



# AND WHAT ABOUT MY JOB?

## JUST MOBILITY AND ALTERNATIVE PRODUCTION

### FOREWORD

Both for ecological reasons and for reasons of securing employment in the industrial sector, consistent steps are needed for a just transformation of mobility, a social-ecological restructuring of the mobility industries, and just transitions for those affected in the sense of a connective, ecological class policy. The Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung has set out to do just that. We went to the companies and asked our colleagues in the automotive, but also in the train and bus industries what is on their minds and what possible prospects could be. We held company seminars, forums, and conferences with workers, trade unions, and environmental activists. We closely watched the cooperation between the service sector union Ver.di and Fridays for Future in the latest round of collective bargaining in local transport, and tested in practice how a bridge between trade unions and the climate movement could take place not only on paper.

Beyond that, we examined the situation and future of the mobility industries and developed concepts for their transformation. Of course, these are not ready-made blueprints, but perspectives, concrete entry projects, and starting points — as a proposal for further discussion.

We proceed from a simple assumption, which is far from consensus in the current debate: namely, that such a transformation requires a differ-

ent kind of industrial production — and in general an incredible amount of labour power. We have calculated how large this employment potential can be in two different scenarios. You can read all this on a total of over 402 pages in our study. Then again, who reads 402 pages? We've summarized the most important findings for you here and in an accompanying video clip. Read it, pass it on, discuss, criticize, and build on it. We are happy to do this together with you. We would be pleased. The QR code leads you directly to our project page [www.rosalux.de/en/switching-lanes](http://www.rosalux.de/en/switching-lanes).

**Mario Candeias**

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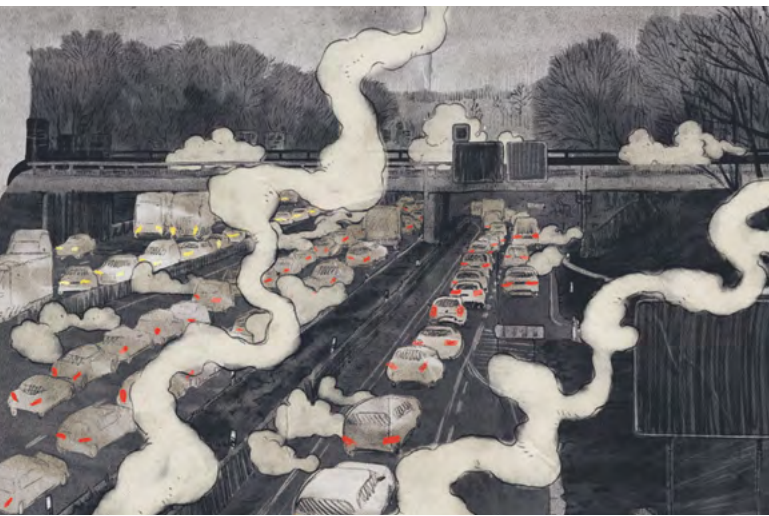
Paul and Ercan work as skilled workers on the assembly line in a car factory. They are worried about the future. The company for which they work wants to carry out rationalizations again: work is to be intensified even further, people are to be dismissed in order to be able to survive on the world market against the competition. Something like that happens every few years. The workforce is fighting, company by company, trying to prevent it from getting even worse. For the core workforce, this still results in very good working conditions, Paul thinks.

Now everything is to become "electric". A lot of jobs will be lost again through the elimination of the labour-intensive combustion engine — the new powertrain requires far fewer parts. Various studies assume the loss of around 150,000 jobs due to the reduction of overcapacity and rationalization. 100,000 jobs are to be eliminated as part of the transition to e-mobility. That is frightening.



**"IT DOESN'T MAKE MY CAR MORE ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY IF I PUT SIX BAGS OF CEMENT IN THE BACK. THIS IS JUST AS ABSURD AS THE ELECTRIC STRATEGY OF THE CORPORATIONS OF EQUIPPING TWO-AND-A-HALF-TON CARS WITH BATTERIES. YOU DON'T HAVE TO HAVE STUDIED PHYSICS TO UNDERSTAND THAT THIS IS NONSENSE. IT'S ABOUT PROFIT MAXIMIZATION AND TAPPING STATE PREMIUMS. IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH CLIMATE PROTECTION, APART FROM MARKETING."**

Shop steward at VW factory in Kassel/Germany



**"AT DAIMLER WITH 9,000 EMPLOYEES, THERE IS A HUGE PARKING LOT OUTSIDE AND ONLY FIVE CHARGING STATIONS FOR THE MANAGEMENT. YES? WHERE IS THE CHARGING STATION FOR THE MASSES?"**

**"AT THE ALDI SUPERMARKET!"**

Discussion between the Chairman of the Works Council of an automotive supplier and a shop steward at Daimler

Ercan thinks it's right that something is finally being done to make the car more ecological. After all, transport is responsible for one fifth of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in Germany. And while in all other areas emissions are at least decreasing, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from transport have actually risen by 170 million tonnes since 1990. Something has to be done, Paul also thinks, at least for the children.

