



# tubeworker

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## WOOLWICH MURDER: FIGHT THE RACIST BACKLASH

The murder of off-duty soldier, Lee Rigby, on 22 May, was an outrageous attack, which *Tubeworker* condemns.

The young men responsible appear to have been motivated by Islamist ideology, that is, by politics that wants a society based on conservative moral values and religious law, where women and LGBT people, for example, do not have rights. *Tubeworker* opposes and challenges these ideas. They aim for the opposite of a society based on equality and freedom, which we strive for.

But much as we condemn the murder, *Tubeworker* feels no support for the backlash it has unleashed. On the night of the murder, 100 English Defence League supporters gathered in Woolwich. One demonstrator reportedly threw a brick through a Mosque window. At a 1000 strong EDL demonstration at Downing Street on 27<sup>th</sup> May, EDL leader Tommy Robinson blamed 'Muslims' as a whole for the Woolwich murder.

The EDL is a right wing group, who use violent direct action to convey their hatred of foreigners. They use the Islamist politics of a minority of Muslims as an excuse to justify hatred of the entire Muslim community.

The EDL's message feeds into more mainstream media hysteria. How often have we heard the ridiculous and disgusting idea that all or most Muslims are in some way responsible for the actions of the Islamist killers? The

media also sensationalises the threat of terrorism. The murder – also by brutal stabbing – of an elderly Muslim man, Mohammed Saleem, it seems by a white racist, in Birmingham on 29<sup>th</sup> April, has not provoked the same coverage.

The next time this shocking event is discussed in our messrooms, we need to feel confident in challenging the spread of racism against Muslim people, our brothers and sisters at work and in our unions.

With the rise of the UK Independence Party and racism against migrants, we need to stand up against the racist backlash to this murder. Our unions need to make links with Muslim organisations and get actively involved in community campaigns against racism. We need to organise to defend civil liberties, which will undoubtedly be undermined again in the name of fighting terrorism; the Communications Bill, to monitor our internet activity, is already back on the agenda. We can challenge reactionary ideas, like Islamism, while fighting racism.

WORKING CLASS UNITY  
AGAINST RACISM & FASCISM



## CLEANERS' COLUMN

### FIGHTING IN THE FACE OF INTIMIDATION

RMT cleaners on ISS voted overwhelmingly to strike about the following issues:

- The 'Bradford Factor' sickness management system, where you could lose your job for as little as three days sick.
- Biometric fingerprinting, which could send workers without papers packing.
- ISS withholding the London Living Wage pay rise since last November
- ISS increasing the working day without extra pay for all on new contracts.

ISS responded to cleaners' strike vote by colluding with the Border Agency to conduct 'immigration raids' in our workplaces, capturing approximately 23 cleaners in recent weeks.

As after the 2008 cleaners' strikes, immigration legislation has been a bosses' tool to disorganise the most vulnerable workers' attempts to stand up for themselves. The whole union movement need to protest at these disgusting tactics.

We have a message for ISS: we will not be silenced by your intimidation. We are not slaves. We have the right to take action against your brutal management.

In response to the threat of strikes, ISS conceded that the Bradford Factor will not be used as a disciplinary tool. This shows organising works. We now need to regroup and pursue our remaining goals.

### ISS' CASUALISATION AGENDA

ISS seems to be replacing directly-employed cleaners with casual agency workers. ISS has removed long-standing employees on immigration grounds and replaced them with workers employed by agencies, such as ATOM. Unlike permanent workers, agency workers are not covered by RMT union recognition, or the London Living Wage agreement. With no fixed location, it's tough to organise against management. With no fixed hours, it's intimidating to speak out, in case you're never called back to work.

This is the brutal sharp edge of the of the capitalist system. Bosses seek the not only the cheapest workers, but those most powerless to fight back.

RMT took steps during the Olympics cleaners' strikes to organise agency cleaners, producing an agency workers' 'know your rights' guide. RMT has organised the 'Justice for the 33' campaign and Northern Rail dispute to employ agency workers permanently. But RMT and the whole union movement still needs to do more. Where casual labour spreads, unions need to follow. With recession and high unemployment, bosses are exploiting peoples' desperation for even the most insecure employment. Our unions must up their game.

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Got a story for Tubeworker? We welcome reports and comments from all Tube workers.

Contact Workers' Liberty, 20E Tower Workshops, Riley Road, London SE1

Tubeworker's weblog - daily updates - [www.workersliberty.org/twblog](http://www.workersliberty.org/twblog)  
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## LU WORKERS FIGHT FOR JUSTICE FOR THE 33

It's excellent that RMT has decided to seriously prepare all LU grades to ballot for strike action to win jobs for the 33 agency workers, who have been jobless since January.

LU callously kicked them onto the dole in January when it terminated the contract with the Trainpeople agency. In terminating the contract, LU did not have to ditch the workers. LU could have chosen to take them on, showing recognition of the workers' five years loyal and excellent service in LU uniform.

LU chose not to employ 33 experienced workers.....perhaps because they had joined RMT and shown themselves willing to stand up for their rights?

Now it's our chance for workers across LU to send a message that LU can't use, abuse and refuse anyone. LU must be made to realise its decisions have consequences. By disregarding what it thought was a marginal, dispensible group of workers, LU has unleashed a response from all of us. TSSA and ASLEF should come on board. We will not allow one section of our workforce to be abused and abandoned. If it gets away with this, it could be us next. An injury to one is an injury to all. By defending the 33, we defend ourselves.

## DRIVERS RIDING HIGH

Piccadilly drivers' dispute also won assurances about SPADs, no reduction in walking time and increased union consultation.

