

RAILWORKERS' VOICE

ABELLIO BULLIES ON THE RUN!

ROCK SOLID STRIKES by RMT ScotRail guards have put the arrogant Abellio bosses on the run.

After months of refusing to even consult or negotiate with the unions in their reckless gamble with safety, ScotRail Abellio bosses have now been forced to guarantee guards on all the new EMU trains, and agree no train will run without a guard on board. That's a massive retreat – and it's only come about because of the courageous, tenacious, united strike action by the RMT members, plus the growing demand for a strike ballot against Driver Only Operations (DOO) by ASLEF members at several recent emergency union branch meetings.

This is actually the very first offer from Abellio! For months they simply tried to impose DOO whilst denying it, refusing to even discuss the EMUs or DOO at meetings they eventually turned up to with the RMT.

It's come about because they are terrified of united action by the RMT and ASLEF – something which the SSP has consistently proposed – plus the impact the next set of RMT strikes would have on the prestigious Queen Street tunnel reopening, and lucrative special services for the Edinburgh Festival, at the height of the holiday season. Their hired scabs aren't route trained to let Queen St open, so they were desperate to get the strikes called off.

Keep chasing the bullies!

THE UNIONS have the bully-boy bosses by the proverbial short and curlies: it's time to squeeze them harder in order to get full, satisfactory guarantees on the issues still left unanswered by Abellio at this stage of talks with both unions.

Questions like the role of guards on platform safety; the platform train interface; train dispatches. Since ScotRail now concedes trains are not allowed to move without a guard, why heap more responsibilities on drivers by making them operate the doors, instead of guards controlling the doors – whilst drivers focus on driving – after they conduct all the usual safety checks?

Abellio have caved in to keeping guards on the EMUs. But the danger is they are delaying guarantees on the role of the guards on PTI and dispatch procedures so as to kill off the strikes' momentum at precisely the time industrial action will hit them hardest.

They promised written proposals on these issues to ASLEF within a week. But within minutes of the RMT suspending the strikes, Verster lied through his teeth about ALWAYS guaranteeing two staff, and making thinly disguised declarations about the guards having nothing to do with door controls.

If Abellio either delay further concessions, or refuse to budge on the outstanding concerns that both RMT and ASLEF share about guards' control of doors and train dispatches, the RMT will need to rapidly reinstate the strikes to hit them hard as they seek to rake in revenue from the Edinburgh Fringe and holiday makers – and ASLEF should help a complete victory for safety by initiating a ballot.

Strikes have been suspended, but they're not ended, and the mandate from members is there to revive the action if Abellio don't budge.

Strikes have forced concessions

NOBODY SHOULD underestimate the impact of the strikers and of calls for a strike ballot by ASLEF members. Don't be conned by Abellio (or Scottish government) spin that what is now on offer has always been on offer. Quite the opposite!

The SNP government issued Abellio the franchise in October 2014 with the clause about cutting Glasgow-Edinburgh travel time to 42 minutes... by introduction of DOO. They claim this would cut dispatch time by 15 seconds; and to hell with the cost to safety!

Last March Abellio wrote to all staff with plans for DOO.

Last month they accidentally leaked documents that made their plans to impose DOO absolutely explicit – and for good measure added this would be the best way to break the power of the unions.

If it was just about “who presses a button” – as Abellio's spin doctors viciously claimed (to confuse the public) and as Nicola Sturgeon repeated in parliament (“This dispute is about who opens the doors”, she said) – then why has Abellio spent untold sums conscripting scab managers to strikebreak, and refused to even talk about EMUs and DOO at meetings with the RMT up until the last week?



Stand firm!

THE PLAIN TRUTH is that Abellio has been forced into concessions by workers' determined strike action, and fear of escalated action at one of the busiest times of the year for passenger volume, but are combining this concession with trickery and repression. Why else has it taken them several weeks into the strikes before they threaten Court action against the RMT?

They wanted to bully the union into ending or suspending the strikes, take the momentum out of the action, and then offer the worst possible compromise in later negotiations – such as removing all control over the doors and dispatches from the guards. To their shame, the SNP government stood aside while Dutch-owned Abellio deployed Westminster Tory anti-union laws against Scottish workers – and piled in alongside Abellio with demands to suspend the strikes.

They must not and will not succeed. United action has already won immense retreats by the Abellio bully-boy bosses. And if they don't concede PTI and dispatch arrangements demanded by the two unions, further action will force them to go back and think again!

A TALE OF TWO PARTIES

This battle for safety over profit has highlighted the stark differences between two of Scotland's political parties – the Scottish National Party (SNP) and the Scottish Socialist Party (SSP). Both are pro-independence, but that's where most of the similarities end.



Issued the franchise demanding DOO **1** Demands a guard on EVERY train

Pretended neutrality with calls for 'dialogue' **2** Actively supported RMT pickets, organised street stalls in support, produced numerous articles, leaflets, blogs and videos before and during the strike to advocate the strikers' case

3 "Strikes should be suspended and passengers put first while dialogue ongoing" – Humza Yousaf, SNP government Transport Secretary

3 "What dialogue? Abellio had at that stage refused any meaningful negotiations. Far from suspending strikes, it was only after sustained RMT strikes and ASLEF branch votes for action that they've even started talking to the unions about DOO." – Richie Venton, SSP national trade union organiser

Silent as Abellio use Westminster Tory anti-union laws against Scottish RMT members, and never once openly called for Repeal of all Tory anti-union laws **4** Repeal of all anti-union laws a founding policy since the Scottish Socialist Party formed in 1998, calling for a Charter of Workers' Rights instead

Pro-big business party, advocating lower Corporation Tax on multinationals and privatising Edinburgh Infirmary and business section of Scottish Water **5** For democratic public ownership of transport, energy, all services, construction, banks and big business, as part of an independent socialist Scotland

PROTEST!
Mon 8 August 2016
at 11:30 am

Outside Scottish Government Offices
5 Atlantic Quay
50 Broomielaw, Glasgow

Bring Placards, Flags, Banners & Horns
(all available on the day)



UNITED, WORKERS CAN WIN: Abellio has been forced into concessions by workers' determined strike action

JOIN SCOTLAND'S WORKING CLASS SOCIALIST PARTY



Join the SSP

Fill in this form and send it to: Scottish Socialist Party, Suite 370, 4th Floor, Central Chambers, 93 Hope St, Glasgow G2 6LD. Or phone: 07828278093. Or join the SSP online: scottishsocialistparty.org/join-us

- I would like to join the Scottish Socialist Party
- I would like more info on the Scottish Socialist Party

Name.....

Address.....

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Phone.....

Email.....

THE SSP has done its best to help RMT members win this battle for safety and future job security. We've campaigned on street stalls and in workplaces with the RMT postcards to demand MSPs Keep the Guards.

We've published articles, leaflets, blogs and videos taking the side of the strikers, helping to explain the issues to the wider working class.

And SSP members and supporters have been instrumental in organising emergency ASLEF branch meetings, attended by about a third of all members (despite shifts), which have agreed to call for a strike ballot against

DOO, as well as raising funds and collections for the RMT strike.

We are unashamedly a workers' party, on the side of the working class majority against the profiteering and exploitation that is inherent to capitalism.

Join the Scottish Socialist Party to stand up for workers' rights; for a decent living minimum wage of £10 now; for abolition of zero hours contracts and casual labour, with a guaranteed minimum 16-hour week and a maximum working week of 35 hours without any pay losses; for an independent socialist Scotland in an alliance of European socialist democracies.