



tubeworker

a regular bulletin by tubeworkers for tubeworkers <><><> special issue: 11 July 2005

UNITE AGAINST BOMB OUTRAGE

<> stand up for safety <> oppose racism, defend civil liberties <> oppose war and terror <>

The bomb attacks on Thursday 7th July were utterly despicable. Around fifty people died, and many more were injured, some losing limbs, disabled and traumatised for life. Thousands of people have lost friends and family.

This was an attack on us at work, and our passengers on their way to work or going about their daily lives. The bombers killed randomly-selected innocent civilians, members of London's diverse population.

As an Iraqi socialist group has said: "We strongly condemn this barbaric Islamic terrorism and we stand shoulder to shoulder with innocent people in London and express our profound condolences to the families of the victims, and to those who are the innocent casualties of this savage act."

HEROES AND VILLAINS

Underground staff reacted brilliantly to the bombs – evacuating quickly, leading people to safety, comforting the injured, dealing with the crowds. We

pulled together in solidarity with each other and with the passengers – something these vicious bombers know nothing about.

On Friday, most of us were back at work, doing our jobs as professionally and calmly as usual.

Tube workers are heroes. We hope that the politicians and the press who praise us now remember their words the next time we are forced to strike, instead of casting us as villains as they usually do.

Our colleagues in the emergency services are also heroes. But despite their crucial, life-saving role, the Fire Service is getting rid of fire engines in central London and threatening firefighters' jobs, and the Ambulance Service struggles with underfunding.

Thursday was a harrowing experience for many Underground staff. Some saw horrific injuries or even people dying. Some feared for our own safety and that of our friends and workmates.

If you need time off, take it – the unions have already secured a guarantee from all the Tube's employers that you will be supported not penalised.

If you think that you are OK, remember that the trauma may still hit



you later. Don't be afraid to ask for help, go sick or get counselling if you need to.

SAFETY BEFORE HASTE

On this occasion, the bad guys are the bombers rather than the bosses. But management are still management, and we still can't trust them with our safety. We need to insist that if there is no train radio, there is no train service. You should refuse any request to carry out checks that you are not qualified for, or to open stations or drive trains if you are not confident that proper safety procedures have been followed.

We must ensure that management do not cut corners in a rush to reopen closed sections ahead of time. RMT has already reported that a Metronet manager sent out an e-mail asking for seats to be revealed without being checked. And Piccadilly Line drivers had to threaten a walkout on the Saturday after the bombing to stop management extending the shuttle service to Wood Green without adequate preparation.

Workers' Liberty discussion forum

**London bombings:
Against jihadi-terrorism,
against Bush and Blair:
the socialist alternative.**

Speakers:

Houzan Mahmoud (Worker-communist Party of Iraq)
Sean Matgamna (Workers' Liberty)
John Leach (RMT Executive - personal capacity)

19:30, Thursday 14th July

Lucas Arms, 245A Grays Inn Road
(King's Cross)

The bomb sites will be treacherous for some time, with asbestos, vermin, poor ventilation and damage making a hard and gruesome task even harder. *We have to take all the time it needs to make it safe.*

WITHDRAW THESE ROSTERS

We have said all along that LUL's draft new stations rosters will compromise safety. In the face of this murderous bomb attack, the company must abandon these staffing cuts immediately. If they go ahead and impose them, there will not be enough staff to do thorough security checks; not enough to evacuate stations or trains; and, if the worst happens again, not enough staff to help people away from danger and towards medical help. In other words, these cuts could cost lives.

This does not mean we have to give up our 35-hour week. Don't let LUL manipulate this tragedy to keep us working long, anti-social hours.

The bomb attacks also show the folly of scrapping guards. Bring them back!

OPPOSE RACIST BACKLASH

The BNP and other bigots will use the bombings as an excuse to target Muslims – and other ethnic minority people who these ignorant boneheads assume to be Muslims. Sadly, we will probably see a rise in racist abuse, and even assaults, at work – despite the fact that the vast majority of Muslims do not support the terrorists.

