



tubeworker

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IAIN DUNCAN SMITH RESIGNS: FIGHT FOR DISABILITY EQUALITY!

The resignation of Iain Duncan Smith as Work and Pensions minister has thrown the Tory leadership into disarray.

He claimed he was resigning in protest at a planned £4.4 billion cut to disability benefit, which the Tories have now been forced to put on hold.

This is a political manoeuvre for Duncan Smith, not a sudden attack of conscience. Duncan Smith himself was the architect and chief advocate of the attacks the Tories have already launched on disabled people. Between December 2011 and February 2014, 2,380 people died after their Work Capability Assessment told



them they should start looking for work. Additional research also

suggested there were nearly 600 additional suicides of disabled people over the same period.

The Tories replaced the old Disability Living Allowance with a new "Personal Independence Payment", which saw many disabled people lose money. They also introduced much tougher "fitness for work" tests, often administered by private firms

like Atos and Capita, that forced more disabled people to search for work or risk losing their benefits.

They have tried to make workers, the poor, and the disabled pay for the ongoing costs of the 2007/2008 economic crisis. The Tories have used that crisis to attempt to restructure society and reduce social spending:

But they have been met with resistance from disabled people's groups, most radically and effectively Disabled People Against Cuts (DPAC). It has also made an immense difference that Labour, under Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell, is now firmly opposed to cuts rather than merely arguing that cuts should be made more slowly.

The TUC Disabled Workers' Committee has recently published a Manifesto for Disability Equality, setting out a number of demands, including:

- Properly funded support for independent living
- Effective employment rights and decent pay and working conditions for carers
- Reinstate the Disabled Students Allowance
- Scrap the current system for determining access to benefits

To read the whole manifesto, visit bit.ly/TUC-DWM

PICC LINE DRIVERS: ALL OUT!

Piccadilly RMT drivers on the Picc Line will strike against an out-of-control management on 23-24 March, 19-20 April, and 20-21 April. We hope members of Aslef will be joining picket lines too.

RMT reported that negotiations aimed at resolving the dispute were sabotaged by uncooperative bosses.

Workers in pretty much every function, grade, and area will recognise the picture from the Picc: managers drunk on power, wielding disciplinary sanctions in an arbitrary and authoritarian fashion. That seems to be the flavour of the month (year?) for LU managers right across the

board.

A solid strike on the Picc could stop managers at Picc depots in their tracks, and send a strong signal to dictatorial bosses elsewhere on the job.

Drivers' demands

- Disciplinary warnings issued at Oakwood depot must be withdrawn
- A director's review must be granted in an ongoing disciplinary case
- Harassment of drivers by managers must end
- Management must stick to agreed policies

PAY/NIGHT TUBE OFFER ACCEPTED



RMT and Aslef members have voted by a big majority in referenda to accept the pay/Night Tube offer. TSSA members are likely to follow.

While Unite has rejected the offer, it has few members and is expected to accept the position once all the other unions do.

We won improvements to the original offer through effective strike action last year by all four unions together. However, the four-year pay offer is barely above official inflation figures and will leave us struggling to keep up with rising London living costs. It also ties our hands for four years.

The No vote of around 15% was around double the level of previous comparable votes, suggesting that a significant minority of members recognised the problems with the deal and voted to reject it.

Meanwhile, RMT members employed by Tube Lines — the company owned by Transport for London which maintains one third of London Underground's infrastructure — are voting in a ballot for industrial action over pay and Night Tube. It is unfortunate that this ballot is only happening as the union concludes its dispute on the same issue with the London Underground staff who work alongside Tube Lines staff.

Had the union run the two disputes in parallel last year, it might have won a better outcome.

FIXED-TERM VICTORY

LU has now agreed that all CSAs on fixed-term contracts will be made permanent by May.

This is a big deal: if it hadn't been for union pressure (RMT pressure, if we're honest; TSSA have been pretty silent on this issue), LU may well have used fixed-term contact CSAs, then dumped them. RMT's insistence that fixed-termers should not be left behind has forced LU's hand.

It's a testament to what we can achieve when we stand together.

CLEANING CONTRACTION

Rumour has it that LU is looking to rationalise its cleaning contracts, with the aim of having one contractor provide services for all lines and depots.

Vinci, one of the smaller cleaning contractors on LU, has apparently told union reps it will be gone in 18 months!

Tubeworker wants all cleaning services brought back in house. Cleaners are currently used like equipment by LU and contractors. They deserve dignity and respect.

Meanwhile, ISS is still refusing RMT requests for meetings to discuss the impact of Night Tube on cleaners.

KEYSTONE COPS ON THE JUBILEE

Over the last couple of weeks on the Jubilee line, objects have been thrown on the track from the same location five times.

Police believed a honeypot trap was the way to go and so security was removed to lure the vandals into the area. It worked! But as the bobbies chase one baddy, the other is allegedly throwing more stuff on the track.

It is amusingly inept until you consider what could have happened had the item come through a driver's windscreen or derailed a train.

Had line reps been kept informed about these plans, they would have pointed out how foolish it was and either demanded it stop, or trains stop running.

BOMBARDIER BALLS UP

A GLA report has revealed the rip-off which saw TfL £886m out of pocket after awarding contract to Bombardier which it could not fulfil.

The money lost about 20 times the annual saving that "Fit for the Future - Stations" is due to achieve. Massive job cuts, ticket office closures, ... and all the money saved gets chucked down the drain. What a farce.

The answer to this is not just to manage contracts better, but to put an end to private contracting and do the work ourselves - with directly-employed staff in a department which carries out projects and major works.

LAUNCH DATE?

September, August, "late July", "from late July" ... it's all fun and games with the announcement of the Night Tube launch date.

Will be bosses rush the launch to suit the mayor, at the cost of doing it safely? They already tried to force it past workers and were given a firm rebuttal by our unions.

One thing is certain: whenever Night Tube launches, it will require the consent and participation of workers. Neither the incumbent nor incoming Mayor, nor LU bosses, should take that for granted.

TALES FROM THE TRENCHES

Ticket machine training for station staff is going terribly. With less than three weeks to 3 April, over 55% of people who require training still haven't being trained.

Meanwhile, additional weekend rest days LU promised would be added into rosters at the beginning and end of blocs of cover weeks have not appeared on many duty sheets.

These additional rest days were won through strikes and the threat of strikes... drawn your own conclusions!



What is Tubeworker?

Tubeworker is a rank-and-file socialist bulletin, published at least monthly, written by Tube workers, for Tube workers. It is published by the socialist group Workers' Liberty, but is produced in editorial meetings open to all workers. Supporters from outside London Underground can help with public distribution.

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