

# On Guard

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## Support the youth climate strikers Workers can stop climate change

School and college students across the world are continuing their monthly school strikes against climate change.

After being started by Swedish school student Greta Thunberg, the Friday school strikes have spread all over the world, from Austria to Australia and from the US to the UK. Here in Sheffield, hundreds of school students regularly turn out. The marches aren't about doing the recycling: they are political. One common slogan is "system change not climate change".

These school students are right to protest and right when they say that the system is denying them a future. The workers' movement should back them up.

The simple way to stop climate change is to stop emitting greenhouse gases, and to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. But as carbon emissions continue, "feedback loops" are being activated which would accelerate warming regardless of human activity – for example, die-back of forests, which capture CO<sub>2</sub> naturally; or the melting of the ice-caps, which reflect heat into space. Scientists reckon that unless we radically reduce human emissions within the next decade or so, many of these "feedback loops" will spiral out of control.

And the big obstacle is profit. 71% of greenhouse gas emissions since 1988 have come from just 100 companies. Stopping climate change means confronting the powerful capitalist organisations that profit from burning fossil fuels.

If we are to stop climate change, we need to keep at least 60%-80% of currently-known fossil fuels in the ground. But the fossil fuels in the ground are worth a lot. American investment bank Citigroup has

calculated that the value of fossil fuels under the earth is something like US\$100 trillion. To put that in perspective, the value of all the work done each year by the entire human race is only worth about US\$80 trillion.

For fossil fuel companies, agreeing to stop climate change would mean wiping out that vast source of wealth, overnight. They won't want to do that. Fighting climate change means putting democracy first, in the economy and throughout society. The force that can do that is the labour movement. Our collective power is scarier and more impressive than fossil fuel capitalists' money. To beat climate change we need to fight for the energy and transport companies to be brought into public ownership.

Trade unions need to organise a transition to a low-carbon economy by drawing up plans for transforming our industries – without loss of jobs or pay, with re-training for workers who need to be redeployed from a polluting job. We should fight for every job – but there's no point defending jobs that will kill us all in the long run.

Sheffield station (between platforms 3A and 2B especially) is one of the most dangerously polluted places in Britain. We should not stand for that: station staff should figure out a plan of our own to clean up the air, so we (and our kids) can live longer: and get management to pay for implementing it.

**As a simple but important gesture, we should bring our union banners and take part in the next school climate strike, and hold a protest of our own on the day of action for the climate on 20 September.**

### NORTHERN: VOTE NO TO "NEW DEAL FOR DRIVERS"

On Guard supports a No vote in the current referendum on the "New Deal for Drivers" on Northern. By involving drivers' annual cost-of-living increases, this deal pulls them out of the joint pay talks ASLEF and the other unions are signed up to by way of the collective bargaining agreement.

Rail workers need to stick together, now more than ever, not fight each other for a bigger share of the meagre sums offered by the company. We should fight together to demand better pay and conditions for all!

See more: [bit.ly/notodeal](http://bit.ly/notodeal)

### What is *On Guard*?

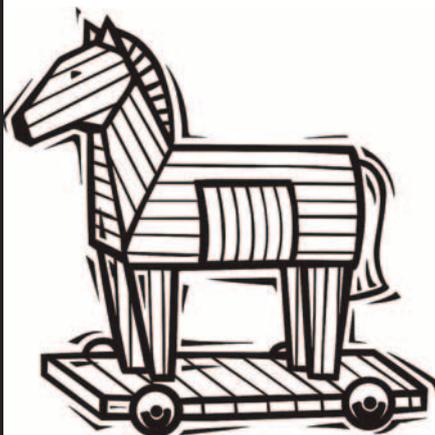
*On Guard* is a rank-and-file socialist bulletin, published regularly, written by rail workers, for rail workers of all grades, and all unions. It is published by the socialist group Workers' Liberty, but is produced in editorial meetings open to all workers. Supporters from outside the rails can help with public distribution.

[www.workersliberty.org](http://www.workersliberty.org)

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**All contributions anonymous  
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## HORSE WATCH



The company have offered Drivers the chance to earn a little bit of extra money by taking charge of a "Hollow Equine Sculpture". ASLEF recommends its members accept this AMAZING offer - vote yes!

