WHY WE NEED A FIGHTING FUND

Tubeworke is pleased that several RMT branches are supporting a move to set up a fighting fund. This is intended to “provide relief to members suffering financial hardship from industrial action”. We urge all union branches to get behind it.

In an era when LU and other rail employers, bankrolled by the government, seem determined to stick their heels in until we can’t afford to keep striking, this kind of initiative is essential if we’re going to keep taking strike action until we win.

Tubeworke also supports RMT’s decision to agree to look into paying disputes payments to members should further strikes be called.

Some argue that “striking is all about sacrifice” and “we don’t pay people to go on strike”. But striking should be all about winning: we should do whatever it takes to win. Strike funds are in fact a fundamental part of labour movement tradition. When trade unions became mass organisations in the 1880s, recruiting previously unorganised workers, their central slogan was: “no benefit but strike benefit”. Unions focused all their resources on helping workers take the action they needed to win.

Tubeworke is pleased that this tradition is reviving. Let’s start raising money now!

HOW THE CUTS WILL HURT DIVERSITY

LU makes much of its reputation as an employer which promotes “diversity” and “equality”. But its real record is poor, and “Fit for the Future – Stations” job cuts look set to undo any advances made during the last decade. Cuts will adversely affect every stations worker. But workers already facing inequality, such as women, black and ethnic minority, and disabled workers, will face particular negative consequences. Cuts will damage LU’s diversity.

WHAT WE FACE NOW

Women workers

London’s population is over 50% female, but on LU, we’re only 16%! LU fails to accommodate shift work around childcare, which women still predominantly do. Unlike our shifts, childcare is not available 24/7. There are much higher proportions of women in part-time jobs; this shows a higher representation of women is possible where shifts fit round childcare, although forcing women to take a pay cut to part-time increases pay inequality.

Black and Ethnic Minority (BEM) workers

• 40+% BEM Londoners, only 29.4% BEM staff.
• Over the past three years, there has been a decrease in the proportion of BEM staff across TfL.
• 44.2% BEM applicants in 2012/13, but only 28.9% appointed in 2012/13.

Disabled workers

Low numbers of disabled staff due to:
• The abolition of positions for medically-restricted staff in the past.
• The “redeployment” process, which too often pushes staff with long term medical problems out of employment.
• Job cuts. LU’s last major reorganisation, the OSP in 2010, reduced the percentage of disabled staff in LU. Job cuts lead to less diversity.
• The percentage of disabled staff achieving promotion has been lower than the percentage of disabled staff employed by LU over the last three years, indicating it is harder for disabled staff to get promoted.

CUTS MAKING THINGS WORSE

LU’s plans:
• Abolish approx. 80% of part time jobs, which women predominantly occupy.
• Abolish the grade with the highest female representation, ticket seller (28% women).
• Will force huge displacements, which will impact on people with caring responsibilities.
• Introduce less family-friendly rosters with fewer weekends off and night work for more grades.

LU’s plans:
• Abolish the stations grade with the highest concentration of BEM workers (SAMF).
• Reduce jobs and therefore promotion opportunities. LU’s figures for recent promotion of BEM candidates do not inspire us with hope.

LU’s plans:
• Abolish many “seated roles”, such as ticket seller and replace them with supervisor jobs requiring greater mobility.
• LU refuses to guarantee that staff with medical restrictions or reasonable adjustments will be accommodated if they cannot meet the requirements of their new role.
• LU has said it will pay “voluntary severance” to staff it will not accommodate, but how is the “voluntary” if the company is forcing disabled staff out of the door.

What is Tubeworke?

Tubeworke 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.

Email us at: tubeworke@workersliberty.org

Follow us on Twitter: @Tube_Worker

Hands off London Transport Day of Action

FRIDAY 13 JUNE

Leafleting and other actions at local stations including Walthamstow, Brixton, and King’s Cross.

