeline.
- Any UK public funding (i.e., in R&D) must come with obligations for UK manufacturing.
- Commitments to upskilling, education, and training and how this will be provided by employers and government.
- Comprehensive support for workers in the component supply chain – to defend employment, win new investment and secure an industry transition on workers' terms.
- Commitments to protecting and extending trade union collective agreements and the ability to organise our workplaces (i.e. extended recognition agreements).

Over 800,000 jobs are directly linked to the UK automotive industry, which is inherently multinational in terms of ownership, supply chains and reliance on exports.

The industry has already completed the first stages of transitioning to become a low carbon sector, with the majority of manufacturers now producing at least one electric or hybrid vehicle.



Photo: DENNIS SCHROEDER / NREL

Hybrid electric truck in use in 2017.

The largest employers such as Stellantis (Vauxhall), Ford and Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) have announced comprehensive strategies whereby every model will have an electric variant by 2030; when the UK ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel engine vehicles comes into force.

Unite shop stewards and officers have won significant victories at the bargaining table, so investment in new models and products has secured jobs in critical workplaces; which also sustain jobs throughout supply chains.

Significant challenges remain. These include:

Competition for investment: Mergers and acquisitions have been the major trend of recent years as large producers consolidate to grow market share and pool investment for the transition. This leads to excess plant capacity, allowing employers to try and pit individual sites against each other for new investment.

- **Supply Chain:** Large car assembly plants and Tier 1 suppliers, often multinationals themselves, have developed green transition plans which the union is working to influence. However, there aren't developed green transition plans deeper into the automotive industry's supply chain, which has around 2500 employers. These smaller companies are often entirely reliant on single customers, and some make components which may not be required after 2030. An ongoing pilot project, led by Unite in the West Midlands, is mapping the supply chain of Jaguar Land Rover in order to identify such sites in their supply chain network; to prepare its business operations for the post 2030 period.

- **Exports:** Eight out of 10 cars produced in the UK are exported. Producers, like BMW at their Mini plant in Cowley, and Engine plant in Coleshill, Warwickshire, that solely produce internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles, are limiting their sales to markets with no restriction on vehicle emissions after 2030. The EU imports the majority

of cars made in the UK, and now requires emissions from new cars and new vans to be reduced by 55% by 2030, instead of 50%. It is also committed to ban new ICE vehicles from 2035.

We must also win union-jobs in emerging parts of the decarbonising UK automotive industry, as the second stage of the green transition goes beyond the introduction of electric vehicles (EVs). This is already happening fast – albeit slower in the UK due to the lack of a supporting government industrial strategy.

This includes EV battery manufacturing, EV battery recycling and hydrogen fuel cells production. Unite is involved in ongoing negotiations with larger employers that operate in the emerging parts of the decarbonising UK automotive industry. These negotiations are centred around winning investment in new technologies to make the UK automotive sector greener, and to improve the pay, conditions and security of the workforce.



Photo Nottingham City Council / Ashden

Rapid Electric charging points. Nottingham.

The next Newsletter will look at these areas.(Ed)

Edited by Carl Jerromes from an original article by Des Quinn, Steve Bush (Unite National Officers for the Automotive sector) and Ben Norman (Unite Researcher for the Automotive sector) in UNITE Environment Quarterly 6 (organised by Jim Mowatt).

Electric vehicles and jobs

The UK is legally bound to reduce its carbon emissions to net zero by 2050. (Climate Change Act 2008). It has committed to a 68% cut in emissions by 2030 and 78% by 2035, compared to 1990 levels. So, a massive reduction is required in the next seven years.

Transport produced 24% of the UK's total emissions in 2020 and remains the largest emitting sector in the UK. The biggest contributors were cars and taxis, which made up 52% of the emissions, HGVs 19% and vans 16%.

The goal for all new vehicles to be electrically powered by 2030 is already having profound implications for the manufacture, maintenance and powering of road vehicles; which will have a big impact on the number and quality of jobs in the industry.

Before looking at the implication for jobs in this transition to electric vehicles (EVs) we need to note the elephant in the room.

