

Socialist Worker

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Time for a fightback on the buses...

SOLIDARITY CAN WIN SPREAD THE STRIKES

THE FIGHT ON LEEDS' FIRST Group buses has now become the sharp end of the fight in the industry. Following the sacking of the Unite branch secretary and two other members, and final written warnings to a further 11 workers, drivers have been forced to escalate their action, in their ongoing dispute over an insulting 38 pence an hour offer.

Bus workers in Leeds have done exactly the right thing by responding to these savage attacks on their right to organise with an all-out strike.

A line had to be drawn in the sand. When the bosses come for our union reps, we have to show them we won't stand for it. An injury to one is an injury to all!

And strikes can win reinstatement. In the last year, PCS union rep Candy Udwin won her reinstatement at the National Gallery in London and Unison rep Sandy Nicoll was reinstated after an unofficial walkout at the School of Oriental and African Studies.

Anger

It is absurd that drivers in Halifax receive £2 per hour more for doing exactly the same job as drivers in Leeds. And it's a similar story across the country.

It isn't a coincidence that this company is fuelling anger in garage after garage! Thousands of drivers have rightly turned around and said enough is enough.

First buses are facing a serious fight back and they don't like it. In Weymouth, First drivers are now in their sixth week of strike action. They were out for five days this week and they are out for another five days next week.

In Glasgow 1,700 Unite members have voted in a consultative ballot for strikes over driver shortages and service provision. They voted by 97 percent for strikes on a 71 percent turnout.

4,000 Unite members on First Buses are being balloted across Yorkshire over attacks on pay and terms and conditions. The drivers, engineers, cleaners and maintenance staff – are based at Bradford, Doncaster, Halifax, Huddersfield, Rotherham, Sheffield and York.

700 bus workers have struck recently in Manchester. And it's not just First buses.



Leeds pickets in June

Newport Bus drivers struck over pay on Thursday.

Every bus driver can do something to support the strikes. An all-out strike is the best way to win but it also needs serious solidarity. The drivers in Leeds and Weymouth should be inundated with messages of support from reps and solidarity collections in garages.

The issues faced by drivers in the First Group are known to drivers across the country. In London, new Labour mayor Sadiq Khan pledged last year that if he was elected he would bring in one rate for the job across London's 18 bus companies.

Coordination

Khan said he will end the 80 rates of pay that exist across the capital. Unite—which backed Sadiq for mayor needs to give him a friendly reminder of his pledge! And if for any reason the London mayor has changed his mind then Unite needs to get the action back on.

London's bus drivers can bring the city to a halt and force the bosses to agree a

single rate for the job.

Coordination across companies and regions is possible. These bus companies make huge profits and give nothing back to the people who do all the hard work, at the same time as cutting services in areas that need it most.

Solidarity

It's good that in Jeremy Corbyn we have a candidate for Labour leader who wants renationalisation of the railways—but how about bringing the buses back into public hands?

Let's have a nationwide rate for the job and services where they are needed.

Every bus worker who wants to see a serious fight back in the industry should fight to build solidarity with those on strike and to spread the strikes to fight local issues.

The bus bosses are running services into the ground and treating drivers like dirt—surely it's time they got their comeuppance!

• Messages of support via:

Leeds: phil.bown@unitetheunion.org

Weymouth: timtucouncil@talktalk.net

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