But the 1.5-tonne electric SUVs they are now supposed to build are not really an ecological solution. His colleagues are very sceptical about the corporations' "transformation strategy" — as a survey conducted by the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung among workers in the automotive industry concluded. Although the electric car is presented as a solution, it neither secures sufficient employment nor is it particularly ecological: the consumption of resources, especially for rare earths, is enormous. There can be no question of a departure from private transport, says Ercan.

Paul's daughter is active in Fridays for Future. He often discusses with her and thinks that the young people are right, that everything should be rebuilt much faster and more radically. "System Change, not Climate Change" and all that, Julia always says. But Paul's job is well-paid, the workforce well-organized. What else is he supposed to do? We need bus drivers and nurses, as the pandemic has shown. They are, in a way, frontline workers. Cars aren't necessary. Not such a good alternative for him and his colleagues, not under the given conditions. Ercan thinks that such professions should be upgraded and paid much better — then you could talk about it. But what to do?

Julia is struggling for the expansion of public transport. Together with the service union Ver.di, Fridays for Future have jointly organized the first nationwide collective bargaining in local transport for over a year. Better pay, more staff, and expansion of public transport. Sounds good to Paul. Ultimately, the eco-mobility network consisting of bus, train, cycling, and walking should account for around 80 percent of total traffic by 2030. To this end, the environmentally harmful state subsidies for car and air traffic — 29 billion euro each year — are to be diverted. After all, at least 20 billion euro are needed for this shift from cars to public transport.



**"THE PAST YEAR AND A HALF HAS PROVEN THAT IT IS POSSIBLE TO CONNECT ECOLOGICAL AND TRADE UNION CONCERNS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF A NATIONWIDE CAMPAIGN. IT HAS BEEN POSSIBLE TO DEVELOP APPROACHES TO AN ECOLOGICAL CLASS POLICY AND THEREBY A LABOUR TURN OF THE CLIMATE MOVEMENT AND A CLIMATE TURN OF THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT."**

Working group for the liaison with unions in Fridays for Future



In fact, more and more young people no longer find a car as important or attractive as in the past. But not only them. Many colleagues in the automotive industry also identify less and less with "their product" and can imagine switching to other means of transport if the conditions are right. This is also a finding of the survey. Ercan no longer has a car. He would like to qualify to be fit for the changing tasks. Perhaps another metalworking activity would be conceivable, for example in the production of rail vehicles? But the wage also has to be a good one. Unfortunately, there are hardly any serious debates about a fundamental change in production. Ercan continues to ponder.

*"SINCE THE DIESEL SCANDAL AT THE LATEST, AND BECAUSE OF HOW THE COMPANY IS TREATING THE EMPLOYEES, THIS FEELING OF 'WE BENZLERS' NO LONGER EXISTS. IF I WOULD HAVE A SIMILAR WAGE AND A SIMILARLY INTERESTING ACTIVITY, THEN I WOULD ALSO WORK FOR THE RAILWAY."*

An engineer at Daimler

A study published by the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung states that such a socio-ecological transformation will require an incredible amount of labour power. Many more suburban railways and subways, trams, regional and long-distance trains are needed for the conversion, along with new control systems, rails, workshops, entire e-bus systems with overhead lines, e-minibuses and on-call buses, specialized e-vehicles like ambulances, taxis, utility vehicles, cargo and e-bikes — also for a moderate export. All this has to be produced. That would constitute a real transformation of mobility, rather than just switching out the type of engine.



In this study, the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung has calculated how big the potential for new jobs could be. Different scenarios were designed:

**SCENARIO 1: DOUBLING THE NUMBER OF PASSENGERS IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND RAIL TRANSPORT AS WELL AS IN BICYCLE TRAFFIC**  
 – TOTAL POTENTIAL: UP TO 214,000 ADDITIONAL JOBS.

**SCENARIO 2: INCREASE IN PASSENGER NUMBERS BY A FACTOR OF 2.5**  
 – TOTAL POTENTIAL: UP TO 314,000 ADDITIONAL JOBS.

The overall potential would be significantly higher if we had a shorter work week, a „short full-time for all“, i.e. a reduction in working hours that flexibly revolves around a 30-hour week.

