

FARE STRIKE

STARTING DECEMBER 15th

WHAT'S UP?

The Chicago Transit Authority is planning a drastic attack on poor and working people all over the city. This will include:

- 20% overall service cuts
- 30 bus routes being completely eliminated, hundreds of others coming less often, having shorter routes, having night or weekend service eliminated
- 11% cut in operating hours of the "L"
- 1000 job losses, most of which are firings, not layoffs
- doubling the fee for paratransit vans for disabled riders
- increasing the fee for student passes by \$.10 a day

WHY'S THIS HAPPENING?

Frank Kreusi and the CTA board say that they have a budget crisis, that they are \$50-some million dollars short. They say they need more money from Springfield—and with their public hearings and add campaigns they are trying to direct all our anger into lobbying our representatives. We don't buy it.

- In 1999, they got money from the state to restore the 1997 service cuts, but the service cuts were never restored.
- They just built a new office at 567 W. Lake St. that cost about \$119 million.
- They have already started work on the new Circle Line to connect the suburbs, which will cost as much as \$2 billion.
- The CTA board recently voted to increase their own pensions.
- They are planning new express "L" trains that will run every 15 minutes between downtown and O'Hare airport, so yuppie tourists don't have to mix with the local riff-raff.
- They always have enough money for security cameras and GPS clever boxes to spy on the drivers... not to mention grafitti clean-up.

So the problem is not only that the CTA has a budget crisis, but that they have chosen to dump their crisis off on us—the people who depend most on public transit and who can least afford to pay more.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

The point is not to offer up different management strategies for the CTA. Lots of community groups have done this, and they have been ignored. The CTA listens to big business, not riders and drivers. The only way they will respond to our needs, is if we can put real pressure on them—if we can disrupt business as usual.

We have the power to do this. Half of CTA's budget comes from fares. They depend on us as riders to pay fares, and as workers to collect fares. When riders refuse to pay, and workers refuse to collect, that will really hit them where it hurts. We can get where we need to go, have a free ride, and put pressure on them at the same time. If this happened on a large scale, they would move very quickly to restore services, reverse job losses and stop the fare hikes.

PEOPLE WOULD NEVER DO THAT

Not true. Fare evasion happens every day. It's such a big problem for transit bureaucrats that transit authorities in almost every major city in the world have issued long reports condemning it. Whenever they introduce new technology into ticket-taking it is explained as a way to cut down on fare evasion. Even though they try to make consequences for fare evasion, riders continue to do it all the time. It just needs to be pushed farther.

Organized fare strikes are a common tactic:

- In Italy in 1974, fare strikes were widespread, and were successful in stopping fare increases all over the country.
- In some cities in France, organized fare evasion became so common, that it was more expensive to pay for police to watch all the metros and busses than to just make the transport free, which is what happened in a number of cities.
- In San Francisco in 1993 a fare evasion campaign helped increase the pressure on the city to bring back transfers, which they did.
- In Dublin a fare-free day was called in the summer of 2003 by bus-drivers unions as part of the ongoing fight against the privatization of the city's bus system.
- There are ongoing and successful fare evasion campaigns in Stockholm, Gothenburg and Helsinki.
- The Bus Riders Union in Vancouver has called for a fare strike in early 2005 if a proposed fare increase goes ahead.

FARE STRIKE!

So let's do it! Starting December 15th riders don't pay, and workers don't collect. Keep riding and driving the bus and the "L" as usual, but for free. Tell everyone you know. Talk to drivers and riders about it. This will only work if we all do it.

NO SERVICE CUTS

NO LAYOFFS OR FIRINGS

NO FARE HIKES FOR ANYONE



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www.midwestunrest.net/farestrike