



tubeworker

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TAKE ON THE TORIES!

Defend the right to strike

The Tories were just elected into government by just 24% of the electorate (36% of those who voted), yet they want to change the law so over 50% of us have to vote yes before a strike can be considered legal.

The employers' fear of strikes is the main reason we have the pay, holidays, pension and other benefits that have made LU jobs into decent working-class jobs.

This is a serious threat: it is important that we defend ourselves against it and refuse to be cowed by it.

A good start would be for all the Tube unions to engage us in preparing a strategy - one that does *not* include shying away from strikes for fear of provoking the Tories.

Fight low pay

Cameron kept boasting that 2 million jobs had been created under the last government. But most of these were bogus self-employed, zero-hours or minimum-waged jobs.

The Tories have used the economic crisis to engineer a low-wage economy to maximise companies' profits.

LU already plans a lower stations starting salary. It is already increasing our workloads and responsibilities for no extra pay (cutting the 'rate for the job' for all grades on stations).

Contractors like Cleshar, Interserve, and Sodexo will also be emboldened to drive down wages.

We need our unions to turn outwards and organise the unorganised with more



determination and resources. Success will require belligerent struggle, backed by all grades on LU.

Restore funding to LU

Every LU function and grade will feel the effect of the £4.2bn funding cuts.

The consequences if you work for a company contracted by LU could be truly damaging. LU will award contracts to the lowest bidder to save money. This will mean job cuts.

The only way to stop TfL's funding being slashed will be to fight with renewed vigour for well funded publicly-owned transport in London. That fight will be most effective if we battle both industrially and politically.

Fight divide-and-rule and racism with solidarity

With UKIP gaining over 12% of the vote, and the Tories promising a referendum on EU membership, we can expect months of racism in the press, directing anger at migrants rather than those responsible for social problems.

This climate will intensify the racism that our workmates from Bulgaria, Romania and other countries are already facing.

As well as migrants, we can expect tirades against benefit claimants, disabled people, young people, and other groups - all in an attempt to get working-class people to direct our anger against other working-class people. Don't fall for it!

We may well find ourselves the target of this too - when we have to defend our final-salary pension, we will be told that that we are greedy, that this is a privilege that we should be stripped of because others are even worse off.

We need to use every opportunity to explain the cause of social ills: a capitalist system, backed by a government that serves to benefit the rich. We need to challenge racism and other prejudices with solidarity.

Make our unions fit to fight

In the face of all this, how can our unions become more effective?

First off, it would be better if we were all in one union - and while we remain in different ones, that they work together to organise action.

Beyond this, unions will be more successful in defending us if they are outgoing and imaginative, and welcome new members and encourage them to get involved - and most importantly, if they refused to be overwhelmed by the threat from the Tories and lead a determined, well-thought-through, rank-and-file-led resistance.

JOBS, PAY, NIGHT TUBE:

PREPARE TO STRIKE!

RMT and ASLEF have now declared their intention to ballot members over LU's insulting offer on pay and Night Tube.

TSSA have also declared a dispute, although have not yet said if they will ballot. RMT has also announced it will re-ballot station grades members for further action against job cuts, after revised figures from the

company revealed that the level of job cuts will only be reduced by 59 posts.

The possibility of joint action over pay and Night Tube is

positive. Having declared their intentions, the unions should now move as quickly as possible to get the ballots underway and put pressure on the company. Unions should ballot for action short of strikes to allow for other industrial action to keep the dispute going between strike days.

The campaign needs clear demands; the RMT's pay claim demanded a substantial pay award, particularly for the lowest-paid, staff travel passes for outsourced workers, and a four-day week for all grades. Those demands should be foregrounded in the campaign, and we shouldn't let LU divide us by trying to buy off certain grades with better offers.

It's also positive that RMT is finally reinstating action against job cuts, although *Tubeworker* is disappointed that the new ballot

will be stations-only. Having well-staffed stations is in every LU worker's interests, and the job cuts on stations are a consequence of LU's £4.2bn cuts, the effects of which are already being felt by other grades.

The fight against job cuts must be fought through to the finish on its own terms, and not submerged into a wider dispute around pay.

Unions need to flood workplaces with propaganda to build the ballots, and give reps, activists, and branches a proper say in the types of action we call.

Strikes need to be sustained enough to have a real impact on the company, and workers who can't afford to take sustained action (such as part-time staff) should be supported with union hardship funds.

Will Strike



If Provoked

CLEANERS' COLUMN

ISS IS WATCHING YOU

ISS RMT cleaners' reps and RMT officers are having further talks about biometric booking on.

ISS wants cleaners to touch in and out of every station they travel to during their shift. RMT opposes the whole biometric system, but while it operates insists that cleaners should only have to touch in and out at the start and end of shifts.

Forcing cleaners to constantly check into the system is a way to spy on staff.

BOOKED OFF WITHOUT PAY

When weekend engineering works close stations or lines, some cleaners who work for agencies are being sent home without pay, as they don't have guaranteed hours.

