



WHY WORKERS SHOULD OPPOSE AVIATION EXPANSION

1 Aviation growth threatens our climate

We face a climate emergency which threatens our future and requires the UK to completely decarbonise its economy. Aviation accounts for around 8% of our UK greenhouse gas emissions, but this climate impact is tripled if 'non-CO2' effects, such as water vapour at high altitude are included. Even without the push for airport expansion, this would endanger UK climate targets.

But the government wants to pave the way to an increase in flying of 70% (200 million additional passengers) by 2050.

There are no credible technologies which could counteract this growth in emissions. Despite the PR and greenwash, when considering scaling up electric flight and alternative fuels, these all come up against limitations: aircraft size, viable distance, and/or supply of the vast amounts of fuel which would be needed. There is also heavy reliance on carbon offsetting, a business which is profitable but entirely ineffective in cutting emissions.

2 Inequity: the vast majority of those flying are rich

In the UK, 70% of flights are taken by only 15% of the population, whilst at least half the population do not fly at all. Globally, only 1% of the world's population cause 50% of commercial aviation emissions, while more than 80% of the world's population have never set foot on an aeroplane.

The aviation sector enjoys significant tax breaks. It has been estimated that the tax exemption on aviation fuel costs the Exchequer well over £6 billion a year that could go towards struggling public services.

3 Local health and environmental impacts

In addition to global climate impacts causing devastation, particularly among the world's poorest, airport expansion is detrimental to the health of those living nearby. Aircraft noise disrupts residents' daily living, sleep and children's learning. Air pollution exacerbates respiratory and cardiovascular conditions and leads to premature deaths.

4 The industry can't close its eyes to the future

Some unions have welcomed airport expansion on the basis that it will create jobs. But these unions have found themselves organising strikes to get airport workers a fair deal, for those facing redundancies due to automation, or fighting against 'fire and rehire' policies of airlines.

In the face of the climate crisis, change is inevitable. Reckless expansion now leaves aviation workers vulnerable to a future of mass job losses, when promises of 'sustainable aviation growth' prove meaningless.

5 Working towards a Just Transition

The government's current policy on aviation and climate ('Jet Zero') is based on unrealistic assumptions for new technology. It entirely fails to consider ways in which demand for aviation could be managed, such as a halt to airport expansion; a frequent flyer levy; incentivising no-fly solutions for business; or additional annual leave to allow people to be able to travel for holidays and leisure by rail.

Alongside this, investment is desperately needed in an affordable, nationalised rail network, integrated with other local

public transport and active travel options. This will create secure, long-term jobs.

The CACCTU report, '*Climate Jobs: Building a workforce for the climate emergency*', shows how we need a huge expansion of public sector jobs across all sectors from transport, energy and food to homes, education and more, which are essential to tackling the climate crisis and improving lives.

Meanwhile the aviation industry should be making itself fit for the future we face. Not expanding but developing new technology, reconfiguring airports and re-training staff within the sector. And trade unions must demand that the voice of workers is central in this process of change.

Find out more

This flyer raises a wide range of issues. References and further reading can be found at:

www.cacctu.org.uk/aviation

Campaign against Climate Change Trade Union Group

www.cacctu.org.uk

climatetradeunion@gmail.com

 [@cacctu](https://twitter.com/cacctu)