



tubeworker

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ARWYN THOMAS BACK TO WORK: WE'VE WON!

RM T has won its battle for unjustly sacked activist Arwyn Thomas, with LU re-engaging him on a driver's salary. We have set back, if not defeated, LU's systematic program of victimisations.

Recall the start of the year. Three sacked RMT reps: Eamonn Lynch, Peter Hartshorn and Arwyn. Management were cocky, spying a tired workforce, battered by the job cuts defeat, beaten down by the recession. They set out to pick off our reps, hoping trade unionism would crumble. They thought our morale was so low that we would not fight back.

They did not expect what we threw back at them. Reps worked tirelessly and built up support from around the job. We were organised, energetic and used public campaigning and even the anti-union press to the best advantage.

Tubeworker has long argued that the unions should fight disputes with a strategy focused on winning, with rank-and-file members in the driving seat and a willingness to take decisive action. Here are the main ingredients that contributed to this victory:

- The action was **escalated when needed**. Local strikes on the Northern and Bakerloo lines had not reinstated Arwyn and Eamonn by February. The choice was: step up or give up. So our Executive member recommended that we stepped up to an all-drivers ballot, a call backed by members and reps.

- The **rank-and-file train grades committee** decided how it thought the

dispute should progress, and our Exec member took its decisions to the RMT Executive. This produced a creative and effective strategy: 48 hours of strikes over five days. LU soon came crawling with an offer. Eamonn was reinstated; Arwyn was promised his job back (LU subsequently reneged).

- **Strikes focused on winning, not on token action**. When RMT named the first set of strikes, it also named the second, so management knew that they could not just tough out one set of strikes and expect us to go away.

- RMT's Executive (eventually) agreed to **strike pay**, enabling us to take prolonged action, recognising that some people were finding the financial hit hard. Again, putting the measures in place to enable us to win.

- We kept going until we got our result. Management underestimated the determination of Arwyn Thomas, who turned down a six-figure sum, refusing to put a price on the head of a rep. Under pressure from reps, RMT's executive voted to keep strikes on unless Arwyn was reinstated. **We didn't blink, so they had to.**

- Legal decisions and negotiations with management need to be **backed up with industrial action**. Arwyn and Eamonn both won their employment tribunals, but the legal decision alone would not have won reinstatement for either. When LU finally talked to the union about reinstatement, it was only because the threat of strikes loomed.

There are a few strings to the settlement. A 100% win would have been better, but in the current circumstances, this is a big win. It proves that, even in difficult times, victories are still possible if we use the right tactics and stick to our guns. It is a much-needed morale boost, and provides an excellent example, which will take us forward for future battles.

Tubeworker's weblog - daily updates -
www.workersliberty.org /twblog ...
We're on Facebook too.
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SUPPORT JUNE 30 STRIKES!

The Government is facing the biggest outbreak of industrial action since it came to power, as civil servants join teachers in striking for 24 hours on 30 June in defence of pay, pensions and jobs. 750,000 workers will walk out, with civil servants then holding a month-long overtime ban. The action could spread later in the year to other parts of the public sector, including councils and the NHS, creating an 'autumn of discontent' involving 1.5m+ workers.

Members of the Public and Commercial Services (PCS) union voted 61.1% for strikes, 83.6% for other forms of action, in a turnout of 32.4%. PCS leader Mark Serwotka said: 'The Government admits that money cut from pensions will go straight to the Treasury to help pay off the deficit in what is nothing more than a tax on working in the public sector.'

More than 300,000 teachers in unions NUT and ATL were balloted in total. The ATL has never taken national strike action in its 127-year history. The teaching unions say the Government's proposed pension changes will see them work longer, pay in more and receive less when they retire.

University lecturers will also strike on June 30, while direct action group UK Uncut said it will stage protests on the same day to coincide with the strike.

Transport unions have our own problems with pay, pensions, job cuts, draconian disciplinary policies and the McNulty Report. There has been vocal support for striking from both union leaders and members, but - our recent fight against victimisations aside - thus far no mention of going out. We should pursue effective strategies to win each dispute, but we should also look for opportunities to co-ordinate with other unions, and with strikes by our own unions in other companies.

All of us should show solidarity to the biggest public sector strike since the 70s. Try to make some of the rallies or marches if possible, and defend your right to strike and to stand up for your rights.

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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. Only our bosses benefit from a divided workforce.

Since February, station staff have been living with the impact of the OSP job cuts: anti-social rosters and staff shortages. Staff are also learning to live with new attacks, such as enhanced AFM functionality, as the unions have not given any lead so far on how we should resist them.

The huge fight last year was not successful in defending staffing levels. The unions have gone quiet, with TSSA saying little and RMT's Executive voting down a set of proposals from a reps' meeting. But the last thing we should do is give up the fight, when management are planning future cutbacks. The dispute may be over but the war still goes on. We should look to start a new dispute with LU, fighting attacks like enhanced AFM functionality and line working. Why make it easy for them to implement future cuts? In the meantime, we need a campaign of guerrilla warfare against the impact of the staffing cuts.

PAY: DON'T DIVIDE THE GRADES

LU may be trying to give a better deal to drivers than to other grades, and to start separate talks for drivers. This will damage us all in the long term.