THAT WOULD BRING US TO AN ADDITIONAL TOTAL POTENTIAL OF UP TO 323,500 (SCENARIO 1) OR 436,500 JOBS (SCENARIO 2).



Even if we were to assume a shrinking of automobile production by 50 percent, the loss of jobs could already be compensated for in scenario 1 by expanding alternative production. Scenario 2 would then already lead to a significant expansion of employment. If we add the shorter working week as part of a "new normal employment relation", the result would be the creation of hundreds of thousands of additional jobs. This represents a new perspective for Paul and Erkan, one that they never thought about before.

Of course, this will not happen overnight. Concrete targets and feasible intermediate steps are required, as well as a guarantee that plausible alternatives for workers in the automotive industry, which is characterized by comparatively high wages, are not accompanied by significant wage losses. So we are not talking about a few additional jobs, but about expanding industrial employment in the core area of the metalworkers' union IG Metall. This is not just about "replacement jobs".

If we rely on a renewed producer pride that takes workers' socio-technical knowledge seriously, then it is about socially indispensable activities needed to establish an industrial basis for a climate-neutral transformation of mobility!



The corporations will not participate in this transformation voluntarily. This kind of social-ecological system change must be enforced *against* the corporations, but *with* the workers. To this end, the necessary conditions must be created.

On this basis, Julia argues in class-struggle terms: practical alliances for a system change can be organized, bringing together the different power resources of workers and trade unions from different industries, from environmental and climate movements, from left-wing political organizations and parties and critical knowledge production. She smiles when she thinks of the almost daily discussions at dinner. Actually, she is a bit proud of her father, who is open to her arguments. He even understood that she does not want a driver's license, but relies fully on public transport and her bike. However, this does not mean that he'll give up his car. Not yet. But she also understands his concerns. He generally lacks confidence in politicians and specifically in the management of his company. But the fact that so many young people from the climate movement now want to stand up for the interests of workers and the environment fills him with hope.

**"ECOLOGICAL CLASS POLITICS MEANS POOLING THE POWER RESOURCES OF THE MOST DIVERSE MOVEMENTS IN ORDER TO FIGHT TOGETHER FOR SOCIAL CHANGE, IMPROVING THE LIVING CONDITIONS OF WORKERS AND ECOLOGICAL CONDITIONS AT THE SAME TIME. [...] LET'S WORK TOGETHER ON EVEN MORE POWERFUL STRIKES FOR THE CLIMATE."**

Working group for the liaison with unions in Fridays for Future

The end result would be a just transition to a just mobility for all regardless of their income, good jobs in industrial and transport companies, liveable and green cities with space for recreation, children playing and meeting with people. And it would also make a significant contribution to limiting climate change.



**"CLIMATE CHANGE MAKES THIS NECESSARY, THE COURSE HAS BEEN SET, WHETHER WE LIKE IT OR NOT."**

A member of the workers council at Daimler



## RECENT PUBLICATIONS

A detailed English summary of the study:

### Switching Lanes

How transforming Germany's mobility industry can lay the foundation for a green and socially just transport system



English summary of the study:  
[www.rosalux.de/en/switching-lanes](http://www.rosalux.de/en/switching-lanes)

More to read:

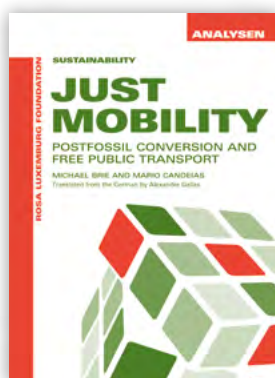
Michael Brie and Mario Candeias

### Just Mobility Postfossil Conversion and Free Public Transport

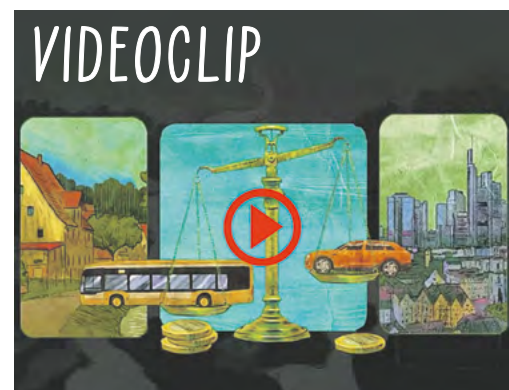
28 pages, brochure, ISSN 2194-2951



Download: [www.rosalux.de/en/publication/id/5900](http://www.rosalux.de/en/publication/id/5900)



For political education you can find here a video on the topic:



**Jobs vs. ecological and just mobility?**



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