



# tubeworker

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## GUARDS STRIKE BACK

**Two days of solid strikes have seen London Overground guards seriously crank up the momentum of their fight to save their jobs.**

There was well-organised picketing at all three booking-on locations — Willesden, Gospel Oak and Stratford — and very little scabbing. At least two drivers refused to cross the guards' picket line. (There is now a minuted agreement that people will not be disciplined for respecting picket lines — remember this when the next strike is held!).

Pickets — and union activists who leafleted in the the preceding week — reported high levels of support from the travelling public. Not surprisingly, passengers do not want the guards removed from their trains. Some said that the reason that they use this Overground line is that it has guards. They are concerned about personal security, about disability access, about trains leaving platforms in safety, and about serious incidents. Indeed, less than 24 hours after the strike, there was smoke on a Southeastern train, and in the absence of a guard and the driver apparently not knowing what was happening, passengers scrambled out of the train onto the track!

On London Underground, we are supposed to believe that guards are some quaint antiquity and that we are managing fine without them. But those who remember guards generally would prefer to have them back. There have been numerous horrific (or near-horrific) PTI incidents since we went OPO, which the company has somehow got away with leading to calls for guards to be restored.



Management are now under pressure, so we must step things up. RMT had, rightly, already decided before this strike to ballot all grades of London Overground members — the plan to scrap guards affects everyone. The union needs to get on with that ballot promptly; we can be confident that other grades will support the guards, especially now that they have seen them stand up for their own jobs with a two-day strike.

This strike is about stopping the job cuts. It is not about getting management to offer a better severance and redeployment deal, and our union officials must be clear that we do not want it to be nudged in that direction.

Having escalated the fightback to all Overground workers, we also need to escalate it to all other workers who face similar attacks — in particular, all companies in the TfL orbit, and all guards across the country. Several mainline companies went “DOO” (Driver-Only

Operation; what the Underground calls “OPO”) several years ago. But many still have guards, who can easily see that if London Overground succeeds in scrapping guards, they will be next. Similarly, this move by London Overground results from the 12.5% cut in TfL's funding; but on its own, it will not save all the money, so the cutters will soon be coming for the rest of us.

**With unity and solidarity, we can stop them in their tracks!**



### DEFEND OUR PENSIONS!

**Our bosses have shown their hand and stated that they intend to close the TfL Pension Fund to new entrants.**



This will mean that new starters get enrolled into an inferior scheme, and also spells disaster for current members — the Fund will shrink and become less secure, inevitably leading to attacks on the benefits we can expect to receive from it.

The pretext, of course, is saving money. And management hope that we will think that “we're alright” as only future workers will be excluded. Maybe they get this idea because some other unions in other industries have fallen for it.

But current workers are very much affected, in a very detrimental way. It stands to reason that as people retire and make a claim on their pension, then we need new people coming in to replenish the stock of money.

Moreover, these “future workers” are our kids and the youngsters in our communities. And they will stand alongside us on the gateline and sit alongside us in the canteen. Just ask Tube Lines workers what happened after their employer closed the Fund to new members — many existing members thought it would not affect them, but as a two-tier workforce opened up, they lived to bitterly regret that view.

We need unity and solidarity — including inter-generational solidarity — to defend our pensions.

**We should demand that not only is this attacked dropped, but that all London transport workers should be allowed to join the TfL fund — including those working for private contractors who are not currently allowed to join.**

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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's blog - daily updates - [workersliberty.org/twblog](http://workersliberty.org/twblog)**

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## STOP JOBS CARNAGE!

A leaked document shows LUL plans to close all ticket offices.

This may or may not be LUL's real plan, but management are serious about smashing up the job as we know it. They are looking to us to make good the 12.5% TfL funding cut.

Regardless of speculation, there is quite enough that they actually are doing for us to fight back.

Particular ticket offices closing, mobile station supervision, BoJo's renewed

promise of driverless trains...

We can stop these attacks, if we are organised, militant and use imaginative and effective strategies.

**workersliberty.org/  
ticketoffices**



## WIDENING THE NET TO FILL STAFFING GAPS

District line stations managers have taken to swapping staff to fill coverage holes.

East Ham and Tower Hill groups have been offering each other's staff overtime. If LUL establishes this practice, it will be very damaging for us. Vacancies will stay unfilled, blocking transfer and promotion and leaving us all overstretched.

