

Scottish Socialist Party

Scottish Railworkers Voice



STAND FIRM: for safety, not profit

UNITE against the profiteering safety-wreckers!

The Scottish Socialist Party continues to give unqualified support to the 550 guards/conductors striking against First Scotrail's assault on public safety – as well as jobs and the threatened erosion of the 'rate for the job'.

Imposition of Driver Only trains is safety-wrecking by penny-pinching profiteers, who could afford to hand out £18million in dividends to their shareholders last year, but refuse to spend £300,000 to hire 32 guards to make these trains safe and secure for the travelling public. All this despite public subsidies paying for 75% of their costs!

The initial strike was absolutely solid, with literally single figures scabbing across the whole of Scotland.

Edinburgh-Perth trains were cancelled. Others were delayed or reduced in frequency. Such was the impact of these vital workers on train services, that First Scotrail resorted to drafting in managers from Trans-Pennine and Great Western railways, amongst others, to scab on the strikers and run trains that were a threat to passengers' lives potentially – as a cynical propaganda exercise.

The scab managers from Scotland were rushed through one-week's "training". Some of the results would be farcical if they weren't also so serious.

A train sat in Edinburgh 10-15 minutes late because the scab 'conductor' signalled the driver to stop, not go... which sounds like a pretty basic distinction to be learnt!

More seriously, a scab belled the driver to set off from Glasgow Central through a red signal – a blunder that could be potentially disastrous and would lead to any properly trained conductor being dragged over the coals.

Perhaps the most hair-raising incident was where the scab manager-pretending-to-be-a-conductor opened the doors for passengers in Edinburgh on the wrong side of the train!

One of the problems RMT members face is the total refusal of the media to broadcast incidents like this, or indeed to even give a hint of the strikers' case - because not only is the media owned by big business, but First Scotrail and other train operators warned the media they would withdraw advertising revenue if they printed the union side of the conflict.

A harsh reminder of the role of the media in a society run for big business's profits.

Guards play a critical role in protecting the public, not just in the event of accidents, breakdowns or disasters, but day-to-day in the face of anti-social behaviour from small minorities

of travellers. This is about more than fighting for guards on the one new line; with electrification of the main Glasgow-Edinburgh service due in 2015, another excuse to impose Driver Only trains would arise, as with the Borders and indeed nationwide – which is why this battle is critical.

As the big banners mounted alongside the pickets declared, "This strike is all about public safety". **The crunch issue in winning this fight is the role of the drivers.** ASLEF, who have a majority of the drivers, could help win this battle swiftly with a simple call for members not to drive unsafe trains, crewed by untrained scab managers. That is what most of the ASLEF drivers themselves want, as they expressed at their branch meeting recently in Glasgow Queen St. But their national leadership have disgracefully dismissed this and seem to accept Driver Only Operations. Angry at this lack of leadership, several Glasgow drivers in ASLEF took out dual membership of the RMT, and came out with the guards on strike!



Two RMT ballots have begun amongst Network Rail maintenance staff and signallers, against catastrophic job losses and life-threatening attacks on safety standards.

A 'yes' vote from these sections of rail-workers could link up with the guards and lead to a national rail strike, on the eve of the general election. That in itself will put all the parties that support big business, profiteering and privatisation on the spot. **The SSP is the only party to have fought alongside RMT members consistently since our formation in 1998.**

Unite in a railway-wide strike to defend safety from the callous profiteers who are out to crucify jobs and weaken the union, whatever the public cost. And join the party that fights for public ownership of the railways, but with workers' democratic control - the Scottish Socialist Party.

for more material on trade union and community struggles - and socialist policies to combat mass unemployment, low pay, anti-union laws, public service cuts, privatisation, and attempts to make workers pay for the bosses' crisis, visit:

www.scottishsocialistparty.org

safety first, not profits - RMT members hit back

FIRST STRIKE SOLID

“First Scotrail are showing absolute determination to continue their reckless course of action, putting on trains with untrained scabs. It shows their contempt for public safety. Meantime guards are slated in the press for putting up a determined defence of safety. The world is upside down!”

