



tubeworker

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Historic strike shuts down London

PREPARE TO STRIKE AGAIN

Escalate the action to win reversal of job cuts

The 8-9 January strike of station and revenue staff was historic. We showed that we have immense power when we stand together. Our strike shut down central London, putting immense pressure on the employer and exposing the depths of their staffing crisis.

Lively pickets were mounted at stations across London, with TSSA reps and activists joining their RMT colleagues (despite TSSA's last-minute wobble!). With unity in the dispute maintained, the logic points towards one industrial union for all Tube workers.

Fantastic solidarity was shown by other grades, with many drivers refusing to cross picket lines and many



more rightly refusing to drive their trains through unstaffed, or unsafely staffed, stations.

Support from the public on picket lines was high. With leaflets, social media, and interviews we got our message out: LU must reverse jobs cuts

and properly staff stations, not with cut-price CSA2s, but with CSA1s and above, and put in place a plan for consolidating the two CSA grades upwards. If LU claim there's no money available, Mayor Khan must stop his disgraceful union bashing and join our fight to demand increased funding from central government.

The employer is on the ropes. We have to maintain our momentum. RMT has said it will name further strikes from 6 February if the employer does not meet our demands. These strikes must escalate beyond 24 hours.

Our strike is also a little window into where power lies, and how we can change society. It's easy to feel small, to feel like a cog in a machine, when you're going through the daily grind of shifts and you're at the whim of the employer. But a day like yesterday reminds us that it doesn't have to be like that. We move London, not our bosses. The power is in our hands. As the old slogan from revolutionary France in 1968 puts it: *Le patron a besoin de toi, mais tu n'as pas besoin de lui*. To paraphrase the translation: our bosses need us, but we don't need them.

We hope other working-class people are inspired by our strikes. Of course, not every job or industry is as integral to the day-to-day functioning of London as public transport, but the key difference between us and other groups of workers is that we have a high level of union membership and that we are prepared to use our unions as tools via which to take action. We should encourage fellow members of our class to see our level of organisation, and our action, not as something to resent but as something to aspire to.

Every striker should be congratulated for the resolve they showed on 8-9 January. Let's push on and win our dispute!

NO "HARD BREXIT"! DEFEND RIGHTS FOR WORKERS AND MIGRANTS

Theresa May has revealed her plans for the terms of Britain's exit from the European Union, which include leaving the single market and therefore ending the rights of free movements between Britain and other European states.

This "hard Brexit", a drastic severing of Britain's links with the European community rather than a negotiated withdrawal on terms that retain some connections, could be disastrous for workers.

As socialists, we have no brief to defend the single market, but the alternative - an isolated British capitalism, walled off by protectionist trade policies - is hardly preferable from a working-class point of view. Leaving the single market could lead to significant job losses for workers at companies which rely on trade with Europe.

Migrant workers are also under

threat. By ending free movement, the Tories will jeopardise the status of EU migrants who've come to Britain under EU free movement rules. This includes many of our colleagues on LU, particularly in the cleaning grades. Our unions must defend migrants' rights, in the first place the right of all existing migrants to remain in the UK.

Many workers' rights, which are enshrined in European law, could also be threatened by a "hard Brexit".

There is no democratic mandate for "hard Brexit". The terms on which Britain either stayed in or left the EU were not on the ballot, and on both sides there were a variety of views about what should happen after the vote.

Our unions should oppose any exit from the EU that only benefits bosses, and threatens workers' and migrants' rights.

MAYOR KHAN: THE SCAB'S FRIEND

Sadiq Khan claims he agrees the Tube needs more jobs. So where are they?



He spent the strike day praising scabs and peddling TfL's wildly inaccurate statistics about how much of the service was running.

Khan's actions demonstrate he is more interested in maintaining the status quo of a city with struggling workers and a few rich fat cats; of stripping back services and cutting jobs; than any serious effort to improve the lives of working-class people in our city.

As a Labour mayor, why doesn't he join the pickets and demand more funding for the Tube from the Tories? He'd rather proclaim there is no money and back the scabs instead.

Labour's Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell proclaimed last year that Labour's policy was now to back all striking workers. But the Labour leadership largely remained silent whilst we were on the picket lines.

Perhaps the left of the Labour Party doesn't want to go head-to-head with Khan, but one of Khan's first acts when he became Mayor was to distance himself from Corbyn and the party leadership, so why not act like proper socialists and call out the scabs?

There was support from the Shadow Education Secretary Angela Rayner, who tweeted: "As I face a 2 mile walk to work I'm reminded of why the #TubeStrike is happening #SafetyFirst".

When we have a Tory government cutting Tube funding, and a Labour mayor attacking workers rather than the Tories, and Corbyn and McDonnell keeping schtum... who do we have to represent us?

We have a real opportunity with our current Labour leadership, please don't let us down now.

WOT NO CAR PARK?

Staff who use Tottenham Hale's station car park were angered to find, with only a week's notice, that it was closing.

The excuse is that the space is needed for taxis due to the Tottenham Hale Upgrade Project. LU's "temporary alternative" is five parking spaces, replacing 12.

Management wail that the project won't pay for alternative parking facilities, but that's not on: if it takes away any of our facilities, it has to pay. End of.

While they get this sorted, the company should not be surprised if staff arrive late or leave early - which will probably cause even more station closures than the north end of the Vic is already experiencing.

BALLOT IMMINENT ON FLEET

RMT has declared a new dispute on fleet, as management tries to pull a fast one with job cuts and breaching agreements.

A union statement cites "ongoing attacks at various levels", which include job cuts and breaches of agreements. Station staff will undoubtedly hear echoes of their own struggles here, and the abuse of procedures and breaching agreements parallel recent drivers' disputes on the Picc, H&C, and Central.

Tubeworker encourages all fleet members to vote yes to strikes and action short once the ballot gets underway.

Reps and activists across all grades should be looking for ways to link up and coordinate the disputes.

CENTRAL LINE DRIVERS STRIKE AGAINST DISPLACEMENTS

After a resounding vote in favour of action, RMT drivers at Hainault, Leytonstone, and Loughton Traincrew Depots struck on 25-26 January.

The dispute is against forced displacements; some drivers face displacement to Earl's Court, on the other side of London.

With forced displacements now an issue on both stations and trains, our unions should look for ways to coordinate the disputes.

WOT NO TAXIS?

The staff taxi service on Christmas Eve night was a disgrace.

Lots of staff were left standing in the dark and cold for up to several hours, waiting for cabs that didn't arrive, making phone calls and being repeatedly fobbed off. It's just good luck that (as far as we know) nobody was badly assaulted.

It's bad enough that we are working when most of the rest of the world is partying or heading round to see family or friends. It adds insult to injury for management to leave us stranded and in danger. Some people got home barely in time for an hour's sleep before the kids got up to open their presents!

It is essential that our unions hold management accountable for this failure, and demand guarantees that it won't happen again.

Perhaps if senior managers had to rely on staff taxis rather than company taxi accounts, they might pull their fingers out!

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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