We put a stop to "line reserve" a few years ago; this is edging in that direction. The unions should demand LUL staff its stations so that groups do not go outside to solicit overtime.

Tempted to take up the offer? Bear in mind whose butt will be on the line if you mess up on a station you are not properly familiar with; and the longer-term consequences beyond your next pay packet.

**workersliberty.org/  
staffinglevels**



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# 55 BROADWAY: THE SELL



**As London Underground Ltd. prepares to sell off its historic 55 Broadway headquarters, so it can**

**become yuppie flats, we print this poem by "Blujeah", a tube worker and poet.**

80 years, this Art Deco building overlooked the tides of Westminster.  
Stream streets slipping onto Victoria,  
Strutton Ground, Petty France and Brewer Street.  
Her faces, front, back and side, sanguine maps at the wakening day,  
The swell and brim of traffic, And tangle heat of press attending the cop shop across the road.  
Before.

55, Broadway, for those who knew her,  
Scalloped bronze, geometry at each door,  
Cool and time burnished, Chamfered balustrade with stairs wide enough to dream;  
Up and down.  
Dreaming, reams of paper sleeping across the arm. 4th floor.  
80 years an unblinking gaze, Geezers and lasses fall from pubs,  
Evening News bloke, when it was, scuffing up the side of Portland Stone,

## ISS CLEANERS: VOTE YES TO STOP FINGERPRINTING

As ISS tries to impose biometric booking on machines for cleaners, voting Yes in RMT's ballot for "action short of strikes" will enable cleaners to refuse to use them.

LU staff should support our cleaners, as the biometric machines pose a threat to the jobs of staff who cleaners currently book on with.

**workersliberty.org/  
tubecleaners**

When the days were short and bitter,  
And punters could smoke, in or out:  
Zip of a lighter, 'Thanks,' 'You look nice.'

Threshold doormen, liveried, braided here and there, tug at proud doors.  
Within, space sings, wall lights murmur, alcoves saved in hush.  
Round, throat-red chairs, curvy and smooth welcome,  
While women, and men, if they wear them, unruckle nylons.  
A clickety search for compact and lipstick, a shade for each year, decade.  
She plumbs the depths of leather bag,  
The lift zings, opening with a sshh,  
And glances up at a clock in 1956.  
The same clock.  
Thursday.  
Someone thinks, 'Wonder if I've missed him; normally in by quarter-to.'

In its belly, at St James's Park, trains dwell in tenebrous arches.  
On the tar-black platform, commuters gently sway in  
That boarding and disembarking dance.  
Umbrellas tight, skirts worn long then short,  
Soldiers on leave.  
Badges sewn, brooches pinned.  
Sigh and swiftly turn, high heeled and low.  
Guards peek like starlings, startling  
Veiled perfumed filth.  
Gone.

Upstairs, downstairs, newsagents like tracery,  
Ticket Hall marquetry,  
function, couth commerce,  
Daily bread patterned in.  
Station staff, uniform, heavy with itching serge,  
Call across the soft-lit hall,  
Criss-cross chat falls silent,

Distant rub of points,  
And lean against their Tardis boxes. Clip.Clip. 'Tickets.'

Memory like a good breakfast, a nutritious building,  
Pulse still racing from war and old earth.  
Feeding the worker, sending, carrying.  
Lines and clocks, important messages by hand,  
Delivering a service without saying it; just doing it, being it.  
Bronze, marble, wood, wide, generous.

Fit for purpose, useful;  
Lavatories with sinks to swim in, taps to see in,  
Thoughtful fittings of chrome and steel  
When Sheffield lived, when the North had breath.  
Silvered mirrors smeared.  
Rubs the glass, perhaps she's crying.

How many years ago? 15, is it?  
How many short years since they came with minds of plastic,  
Pressed in blue and white shells and smirking, yellow takers.  
Now they swim without a pearl in shallowed water.

Here they are, quick and newborn as a developer's soul.  
Deals cut in swagger glass. We know, we do know.  
Commercialise the past, commodify resources,  
Is there anything left to sell?

The built and sound.  
Knock it down, keep it, change it,  
Let it stay, build flats, build shops, got those already.  
Make it pay.  
Make it pay.  
Make it pay.  
Hotel Heritage: we've paid.  
History has already paid.  
Is your legacy to make us pay,  
Without a memory to carry on the clock?

**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.**