- There are 32 million cars in the UK as well as 150,000 HGVs and 1.5 million vans. An electric car battery weighs about half a ton.
- The fastest growing market has been for heavier cars (SUVs) for which the battery weighs over a ton.
- The battery for an HGV weighs in at about seven tons.
- Globally there are over a billion cars and nearly half a billion other vehicles.



The requirement for the vast material resources – lithium, cobalt and other exotic minerals - to replace existing personal vehicles on a one to one basis is simply not possible to satisfy because:

1. reserves for some of the minerals required are limited and subject to geopolitical tensions.
2. the energy required to extract and purify the minerals will grow to unsustainable amounts. In addition, the energy requirements to drive all these vehicles must be added to the electricity required for all other purposes – other manufacturing, domestic use etc. The problems are spelled out in this [letter from geologists at the Natural History Museum](#) to the Parliamentary Climate Change Committee.



Trams tomorrow? Photo Ashden / Ashden

It is often asserted that advances will be made to solve these problems. But there are limits. Lithium is efficient and widely used in batteries partly because it is the third lightest element after hydrogen and helium – any other element will be heavier with a negative impact on battery weight.

So, a dramatic reduction in energy, and car use is an unavoidable part of transition.



Photo: Abhishek Chinnappa / Climate Visuals Countdown

We're going to need some lighter vehicles. Electric Rickshaws under construction in Bangalore.

There will undoubtedly be fewer jobs in future, although how many depends on investment. The EV powertrain has far fewer moving parts - 17 in a Tesla - than a petrol/diesel engine, which has around 2000. That means it's simpler to make, lasts longer and requires less maintenance; which means less labour all the way down the line.

Making an EV battery requires twice as much energy as a conventional engine. Battery factories are highly dangerous places to work and require massive investment. The demise of BritishVolt is not a good sign. The Faraday Institute estimates that five such gigafactories will be needed in the UK by 2030 – just seven years away! Car manufacturers want to be near such gigafactories because transporting heavy batteries is expensive and difficult.

All this is bleak news for car workers, especially given that the 775,000 vehicles produced in 2022 is the lowest in 66 years, with little likelihood of an upturn unless there is significant investment and government support. It isn't a happy prospect for jobs in the road vehicle industry in a society where personal ownership of a car will have to become a rarity.

But unions should not just be reactive and defensive.

It is vital that current jobs must be defended and retraining provided for the reduced requirement for electric cars. But in a world transitioning to a green economy there will be a need for new jobs. These will be more secure than those in the current turbulent situation.

- We will need an excellent public transport network, requiring the manufacture of more buses, coaches, taxis and trains, together with a community EV car network, and light electric vehicles like bikes and scooters.
- A rapid and sustained programme of upgrading buildings to high standards of insulation will be needed – the UK is currently the worst in Europe.

The current Tory government needs to be lobbied with these demands. Even more important, so does the Labour Party, which is more likely to implement a just transition support strategy, when and if it gains power in 2024.

Mike McGrath; Mike was the lead author of the Transport chapter in CACCTUs [Climate Jobs; building a workforce for the climate emergency](#) Book.

Circular Economy for Auto Industry?

In the future, a significant share of private cars could be turned into autonomous taxis, where owners could rent their vehicles out during the day when they aren't in use. Such a model would create a fleet of autonomous vehicles that could potentially provide the same number of passenger miles with 90% fewer cars.

Each car would see an increase in utilisation which could clear a path for closed-loop recycling programs (where vehicle components and materials are remanufactured, reused and recycled at the end of life). Automakers who invest in circular innovation can trim costs and complexity from the manufacturing process and increasingly see financial returns.

From WEF

Time to Ban SUVs?

*It beggars belief that auto manufacturers have deliberately marketed more **expensive and heavier SUVs**, now 40% of all sales, knowing that this wipes out all the emissions reductions made by increased efficiencies in other areas.*

*The collective emissions of SUVs globally are now approaching a **billion tonnes a year**.*

The resource implications for Electric SUVs means that it should be a no brainer that such large and heavy models – of both conventional and electric variants - are phased out as rapidly as possible.

Ed

What our cities could look like

Possible is running a series of **visions of what our cities could be like when we cut car dependence here**. These look a lot like hope!



Beeston Road in South Leeds reimagined: Photo Possible.

Offshore oil and gas workers plan for the energy transition

An industry first, [Our Power: Offshore workers' demands for a just energy transition](#) is supported by over fifteen trade unions and climate organisations.

They have 10 demands that are comprehensive in scope, transformative in scale and deliverable now including

- Removing barriers that make it harder for oil and gas workers to move into the renewable industry.
- Ensuring safety, job security and fair pay across the energy industry.
- Sharing the benefits of our energy system fairly, with public investment in energy companies and communities.

Platform surveyed an additional 1092 offshore workers and over 90% agreed with the demands.

Help spread the word. Watch the video and share on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#).

Platform

Global Ocean Treaty may block deep sea mining

On 5 March 2023, the UN finally agreed an historic ocean protection treaty. Oceans Campaigner at Greenpeace International, Louisa Casson, says it's

'a monumental win for ocean protection, an important sign that multilateralism still works in an increasingly divided world. The agreement of this Global Ocean Treaty sends a powerful signal that the tide is turning and that governments can put protection, not exploitation, at the heart of our approach to the global oceans.'

This momentum will almost inevitably spill-over into the highly controversial [deep sea mining negotiations](#) led by the International Seabed Authority (ISA), which opens in Jamaica this month.

As we reported [here](#) multinationals like the Metals Company are pressing for sponsorship deals with Pacific island nations Nauru, Tonga and Kiribati to strip-mine metallic nodules on vast tracts of the ocean floor for the copper, cobalt and nickel they contain.

Hopefully the treaty will embolden more governments to join the calls to stop this risky industry before it starts. Many governments will not want to be seen to undermine the achievement of agreeing this Treaty by giving a greenlight to strip-mining the seabed just two weeks after this historic success. Campaigners will be holding politicians to account for their commitment to deliver ocean protection through to the upcoming talks in Jamaica.

The treaty still needs to be ratified and to come into force. But elements of the Global Ocean Treaty will play a role in helping to protect the oceans from destructive activities like deep sea mining, including:

- a pathway to create a network of 'ocean sanctuaries.' These will protect wildlife living in the high seas from all forms of industrial exploitation, to create ecologically-coherent, representative protection across international waters.
- standards and guidelines for strong Environmental Impact Assessments can help raise the bar and may influence ongoing negotiations at the ISA about assessing the potential for harm from strip-mining the ocean floor.

However, the Treaty of itself will not be enough to prevent the destruction caused by deep sea mining. Even if global targets are met - 30% of the oceans fully or highly protected – the polluting impacts would spread far beyond boundaries of mining zones. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has now called on the ISA member states to halt all mining activities.

A ban or moratorium on deep sea mining is a necessary partner to a strong Global Ocean Treaty. 2023 is a crucial year for governments to make them happen.

Philip Pearson



A Seabed mining machine for Nautilus Minerals, YouTube/Nautilus Minerals

Who does National Grid work for?

In January, at Common Wealth we published a short briefing on National Grid plc, the private company that runs Britain's national grid. National Grid plc is a publicly listed multinational utilities company with major operations in the UK and several US states.

We present an analysis of National Grid plc and its key UK subsidiaries, including the firm's ownership, payouts to shareholders and measures of profitability.

We focus on National Grid plc's UK subsidiaries: National Grid Electricity Transmission, National Grid Electricity System Operator and National Grid Gas Transmission.

- National Grid Electricity Transmission plc owns and maintains the electricity transmission system in England and Wales.
- National Grid Electricity System Operator plc balances the electricity system, to ensure that the electricity supply meets the demand each second of the day.
- National Grid Gas plc owns and maintains the gas transmission system in Britain.

The Electricity Act, passed in 1989, saw our publicly-owned energy transmission system sold off to the private sector. National Grid plc was first listed on the London Stock Exchange in 1995. As of today, National Grid plc's top ten shareholders range from global asset management firms, such as BlackRock and Vanguard, to public pension funds, notably Norway and the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority.

