



tubeworker

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STRIKES FORCE CONCESSIONS: KEEP UP THE PRESSURE TO WIN MORE!

The RMT has suspended its planned three-day strike after the union reached a settlement with London Underground management.

The settlement commits management to actually carrying out the station-by-station review first promised after the February strikes, sets out a timescale for this (by 23 May), and establishes a framework for proper trade union input. The settlement also commits managements to discussions to “ensure” that workers who previously faced pay cuts will be reallocated to a role of at least equivalent salary. LU has also committed to pause the implementation of cuts while the review takes place.

Of course, this deal is not perfect. But it is an advance on the position before last week's strike, and does buy us some time to try and step up our organisation and press for more concessions.

Management promised a station-by-station review after our first, very solid,

strike in February. But, once the pressure had eased off, they were allowed to backtrack on this. They can't be let off the hook again. Whether the review leads to any ticket offices staying open will depend on mobilisation over the next few weeks rather than on the exact wording of this deal. The wording from February — that it may lead to some ticket offices staying open — has not been revoked and remains on the company's intranet. Some local community uproar in defence of their local ticket office would be really useful. The Hands Off London Transport campaign coalition will be crucial to organising that. If RMT can use its political links to push for a public consultation on ticket office closures and job cuts, that will put LU under huge pressure.



The definitive commitment to ensure no worker loses pay is a step forward. Management had previously spoken unofficially about this, or about extending the three-year protection of earnings to more staff, for longer, but this is a more concrete commitment. While it does not address the central problems of the overall reduction in staffing levels and ticket office closures, it does mean that staff who, prior to the strikes, were staring down the wrong end of a £6,000 to £12,000 pay cut are no longer doing so.

Management, and TSSA, might say that this would have happened anyway, and that it was down to negotiations, not strikes.

But without the strikes, and the threat of further strikes, management would have been under no pressure whatsoever in the negotiations themselves. We know they have a far-reaching austerity project: if they could have gotten away with it, of course they would have slashed pay. Our strikes stopped them; that should encourage us.

But the struggle is far from over.

THE NEXT STEPS

- Keep up the fight — don't drop the ball; the strike being suspended does not mean that the dispute is over
- Name action now to start after the end of this review so that management know we expect it to deliver results and so that members are prepared for action industrial action should consist of strikes, and also action short of strikes, with each grade/function/area taking action that its members believe will be most effective (eg. overtime ban on stations, work-to-rule on fleet, etc.)
- Relaunch the existing strike committee as a democratic body with delegates from all grades and branches
- Serious fundraising can build a substantial fighting fund to help members facing hardship from industrial action
- Mobilising public opposition to the cuts can make the difference and help us win — hold a major central rally, set up HOLT groups in every area and for every line, organise mass leafleting, protests, target politicians, etc.
- More effective political campaigning, with more rank-and-file input and accountability: RMT members should be able to use their union's Parliamentary Group and supporters on the GLA to ramp up political pressure on Boris Johnson and the Tories, by demanding a public consultation on ticket office closures and staffing cuts, as well as organising lobbies, demos, motions in Parliament and the GLA, and other initiatives.

JOHN LEACH FOR RMT GENERAL SECRETARY

Tubeworker is backing John Leach for RMT General Secretary. Check out his campaign page at facebook.com/johnforgs

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. Email us at tubeworker@workersliberty.org

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CLEANERS' COLUMN

ISS: PREPARE FOR STRIKES!

ISS is now telling workers that the biometric booking on machines will be introduced in August. There's still time to stop their introduction altogether! **RMT agreed to ballot its ISS members for strikes on this issue weeks ago: the union should get on with it!**

WOT NO PAY SLIP?

Cleaning companies Initial and ISS are scrapping printed payslips and moving to online-only systems. ISS initially said the company would print out pay slips on request, but have since backtracked on this and said it's the responsibility of individuals cleaners to print their own slips.

This means that anyone who doesn't have access to the internet, or a printer, is severely disadvantaged. Cleaners have been told to use internet cafes, but that could mean having to enter sensitive details like bank account numbers and home addresses onto less-secure, public computers.

ISS are contracting out the e-payslip operation to private company, Ceridian, creating yet another link in the never-ending chain of outsourcing!

