



# tubeworker off the rails



## No to job cuts — vote yes to strikes!

**The RMT is balloting guards on London Overground from 31 July for strikes against management's proposal to cut 130 guard jobs and move to "Driver-Only Operation" (DOO). The ballot closes on 15 August.**

All members should vote yes to strike to stop a cut that will not only create more unemployment, but will have an extremely damaging effect on passenger safety.

As a union statement put it: "[In the week beginning 12 July] there was a major incident near Kentish Town which required the emergency evacuation of over 100 passengers in searing heat between stations. That evacuation was led by the guard, and even LOROL admitted in their statement: 'The prompt actions of London Overground staff enabled the incident to be brought to a close as quickly as possible.' The company and TfL are now preparing to sack those very same staff whose actions they were praising just a week ago."

LOROL managers have not properly negotiated with the RMT about the cut, instead exercising a "clause in [their] contract" which allows them to move to DOO within six months.

Drivers' union ASLEF has also opposed the move to DOO on London Overground.

### Not one cut!

As workers, withdrawing our labour is the most powerful weapon we have to stop our bosses from doing things which will harm workers' livelihoods and passengers' safety.

The union position in this dispute should be non-negotiable: not one single cut. Management have already tried to shift the goalposts by drawing distinctions between compulsory and voluntary redundancies. *Tubeworker* and *Off The Rails* believes that job cuts have to be opposed, however management tries to make them.

RMT members on London Overground should convene a strike committee to oversee the dispute and decide what tactics and strategies are necessary to beat the bosses.

### Strikes and solidarity can win!

Even though, with an aggressive Tory-led government and a Tory administration in City Hall, unions are generally on the back foot, there are experiences from recent years which show that strikes and solidarity can win.

In 2010, London Underground sacked two prominent RMT driver reps on trumped-up charges. A campaign of strikes, demonstrations, and public leafletings — and the threat of a network-wide ballot for escalating strikes — forced

management to back down and reinstate Eamonn Lynch and Arwyn Thomas, even after they'd said they wouldn't be budged.

### Unions must fight together

RMT's membership on London Overground is mainly amongst those who will be directly effected by the proposed cut.

Drivers' union ASLEF also has members on London Overground. It has opposed the cut, is promoting the cross-union Action for Rail campaign to petition Boris Johnson to stop the cut. It should mobilise its members in industrial action too. If DOO is implemented on London Overground, ASLEF's driver members will face being solely responsible for safety-critical tasks that no individual worker should be expected to oversee alone.

If you are an ASLEF member, raise this issue in your branch and argue for a ballot! If ASLEF moves to ballot, the two unions must coordinate their action to maximise its impact.

### A political fight against the 12.5% cut

The background to this attack is the 12.5% cut in Transport for London's central government funding.

This cut will wreak havoc with the capital's public transport system. The London Overground fightback should be the spark for a London-wide campaign to reverse the cut. The General Grades Committee of the RMT recently passed policy which commits the union to working with others — other transport unions, passengers' organisations, and community groups — to help build a campaign of political pressure and direct action to reverse the cut.

**It is planning to build for a demonstration on the day Parliament reopens - 8 October.**

**This is a joint bulletin from *Tubeworker* and *Off The Rails*. *Tubeworker* is a monthly bulletin for London Underground workers, featuring news, information, and discussion from across the job. *Off The Rails* is a quarterly zine for mainline railway workers.**

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