

UK bus driver speaks up in support of school strike: “I do not want my child taking part in the Johnson government’s herd immunity experiment”

Our reporters
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Ian, a bus driver with First Eastern Counties Ltd, and a member of the London Bus Rank-and-File Committee, sent the following statement to the *World Socialist Web Site* in support of the call for a school strike tomorrow, October 1, issued by parent and SafeEdForAll (Safe Education for All) member Lisa Diaz last week.

“I am in support of Lisa’s cause. For far too long misinformation has been allowed to ride rampant. Even our own government has been exposed by the Good Law Project for misrepresenting the truth to suit their own ends—the cronyism around the contracts awarded to the private sector during the pandemic for testing equipment such as [private testing company] Abingdon Health.

“As a parent I do not want my child taking part in the Johnson government’s herd immunity experiment. All parents should be behind Lisa. No more gaslighting, no more threats by education officials. Every parent has the right to protect their child. Solidarity to all parents trying to protect their families!

“My attitude is that we could have eradicated the pandemic by now, science can be used to beat this thing, I think a lot of people agree. I read this in the British Medical Journal [BMJ]:

As proof of concept for COVID-19 eradication, several countries and jurisdictions have achieved elimination without vaccination, using new and established public health and social measures (PHSMs) (e.g., border control, physical distancing, mask wearing, testing and contact tracing supported by genome sequencing).

“You cannot live with the pandemic. It will only get worse, and they are condemning people to death and long-term illness. It was summed up by [Prime Minister Boris] Johnson in his comment, ‘Let the bodies pile high’. That is what is happening.

“As a bus driver, we are being exposed more to the virus and the return of schools and colleges is adding to this risk. I carry college students on my bus and around 80 percent are not wearing masks as it is no longer mandatory. This means I risk getting it and bringing home to my family, the students are at risk and the teachers—it’s a knock-on effect. If you only leave home to go to work you can only be catching it at work or on the way to and from there.

“I worked largely throughout the pandemic with a period of furlough where I lost 20 percent of my wages. On top of this, the union Unite agreed to new terms and conditions which us drivers have not seen the contents of, but I know for a fact that I am working longer for less money. I have encouraged my colleagues to think for themselves and consider an alternative.

“The fight against the victimisation of [London bus driver] David O’Sullivan and the action called for October 1 against unsafe schools go hand in hand. Him winning his case will expose the maddening agenda of money and profits over everything else and how capitalism is crippling society. They only want kids in school so that their parents are back at work.

“Workers are being burned out and what for? To make the millionaires into billionaires. They do not do anything for us. Living costs are going up and life gets even harder.

“Lisa was spot on about the Labour Party and trade unions. They are another form of cronyism. The Labour Party has not represented the working man since the eighties and the trade unions have made their bed with the employers a long time ago. There should be a special place in hell for them.

“Working with the London Bus Rank-and-File Committee has really opened my eyes and now I can use that to educate others. This needs to be international, what happens in any part of the world affects us all. The technology is there for us to communicate and organise, we are far more interconnected. We’ve seen it with bus drivers in New Zealand and Australia taking action against COVID and to defend their rights. We need to think collectively not in a singular way.”



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