



tubeworker

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WE'RE RIGHT TO STRIKE! ONLY THE RICH WOULD GAIN FROM TUBE STRIKE BAN

The London Assembly's Tories published a report on 'London Underground's strike laws'. It polled a small, unrepresentative sample of 285 people, asking 'is it too easy for Tube workers to strike?' 59% said 'yes', while 14% disagreed. Just goes to show, you can get the answer you want if you select the question. Perhaps tube workers should conduct our own survey?

Tube workers' ability to strike is a Tory bugbear. Boris Johnson fussed about it last election, saying 50% + 1 of those eligible should vote for a strike for it to be legal (neglecting that Boris himself would never have been elected under such rules).

Why are the Tories so bothered? The report contains sob stories about strikes 'damage to ordinary Londoners', some of whom are 'low paid'. But if the Tories cared for 'low paid' Londoners, they would drop housing benefit caps that will drive poor people from London, build more social housing and cap extortionate London rents.

The first line of the report gets to the heart of the Tories' obsession: 'The average strike on LU costs London's economy approximately £48 million per day'. 'Cost to the economy' really means 'damage to the profit margins of banks and London businesses', the people the Tories really care about.

They dress up 'Tube strike bans' as a cause for the greater good. But let's ponder what the 'greater good' actually means for the majority of people.

It was in the 'greater good' that we struck in 2010 against station staff and ticket office cuts. Defending public services and jobs in reality benefits the majority of people in London more than securing the profit margins of the corporations for yet another day.

It was in the 'greater good' that we struck in 2008 over pay and maintaining our 'no compulsory redundancies' agreement. What benefit would it have

been to London if we added ourselves to the unemployment statistics?

The Evening Standard might not believe this, but it was even in the 'greater good' when we struck over pay. While Tories call British workers 'idlers' and model UK work on the long hours and low wages of 'productive' economies like Hong Kong and Singapore, it is essential that unionised workers like ourselves stand up for pay above the poverty line. Our pay struggles are not just 'selfish'. They help raise the bar for workers in other industries. We are part of the working class, collectively staking our claim to live in a society where workers are not impoverished and capitalists do not have the unchallenged right to dictate our living standards and the price of the hours we sell to them.

When Tories bleat on about strike bans benefitting 'ordinary Londoners', it is a disguise for their concern to create an economy that benefits the rich. Tubeworker has a better idea that would benefit ordinary Londoners: eradicate poverty from the capital. We can only do that by challenging the power of the bosses who perpetuate our poverty to maximise profit. One of the best tools for challenging the bosses is strike action; it should be available to us and all workers – as it benefits all workers.



JUSTICE FOR THE 33: THE CAMPAIGN ESCALATES

Tubeworker applauds the 33 agency workers for reigniting their campaign for permanent LU jobs. They have been outside 55 Broadway almost daily since their 15th April demonstration, which was described as 'the siege of 55 Broadway'.

After five years in LU uniform on the Bakerloo and District Lines, LU kicked the 33 agency workers onto the dole queue in January by terminating its contract with the agency. Since then, the 33 have been fighting for LU jobs. At first, LU promised to take them on but then only employed six, after a flawed recruitment process.

Jobless since January, lack of money and morale would have kicked the fight out of most people. But not the 33! LU completely underestimated the determination of these workers.

RMT branches around London have pledged money and support. Branches now need to get actively involved in the campaign; it would boost morale.

The best way to win would be for LU workers to take strike action in support of the campaign. RMT needs to step up organisation in our workplaces to get the word out. All LU workers need to get behind their campaign.

RMT also needs to contribute and raise funds. Our comrades are struggling in the face of financial hardship we probably cannot comprehend. RMT and the whole labour movement must support the brave workers who will not give up until they win.

ISS: RAMP UP THE FIGHT

ISS conducted its second immigration raid in two months when immigration services arrested night cleaners at Waterloo Station. It is also conducting near-daily LUCAS card checks to flush out cleaners without permits. ISS is responding with intimidation and attacks to RMT cleaners' current strike ballot.

ISS is lying about the ballot. ISS says biometric fingerprint booking on machines have been ditched in favour of swipecards. Not true! ISS wants to use both.

ISS says only new staff will have to work longer shifts for no extra money (by extending the unpaid meal break). But if the practice becomes established for new staff, it will soon be extended to all.

Cleaners are strong; ISS is scared. We need to keep up the pressure; vote 'yes' and defeat ISS' plans.

www.workersliberty.org/cleaners

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Q AND A: WHY SHOULD LU WORKERS SUPPORT THE 33?

Q. Agency workers lost their jobs when LU terminated the contract with the agency. Isn't it common for agency workers to lose jobs when a contract ends? What's wrong with that?

A. Organisations often ditch agencies to save money while employing the workers for their experience.

The 33's five years service on LU gives them a particular claim to an LU job. Some trained managers in ticket offices; together they got seven 100% mystery shopper scores over the Olympics. LU treated them as second class citizens; they got no Olympic bonus; no counselling for one unders. LU owes jobs to the 33 to rectify years of injustice. Instead, it has dropped them like a sack of rubbish.

Q. What is casualisation?

A. Most LU workers are on permanent contracts. Casualisation is a shift towards irregular hours and insecure work, without permanent contracts, often employing workers via agencies. Casual workers do not receive employment benefits, such as pensions and sick pay.

Q. What's wrong with casualisation?

A. Casual work blights a worker's life. How can you plan without a guaranteed job or income? Employers pay the bare minimum for labour. Worse, insecure employment silences workers from speaking out about safety and injustice because workers need to keep in the bosses' good books to keep getting work. Casualisation has been used by bosses worldwide to curb the power of the working class.

