

# New York City transit and other US workers back UK rail strikers

**Our reporters**  
**23 June 2022**

New York City transit workers and other US workers expressed their solidarity with the 50,000 striking rail workers in the United Kingdom.

“Yeah I support them,” a cleaner said, drawing parallels to the “crazy inflation” impacting workers in New York City as well as the UK. This year’s wage increase was a measly 2.75 percent, equivalent to about a 6 percent pay cut after inflation.

She explained the long hours she’s forced to work to save enough to purchase a house in one of the most expensive metropolitan areas of the country. “I spend most of the time here on the job. I even sleep here. I do double shifts and work all kinds of crazy hours. I sleep in my car in a bed I set up there,” she said. “I need a break.”

A train operator, when informed of the rail strike in the UK, responded, “I wish we would do it here too.”

Many workers hadn’t heard of the nationwide strike and were appreciative of the WSWs team for bringing it to their attention. Transit workers in New York quickly identified the commonalities they share with workers in the UK struggling to offset inflation and deteriorating working conditions.

Given the soaring levels of inflation facing workers in the UK as well as the US, a conductor said, “It’s not easy. I support my family by myself. I have a wife and two kids. I have to work like a machine. Six days a week, 14 hour day, sometimes more than that. I have no choice. I have to pay the bills.”

One conductor explained, “I have four kids myself and it’s a real struggle just to buy food. We need to do more than merely survive, we want to live.”

Another motorman commented, “Workers should be able to afford [to live] in the city where they work, but many of us cannot.” He contrasted that with the newly appointed transit chief, Richard Davey, who “lives

upstairs” in one of the newly constructed ultra-luxury high rises built above the terminus of the 7 train in Manhattan.

A striking nurse at Saint Michael’s Hospital in Newark, New Jersey also expressed her support for the rail workers in Britain.

“I support the strike and everybody here at the hospital knows about it. I think it’s great. It’s very hard for those people. They were having strikes on and off over the years. It was safety-related. It was not right what they were asking them [train operators] to do. They were told to work alone in one train. But if anything happens on that train, there is no other person who can help. All because they were cutting costs, they were privatizing a lot of the lines there.”

Rail worker B. Jones said, “As a nine year Freight Rail worker in the US, I fully support the strike actions taken by the RMT. Some things are universal across all countries with rail infrastructure, which include worker’s pay, lifestyle and retirement. All of these things, while critical to the rail worker, seem to be expendable to the rail carrier and the government in order to year after year show record profits. Everything the RMT is striking for: working conditions, duty hours and a minimal pay raise for the employees who make the rail industry operate 365 days a year, is just.

“From an outsider’s perspective, it seems both the UK and Canadian politicians are trying to take cues from the US politicians and carriers. I implore everyone to take a look at the current rail crisis that is taking place right now. The carriers blame the employees for their mismanagement and lie to the STB [Surface Transportation Board] to avoid sanctions that would cut into their record profits. This leaves many rail employees asking ‘Where is the respect and gratitude from the carriers towards their employees, who are the

backbone of the rail system?’ It’s time for all railway laborers across the world to stand together in unison for better pay, workers’ rights, benefits and overall better treatment.”



To contact the WSWs and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://wsws.org/contact)**