Over the last five years (the financial year 2017/18 to 2021/22), National Grid plc has paid their shareholders close to £9 billion (£8.874 billion) through dividends and buyback schemes; this averages at £1.8 billion each year. In 2018, shareholder pay-outs totalled £4.5 billion, more than double the yearly average. This was in large part due to the sale of their UK Gas Distribution Networks, which were operated by the subsidiary company, National Grid Gas plc.

The electricity and gas distribution networks are an often-overlooked section of our energy system. Our recent report **"Profiting Amid the Energy Crisis"** shows that the distribution networks have high operating profit margins: 42.6% across the gas distribution networks between 2017 and 2021. In comparison, the average operating profit margin for the FTSE 100 over the same period was 10.5%.

In 2022, National Grid plc's UK segments had high operating profit margins with their electricity and gas operations having operating profit margins of 19.3% and 36.3%, respectively. The margin for electricity operations is almost double the FTSE 100 average, while the figure for gas operations is over three times as high.

Common Wealth is undertaking a programme of work on every aspect of Britain's energy system, from extraction to supply, looking at how to establish an energy future that is secure, green, and affordable for all. The full briefing looking into National Grid's financial accounts can be read [here](#). For more on the energy system as a whole, see our latest explainer **"How Britain's Energy System Works – and Why It Needs an Overhaul"**. Our analysis of National Grid has also been featured in the Guardian **"Put all of National Grid Under State Control, Net Zero Campaigners Urge"**.

Sophie Flinders, Data Analyst at Common Wealth

Green New Deal Collective Bargaining

This is an update on where our UCU branch (University of Liverpool) is at in implementing the Green New Deal collective bargaining framework because it's getting quite exciting!

The Green New Deal framework - put together by UCU national and SOS (students organising for sustainability) - outlines how branches can use collective bargaining to implement sustainability and climate action at their Universities using a Green New Deal bargaining claim. We passed a branch motion in 2020 to get started on this and began co-working with the Guild of Students and the Unison and Unite branches at UoL. A group of members and reps co-wrote the claim based on five key areas:

- Local and global emissions reductions
- Sustainable Employment
- Decolonisation and decarbonisation of the curriculum
- Sustainable Research
- Divestment

It's mapped onto the UN sustainable development goals (SDGs) which our University is a signatory to, and each area contains a list of demands/ways forward that we want the University to agree to in order so that the green transition that must happen within our institutions is both effective and just.

We submitted the claim to the employer in October and we had our first negotiation meeting last week. We took representatives from each of our unions and our Green New Deal Action Group, and we came away with a commitment from the University to a series of meetings to discuss each area of our claim. We know we won't be able to get everything that we're asking for, especially not in six meetings, but our hope is to negotiate for

infrastructure that gives the Unions a seat at the table and a voice on meaningful climate action at the University of Liverpool.

Liverpool Hope University UCU passed a motion in the Autumn to start working on their own Green New Deal collective bargaining agreement and had their first organising meeting yesterday.

We ran a teach out together on a strike day in November, in tandem with Liverpool John Moores University, and it felt amazing to be working on the Green New Deal together, across branches and across Unions and with the students as well. I've also had conversations with others from other UCU branches who are thinking about starting to use collective bargaining in a similar way to push meaningful climate action in their institutions. We're beginning to build a network to share our methods, materials, and motivation.

If this is something that you might want to try at your institution, or find out more about the possibility of doing so, then please get in touch. I can share more detail and resources and we can build a wider network and more momentum.

We are running a couple of teach-outs this spring focussed on Capacity Building for a Green New Deal, one student focussed (24th February) and one for our joint trade union members (2nd March), which folks would also be very welcome to attend to find out more that way.

There's more information about all of this on the UCU website, and the UoL UCU Branch website, along with a petition that you can sign that asks UoL to adopt the claim.