### CRACKING APP

Following this May's timetable change the Company managed to avoid the barrage of negative press that resulted from last year's debacle. This is not because everything is going swimmingly. Northern's reputation as a national disgrace is well and truly cemented - someone has now created an app to catalogue its failures on a day to day basis in real time.

We checked the app on 5 July and by lunchtime there were already 6 services cancelled completely, 12 more part cancelled (not making all timetabled stops and/or having shortened routes), with another 58 running with fewer carriages than booked, resulting in overcrowding and delays in the summer heat.

The company launched its brand new Class 331 trains this week with some fanfare but with so few units actually making it out of testing so far, the vast majority of Northern passengers are still having to put up with the same old nonsense.

And if ASLEF were to pull Rest Day Working, it'd be back to full blown chaos like last year. Maybe it's time they did - it could help focus minds in the Company and the DfT to start turning our railway into something like the one we need, instead of the one we just have to put up with.

### METRO BEEF

The Metro newspaper has been carrying government adverts disguised as articles promoting Universal Credit, the new welfare benefit responsible for driving claimants - including disabled people - even further into poverty and insecurity.

Understandably, disability campaigners have been removing this austerity propaganda from its distribution points, which include many stations and other transport premises.

Janine Booth, chair of the RMT Disabled members advisory committee has said, "As transport workers, our job is to ensure the safe running of the service. It is not our job to prevent the safe removal of newspapers."

### NATIONALISING NORTHERN?

On 3 July Labour MP for Leeds Alex Sobel criticised the failure of Northern to get rid of its creaking Pacer fleet. He said "I am now calling for the franchise to be removed from Northern and for a new, nationalised service to take its place."

We agree! But taking the service off one lot of self-serving crooks (Northern bosses) won't do much good if all we do is hand it over to another lot (government ministers). We need the service to be in public ownership, but managed collectively, by us: not handed from one bureaucrat to another. Elected workers' representatives could do a much better job than the clowns running any of Britain's rail companies.

### REFURB MESS

Last issue, we reported that the Company appeared to really be going ahead with the Sheffield messroom refurb, only to learn soon afterwards that they had in fact decided to completely scrap the refurb and stick with the current depressing, overcrowded facility.

Now word is circulating again that they are actually going to do it. Well, let's see. We've been wrong before and we'd be lying if we said we had any faith in Northern Fail™ to deliver for staff, just like they don't deliver for the general public either.

### DOO DILIGENCE

The news from the DOO talks at

ACAS, published in a letter from Brendan Barber to the Company and RMT 21st June, appears to be fairly positive from the point of view of train crew. We would like to congratulate all workers involved in supporting the sustained campaign of action that began in March 2017.

That said, the devil is always in the detail - it's going to be up to us to ensure our leaders don't squander the progress we've made and agree to something that falls far short of our expectations. We must be ready to ramp the fight right back up!

### Union leaders should take a workers' wage

John Moloney has been elected Assistant General Secretary of the PCS trade union. John is a member of Workers' Liberty (the people who publish On Guard) and his policies tell you something about how we think all unions should be run. John was the only ordinary worker running in that union election. The other candidates were career union staffers - people who had not worked outside of the union headquarters for many years. That is too often the case in many trade unions!

Workers' Liberty wants trade unions that are run by workers. We think that our unions can't be effective if they are led by people who are removed from life on the job. In 2017, 31 trade union leaders took home more than £100,000 (not including houses, company cars, and so on). John has pledged not to take the £69,466 salary of the PCS Assistant General Secretary, but instead to take the average pay of DWP workers he represents: £30,303. He will be publishing his pay slips. He explained why: "My stance is not that of a hair shirt moralist; it is political. During the five years of my contract, my take home pay will only increase in line with that of DWP London staff. Poor pay awards will hit me in the same way as members. Therefore there will be a real link between my well being and that of members. So at least in the pay sense, I can say I am one with the members and have no separate material interest to them."

**One for transport unions to think about...**