



Londoners call for Tube strikes to be outlawed in exclusive poll



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Matthew Beard



15 April 2013

Almost two thirds of Londoners think it is too easy for Tube workers to go on strike and half want to outlaw industrial action altogether, according to a new poll.

Asked whether they thought it was too easy for union members to down tools, 59 per cent agreed and only 14 per cent disagreed in a poll for the London Assembly Conservatives.

Some 47 per cent backed Government legislation to make it illegal for Tube workers to take strike action.

Asked about the different options to reduce strike action, 16 per cent backed a complete ban under which workers would be sacked for withdrawing their labour for breach of contract. Fifteen per cent wants to introduce the "Taylor Law" used for the New York subway which bans strike action but gives unions a right to binding arbitration; while 16 per cent favoured "pendulum" arbitration in which a judge cannot compromise but has to choose between either the employer's or union's position.

In the survey of 285 Londoners conducted by Bryter two weeks ago, only 14 per cent backed the status quo on strike law, while six per cent wanted to make it easier to strike. One third wanted to raise the threshold which would require more than 50 per cent of a union's members to vote in favour of action.

The Assembly Tories called on the Government to ban strike action on the Tube to be replaced by binding arbitration led by a judge.

It has also backed the mayor's call for a minimum 50 per cent + 1 of all eligible trade union members to vote in favour of action.

Assembly member Richard Tracey, author of the report "Struck Out, reforming London Underground strike laws", said: "For too long London's Tube unions have been holding the travelling public hostage, demanding ever greater pay deals and calling strikes at the drop of a hat. We need to urgently readdress this imbalance. Our research shows six in ten Londoners feel it is too easy for Underground staff to go on strike. Almost half would favour a ban on industrial action. Banning strikes tied to

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a wider package of compulsory arbitration will protect London's commuters and the capital's economy. It will also ensure Tube drivers and staff do get a fair hearing from London Underground management when seeking to secure wage and benefit improvements."

The report said that a day's strike cost the London economy £48m, principally by the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT).

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said: "One of the first things fascist dictators like Hitler, Mussolini and Pinochet did when they seized power was to ban transport workers from taking strike action so the Tory group on the London Assembly find themselves in some high profile company on this one. This crowd have obviously overdosed on their post-Thatcher adulation and are looking to ramp-up the anti-union rhetoric in advance of the publicly financed funeral on Wednesday. Of course, banning the fundamental human right to withdraw your labour, a right that distinguishes workers from forced labour, is all the rage on the far right and anyone stupid enough to try and embark on such a policy is doomed to failure as Boris Johnson found out."

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HIBAT 14 hours ago

I agree to outlaw tube strike, while public bearing high fares and staff paid high salaries. Staff should be loyal to the commuters and not to take part in the strikes to upset business in London.

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ASLEFshrugged 3 days ago

The simple point you are missing is that Tory party rules are that the leader has to be an MP. The next General Election will be before 2015, Boris will be Mayor until 2016 so unless he resigns he can't stand as an MP until the next General Election unless he can get selected as a candidate for a by-election in a safe Tory seat.

Murdoch needs someone to be his pet politician now not in five, ten years time, Boris is to Cameron what Heseltine was to Maggie.

Reply +1

Anonymous 3 days ago

As they say tell a lie enough times and many fools will believe they are true!

This is Boris positioning himself as heir to Cameron trying to get people onside for more anti worker laws !

FIVE YEARS AND STILL NOT MET UNIONS. !

Reply +2

Speedemon 3 days ago

Londoners over reacting as per usual. Official figures show under the FOI that only 11 days in the last 10 years have been lost to strikes. Approx. 11 out of 3650, less than 2%. This newspaper always reports like the strike is actually happening. There is a difference balloting and talking about a strike than actually going on strike.

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camsw4 3 days ago

Do you know how much money and lost trade each of those days on strike costs the capital ?

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