Eve Merrall UCU Green Rep

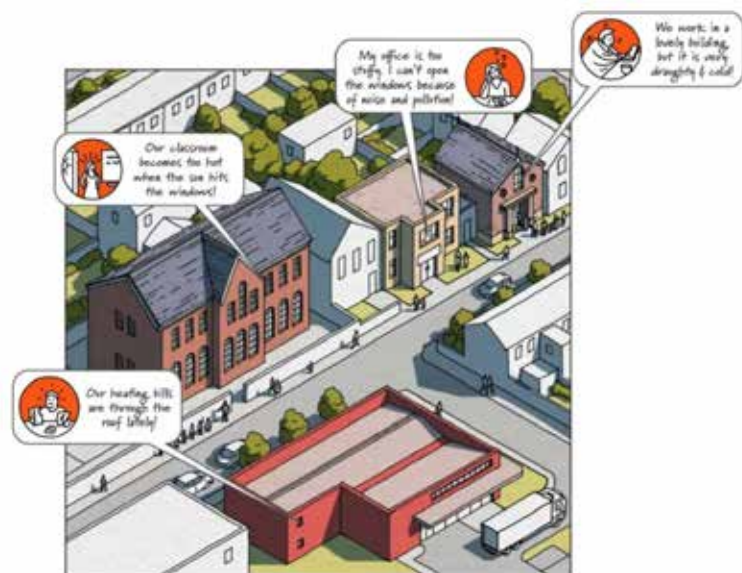
This report shows that Green Bargaining is for all sectors and shows the importance, and possibility, of union reps taking the initiative to up the pace of transition.
Ed



TUC guide to advocating for retrofit

Cold and draughty buildings with poor air quality affect our wellbeing and health at work. Running buildings is increasingly expensive due to the cost of living and energy bill crisis, and is the third largest carbon emitting sector globally.

Done in the right way, maintenance and retrofit can fix these issues. This [guide from the TUC](#) provides suggestions for trade unionists for why and how to start advocating for building retrofit at work.



NEU Guide to School Retrofit

Simple adaptations to education buildings can help meet climate targets, make buildings more resilient to climate change, more energy efficient and healthier places to work and learn.

[Advice on how to negotiate to get this done](#) and get greener buildings is now on the union web site.



Photo: Richard flickr.com/photos/tortipede/

Mass lobby of Parliament 1 April

On the **1 April**, people across the UK are going to lobby their MPs to call for proper funding for nationwide energy efficiency in homes to lower bills and tackle the climate crisis.

The government has failed to do the quickest and cheapest thing to help lower bills - they've not properly insulated homes or swapped gas boilers for heat pumps. If they did, the average household would save £1800 a year!

Organised by [Warm this Winter](#), a coalition of 40 organisations including 350.org, Greenpeace, Fuel Poverty Action Group and many more.

[Details of the lobby here.](#)

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.