More: handsofflondontransport.wordpress.com

VOTE JOHN LEACH FOR RMT GS

UNITY, EQUALITY, LEADING THE FIGHT
NOT A ONE UNDER?
LU has changed its “customer facing language” (for PA announcements, etc.) guidelines: “we currently use ‘person under a train’, and instead we will be using ‘person on the track’.”
We are effectively being told to lie to customers.
“Person on the track” means something radically different to “person under a train”. It also implies the situation will be resolved quickly. When it isn’t, we will get it in the neck with more abuse from customers!
LU is once again showing more concern for image than accurate information for passengers or protection for staff.

FACING JAIL FOR PICKETING
RMT rep Mark Harding faces charges over allegations relating to picketing during the February strikes. He appeared in court on 23 May, and will find out the verdict on 2 June.
We picket to make strike action effective; we have the right to ask people to respect our picket lines and build support for our action. This is picketing; it is not “intimidation” or “harassment”.
We need to keep defending Mark, and step up our action to repeal the anti-trade union laws under which Mark is being charged.

TWO TRAINS COLLIDE
On 1 May, between East Putney and Southfields, two District Line S stock trains collided — or, in management-speak, “came into slight contact”. The cause? Tracks in the area had moved. Again in management-speak, this was a “slight movement”, but if it was enough to cause two trains to hit each other, it is very very serious.
You may wonder how an incident like this would have played out if there had been no drivers on the trains...

UNATTENDED TRAIN
LU has formally invited companies to bid for the contract to “design, manufacture, test and commission” new Tube trains.
LU has specified that it wants companies with experience of delivering unattended train operation (UTO), i.e. not just no driver in the cab, but no crew on the train at all!
RMT is already in dispute over driverless trains and is launching a “train drivers’ charter” to recruit and campaign. ASLEF needs to wake up. If you’re in ASLEF, ask your union what it’s doing to safeguard your job.

MARKET RESEARCH
LU has paid a market research agency to say exactly what it wanted to hear from customers about the new LU uniform: feedback contained all LU’s jargon about making staff more “identifiable”, etc.
We have said we don’t want bright uniforms with huge logos. But LU will listen to market research companies rather than its own workers.
Strange how LU can find the money for “Person on the track” means something radically different to “person under a train”, and instead we will be using ‘person on the track’.”

TFL STAFF FIGHT PAY FREEZE
RMT, TSSA and Unite workers struck on 9 May.
Strikes closed Liverpool Street and Piccadilly Circus and other Travel Information Centres; this shows the power of joint action between unions.
We’re fighting cuts to pay and pensions. Instead of a pay rise, which augments our pay year on year, TfL wants us to take one-off lump sum payments.
Cuts in central government funding to TfL are behind our fight and the LU jobs dispute. We need more, united action, as well as joint political campaigning through Hands Off London Transport.

PAY-AS-YOU-GO SUPERVISORS?
LU is training apprentices to supervisor level, but giving them CSA jobs at the end of it.
This short-changes apprentices. But, worse, LU is using qualified apprentices as “pay-as-you-go” supervisors. They’re CSAs for most of the time, but supervisors on Higher Grade Working when it suits LU.
Similarly, those training for supervisor’s licensing opportunity will be used as cover, while current supervisors train for the roles LU wants us to do after it has made cuts. No promotion, just the chance of Higher Grade Working at LU’s whim. What a cheek!

UNSANE UNIFORM
Assaults on ISS cleaners are up 100% since the yellow Olympic uniform was introduced. ISS has agreed to replace it with a blue uniform. But ISS says it needs Tube Lines’ permission first. Why?
We thought we worked for ISS!

PIECENYEAL PRIVATISATION
LU used to get revenue inspectors to go out onto trains asking to see tickets in order to compile statistics on LU revenue lost due to unpaid fares.
Now LU has contracted out this element of a revenue inspector’s duties to a private company. Its workers wear a hi-vi emblazoned with “in partnership with TfL” on it.
Strange how LU can find the money for this uniform, while it’s cutting...