A Glasgow conductor

“The public’s response when we leafleted them was overwhelmingly supportive, once they got the facts, as opposed to the media lies. Many turned back, refused to travel.”

A Glasgow guard

“Two pensioner women from Glasgow travelled through to Edinburgh, discussed with a picket at Waverley, and then declared they would not take the train back home because it wasn’t safe – ‘and the bus is free to us anyway!’”

An Edinburgh guard

SSP: “Maybe they are testing the water for an offensive against the RMT in the hope of a Tory government?”

Scottish RMT officer: “Aye, or maybe in the hope of a Labour government!”



“Network Rail have cut their budgets 30% in 5 years - but want another 21% cut in the next 5.

They want to slash 1,500 jobs that are critical to public safety and workers’ safety: those who inspect and repair signals, tracks, overhead lines, level crossings.

They want to cut the size of teams - and even to bully signallers and maintenance

workers into working alone - which is a life-threatening breach of safety rules.

The cuts they threaten would mean people working 39 weeks of night-shift and 39 weekends - hardly good for your health or social life!

And they are trying to impose these rosters, despite union opposition.

We have been forced to ballot for strike action.”

A Network Rail worker



SNP - tartan profiteers support DOOs

It has now emerged that Transport Scotland, the SNP government’s transport arm, saw and approved First Scotrail’s proposals for Driver Only Operations on the Airdrie/Bathgate line.

New Labour has retained the Tories’ privatisation of the railways - letting profiteers like First Group make an absolute packet (£90m profit last year) at public expense and off railway workers’ backs. The SNP has been funded to the tune of hundreds of thousands by Brian Souter (Stagecoach), one of Scotland’s richest fat-cats, who made his fortune from the privatisation of buses and trains. After he handed the SNP his latest bung, they dropped the SNP’s previous policy of public ownership of transport. And the head of the SNP’s Economic Council is former head of the Royal Bank of Scotland. He who pays the SNP piper calls their tune!

Now they’ve been caught red-handed supporting First Scotrail bosses who want to endanger public safety in pursuit of even bigger profits.

So much for the SNP being ‘Scotland’s party’ - the bankers’ and billionaires’ party, more like!

That’s what makes the **Scottish Socialist Party** so important; we won’t be bought off - we unashamedly side with workers against bosses, people against profit, public safety against private greed. The SSP has consistently fought for public ownership of the railways - and transport as a whole - but with democratic working class control. Indeed we produced a pamphlet, in collaboration with the RMT, popularising the case for Reclaiming Our Railways.

SSP STANDS UP FOR SCOTLAND

The Scottish Socialist Party stands up for working class people. As part of our battle for a democratic, nuclear-free, poverty-free, independent socialist Scotland, we demand:

- no cuts to jobs and services - demand the funds off Holyrood and Westminster - tax the rich instead of punishing the poor
- free, quality child-care provision, round the clock
- cut class sizes - not schools and education - 20’s plenty in any class - save our schools and communities
- increase pensions and benefits £50 a week as an immediate emergency step towards a living income for all
- repeal all anti-union laws - independent, democratic unions
- an £8 national minimum wage for all workers and trainees over 16 - end age wage discrimination - equal pay for women
- cuts hours - not jobs or pay - for a 35hour maximum working week without loss of earnings
- scrap Trident - invest in homes, hospitals and schools - not weapons of mass destruction - with jobs guaranteed through peaceful alternative work for all at Faslane
- reverse Tory and Labour privatisation - for democratic public ownership and control of services, banks, transport, construction, major industries, N Sea oil - for people not profit
- an independent socialist Scotland - as part of a socialist Europe

JOIN THE SSP TODAY - the party of workers’ unity, public ownership and socialism

name..... email.....
 address.....
 phone(s) union.....

return this form to: SSP, 93 Hope St (suite 308), Glasgow G2 6LD

ring 0141 221 7470 or 07828 278 093 email: richieventon@hotmail.com

www.scottishsocialistparty.org

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