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“The Just Transition and the Role of Labour: Our Ecological, Social, and Economic Future”

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## **Energy Transition and Smart Unions**

*„Not macht erfinderisch“ (Necessity begets ingenuity)*

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Taking a roller coaster ride is thrilling but safe - you already know the outcome. The transition towards low carbon energy production in Germany is thrilling as well. But being aboard of any energy corporations workforce may stir up worries on employment. The German Solar Industry recently experienced a rollercoaster ride with a devastating crash landing and few survivors. Still, Germany's working class shows confidence.

We fell on some hard times since the 70's. The downturn of Germany's coal industry affected millions of lives. Nuclear power plants in return generated only a handful of highskilled or extremely dangerous working class jobs. But new professions emerged, replacing the old ones. The recent nuclear phase-out excited the faith in renewable energies and boosted the creation of employment in the energy sector. But many workplaces got lost in the consolidation of the solar industry since 2011. Where are the new jobs in a low carbon emissions economy? And will these be decent jobs?

These questions in mind I will point at two keyfactors:

### 1. Education of Unionists:

The German saying „Not macht erfinderisch“ (Necessity begets ingenuity) may give a hint! The well educated Unionist thinktanks brought up innovative perspectives i.e. the 2008 financial crisis which resulted in even higher employment and fulminantly stopped neoliberal standard solutions.

We lost jobs in the energy sector but Engineering, Information Technology and Logistics obtained millions of new workplaces for high and low skilled workers. The intellectual armament of Unionists has a major role in these combats on workplaces.

### 2. Gains and Losses:

What types of employment got destroyed and were created when looking at the energy sector? How did the numbers on workplaces change? How does employment differ in workload, payment and labour conditions? Did women gain or loose in this process? How did and does the work affect health?

My comparative research will make use of Eurostat-data, workforce interviews and literature review.