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Why denying Tube workers the right to strike sets a dangerous precedent

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This article was written in response to [Why TfL drivers should never be allowed to strike](#).

Last week, you could almost feel the capital breathe a sigh of relief. The proposed Tube strike had been called off. I for one didn't have to take three - most likely packed - buses and TfL Rail to get to university.





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Last week, you could almost feel the capital breathe a sigh of relief. The proposed Tube strike had been called off. I for one didn't have to take three - most likely packed - buses and TfL Rail to get to university.



There was an inclination to say that TfL strikes should be banned, due to the inevitable disruption it would cause. But this is a very dangerous line of reasoning.

As someone who has libertarian and conservative tendencies, I feel strike action should be avoided at all costs, and that sometimes they are unwarranted.

But to completely ban them, goes too far the other way.

Philosophy students would be aware of Aristotle's law of means - a virtue is the halfway between two extreme vices.



This is something that can certainly be applied here. Constant striking would damage the economy and lead to almost anarchy - nothing will get done and the country will come to a standstill. Certainly, sympathetic strikes should not be considered. It's all well-showing solidarity, but if services are disrupted enough, I'm not sure it's helpful.

You could always show solidarity by donating money to cover the loss in wages - nothing to stop you. And whilst we're here - the argument that transport workers can't strike as people might lose wages if they can't travel isn't a strong one, either.

It's not also fair on employers who haven't done anything wrong.

By striking, workers are willingly losing a day's work also, if they're willing to do that then a) there's probably something that is deeply troubling then, justified or not and b) everyone's in the same right.

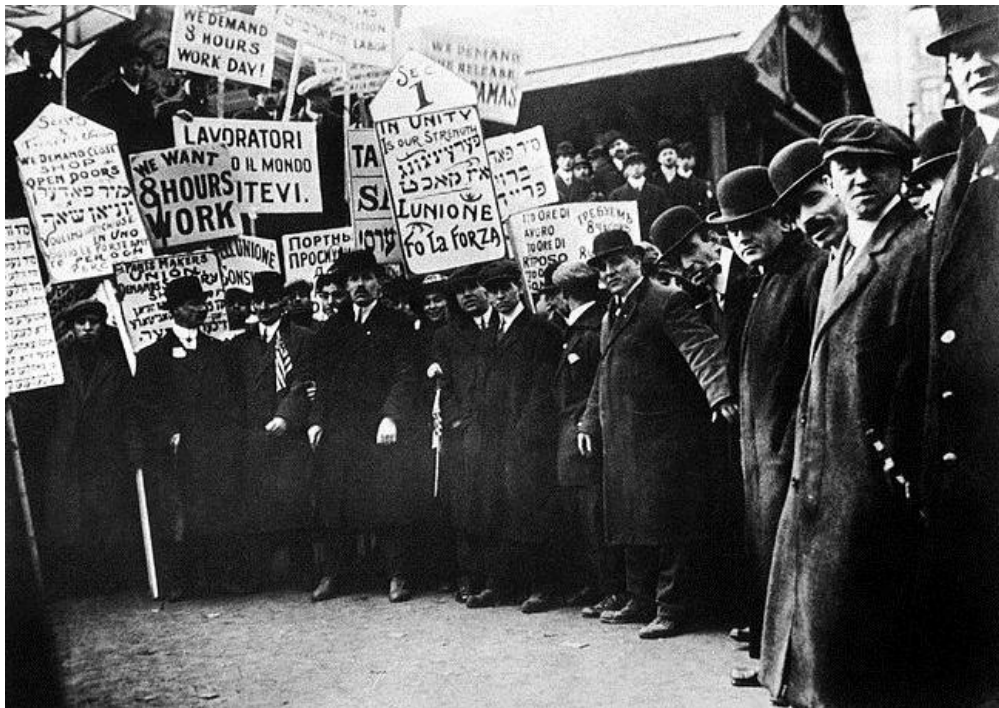
Next, we must look at the banning of said strikes and what it actually suggests.

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It suggests that people are entitled to the fruits of TfL drivers' labour. Being entitled to someone's labour is a horrifying concept. This way - no matter what, someone has to drive you, which has the same principle as slavery.

Though, I wouldn't claim it was exactly the same as that would devalue the suffering of those subjected to the brutal practice.

But, say, TfL workers weren't allowed to strike? What could happen?



The option to strike prevents companies from imposing draconian working conditions and practices on the workforce. If you can't strike, then you only have two options. Leave your job or just take it.



With the former, there's no guarantee you'll find employment quickly. With the second, this could lead to really dire consequences.

Between 2009 and 2015, abuse on the London Underground towards workers increased by [44%](#). This led to [strike action](#). Working on the Underground network can be more dangerous than people think.

Imagine working the graveyard shift on your own. Late at night, some rowdy passengers, some of whom might be intoxicated and aggressive come in hurling abuse at you?

Drivers may pull the trains but workers also play a vital role in keeping the system running. If they want their bosses to help them feel safe, why is that such a bad thing?

The previous aborted strike came as TfL had reneged on earlier agreements regarding [working hours](#).

If your boss makes an agreement with you, and then just doesn't fulfill - you would be furious and quite rightly so. But, hey, if you're not allowed to strike, you're faced with the same issue. Put up or leave.

Which is why banning strikes are wrong. I really don't like them, but in extreme cases, they are more than justifiable, they provide a safety net for workers so they don't get exploited. If you value the people who help you get to your destination on time for reasonable-ish prices, then you would agree anything that stops them being exploited is surely a good thing.

It may be annoying to have the inconvenience, but surely, when it's really needed, the ability to strike is more important?

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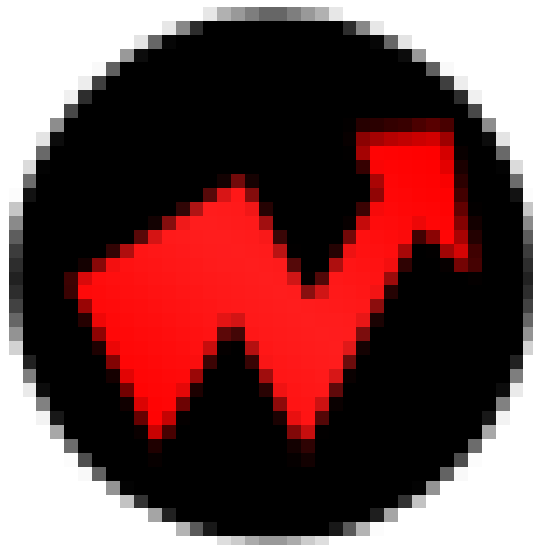
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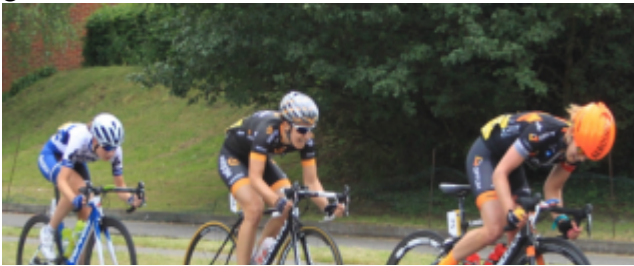


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