Drivers are riding high. Fights have produced progress on the Jubilee, Bakerloo and now Piccadilly Lines. Hammersmith and City drivers' ballot over cross-line working is sending a strong, proactive message to LU. Other grades, such as stations, need to adopt these winning strategies.

[www.workersliberty.org/piccadilly](http://www.workersliberty.org/piccadilly)

## GOLD PLATED?

After driverless trains and free travel threats, Tory London Assembly members now accuse TfL of giving us 'gold plated' pensions.

Retiring on their fat investments, Tories want us to end our days in poverty!

Private sector workers have seen their pensions slashed. Now Tories hope for private sector workers' support in attacking ours. Public and private sector workers must unite for decent pensions. All cleaners and contractors in TfL should be in the TfL pension scheme.

Our pension pays well partly because shift work shortens our lives; we don't live long to claim it. The rich take a long retirement for granted; we cannot. It's bad enough that our jobs damage our health; don't begrudge us money to enjoy our lives after work.

[www.workersliberty.org/ltpensions](http://www.workersliberty.org/ltpensions)

## HAPPY 80TH BIRTHDAY!

This year is LU's 150th anniversary. But more accurately, it's 150 years since someone first put a train in a ditch heading for central London. This year's real anniversary is that it's 80 years since the London Transport Passenger Board was set up: the moment LU's lines became publicly owned. That's a principle we should be celebrating and defending today.

[www.workersliberty.org/tubeunionspolitics](http://www.workersliberty.org/tubeunionspolitics)

## THANKS TO US?

The manager of the scheme tells us one in four workers has received a 'thanks to you' award. How come noone we've asked knows anybody who's received one?

It's most likely because not all managers recognise hard work - or only recognise their favourites. *Tubeworker* would rather see better rewards for every worker.

[www.workersliberty.org/pay](http://www.workersliberty.org/pay)

## CAMPAIGN FOR EQUALITY

*Tubeworker* praises the work of RMT's LGBT conference. It resolved to fight homophobia, set out a strategy to combat transphobia and discussed issues faced by LGBT asylum seekers.

Compare this to the 'TfL LGBT Staff Network Group'. It wants to grow but doesn't say what issues it wants to tackle. It aims to get on the Stonewall Equalities Index, but doesn't mention fighting homophobia in the workplace.

We're not saying such groups are bad per se, but it's a problem if people see the existence of such a group as an answer in itself. It could be used to cover up for issues. We need active campaigning!

[www.workersliberty.org/LTequalities](http://www.workersliberty.org/LTequalities)

## BAD SCORES

In a rare attack of common sense, LU has changed its scorecard system so station staff will no longer be measured on whether we give a 'smile' or 'parting comment' to mystery shoppers.

But it's not all good. 'Snapshot' reports on individual workers will now get sent to managers to monitor bad performance. Previously only good scorecards were published.

Unions need to make sure that management do not start to use mystery shopper reports towards any disciplinary targets, as happens on other train companies. We don't want management to increase their power and surveillance over us in the workplace.

[www.workersliberty.org/perform-manage](http://www.workersliberty.org/perform-manage)

## LET'S GET COOKING!

For two years, ticket sellers at Euston asked management for a cooker in their messroom. They were ignored and fobbed off with every excuse under the sun. Finally, they decided to submit a collective grievance. Before management even let them submit the grievance, a cooker was ordered. A two-year-long battle was sorted within two weeks, thanks to the threat of a little collective action.

[www.workersliberty.org/northern](http://www.workersliberty.org/northern)

## WHEN BOSSES FIGHT FOR FUNDING....

Mike Brown tells us he's been busy ahead of the Government's spending review on 26 June, meeting with business groups, politicians and media to highlight the Tube's contribution to the economy.

He says the Tube deserves funding for modernisation. He quotes success on the Jubilee and Northern lines, neglecting that most of that money went to line the pockets of fat cat contractors, as we reported in last month's *Tubeworker*.

Also, he's asking for money to fund a plan that looks at modernisation the wrong way. He wants to modernise staff out of existence on LU in a way that will disadvantage our jobs and customer service.

This is what happens when we leave the campaign for increased transport funding in the hands of the bosses. Our unions need our own working-class-based campaign to protect funding, jobs and public service. Unions need to intervene in London Assembly and Government politics more proactively and effectively.

[www.workersliberty.org/tubeunionspolitics](http://www.workersliberty.org/tubeunionspolitics)

## GLOSSED OVER

Contractors reckoned household gloss would be good enough to repaint the yellow line on Central Line platforms. It was like a strip of ice rink along the platform edge: it needed repainting. Contractors obviously haven't learnt from when household gloss ruined many smart suit trousers a few years back at Epping!

[www.workersliberty.org/central](http://www.workersliberty.org/central)

## ONE BY ONE?

On top of LU's plans to close Whitechapel, we hear LU might want to close Vauxhall Ticket Office.

Is LU's strategy to close ticket offices one by one, hoping unions and customers won't notice and fight back?

Unions should enter dispute with LU over even one ticket office closure. It's a line in the sand. Let's start actively campaigning and building towards industrial action

[www.workersliberty.org/ticketoffices](http://www.workersliberty.org/ticketoffices)

## OVER THE RAINBOW

Rainbow is LU's ridiculous attendance management system which puts you on a case conference for 'patterns' of non-attendance, e.g. sickness during school holidays, whether or not you have kids! Piccadilly and Jubilee drivers challenged Rainbow with industrial action threats. Management agreed to suspend case conferences! We hope this assurance can extend to all LU workers.

[www.workersliberty.org/sicksystem](http://www.workersliberty.org/sicksystem)