

Rail, Transport Workers Strike in France and the U.S.

At this moment, hundreds of US transit workers and tens of thousands of French rail and transit workers are on strike against the same employers.

More than 40 days ago, bus drivers and mechanics employed by the French contractor Transdev began striking at the Cinder Bed Road facility of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) in Lorton, Virginia. These workers are organized by Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 689. Their top demands are A- an end to pay differences for the same work and B - opposition to the contracting out of public transit work which would only drive down the standard of living and create unsafe operations.

Meanwhile 800,000 French workers and allies took to the streets in France on December 5th, led by French railway workers, many of whom also work for Transdev. The French strikers are protesting attempts by the government to take away historic pension benefits and other measures against safety and quality of work life.

Meanwhile, earlier in December, 600 additional ATU organized Transdev bus workers also joined the strike in Virginia.

In a significant demonstration of real international worker solidarity, a strike leader of the French railway sector took time out to send a special message of greetings and support to his U.S. brothers and sisters on strike at Transdev.

David Gobé, International Affairs Director of the CGT Railway Federation and Secretary of the SNCF European Works Council, was out in the streets with his co-workers when he stopped to send this video of solidarity. The CGT is the largest of the French Trade Union Federations.

Meanwhile, ATU strikers in Virginia demonstrated their reciprocal solidarity at a recent mass strike meeting by carrying the banner of the CGT Transport sector.

In a recent meeting in Paris between Gobé and an RWU representative, he noted that the worldwide struggle against single person crew operations is already the subject of strikes in the UK, and will become the subject of a worldwide Labor campaigning in the second half of 2020. He also noted that the problem of contracting out of State transportation assets by Keolis, Transdev and several other international players represents a huge problem for transportation workers everywhere.