Q. How does this affect us?

A. LU is introducing casual working. It plans to remove night turn supervisors from 'quiet' stations. LU has left the door open for ICSAs (managers with phony licenses) to do Bakerloo detrainment. Will agency staff come next?

LU wants more 'flexible staffing solutions'. Instead of permanent CSAs for stations coverage, LU would love to phone up an agency every time there is staff shortage at short notice.

Q. Why should support this campaign?

A. The 33 agency workers were LU's experiment in flexible staffing on the Bakerloo and District Lines. The 33 joined RMT and stood up for themselves. Their stance slowed the spread of agency work across LU, securing our jobs. We owe them our support!

LU used the 33 and dropped them. LU could easily to treat us all as dispensable workers if it gets away with this.

DETRAINMENT: FIGHT ON!

Bakerloo Drivers' action forced LU to bring back station staff for detrainments. But staff check only outside the train. This isn't safe! LU still won't put detrainment CSAs on

Tubeworker is produced by Tube workers and published by Workers' Liberty, an organisation fighting as part of the labour movement for a socialist alternative to both capitalism and Stalinism, based on common ownership and democracy.

We want one democratic, fighting union for all railworkers. We reject artificial divisions between workers of different grades. We oppose racism, sexism, homophobia and all prejudice that divides us.

rosters and won't rule out using ICSAs. LU is victimising an ASLEF driver and RMT driver, Jay Patel, for their part in the industrial action. LU says it will review Bakerloo detrainments in three months. What's RMT's plan? RMT needs to carry out its pledge to continue the fight. ASLEF must join in.

www.workersliberty.org/bakerloo

DODGY DUST?

Academic research into dust levels on underground railways has revealed a high quantity of metals in unusually fine dust particles, which 'may pose a risk to health for people who spend sustained periods in that environment, such as railways workers'. Unions should push LU to do conclusive tests. Better to be proactive than wait to get ill!

www.workersliberty.org/ltsafety

JUBILEE PROGRESS

Following drivers' 'yes' strike vote, Jubilee management have made positive offers around the behaviour of TOSMs, punitive interpretation of the sickness policy, drivers' facilities, and other issues. RMT and ASLEF have come together in essential unity. Drivers need to see LU stick to its promises before the dispute can be called off.

www.workersliberty.org/jubilee

SPARE CASH TO FAT CATS

Labour London Assembly members say TfL's £900 million surplus could be spent on cutting travel fares. Boris says he'll spend it on Tube upgrades.

TfL has spare cash; there's no need to cut the grant to the London Transport Museum.

Where does money for Tube upgrades end up? Into private contractors' profits! Thales has a £480 million contract for the Jubilee and Northern signals upgrade. Thales posted a record 585 million Euros profit for 2012. Meanwhile, Thales installs a poorly-tested signal system in Neasden depot, which is still not fixed! It's not Thales workers' fault: bosses cut corners to enhance profit. Public money should improve public transport, not make the fat cats fatter!

www.workersliberty.org/tubeunionspolitics

HAVE OUR SAY!

We should seek to influence the Mayor and London Assembly's decisions about public spending. Unions should organise a 'London Assembly Group' of members who could support us on important issues such as defending staff travel and Justice for the 33.

www.workersliberty.org/tubeunionspolitics

GOING MOBILE?

Turnham Green Supervisors hold keys for Kew Gardens and Gunnersbury. Supervisors on the High Barnet Group and Central Line loop give out keys for unstaffed neighbouring

stations. Contractors work unsafely on unstaffed stations!

RMT and TSSA strike threats forced LU to withdraw this 'mobile station supervision' in 2008. Unions must fight again for a supervisor on every station 24/7!

www.workersliberty.org/casualise

WOT NO LUNCH TIME?

On High Barnet Group, overtime and working through your unpaid meal break were written on the duty sheets, implying it's compulsory.

We're entitled to an uninterrupted meal break. According to the Stations Framework, a meal break interrupted in 'an unforeseen situation' can be paid overtime. But it's hardly unforeseen if it's on the duty sheets!

Sick of being put upon, supervisors are refusing, threatening station closures. When will LU realise it needs more staff?

www.workersliberty.org/casualise

WOT NO HOME TIME?

On the north of the Bakerloo Line, if no cover is on its way, management expect you to stay past the end of your shift to deliver the published ticket office opening hours.

Overtime is voluntary! Workers are refusing. If we let management think our free time is at their disposal, they soon won't pay overtime rate at all.

So LU can't open ticket offices, while it refuses to employ the 33 former agency workers who are trained to work there? Come on LU, see sense and save overtime money: Employ the 33!

www.workersliberty.org/casualise

PREP TIME PLEASE!

Timed by union reps and managers together, the agreed drivers' prep list for S Stock trains takes 16 minutes. But management want to cut prep time to get the train on the road quicker: part of the master plan to employ fewer people to run trains.

To cut the time, LU started chopping items off the prep list. Without thorough checks, the train will fail in service.

Both ASLEF and RMT should ballot drivers for 'action short of strike' to stick to 16 minutes!

www.workersliberty.org/handc

NINE PER LINE?

Tubeworker hears that LU has ordered at least nine stations posts to be held vacant on each line. So that's 100ish across the job.

So, promotion and movement is blocked; station staff work without colleagues; passengers go without help. And 100ish Londoners are on the dole when there is work to be done.

www.workersliberty.org/casualise