



tubeworker

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STATIONS DISPUTE “RESOLVED”: THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY

Following a last-minute deal, station grades strikes planned for 6-8 February were called off. Not only that, but our dispute has been, RMT tells us, “resolved”. What to make of this?

The good

The concessions management gave at the 11th hour, around short-notice duty changes and weekend rest days, are real.

They’ll make a difference to people’s lives, and certainly wouldn’t have been secured without the threat of strike action.

At the point of implementation, the “Fit for the Future” restructure looks different from what management wanted it when it was first launched in 2013.

We’ve forced them back on a number of issues, and we did that by standing together and taking determined industrial action.

But...

The bad

...suspending yet another strike at the last minute could have a damaging



the bottle to go through with action (unless, perhaps, all four unions are striking together).

Could we have won more concessions if we’d kept the strikes on? Or would the strike have been ineffective? We’ll never know, but Tubeworker reckons that enough station staff in enough areas were sufficiently up for the fight to make it worth a try.

Having a stations-only strike was never an ideal strategy, but calling one and then calling it off risks reinforcing the mistaken idea that station staff are powerless.

effect.

Both our bosses and fellow union members will begin to think we’re all mouth, and that we don’t have

jobs, bringing in dreadful new rosters, and forcibly promoting us all without any extra pay. The SRT framework is still under threat.

Tubeworker is alarmed that the union felt able to resolve the entire dispute (rather than simply suspending this weekend’s strikes, if negotiators felt there was enough on the table to warrant that). Many of us feel there’s still a fight to be had over “Fit for the Future” and its consequences, and settling the dispute makes that fight harder (in the first instance, it means that any potential future action now requires a new ballot).

In the long term, those of us in the RMT need to have some difficult discussions. The “Every Job Matters” dispute was launched in 2013 on an all-grades basis, but that unity deteriorated.

We need to discuss how that happened, and how we can rebuild it.

The ugly

Despite the concessions we’ve won, we’re still faced with the reality that “Fit for the Future” is a horrific cuts programme, slashing hundreds of

NEWS FROM “FIT FOR THE FUTURE” WORLD



- Chaos on the “vanguard groups”!
- CSAs failing enforced ticket selling training
- Turns out iPads *can’t* run stations
- Work/life balance out the window

Read all about it, overleaf...

SUPPORT THE JUNIOR DOCTORS!



Tube workers should support junior doctors. They provide vital NHS services we all rely on, and, like us, they’re at the sharp end of Tory attacks on public services.

Jeremy Hunt wants a 7-day NHS (even though, in reality, we already

have one), and Boris Johnson wants a 24/7 Tube. In both cases, those who deliver that service have to fight to defend our rights and our work-life balance.

Many of us went to the docs’ picket lines to show support. And we’ll need to do more to support them as Hunt cranks up his efforts to force them into a life-wrecking contract.

Their next strikes are set for 9 March, 6 April, and 26 April.

VOTE NO ON PAY/NIGHT TUBE OFFER



Tubeworker encourages all readers to vote no to LU’s offer on pay/Night Tube.

To find out why, visit bit.ly/tw-vote-no



CHAOS ON THE "VANGUARD GROUPS"

Stations left unstaffed with ticket machines not working; staff sent from other stations to attend incidents; queues out of the doors; staff given duties and stations they are not licensed to work at; iPads and apps not working; cash-handling devices not handling cash properly; loads of people not trained to do what is expected of them; etc, etc, etc.

Meanwhile, work-life balance has gone out of the window, with much-increased weekend working. That's the picture of life on the "vanguard groups" where "Fit for the Future" has launched. This will only get worse when staff begin to leave the groups.

Staff are furious, and a little bewildered at how our dispute has been "resolved" with all this going on. The local RMT branch has already asked for a new ballot, but because this has to start from scratch, it'll be a couple of months before official action can be called. So union members are taking matters into their own hands in the workplace, exercising their rights to refuse to carry out duties they are not trained to do, and reporting every incident.

Doubtless some of the "teething problems" can be sorted with a tweak or a technical fix. But the big picture will only improve if we force management to retreat from the worst aspects of their new world, starting with putting back jobs which have been cut.

And staff on the rest of the job - be warned. This is coming your way if we do not stand up for ourselves.



WHOSE FAILURE?

Up to 80% of trainee CSAs are failing the ticket selling training LU is forcing them into.

The course is condensed into two days, and we are dealing with most complicated fares system of any city in Europe. We don't want to be rushed through these courses so LU can pretend that its new world is working. It's not.

One of the things that our strike threat won was an agreement that no-one has to handle money if they don't feel confident - even if you have passed the training.

So don't! Why put your livelihood at risk for no extra reward?

FIDDLER ON THE ROOF

The Central Line went up the wall on 22 February after a chunk of tunnel roof collapsed onto the westbound track at Shepherd's Bush, caused by ongoing construction work to extend the commercial empire of the Westfield Shopping Centre.

Management got the service running again, albeit with severe delays. Swift repair work, or reopening in a rush? We hope it's the former.

It wouldn't be the first time such things had not been dealt with properly. Why were builders allowed to get even close to drilling a hole through our tunnel roof? We were lucky there was no damage, injury or worse.

Tubeworker wonders whether Westfield will foot the bill. In Tory Britain, big business seems to get away with not paying its bills most of the time.

PICC LINE DRIVERS: VOTE YES FOR STRIKES!

RMT is balloting Picc Line drivers for strikes, after management have begun falling back on old habits.

Out-of-control managers abusing disciplinary procedures led to an 85% majority voting for strikes in October 2015; things calmed down a bit, but they've now flared up again. It's a sad state of affairs when we have to strike just to force management to stick to its own (usually inadequate) policies, but that's where we are.

The ballot runs until 8 March. Make sure you vote yes. Aslef drivers should respect the picket lines.

IN PRAISE OF LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

As "Fit for the Future" rolls out, many stations on the east end of the Central Line will be operating without their normal rostered staff (gone via voluntary severance or displaced).

This intimate local knowledge gained over many years or decades is not about to be adequately replaced by iPad technology or one-hour familiarisations.

As one popular song has it, "You don't know what you've got till it's gone!"

UNDER NUMBERS?

Word reaches *Tubeworker* HQ that Oxford Circus opened under numbers last week.

Safety reps are investigating. If it's true, management must be held accountable.

Minimum numbers aren't guidelines, they're legal requirements to guarantee staff and passenger safety!



CLEANERS' COLUMN

DLR INTERSERVE CLEANERS: VOTE YES!

On the Docklands Light Railway, RMT will ballot Interserve cleaners for strikes against job cuts and unilateral changes to contracts and shifts.

Strikes by Interserve workers on DLR already forced a 75p/hour pay increase; further strikes can force them to back off from their cuts plans.

CLEANER... OR PERSON IN CHARGE?

Some Interserve cleaners turning up for work on the east end "vanguard" (i.e., guinea pig) groups were booked on using a new app.

This requires a PICER and by implication a Site Person in Charge who takes responsibility for the entire group. But such a role is neither trained nor paid for by the Scrooges of Interserve.

Someone had better tell the iPad.

BIOMETRIC MESS

ISS cleaners are being short paid, despite the company's use of supposedly efficient biometric technology.

Staff are now asked to use both the biometric machine and the phone to book on.

ISS is still stonewalling union requests for talks about Night Tube, and implementing the London Living Wage increase.

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.

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