

"Real Utopia proposal"

Postfossil Conversion and Free Public Transport

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Part I. Private E-Car vs. Public Transport for free – Real Dystopia vs. Concrete Utopia (Michael Brie)

Crises create opportunities to set long-range goals for the future. A key question is that of urban mobility in a world in which the great majority of the world's population will soon live in cities of over a million inhabitants, many of them in metropolitan conurbations. Broadly speaking, there are two possible alternatives: one, the US system of mobility centred on private, petrol-driven cars can be ecologically modernized and expanded to embrace the globe by switching to electric-powered cars; or, two, public transport can be ecologized and made more flexible. For historical reasons the factors determining which of these alternatives will be chosen are very different and path-dependent. Whereas rapid transit systems have largely disappeared from many US metropolises, European metropolises are characterized by mixed systems. In many metropolises of the southern hemisphere the car-based mobility of the rising middle classes coexists with the exclusion of large sections of the city-dwelling poor from urban mobility. Long-term experiments with a free-of-charge public transport system could act as a global model.

Part II. Conversion. Towards a Eco-Socialist Economy of Reproduction (Mario Candeias)

How to get from here to there? A Free Public Transport system is deeply connected to the conversion of the car industry and specific modes of dealing with contradictions of a transformative process. The car industry is facing strong challenges between crisis of overproduction, booming demand from 'emerging markets', spatial relocation and ecological necessities. Conversion and a just transition for the workers and communities affected face several strategic dilemma. The paper elaborates on union and (eco)movement strategies and short comings, trying to draw on a political method and projects, which create communalities out of different interests at the same time as appreciating differences. The protagonist of such a process of transformation towards a Green Socialism can only be a 'mosaic left' oriented towards participation, which enables people to become "the drivers of their own history" (Eric Mann 2001)