

Letters on the New York transit strike

23 December 2005

The following is a selection of letters sent to the World Socialist Web Site on the New York transit strike. We encourage transit workers and supporters to continue send in comments and reports on the strike.

On “New York transit strikers confront escalating attacks”

Dear WSWS,

Thank you for seeing the incredible significance of the NYC transit workers strike. Without your coverage this story is easily one that I could have let slip by. The fact that these workers have been brave enough to strike offers hope. In spite of being fined twice their wages for every day on strike, in spite of not receiving strike pay from their International, and in spite of the draconian \$25,000 fine that doubles every day, these workers still went on strike. Unlike so many unions that are willing to accept two-tier pay scales and pensions, these workers are fighting not only for their own pensions, pay, and better working conditions; they are fighting for those of the next generation as well. These people are leading by example. To use the terminology of the exploiting, militaristic capitalists, they are “heroes.”

The transit workers deserve all the support we can give them. Since money will surely become an issue for them, perhaps the WSWS could create a fund. I—and I’m certain many of your other readers—would gladly send some money to help them as they stand up for all of us. Hopefully other unions will show their support by also going on strike.

Besides exposing even more blatantly the pro-business bent of the Democratic Party and the betrayal of union leadership this strike has also more fully exposed the bias of the national news media. On the cable news channels I saw pictures of Mayor Bloomberg walking across the bridge, braving the cold with commuters adversely affected by the strike. Reports center on the \$400 million or so businesses are losing per day because of the strike while little or nothing is mentioned from the standpoint of the workers. The fact that the International does not back the local is even used as a reason to discredit the local. Issues of national security are played up while the harshness of the Taylor Law is almost completely ignored.

In actuality what the strike proves is the intense power and impact that the working class possesses. The greatest city in the most powerful nation on earth can be brought to its knees by 34,000 striking workers.

If the strikers eventually cave under the pressures of fines, injunctions and the betrayal of their International, they should still be respected for their bravery. When unions first fought for the rights of the worker, they did so in spite of and in violation of the existing capitalist laws. They even died for their cause. Nothing will ever change if we continue playing by their rules. This strike demonstrates there still are people willing to accept the risks and hardships that must be endured in order to end the exploitation.

Thank you WSWS for highlighting this story and thank you members of Local 100 for giving us hope. This strike really could be a

turning point.

MB

Portsmouth, Ohio

22 December 2005

Power to the people! It’s about time those guys went on strike! I’m telling you, there will be a future for labor in this country when we are pushed far enough. Service workers—and that includes clerks, teachers, janitors, everybody—cannot have their jobs outsourced. The future of labor will be all about service workers taking the power back. Thanks for reporting this strike as it should be reported. If I were in NYC I would be marching with those guys.

BB

Oklahoma

22 December 2005

On “The New York transit strike: A new stage in the class struggle”

Thank you so much for such a good article/editorial about the situation regarding the striking New York City transit workers and the hardships that they face. I am so proud that in spite of adversity from within the unions, who are supposed to support them and protect their rights as workers, they are still determined to go on strike. I grew up with New York City transit. I feel bad for the transit workers who have to risk life and limb for their jobs on a daily basis (and keep New York City a 24-hour place). They deserve the living wages and job security that they are asking for. I am appalled that no Democratic or Independent or other politicians have come forward to support them and their brave efforts.

I thank you so much for the truth reporting of WSWS and I want to support your efforts as well as those of the New York City transit workers. I am so happy that the WSWS editorial highlighted the oligarchy that is plotting to destroy the working poor of this country. I am also glad that the farce of happy unity is being exposed first with the theft of the 2000 elections, followed by the 9/11 Bush-directed farce attack, and then with Katrina, Rita and Wilma. I know that it will continue and the cracks are just breaking out, but bigger uproars are coming.

The Bush administration’s lies to bring on an unjust war and to illegally spy on US citizens just to intimidate them will result in his impeachment and the imprisonment of those who sought to bring him to power.

Finally, I stand with Mr. Roger Toussaint, a Caribbean American black man for standing up for truths and rights and for not being afraid of the powerful rich and monied folks in this country who are against him. I will continue to send positive vibrations to him and those who stand with him in this strike and I know that he can follow the course and win this fight for all the poor of this country.

MNP

Miami, Florida

21 December 2005

This Taylor law is fascism. No matter how strong or weak a case, a

union has the right to strike. These rights were hard won and should be defended to the hilt. Someone has to stand up and say no. In the UK, the Murdoch press dragged journalism down into the gutter and his tabloids turned us into a nation of semi-morons.

