

- the future that works!

Communist Party of Great Britain (Marxist-Leninist)

Urgent measures needed to address the crisis now:

- **Nationalisation of ALL utilities (without compensation) along with monopoly producers, manufacturers and distributors of food, so as to ensure a secure supply of all necessities at affordable prices, free from the vacillations and disruptions of the world market.**



- **Lifting the minimum wage to a level providing a decent family existence.**

- Legislation for pay/benefit rises that keep pace with **REAL** inflation.

- An end to currency devaluation through endless money printing.

- Requisition and building of social housing and introduction of a rent cap to address the housing crisis.

- An end to the self-defeating sanctions war against Russia, which is fuelling both the energy and the inflation crises.

- The complete renationalisation of every part of the NHS, including all its buildings and the pharmaceutical industry.

- An end to all subsidies to banks and monopoly corporations. Any business considered 'too big to fail' or 'necessary to the economy' that cannot make adequate profit from ordinary operations should be nationalised without compensation and run according to a plan based on meeting the needs of the people.

- Leaving Nato, bringing all troops and military contractors home, an end to funding for proxy forces and all other aspects of British involvement in aggressive wars abroad.

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Bus drivers need decent pay

Passengers need a decent service!

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Over 1,000 First West of England bus drivers are on strike, having voted to reject a derisory pay offer that falls well short of inflation. It is clear that both government and employers need to feel the full force of working-class solidarity before they realise that their profiteering will grind to a halt if they continue to avoid paying decent wages to hardworking staff.

The latest insulting 'offer' says it all: a two-year 'deal' offering a mere £1 hourly increase until next year, with a further 30p an hour increase from April 2026. New starters are being treated even worse – only 50p an hour extra, rising by a pitiful 10p per hour next April.

All of which perhaps explains how First Group's operating profits reached £204.3 million in 2024, and shareholder dividends increased by 45%. These profits, created by milking drivers and passengers alike, weren't invested in new buses or better wages. They were pocketed by parasitic shareholders who have zero accountability to the hundreds of thousands of workers relying on functional public transport.

Crisis rooted in privatisation

Bristol's bus crisis didn't begin with this strike – it's the result of decades of privatisation and profiteering. Before 1986, buses were either state-run or under local control. The network was extensive, services were frequent and fares were far lower. Back then, we were told that 'competition' would improve services and reduce fares. Instead, we got 'bus wars', as companies used underhand tactics to drive out competition. When the chaos subsided, five companies were in control of 70% of British buses, delivering sub-par services at extortionate prices.

First Group now runs most of Bristol's buses, cherry-picking profitable routes and abandoning loss-making ones – and the communities they serve. Meanwhile, Bristol is one of Britain's most polluted cities – pollution that would reduce drastically if buses were reliable enough to allow people to get out of their cars. This isn't market failure: it's exactly how capitalism works.

Putting the squeeze on drivers

In their drive for profit, the bus companies have pushed longer hours, more intensive days and lower pay onto drivers, while jacking up fares for the passengers. But driving a bus is a difficult and responsible job; it takes skill and concentration. It shouldn't be done by stressed-out and overtired workers. Yet today's drivers can work up to 15-hour days navigating complex routes, and they often face abuse from a public squeezed by the same system that is crushing them. A late bus can mean a passenger losing their job, and unreliable transport forces people into private cars, worsening traffic and pollution, and lengthening journeys.

Who could blame drivers for leaving the industry when they face such poor terms and conditions and bear the brunt of passenger anger over terrible services? Drivers have become lightning rods for passenger rage while profiteers count their money.

The leadership betrayal

Our unions take our dues but confine themselves to minimal activity within parameters that have been set by the ruling class. Their primary loyalty is not to their members but to the imperialist Labour party and its electoral fortunes. And to the monopoly capitalist system that Labour serves.

This is why the union movement has done nothing to overturn the system of anti-trade-union laws which prevents us from organising effectively. Rather than fighting – or simply defying – the legislation that shackles workers, union bosses have hidden behind it, pretending that workers are powerless and capitulating to employers and the ruling class for decades.

This is also why the union movement has allowed two-tier conditions to be established in every workplace and across the country, which inexorably pull pay and conditions down. Just like the national minimum wage, which was another bosses' mechanism for reducing wages that was actively promoted by the TUC.

For decades, workers' dues have lined the pockets of class traitors who climb corrupt union structures, selling out workers as they go. Trade union leaders are routinely promoted to the House of Lords for services rendered to capital. Unite has admitted that £66 million "went missing" during the time of former general secretary Len McCluskey.

Union leaders consistently prioritise political relationships over mobilising members, diluting demands to preserve alliances. They let strikes get trapped in procedural barriers and allow negotiations to be dragged out until momentum dies, leaving workers demoralised and guilt-ridden over 'public disruption'. Meanwhile, private companies, Tory and Labour austerity, and rampant exploitation continue unchallenged. The parliamentary system absorbs working-class anger and redirects it into futile dead ends, while union bosses act as compliant middle managers of the whole operation.

The way forward

Drivers are right to strike in defence of

their pay and working conditions, and passengers should support them in doing so. They are the people on whom this essential service depends. Meanwhile, true victory requires much more far-reaching change. Workers need and must demand affordable, integrated transport that serves their needs, not private profit.

If the capitalists can't provide these basic public goods, they are only admitting that their system is not fit for purpose and must be got rid of!

Workers do not have to accept a life of constant instability and insecurity, of never-ending stress and social breakdown. Our work has produced vast wealth; human ingenuity has produced phenomenal technological advances. If those were properly utilised, every person of working age in this country could have a decently-paid, useful job and we could provide everything we need for ourselves in peace and dignity, without the need for wars, or the need to pay tribute to a handful of parasitic vultures. With the healthcare, education, childcare, housing, transport, social facilities and pensions needed for a decent and meaningful life.

To achieve these things, we must build effective organisation and collective strength. We need to reclaim our unions for the workers who make up the membership and take them out of the control of the careerists who serve our class enemies. We need to organise a mass movement to reverse austerity and begin to use our power in the interests of our class.

Remember: First Group's profits vanish without drivers – the exploiters can't do without workers, but the workers could do fine without an exploiting class!

Join us!