One possibility is more pay for bank holidays. This would be welcome (consolidated rises would be better), but there is no reason for one grade to get it but not others. Having to work on a bank holiday is as anti-social for station staff, service control or anyone else as it is for drivers.

LU still wants a 5-year offer, hoping we will accept it as each year is a bit above RPI. Remember that circumstances change, and that RPI often does not accurately reflect the real rise in our living costs. If we sign up to a 5-year deal, every demand for better conditions that is not met this year (eg. shorter working hours, better family-friendly policies) is shelved for half a decade. Five years is far too long.

In many mainline rail companies, there are as many as five separate pay talks for different grades. Employers offer less to those grades with less 'muscle'. Result: the better-paid get a bit better-paid, the lower-paid get held back, inequalities widen.

LU hopes drivers will like this, as it assumes that drivers don't give a toss about other grades. But the benefits even to drivers are marginal and short-term. Any cash benefit will be outweighed by the attacks on all grades' pay and conditions that LU will be able to push through once they have divided us from each other.

Sadly, LU may find an ally in this project in the ASLEF leadership. The Society's members should insist that it acts in a more principled way. Unions should unite workers to force more out of management, not collaborate with them to divide and disadvantage other workers. RMT, TSSA and Unite have worked together in the pay talks so far - ASLEF should join this united front, not hold hands with LU. That way, we could get a better deal for all grades.

DEFEND TUNDE AMANAH

LU has sacked Leytonstone driver Tunde Amanah, after an incident at Woodford where a DTSM deliberately obstructed the doors of Tunde's train.

His workmates are furious at Tunde's sacking, while the DTSM has apparently gone unpunished. Unless Tunde is reinstated, we can expect action ...

www.workersliberty.org/central

GREEN MEANZ CUTS

LU is sending Station Supervisors on workshops to explain that SIS scores determine how much government funding LU receives. It's the ultimate bribe: get green scorecards and your job is safe.

The biggest threat to green scorecards is staff cuts. But staff and funding cuts will continue if green scorecards falsely suggest we have enough staff to do the job. We should not have to jump through silly hoops to get public transport the cash that it needs.

www.workersliberty.org/perform-manage

A FIVER FOR A ROUNDER?!

Management's latest plan: to offer small sums to induce drivers to work over their time during the Olympics. An extra 30 minutes will be £10, an extra 15 minutes, £5.

We should demand real compensation, and alternatives such as extra leave. A lot of us would like extra time off work, especially if money offers are not tempting.

www.workersliberty.org/victoria

JUSTICE FOR CLARA

Cleaners' rep Clara Osagiede has beaten back Initial Cleaning Services' attempt to victimise her. Clara stood up to management when cleaners were removing graffiti from trains without the right equipment or training. A few days later, she was suspended.

Management have suspended her disciplinary until her grievances are heard. Without representation and a protest outside, Initial would no doubt have pressed ahead in sacking her. We need to keep up the pressure to make sure Initial do not go on to discipline her.

www.workersliberty.org/tubecleaners

WORKING BLIND

Management are introducing a new 'surplus and loss' procedure for the ticket office: ten minor discrepancies and you face a warning. A discrepancy of £50+ will be automatically 'gross misconduct'. With the huge sums ticket sellers handle each day, a £50 error is easily done.

Is this just another way of getting rid of 'excess' SAMFs? We should resist this. Maybe we should insist on our right to count the money in our till to protect ourselves from punishment?

www.workersliberty.org/ticketoffices

VIC LINE: GOOD SERVICE?

Vic Line managers keep telling drivers to over-ride the sensitive edge door kit on the new trains. It is causing delays and is one reason that Vic Line performance has plummeted since the new stock.

Management say that drivers no longer need to visually check what is stuck in the door, and can check from their cab. What about safety?!

Vic Line RMT drivers have voted for action short of a strike to cover them if they want to disregard management's instruction to over-ride in order to do the full checks. This has forced management to talk to reps about the new stock, after refusing for months.

No doubt they will keep pressuring drivers to carry on with the status quo as if nothing is wrong. Vic Line drivers, stick to your guns!

www.workersliberty.org/victoria

24-HOUR OLYMPICS?

On the nights of the opening and closing ceremonies, LU wants to run trains until 0430, but denies this is a 24-hour service! They can't expect us to believe that a 30-minute gap between 0430 and 0500 means anything other than trains round the clock.

We have to be on the alert for LU's attempt to make us do extra without reward. LU will also try to use the Olympics to implement new, casualised ways of working as a precedent for the future. We should not be tempted to sell our hard-won conditions of employment, even for a substantial bribe.

www.workersliberty.org/olympics

Ideas For Freedom

a weekend of talks and discussions - Friday 8 - Sunday 10 July - Highgate Newtown Community Centre, Archway
 Sessions include: 20 years of Tubeworker - Sergei Eisenstein's film 'Strike' - introduction to Marxism - eye-witness report from Benghazi, Libya - Marxism or anarchism? - 'Chavs': the demonisation of the working class - antisemitism - the working class in the North African and Middle Eastern revolutions - 100 years since the 'Great Unrest' - race, class and sexuality on film - General Strike? - feminism - multiculturalism - 'New Unionism' - the US civil war - the Eurozone crisis - fighting Council cuts - an alternative history of the Second World War
 Exhibitions, cheap food and drinks, free creche
 Tickets: £20 www.workersliberty.org/ideas