PA

21 December 2005

It is time for people to stand united! The revolution has begun and there is no stopping it. South America is leading the way and people everywhere are beginning to wake up and think for themselves. We must stand together and hold a grand vision of Peace, Love, & Equality. Thanks for the straight, un-biased reporting.

TS

Vancouver, Washington

21 December 2005

I agree completely with the article on the transportation strike. The only thing that I do not understand is why a call is not made to the labor unions demanding that they support a general strike. Along with backup committees in the population? Solidarity and extension are the only one means by which they can succeed.

JV

Buenos Aires, Argentine

21 December 2005

On "New York transit workers set up picket lines: 'Today's strike is for all working people'"

Excellent. Now we get to hear the real stories from the ones who are suffering and bearing the brunt of the sacrifice so the rich can get richer! The rich have to have the media to spill out their lies to justify their evil deeds, but they are still not believed. Do you believe someone who actually works for a living, someone that is poor and struggling, or do you believe someone who has it all and is never in need?

The ones to be pitied have always been and will always be the rich, for they have no where to go and no good person to turn to in times of need, for they have destroyed all that is good around them by their avarice and greed. They are truly the sad ones. I have been reading your articles for over 10 years now, for a reason. Great reporting, and as always may God be with you.

MG

21 December 2005

On "New York City transit workers defy threats and strike"

As a resident and daily rider of the New York City transportation, I would like to first take the opportunity to say that I am an admirer of the hard work put forth by MTA employees on a consistent basis. Due to their diligence and dedication put forth collectively every day, New York City transit runs at astronomical speeds from place to place anywhere in the city at any time, on time. Thank you for your effort to make sure that all bus and train passengers get to their desired destination on time. You guys are genuine local heroes who deserve the recognition and appreciation by your fellow transit rider and college student. At this time the TWU is on strike for prior needs not being fulfilled in the workplace. Minimal satisfaction has not been met by the MTA for mere penny pay raises and benefits.

The decisions by the city and MTA show the lack of concern for the foundation of the NYC speedy transportation (MTA employees), as well as NYC citizens who in very large numbers ride the train and buses every day. Not only is the weather at frigid temperatures but as of late there has been concern and caution with mysterious bags and packages aborting the trains and buses due to prior terrorist plots. In a matter of days we have two of the biggest celebrated holidays in the

world: Christmas and New Years Day. It can also be the busiest time of year for a terrorist to plot an attack on New York City, and deliver a present that will definitely put coals in all our socks. If so, what is the point of checking bags and having check points when there really isn't a concern by the MTA? They care more about stuffing that 1 billion dollar surplus in their plump pockets instead of striving to be at the least an ethical monopolistic big business, maybe the first of its kind.

This is how you are repaid, with million dollar fines and 3 percent take-it-or-leave-it pay raises, which is just ridiculous? I also question the views of the people behind the decision-making. Is it because the face of the union is of African descent that your keen decision-making is clouded? Maybe your pockets are too full from the unnecessary fare hikes in the last decade? Whatever it is, thanks for showing future business owners and future corporate CEOs how to treat their employees. And thanks for the delays in the busiest city in the world.

Yours truly,

RIA

Bronx Resident and College Student at Lehman College

Bronx, New York

20 December 2005

They may as well stay out until their demands are met. They'll be all be bankrupted by proposed fines, or fired, or both, should they cave. They have nothing more to lose, everything to gain. Time to teach the corporate bastards a lesson. After a couple days they should increase their demands to include costs they are incurring due to being forced to strike. Maybe Bloomberg will have a stroke and drop dead upon hearing that. Power to the People!

TC

20 December 2005

This is virtually the only pro-labor view I've seen on the entire web on the transit strike. The across-the-board censorship is depressing. If people can't see that the NYC transit workers strike is an action in support of all laborers and working people after all the blatant treachery and crimes committed by corporate America and ruling circles, then the situation seems hopeless in the US.

You guys are doing something about it, but until the media clampdown is cracked how can the masses be educated and mobilized? There really needs to be a broad coalition with groups like FAIR, Media Channel, Democracy Now and others to minimize differences and fight the common enemy. Each group should be quoting and working with its allies. The right depends on opposition fractionalization and internecine conflicts to get its way. Divide and rule is practiced globally, nationally and locally to great success.

RC

Richmond, California

20 December 2005



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

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