



notts **offtherails**

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Tory Strife Is Our Opportunity

The Tory leader candidates have denounced each other and (implicitly) the Tories' whole record in government since 2010. The new Tory leader will start out as a choice rejected by over half the Tory MPs. We can take advantage of that strife only if the labour movement gets aggressive; the 8 day strike just announced by Unite at Felixstowe is a good example.

If the labour movement warms itself not with an aggressive fightback but with notions that the Tories' troubles will bring respite and easy concessions, then the Tories can regain the initiative. If the Tories get their way, the vast majority of public-sector workers will get a real-terms cut because soaring inflation will drag down wages and depress workers' position automatically *unless we do something about it*.

Both Rishi Sunak and Liz Truss are, in slightly different ways, right-wing even by Tory standards. Both have made it clear they intend to expand Boris Johnson's offensive against the working class – whether that's banning strikes on essential public services like the railway, pushing down real wages, expanding privatisation or anti-migrant measures like the Rwanda refugee scheme. If they're given time for it by unions making industrial campaigns into a long dribble of uncoordinated one-day strikes, they will be able to redress Tory authority.

There are also many factors favouring our side – including low unemployment and now, too, the deep discrediting of the government. The most important one is workers' growing spirit of anger and revolt. We should aim to channel that disgust at the Tories into spreading and developing this spirit of revolt, and with it workers' organisation and struggle. Every victory will tip the scales in favour of the working class and help other victories.

The cutting edge is strikes. A few days of national strikes on the railways have significantly changed the political atmosphere – but to win we need many more strikes in all sections of the economy. In the face of raging inflation, and as an atmosphere of revolt grows, many union leaderships are showing what looks like significantly increased determination to fight. There could be national strikes in industries where there haven't been for decades. The long chain of defeats, often without any real fight, going back over the years and decades should remind us that *no* union leadership can be relied on for an adequate fight. We need to step up rank-and-file links and organising, within every union and industry and across them.

Alongside an aggressive strike struggle, we need strong campaigning for clear pro-working class political demands – like an increased minimum wage and benefits, decent sick pay, and public ownership of energy. We need to force Labour to respect its conference policy and fight for these demands. The more heated political atmosphere provides a chance to change things in the Labour Party too.

We also need a renewed campaign for repeal of the anti-strike and anti-union laws – not just the new law as of 21 July allowing the use of agency workers as strike-breakers, but all of them. Right now workers are doing better at clearing the strike-ballot turnout thresholds set by the Trade Union Act 2016. Sooner or later though the laws' restrictions – not just those ballot turnout thresholds, but limits on picketing, the ban on solidarity action, and much more – will get in the way.

We need to defy the anti-union laws whenever we can, and we need to fight to scrap them.

Playing With Fire

Next time the manager comes into the messroom and tells you to ignore the fire alarm going off in the station lift ask them to put that in writing; a quick email ought to do the trick. You won't get one because the advice is plainly dangerous; so ignore it and act like you would in a fire emergency.

Walk Away

When a Vinci cleaner threatened to walk off the job because they simply couldn't do everything that was being asked of them management miraculously found not one but two extra cleaners to help them out. Anybody else feeling overworked?

Get a move on!

Why is it taking so long for ASLEF on EMR to ballot for industrial action? On the current timetable they won't be able to take action until October! ASLEF struck on 8 TOCs already in July with more on the 13th August.

Drivers eager to take action earlier are always welcome on TSSA/RMT picket lines on 18th and 20th August.

Unite at Eastcroft are also pushing for a ballot but are being thwarted by a sluggish bureaucracy.

Read this bulletin and more online. Scan this QR code.



Great Barrier Grief

During covid, when there were fewer travellers, there was an agreement that the barriers at Nottingham could be operated by 2 people.

Now, with the huge increase in travellers gate line staff have been pushing to return to precovid staffing levels but to no avail: management have refused to meet with reps to discuss it.

Sadly, last week, there was an incident on the barriers that might have been avoided if more staff had been available.

Nothing to See-See TV

Management have recently admitted that the CCTV on most of our trains is obsolete. That's been cold comfort to members of staff who were relying on it to provide evidence in cases of assault and a coroner's court appearance and were let down because of failed equipment.

Guards are also now reporting that 3 or 4 days in advance of being booked a job on the Worksop line they can feel their anxiety levels rising. Surely the chain of care has to start with units that are fit for purpose?

Update

We're pleased to report that management responded positively to an ORR recommendation that they employ more shunting staff down Eastcroft: new starters are in training now. That should go some way to making operations safer on the depot; even better if they'd fix the annual leave system so that workers could get the

quality time they need away from work to guarantee they are refreshed when they return.

Double Standards?

Sadly, some members of a certain union crossed RMT picket lines to work during strikes in March and June. Bemusing, then, to see some of these same people praising RMT GS Mick Lynch, worrying about further anti-strike legislation, or attacking the Labour Party leadership for being anti-union.

Don't tweet or post on Facebook that you are worried about agency workers covering the work of strikers if you yourself are crossing picket lines right now.

Buck: The System

Forgot to also give a big thank you to the EMR first class hosts who came to work during the strikes and watched RG staff do their work for them. And just so they didn't get too fatigued they were only asked to do some cleaning. Got to look after the strike breakers.

Notts Off The Rails

Is a rank and file socialist bulletin, published monthly and written by rail workers. It is published by the socialist group Workers' Liberty, but is produced in editorial meetings open to all rail workers.

Got a story for us?

We welcome reports and comments from all rail workers. Email us at:
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