We are a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural workforce, and proud of it. We need to stand up for ourselves and our workmates. We may need to organise to defend ourselves and others in our communities, too. Don't let the bombers, or the racists, divide us.

DEFEND CIVIL LIBERTIES

The government will use people's anger at the bombers to push through its plan for ID cards. But remember – Spain has ID cards, and they did not stop the Madrid bombings.

We may see further clampdowns on civil liberties and on immigration. These will not prevent terrorist attacks, but will merely persecute lots of innocent people.

WHO ARE THE BOMBERS?

We have been dealing with threats to our security for years – before al-Qaeda, we were on alert against possible IRA bombing.

But al-Qaeda is different. With the IRA, you might deplore their tactics, but still have some sympathy with their grievances. Not these bombers.

They are not allies with bad tactics – they are our bitter, mortal enemies. Their tactics tell us a lot about what sort of movement they are – fundamentally against humanity. They are fighting a 'jihad' – a holy war.

When we call them 'Islamist', we do not mean Muslim religious observance. We mean a political movement to establish an Islamic state – with Sharia (Islamic) law, no democracy, no rights for women or workers, no sexual freedom, no freedom of speech, dissent or religion. Not all Islamists carry out attacks like al-Qaeda does. But Islamism is a fundamentally anti-working-class, anti-democratic movement, which often uses or supports violent repression. Islamist 'resistance' gangs carry out murderous attacks in Iraq on a regular basis.

WHO IS TO BLAME?

Britain's involvement in the wars against Iraq and Afghanistan helped to make London a target. But that does not take responsibility or blame away from the al-Qaeda barbarians.

In any case, the wars against Iraq and Afghanistan did not create al-Qaeda. It existed, and it attacked New York, before those wars.

US and UK foreign policy have pushed many people in some parts of the world towards supporting al-Qaeda. Bush and Blair share some responsibility for the support it has. But its terrible, murderous,

Tubeworker is produced by tubeworkers in the Alliance for 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. Only our bosses benefit from a divided workforce.

reactionary politics are its own responsibility. Al-Qaeda has its own distinct political aims. They feed off US/UK foreign policy, but are independent of it.

Tubeworker opposes Tony Blair's government. We deplore its privatisations, its attacks on workers and trade unions, its sucking up to the rich, and its wars. Its policies contribute to a world in which war and terrorism threaten ordinary working-class people.

But Tony Blair did not plant those bombs. Islamist jihadi-terrorists did.

HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND?

Should Britain pull out its troops from Iraq in response to the bombings?

Tubeworker opposed the war. We want the occupation of Iraq to end and Iraqis to rebuild a free, democratic, secular society.

But we can not let these bombers determine what the policy on Iraq should be. If troops are pulled out from Iraq, it should be when, and because, that is the right thing to do, not because of intimidation by al-Qaeda.

The best way to stop the terrorists is to undermine their support in the regions where they are strong. In countries like Pakistan, Algeria, Iran and Iraq, there are trade unionists, socialists and others who are fighting for a decent society against both the Islamists and the US/UK warmongers. We should give them our full support.

We respond to this attack as working people and trade unionists – we abhor this sort of violence, and stand up for diversity, democracy and freedom.

Working-class solidarity can see us through this awful time. We are cannon fodder for no-one's war and no-one's jihad.

Want to get every issue of *Tubeworker* (published every three weeks) sent to you? Send us a fiver (cheques payable to *WL Bulletins*) - and your address!

Got a story for *Tubeworker*? We welcome & will publish reports & comments from all Tube workers. Also get in touch if you want to come to our regular readers' meetings, or to get involved in action about any of the issues we've covered.

Contact Workers' Liberty, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA 020-7207-3997
e-mail: office@workersliberty.org - Website www.workersliberty.org/tubeworker

Subscribe to Tubeworker by e-mail. Send a message to tubeworker-list-subscribe@workersliberty.org

Tubeworker p&p S. Matgamna