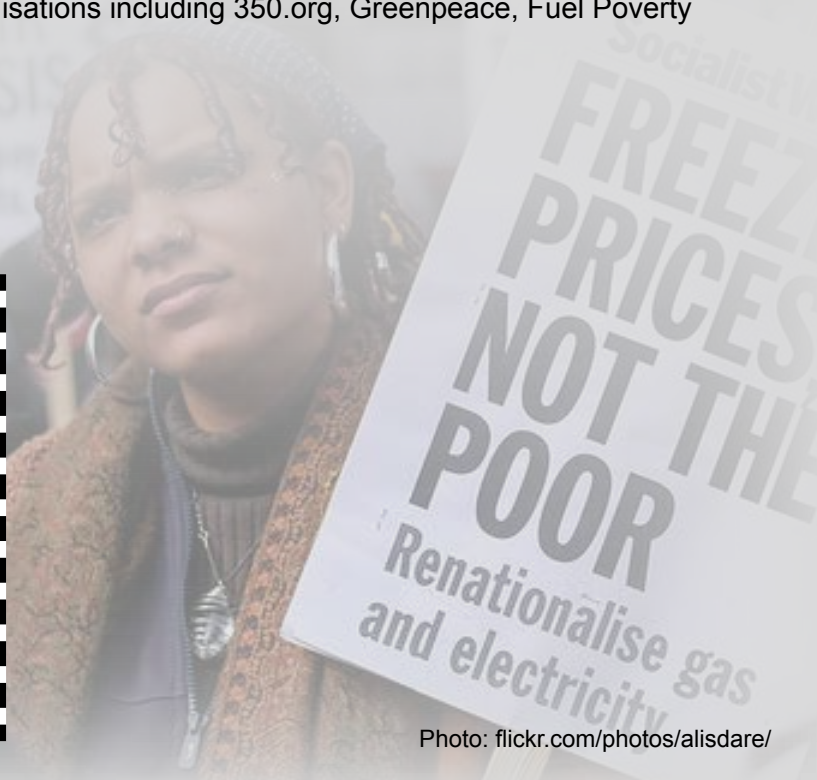


Photo: flickr.com/photos/alisdare/

Labour for a Green New Deal - Appeal for Volunteers for 'Worker-Climate Team'

Many of us have been witness to the expansion in capacity and attention put into climate and transition issues within the trade union movement over the last few years. While it is hugely positive that a variety of new and revitalised projects have appeared- it is crucial for these efforts to be learning from each other and coordinating to build a collective strength.

Last year, we created our 'Worker-Climate Team'- to build stronger relationships and understanding between trade unionists taking on climate efforts. In 2022, our work involved:

- Outreach across regions, unions and sectors to find many activists engaged in different projects
- Conducting in-depth interviews with workers about their organising
- Producing accessible resources on different approaches and challenges raised by interviewees
- Hosting a Worker-Climate Conference in October- engaging workers in critical strategic conversations

Now in 2023, we are taking our network-development work to the next level, by expanding our outreach, running more in-depth interviews, producing further resources surveying the ongoing uses of methods/ tactics, and hosting strategic roundtable discussions bringing together workers with shared interests (e.g. same tactics/methods; similar industrial targets) to enhance practical collaboration. Our operations will be a key relational and information resource for worker's transition efforts, working in parallel with more formalised structures being created through cross-union bodies such as STUC and Yorkshire and Humber TUC.

To achieve all this, we need your help! We are currently recruiting across a variety of volunteer roles to massively enhance our capacity- if you or anybody you know has the experience for any of these roles- please sign-up and share widely.

Roles:

- **Data and Information Volunteer:** Structuring and managing the data gathered by the wider team (from worker interviews and roundtables), ensuring an accessible and understandable system
- **Analysis and Resources Volunteer:** Review and compare data to develop conclusions and recommendations e.g. coordination between workers using similar tactics. Help to develop output from interviews and roundtables into effective written resources for the wider worker-climate network
- **Outreach and Liaison Volunteer:** Establish and maintain relationships with activists taking climate action from across the labour movement
- **Interview Volunteer:** Arrange and conduct interviews with trade unionists and other activists to develop an in-depth understanding of their organising and how it fits into the wider movement
- **Facilitation Volunteer:** Plan and host events bringing workers together to discuss methods, tactics and strategies, e.g. worker roundtables, network showcases featuring interviewed workers.

