

Video: “Support the 70,000 striking bus workers in Maharashtra, India”—London bus drivers issue call

Kranti Kumara, Laura Tiernan
6 April 2022

Bus driver David O’Sullivan, a leader of the London Bus Rank-and-File Committee, has released a powerful video message supporting the courageous five-month strike by more than 70,000 bus drivers, ticket collectors, mechanics and support staff in Maharashtra, India.

More than 70,000 state bus transport workers have been on indefinite strike since November 4, 2021. Their struggle has global significance. They have defied savage management reprisals and the courts, which have repeatedly declared their job action illegal. They have also had to wage their strike in defiance of the more two dozen unions that claim to represent them. Bowing to the courts, the unions withdrew their sanction for the strike even before it began.

O’Sullivan, whose message is published today in English and Hindi, is calling on bus and transport workers throughout the world to come to the aid of the strikers. “Maharashtra bus workers are an inspiration to workers everywhere,” he says in his five-minute video.

O’Sullivan was sacked by Metrolink bus company in February 2021, for standing up for his colleagues’ rights to a safe workplace during the COVID-19 pandemic. He is fighting for his reinstatement.

Maharashtra bus workers are facing the threat of privatisation. They are demanding the state-owned bus corporation (MSRTC) be fully merged with the state government. State government workers have better job security, wages and benefits than those employed at public sector enterprises. But the state government has ruled out a merger and threatened the striking workers with mass dismissal.

Yesterday, April 6, the Bombay High Court directed the Maharashtra State Road Transport Company

strikers to report back to work by April 15. They not only face the prospect of losing their jobs but could be subject to mass arrests.

The workers in Maharashtra have shown tremendous militancy in sustaining their strike for 5 months, braving suspensions, firings and other company reprisals. They have not received a single rupee in strike funds.

But their struggle is in grave danger above all because the national trade union federations and ostensible “left” parties, led by the Stalinist CPI and CPM, have deliberately isolated their struggle. The Stalinist-led trade union federations have done nothing to popularise the battle in Maharashtra, let alone mobilise workers in their defence.

During the recent 2-day general strike against the pro-big business austerity and privatization policies of BJP Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the trade union federations representing tens of millions of workers made no mention of the Maharashtra bus workers’ protracted strike, maintaining their enforced isolation.

This makes it more urgent that workers throughout the world come to the aid of the Maharashtra bus workers. They must not be left to fight alone! As O’Sullivan explains in his video message, their fight is part of a new stage of global class struggle.

The *World Socialist Web Site* and the International Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees calls on workers everywhere to support the struggle in Maharashtra. Share today’s video message from London among your colleagues, family and friends. Send messages and workplace resolutions supporting the determined fight in India.

As O’Sullivan concludes in his message of support to

the Maharashtra workers, “Your fight is our fight.”
Send your messages of support to the WSWS here.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact