



tubeworker

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AFTER THE SCOTTISH VOTE: FOR WORKERS' UNITY AND A DEMOCRATIC FEDERAL REPUBLIC!

The Scottish people voted 55%-45% to remain within the current United Kingdom. Workers' Liberty, the socialist group which produces *Tubeworker*, was against separation, because we believe that, in most cases, where a border doesn't exist it's a step backwards to set one up.

The key struggle in Britain is on the basis of class. A working-class person from London has more in common with a working-class person from Glasgow than either do with the rich who happen to share their nationality, and an independent Scotland, run by capitalists in Edinburgh rather than capitalist in London, would still have been a state based on exploitation, neo-liberalism, and cuts.

But the current UK union is an undemocratic set up. The UK has a monarchy, an unelected second chamber, national parliaments only once every five years, and local governments without real power. In the growing debate about constitutional structure, Workers' Liberty will argue for a democratic federal republic, with annual parliaments, no Royal Family, no House of Lords, and real powers for local government. A "federal" republic means that local units can have autonomy while still remaining part of a united set-up.

After the Scottish referendum, trade unionists and socialists across Britain should fight for a common class perspective and joint struggles against cuts - whether they're driven from Holyrood or Westminster - that can unite us across national, and other, differences.

BUILD THE BAN. PREPARE TO STRIKE!

The RMT began an overtime ban on stations on 24 September, restarting industrial action in our fight against staffing cuts and ticket office closures. This is a good start, as an effective overtime ban will see stations close, but we need to step things up to regain momentum.



With axeman-in-chief Phil Hufton resigning, and Labour GLA members finally waking up to the reality of staffing cuts and making a fuss in the Assembly, the unions should go on the offensive. Reps and activists need to get out into workplaces to build the ban, and build up people's confidence for further action.

There is support for this. The decision of the General Grades Committee (the RMT body that decides on strikes) explicitly talked about strikes on 14-15 October. The London Transport Regional Council of the RMT has already got policy in favour of striking alongside public sector workers on 14 October.

Tubeworker believes we should strike for two or more days on and around 14 October (strikes for 48 hours or more will pack a bigger punch than shorter ones), using the unions' disputes and hardship funds to support members (particularly part-timers) who might feel the pinch from taking sustained action, and plan further action beyond this.

We don't think for a second that the cuts were all Hufton's idea, with other LU managers dragged along unwillingly behind him, and that now he's gone the cuts plan will disintegrate. But the departure of the person brought in specifically to implement the cuts before they've actually been implemented does weaken management's project.

With the Hands Off London

Transport campaign restarting leafleting, petitioning, and other actions outside stations to raise the political profile of the issue of Tube cuts, we should push on with more action on the industrial front.

Night Tube?

Management say they plan to introduce all-night running by 2015. We're not opposed to the Night Tube, but management are trying to bulldoze it through without proper consultation with unions.

24-hour running requires more staff, not fewer. The only way to guarantee a safe Night Tube is to stop slashing jobs!

Cash wins RMT GS election: grassroots must organise!

Mick Cash has won the RMT General Secretary election by a significant margin.

John Leach, the candidate *Tubeworker* supported, finished fourth, with just over 1,400 votes. The turnout in the election was very low, which suggests that union reps and activists have a lot of work to do in order to build up participation in the union.

Cash is a moderate, with a more cautious attitude to industrial strategy than Bob Crow. If his leadership means the union now looks for conciliatory deals with management rather than taking action to win concessions for our members, that'll be a step backwards.

Grassroots RMT members will need to organise to create a counter-pressure on the union leaders.

Bulletins like *Tubeworker* aim to be part of that independent grassroots organisation.

ISS CLEANERS VOTE TO STRIKE: UNION MUST BACK THEM!

ONE FOR ALL, ALL FOR ONE

ISS cleaners have voted by a huge 92% majority in favour of striking, and taking action short of strikes, in their dispute against biometric fingerprinting machines. As yet, the RMT's leadership has not named any action.

Some ISS cleaners have now been locked out for three months for participating in a union action (refusing to use the biometric machines). They have had to fight to win decent strike pay from the union during that period. Now some senior union leaders are saying there's no more money to fund the cleaners' fight.

This is not good enough. Cleaners are amongst the most vulnerable workers on London Underground; RMT prides itself on being an all-grades, industrial union. It needs

to fight as hard for cleaners as it does for any other grade. A union's fundamental purpose is to enable to fight back against their employers. If that means paying strike pay, then that's what should happen.

RMT should activate the strike ballot by calling action-short-of-strikes, then following it up with strikes around 14 October, when we hope London Underground workers may also strike again in their jobs dispute.



The union also needs to make firm commitments on protecting workers

from sacking and victimisation. If ISS goes after cleaners who've participated in union action, the union needs to back them up, including with funding for tribunals if it comes to that.

If the ISS cleaners' dispute is allowed to go out with a whimper, it will severely damage the confidence of cleaners, and other workers, in the union's ability to fight. They will see it as an "I'm alright, Jack" attitude. Remember: if ISS introduces biometrics for cleaners, other grades are next.

With a new General Secretary now in post, it's a new era for the RMT. It would be a poor start if that era began with letting down union members at ISS.

PAID TOO MUCH?

LU must hope that SCRA's, SAMFs, and Supervisors will not grumble about threatened £6 to £8k thousand pay cuts, knowing that, since 2010, workers have experienced the longest sustained drop in real wages for a generation.

Low pay has become the norm: low-paid jobs account for 80% of the jobs created since 2010. LU seems to have seized this period of unprecedented low pay as an opportunity to slash ours.

It might hope we feel guilty because, unlike minimum wage earners, or workers in local government, schools and hospitals, we've won inflation-proof pay rises in recent years. It might hope that we'll accept less so we can be closer in earnings to the 20% of Londoners on less than the living wage.

But sacrificing our wages won't increase pay for the majority of workers: we need strikes, demonstrations and a new drive to organise low-paid workers into unions. The NHS, local government, and civil service workers' strikes on 13-15 October, and the 18 October "Britain Needs A Pay Rise" demo, can be part of that.

We need to remember where the gap between high and low pay is really located: between working class people, including ourselves, and the rich. On average, the top 10 per cent richest Londoners are 273 times wealthier than the bottom 10 per cent. London is one of the most unequal cities in the world and inequality is rising. But our wages are not to blame. Our riches are not so vast that we should accept LU's planned pay cuts to even out pay inequality.

We are part of the solution, not part of the problem: we want well-paid LU jobs for low paid workers to apply for; we want our wages to challenge the low-paying norm and close the widening gap between rich and poor.

We want well-paid jobs for every worker!

SUPPORT THE PUBLIC SECTOR PAY STRIKES ON 13, 14, AND 15 OCTOBER!

JOIN THE TUC'S "BRITAIN NEEDS A PAY RISE" MARCH ON 18 OCTOBER!

CENTRAL LINE DRIVERS' DISPUTE

Central Line management are still not taking unions' concerns seriously.

That's probably partly because, despite RMT now having a ballot for strike action, ASLEF suspended its planned September strikes.

Local management are out of control. Relations have got so bad that union reps at Hainault have said that they are unable to communicate with local management.

The ASLEF strike in August was effective, but LU needs to know drivers will strike again unless management's attitude improves.

ASLEF needs to be clear to LU, and its own members, that it will not wriggle out of this campaign. With RMT now joining in, there is a chance that joint strikes could budge management.

RMT and ASLEF need to name strike dates together.

FALLING ROCKS

We reported just a few weeks back about lumps of concrete falling onto tracks and endangering life and limb. That time, it was on the Central Line, this time it's the Met/H&C.

The falling rock fouled the juice rails and the running rails. The alertness of a track workers that prevented a disastrous derailment.

King's Cross, Euston, and even Bank had to close due to the incident.

There is good reason to believe that the dodgy concrete is a hangover from the PPP days, made worse by ongoing contracting-out.

This incident allows illustrates the folly of even considering cutting staffing levels - whether on the track, on the stations, or elsewhere.

FAREWELL PHIL

Farewell, Mr. Hufton. You weren't here very long, but you managed to announce the closure of all ticket offices and loads of job cuts before jumping ship and boarding HMS Network Rail.

We're sure it was tough, but equally sure that you were handsomely rewarded for your efforts, and will continue to be so in your new post.

So, what do you leave us with? A dog's breakfast of a "Fit for the Future" policy that everyone knows will widen inequalities, drive out and demoralise loyal staff, and really piss off many of our valued customers.

The management (and the Mayor) whom Phil has left behind to deal with the mess may reflect that it is time for Fit for the Future to depart too.

FARES FREEZE

BoJo and TfL's spin machine announces that fares will be "frozen", but goes on to define this as "on average going up by the rates of inflation".

As many people's wages don't increase in line with inflation, that's not a freeze.

London Underground is already one of the most expensive metro systems in the world, and the rises will again hit passengers hard - which will mean more grief for us.

Unions should demand an increase in public funding for the Tube to reduce fares, and increase staffing levels.

DIRTY DRAIN

You could be taking a big risk if you take a swig of water in the Waterloo & City line depot.

The site used to be a chemical plant, and it seems that some of the chemicals might have, erm, lingered. In a recent test of the water, it tested positive for nine out of 15 pollutants!

Yuk. No wonder it's known as "The Drain". It doesn't sound safe to work from to us.

CARD CLASH

Have the incessant "card clash" announcements even been that helpful for passengers?

What about people who can't hear well, wear headphones, or just tune out?

Besides, the language of the PA script is actually LU jargon rather than plain English.

Unless you're fluent in the lingo of "card clash" and "contactless", it's likely to go over your head.

REINSTATE NOEL AND ALEX!

Noel Roberts has been "medically terminated" despite everyone from his GSM to his GP to LUOH agreeing that he's fit for work.

After some time off, Noel has been back at work for 10 months and hasn't missed a single day. Management have stitched Noel up in order to get rid of him. Read more about his case here.

Meanwhile, Northern Line driver Alex McGuigan has been sacked after 29 years' service. Alex failed a breathalyser test, but the company is refusing to take into account circumstances like Alex's diabetes, which could give false positives. They also flouted standard procedure by only testing a urine sample for drugs, rather than alcohol, and then destroying a second sample. There's more info on Alex's case here. Alex's fellow Northern Line drivers are rightly discussing balloting for strikes to demand his reinstatement.

If LU are allowed to get away with flouting their own procedures to summarily sack workers of nearly 30 years' standing, none of us are safe. If they're allowed to medically terminate staff despite them being declared fit for duty by LU's own OH department, none of us are safe.

Support Noel and Alex, demand reinstatement!

EAMONN LYNCH FOR RMT EXECUTIVE!

Branch nominations close 5 November. Members' ballot closes 12 December.

Eamonn Lynch stands for effective militancy and solidarity.

Get your RMT branch to nominate him, and vote for him when the members' ballot opens!

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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