It particularly affects the train litter pickers who work at the terminus stations.

Cleaning companies and LU have obviously spied line closures as a way of saving a few quid from the lowest paid people on LU.

Cleaners need guaranteed hours. Unions need to keep up the pressure to end sub-contracting to agencies. In the meantime, LU should find alternative work for cleaners during engineering works.

There are plenty of stations where cleaners could do with a hand at weekends!

NEW CARDS, SAME DISCRIMINATION

Tubeworker has previously reported how the tests for the new "Sentinel" cards, the equivalent of LUCAS cards, discriminate against cleaners.

They require internet access, which many cleaners don't have, and as they need to be partially completed remotely, disadvantage those who have English as a second language and could seek additional support with a workplace-based test.

Cleaners who have completed the test for the new cards also report delays in receiving them - yet more evidence of cleaners being treated as second-class citizens.

REINSTATE CLARA

Cleaners' rep and organiser Clara Osagiede has been sacked by Interserve on trumped up charges, all relating to her union activity.

RMT is already in dispute with Interserve over short- or non-payment of wages, management bullying, and victimisation of reps.

We cannot tolerate this shameless attack on a prominent union activist. Reinstate Clara!

DLR INTERSERVE CLEANERS: STRIKE FOR PAY JUSTICE!

DLR cleaners are due to strike from 27-29 May in their fight for pay justice.

Tubeworker urges all DLR Interserve staff to join the strike, and all workers to support them.

Solidarity!



FIXED-TERM CONTRACT CSAs: FIGHT FOR YOUR FUTURE!

The future is uncertain for fixed-term contract CSAs, and there's some caution about getting involved in unions, and participating in potential strikes.

Tubeworker reminds all fixed-term CSAs that they have the same legal rights as permanent staff to join unions and participate in industrial action.

But it's not simply a legal question. It comes down to this: joining the union and getting involved in the fight against job cuts and casualisation won't guarantee you a secure job, and yes, it's not without its risks.

But the alternative - doing nothing, keeping your head down, and relying on the benevolence of the company to see you through - is unthinkable.

As the old saying goes - if you fight, you might not win. But if you don't fight, you'll surely lose.

CUTS MEAN DELAYS

There was an unnecessarily long delay on the Jubilee Line a couple of weeks back, as staff shortages meant a smouldering on the track couldn't be dealt with quickly.

The nearest station had no supervisor and so one needed to travel down from elsewhere. What would have happened had there been another incident elsewhere at the same time? How much did this staff shortage cost in terms of the service delay?

If LU carries out its plans to cut more than 800 frontline jobs, safety standards will drop and such incidents will become more common.

Unions need to keep up the fight against these cuts, and publicise incidents such as these to remind workers and passengers what these Tory "cost cutting" measures really mean.



TUBE SNOT SYNDROME

With 24-hour running on its way (meaning more trains), and with staff (including cleaners) spending more time on platforms, *Tubeworker* is worried about the effects dust inhalation could be having on our health.

We've all experienced Tube Snot Syndrome: blowing our noses and seeing black muck come out. It's simply not good for us to be down there breathing that in for sustained periods of time.

What if LU had spent the £134 million it wasted on the ticket office closure programme on infrastructure to improve staff and passenger health and safety - like more and better tunnel fans to clear the dust, reintroducing tunnel cleaning trains, and employing more staff so time on platforms could be better shared out?

Once again, profits come first, our welfare comes second.

DUTY OF CARE?

Tubeworker HQ recently received a report of a particularly shocking demonstration of the company's lack of concern for its staff.

A worker who had a heart attack hasn't heard from his manager once; not even an "are you alright?" email!

Moreover, the worker's doctor told them they'd seen several similar heart cases down

the years. The common feature in all of them? Shift working, and particularly working nights.

This shows why it's so important that our unions fight for a shorter working week and extra time as part of the Night Tube settlement, to ensure our work-life balance and health is protected.

Cuts to the LUOH counselling department also mean that vital support services we need to get over trauma at work are being diminished.

Tubeworker sometimes wonders whether our bosses care about us at all?!

NIGHT TUBE HAZARDS

Has LU considered the safety implications of having escalators running 24 hours, with their motors potentially overheating?

Has it considered whether it's really adequate to block off adjacent platforms, where one line runs "Night Tube" and one doesn't, merely with mesh gates?

Has it considered whether there are adequate places of safety for staff dealing with drunk passengers?

Tubeworker knows union safety reps have been putting these questions to management in talks. It doesn't sound like they've been getting very adequate, or indeed any, answers.

ON THE PULSE

3,000 people took part in the new TfL staff satisfaction survey, "Viewpoint Pulse".

Unsurprisingly, only 32% of us thought "senior managers are open and honest in their communications with me", and only 26% thought "change is managed well where I work". Sounds about right! It seems we're not too keen on "change" that amounts to job and pensions cuts.

Time to take action to show how unhappy we are!



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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