Not having guaranteed access to a printed payslip means it's easier for the companies to make illegal deductions from our wages without us noticing.

Unions should take up this issue as part of the fight for cleaners' rights.

CLEANERS FOR SALE!

Initial, one of the companies to which LU contracts out cleaning work, has been bought by Interserve.

That means cleaning workers have just been traded like any other commodity, and now have a new employer.

Workers are not assets for companies to buy and sell!

Staff employed by contractors will always be vulnerable; LU could end this trading of people's jobs by ending contracting out and bringing all cleaning work, and other sold-off parts of the job, back in house.

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Got a story for *Tubeworker*? We welcome reports and comments from all Tube workers.

Contact us: Workers' Liberty, 20E Tower Workshops,
Riley Road, London SE1 3DG,
tubeworker@workersliberty.org

TfL PENSIONS STRIKE

TSSA, RMT, and Unite members at TfL are striking together on Friday 9 May as part of the ongoing battle against attacks on pensions.

The strike was called by TSSA and Unite, unfortunately without consulting the RMT. The RMT has rightly joined the action.

The division of transport workers between several unions only serves the bosses; we need one, industrial union for all transport workers!

DEFEND MARK HARDING

Mark Harding, the RMT rep victimised and facing legal sanction for alleged misconduct on a lawful picket line, is back in court on 23 May.

Supporters will be meeting at Monument station before heading to court to support Mark.

For more info, see facebook.com/defendmarkharding

JUSTICE FOR PETRIT

Petrít Mihaj, RMT rep at Sodexo (the company which runs many staff canteens) and the activist who led the campaign to recruit 50%+ of the canteen workers to gain RMT recognition in the fight against vile exploitation, has been sacked. It's blatant union busting and victimisation.

RMT will be balloting members in Sodexo canteens for industrial action to win reinstatement for Petrít.

It has also called on LU workers to boycott the canteens every Monday until Petrít is reinstated. If their takings drop, they will learn not to mess with our reps.

RULE BOOK CHANGES HELP JOB CUTS

We all knew that LU couldn't implement station staff cuts without rewriting the LU Rule Book. Changes will come into effect on Monday 28 April.

"The requirement for accessing a station when closed or unstaffed", which has applied to surface stations since the 2007 Rule Book, will be extended to "all stations". This means that engineers, cleaners, and other workers on stations could have to evacuate themselves from an unstaffed subsurface station! As one cleaning worker put it: "I like to know that if the station got broken into overnight, there is an LU supervisor there, watching everything on the camera, who has got my back". Unions have not agreed to this change.

Another change is that "Station supervisors are no longer responsible for checking worksites after the work has finished". The person in charge has sole responsibility. LU operational staff should decide whether the area is safe for the travelling public. It's just another

pretext for cutting jobs.

Unions should start making preparations for engineers, cleaners, and other staff to refuse to work on unstaffed stations.

NEVER WORK ALONE

Tubeworker is alarmed to hear that the number of stations with lone working will go from 73 to 122 if the "Fit for the Future" proposals go through.

Incredibly, LU has denied that this will increase risk of assault, only our "perception" of risk.

The risk of assault is not just in our heads! Staff assaults have risen year on year, with an increase in sexual, racially-motivated, and homophobic assaults increasing in the last two years.

It will get worse when we're carrying an iPad in a "designer-like bag", which LU proposes because the pockets in the new uniform are too small to fit the iPads that management believes will magically replace the function of a ticket office.

LU can't treat our safety with such contempt. The way to reduce vulnerability is to increase, not cut, staffing levels.

MORE REFURBS, MORE CONTRACTING OUT

An item on the LU intranet announces that 70 stations are due to "be modernised and fit for the next decade".

Embankment, Paddington, Earls Court, Charing Cross and South Kensington stations are all included.

The announcement says: "Construction supply chains have become multi-tiered and fragmented, and it could be said that the industry has lost sight of the importance of craft skills in delivering efficiently." And what's behind that fragmentation of construction supply chains, we wonder? Endless layers of contracting-out and outsourcing!

The announcement says LU wants to engage "directly with the contractors actually doing the work on-site, simplifying contract arrangements".

If the company really wants to streamline refurbishment programmes, and improve efficiency, how about taking this work back in house instead of contracting it out at all?!

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