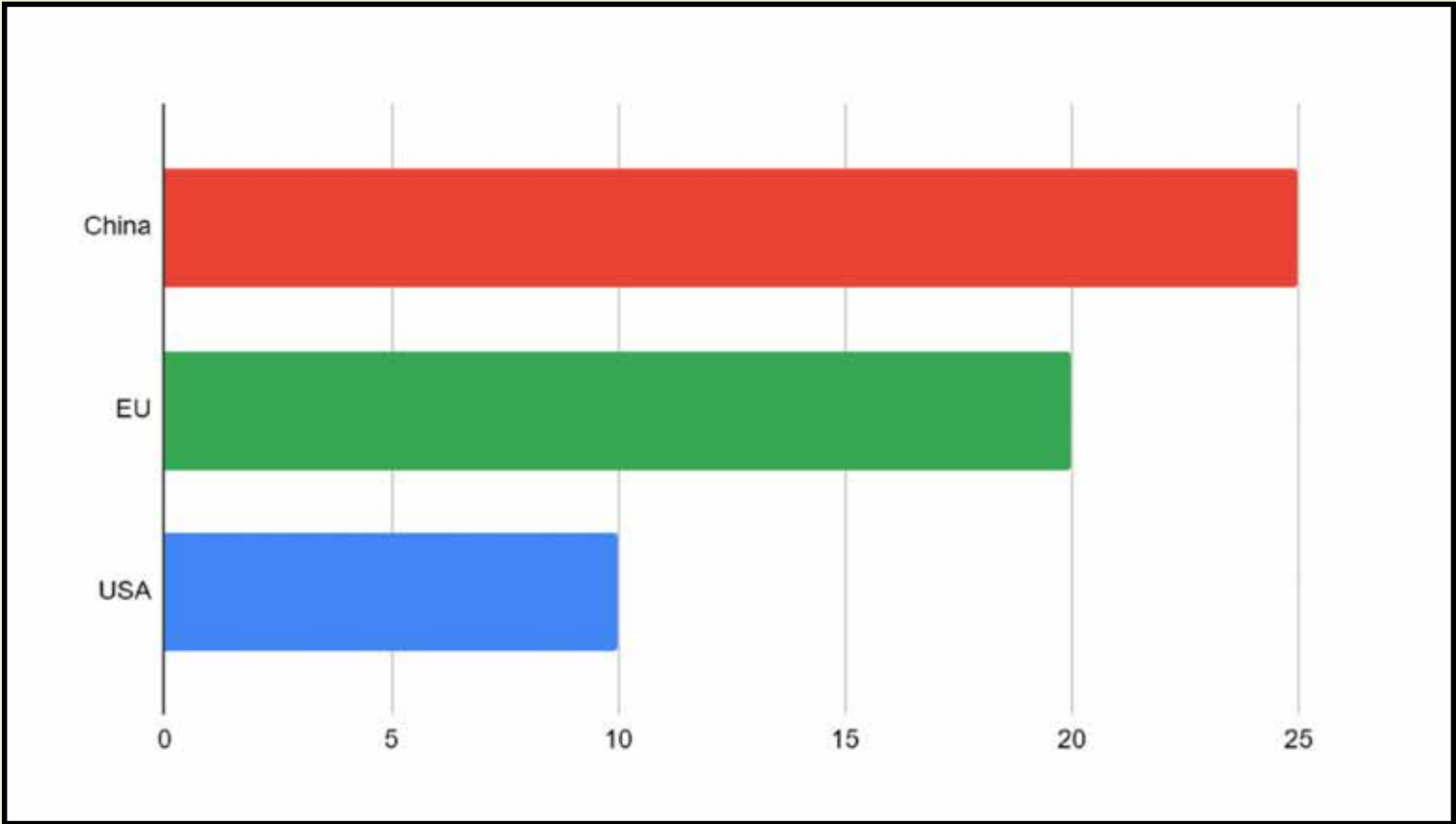
[Sign-Up Here](#)



Green Bites

Graphics of the Month

Percentage of Electric Vehicles in total car sales in 2022.



STATS of the Month

0.4%

Of 18,600 firms surveyed by CDP were assessed as having a credible transition plan to stay below a 1.5C increase. Why we can't rely on the private sector to take a lead.

5 - 15%
a year

Current annual GDP loss from climate impacts on countries in Africa.

95%

China's solar industry output increase in 2022, reaching \$200 billion. Production capacity increased from 87.41 to 392.61 GW; export of PV products increased by 80%, and about half of that went to Europe, doubling the level of 2021 and helping UK rooftop installations to triple last year. From Yicai global

Shell Game

Following a similar pattern to BP, Shell spent 7.5 times as much on payouts to its shareholders and twice as much on marketing as it invested in its 'Renewable and Energy Solutions' division – which in turn has come under fire for its green credentials. From Open Democracy.

Coming up

By the end of March the government is legally bound to publish an updated Net Zero Reduction Plan to be fully compliant with the Climate Change Act.

The Parliamentary Climate Change Committee has called for the recommendations of the Skidmore Review to be implemented in full.

Full coverage in next edition.

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