



tubeworker

www.workersliberty.org/tubeworker • tubeworker@workersliberty.org

Build for new strikes

MAKE IT A “HOT AUTUMN”



In 1969, a wave of strikes by workers in Italy's car industry was nicknamed “autunno caldo”, the “hot autumn”.

As August turns in September, it's time to start building for our own “hot autumn” on LU.

Stations

RMT says it will ballot stations and revenue staff for renewed strikes against the consequences of “Fit for the Future” in September.

There is no shortage of issues around which a new dispute could be constructed: displacements, training, abuses of the Attendance At Work policy, and of course the fundamental issue of job cuts and staffing levels.

The sooner the ballot is announced the better: there's nothing like a strike ballot to focus the mind.

Strikes should be supplemented by an overtime ban (for more on OT, see overleaf), and we should follow the example of our brothers and sisters on Southern and Eurostar by announcing sustained and impacting strikes: one or two days won't cut it.

Trains

We've seen a few stop-start disputes on trains side recently, on the Piccadilly Line, Central Line, and Victoria Line. There is a ballot currently underway on the Hammersmith & City Line, which closes on 23 August.

There is clearly a long list of ongoing issues, many of which seem to be generalised across lines and depots: over-zealous managements abusing and breaching policies, for example. As managers on stations play increasingly fast and loose with policies such as Attendance At Work, some of those issues are taking on more of an all-grades character.

There've also been issues around rostering, and the unfair treatment of pool drivers in some depots. The testing of driverless trains on the Jubilee Line is also a huge provocation which merits an industrial response.

Our unions (in the first place, RMT, as the only all-grades union on the job) needs to rebuild solidarity between grades and functions.

Job cuts on stations affect drivers too, and our aspiration should be for a united dispute across the whole job, on shared issues.

Cleaners

Cleaners are being pummelled by the ruthless contractors to whom LU outsources.

Interserve and ISS are scrambling to undercut each other as they race to win the “super contract” due to be awarded next year.

Unions are weak in the cleaning grade, so the first job is the basic one of building up workers' confidence and union strength. While that's ongoing, a public campaign to embarrass the cleaning companies by exposing their exploitative practises could put real pressure on them.

There should be regular union demos outside Interserve and ISS offices, and the aim to launch industrial action as soon as possible.

Engineering and Fleet

The dispute over core agreements on Fleet is almost certain to intensify soon; management right across the job are taking every opportunity they can to cut corners with policies and agreements.

TubeLines shunters and engineering train drivers have recently voted for strikes, and there may be fresh issues arising out of the cancellation of the Amey contract on the JNP.

Unions must identify common issues across functions and coordinate action wherever possible.

VOTE CORBYN!

The ballot for the Labour Party leadership election opens on Monday 22 August. It will close on 21 September.

Tubeworker encourages all of our readers with a vote to cast it for Jeremy Corbyn.

Under his leadership, the Labour Party has begun a process of transformation from an ineffective junior party of neo-liberalism to a real opposition with pro-working-class policies. That transformation must continue.

Vote Corbyn! If you're not yet a member of the Labour Party, join!

Trots under the bed?

Recent weeks have seen attempts by Tom Watson and others on the right of the Labour Party to manufacture a scandal about “Trotskyist entryism” into Labour.

Workers' Liberty, the group which publishes *Tubeworker*, has been a particular target.

To read more on Tom Watson's bizarre scaremongering, see:

bit.ly/watson-trots



Night Tube
Service

NIGHT TERRORS?

**Night Tube is finally upon us.
Turn over for some stories from
the frontline...**

DOWN IN THE TUBE STATION AT MIDNIGHT...

Management are happily slapping each others' backs after the "successful" launch of Night Tube.

The media scrum around the Mayor and the 50,000 first-night journeys made good headlines for them. Oh, and there were no actual disasters.

Still, it wasn't them cleaning up vomit, trying to wake unconscious drunks on the platform, or waiting hours for ambulances because under-funding has reduced the ambulance service to only attending people in danger of dying.

One of the more irritating features of passengers' journeys was the constant on-train announcements. You see, the PA system can't simply state that only the Vic and Central lines are running and remove all other references to interchange. Oh no. The only way to not advise people that they can change to any other line (or TOC) is to announce, one at a time, that the particular service is "suspended" - only it's not suspended, it's just not scheduled to run at night.

The biggest problem remains, of course, under-staffing. People were being shifted around all over the place in order to keep stations open, nicked by one station from another to stop it falling below minimum numbers.

As Night Tube spreads and the party season approaches, what could possibly go wrong?!



TIMETABLE TRAUMA

The new timetable on the Central Line, imposed by management without adequate notice is causing headaches all round.

Moreover, by cutting the number of trains in the morning peak from stations on the loop, passengers have to wait longer for a train and face journeys packed like sardines with their face in someone else's armpit.

Unhappy passengers means grief for us, and fewer trains in the peak means more platform congestion and more PTI incidents.

Of course, had we been properly consulted, we could have told LUL of the pitfalls of its new timetable, but obviously a computer in Broadway knows better than those of us on the frontline.

WOT NO TRAINING?

Training for station staff still seems to be in a total state post-"Fit for the Future".

There are huge training backlogs on many groups, meaning few staff have the "TSIDs" required to float or service machines. Staff who've been displaced to lift stations are still waiting for lift training and familiarisation.

CDP has been cut right back, with LU's latest wheeze a two-day



"managing our stations" course. Is two days really sufficient to refresh the operational and technical

skills necessary to do our jobs safely?

Nevertheless, reports from the first waves of staff to participate indicate that the sandwiches were not bad.

HAVING A MAYOR

Labour Mayor Sadiq Khan did the inevitable press walkabout at Oxford Circus to celebrate the Night Tube launch.

He could be heard commenting about how impressive the found the staff.

Let's hope he remembers that when LU bosses tell him they need to cut more jobs because of budget squeezes...

CALL TIME ON OVERTIME

Many stations are currently only being kept open on overtime.



We've all got bills to pay, and the prospect of a bit extra in that pay packet is appealing.

But we have to start seeing the bigger picture. If management know they can scrape by with their shockingly low staffing levels, in the knowledge that the slack will be picked up by staff doing overtime, there's less pressure on them to increase the staffing level.

A culture of reliance on OT is also damaging for our work/life balance. It eats into time we should be spending away from the workplace, with friends and family (or in union meetings, planning our next strikes!).

We shouldn't wait for an official ban to call time on overtime. It's always voluntary, so let's boycott it and let the bosses know they can't get away with running stations without sufficient staff.

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

Tubeworker's blog —
workersliberty.org/twblog

@Tube_Worker on Twitter
[facebook.com/tubeworker](https://www.facebook.com/tubeworker)

Subscribe!

Want to get every issue of *Tubeworker* (published at least monthly)? Send us your address along with a tenner (cheques payable to WL Bulletins)

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