



tubeworker

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RMT General Secretary election:

Vote John Leach #1

If you are an RMT member, you will soon be receiving a voting paper for the election of a new General Secretary (GS).

You have the choice of four candidates, and *Tubeworker* recommends that you vote for John Leach, who is currently our Regional Organiser and has been nominated by seven of our Region's branches, along with 15 more from elsewhere in the country.

Sometimes it may seem like it doesn't really matter who holds the post of GS, as the union carries on doing its everyday work whoever is at the helm. At other times, it seems almost too important, when the GS is portrayed as an all-powerful union chief.

It does matter, and it is important that you vote.

The GS strongly influences – although the Executive decides – how we campaign, what demands we make, what action we take. We need a General Secretary who wants to fight for the best for workers, and who can build meaningful, effective action because they listen to and involve rank-and-file members. We don't need a GS who holds us back, and neither do we want a GS who thinks that he always knows best.

We have huge battles with our employers on their way, and the candidate who matches what we need most closely is John Leach. Crucially, John knows that genuine militancy is measured by how effectively you build union strength in the workplace rather than how angry you get or how loudly you shout.

When we battle our employers, the GS puts our case to the public. When you see your union represented by the GS on the TV, you want to feel confident that the union is on your side, is up for the fight, and can put its case clearly and convincingly.



Many of the decent conditions that we have, we have won through hard-fought battles – and John Leach has been at the head of many of these. LUL staff have a “job for life” - i.e., a guarantee of no compulsory redundancies, because of a 2001 dispute in which John as our NEC member resisted calls from union officials to accept less than we eventually won, and stood alongside us when we went out on strike alongside ASLEF even though a court had banned RMT's action.

John led the charge to get TubeLines workers' pensions returned to the TfL pension scheme, to stop the employer's attempt to cut the frequency of train preparation, and to save hundreds of the stations jobs that management tried to abolish.

He has also achieved important wins with and for sections of our workforce who are marginalised and less secure than directly-employed LUL staff. At the start of the pandemic, John successfully insisted that cleaners receive 100% sick and isolation pay, and went on to coordinate the union's efforts to stop compulsory redundancies of canteen staff, again was successfully.

In an election where we are once again faced with a choice only between white men, we can at least pick the one with the best record on equalities. Again, that is John Leach.

John has committed to supporting moves to empower our equalities committees, giving women, BEM members, LGBT+ members, and disabled members greater representation within the union.

Before becoming a union officer, John had worked on London Underground stations since he was 18. He has pledged not to accept the pay rise that comes with the GS's job, because he doesn't believe union officers should be paid salaries vastly in excess of what most members earn. John has an understanding of and commitment to representing the interests of rank-and-file members like us that is unmatched by the other candidates.

No candidate is perfect, and *Tubeworker* doesn't agree with John on every issue. Whoever wins the election, RMT members will need independent rank-and-file organisation to hold officers to account and build a fighting, democratic trade unionism from the workplace up.

But who our officers are can make a big difference to whether grassroots efforts to build that kind of trade unionism are encouraged and supporter, or obstructed.

John Leach will be a General Secretary who supports it.

IF YOUR BALLOT PAPER HASN'T ARRIVED BY 8 MARCH, CALL THE UNION TO ARRANGE A REPLACEMENT: 0800 376 3706

**For more on John's campaign, see facebook.com/RMTJohnLeach
JLforGS@gmail.com -
[@RMTJohnLeach](https://twitter.com/RMTJohnLeach)**

CLEANERS' COLUMN

RMT and the TUC in London and the South East have teamed up produced an extremely useful briefing, setting out the case for Tube cleaning to be brought in house.

The contract, currently held by ABM, is up for renewal next year. RMT is pressuring Sadiq Khan's Labour administration to bring the work in house rather than re-tendering the contract. Being directly employed by LU would give cleaners access to the same staff travel passes, pensions, and sick pay arrangements directly-employed staff currently receive.

A real campaign needs to be organised around the briefing, including online/social media campaigning and, as soon as it becomes viable, physical protests targeting City Hall.

There are clear precedents for such a step: as well as the in-housing of cleaning on Transport for Wales mentioned in the briefings, campaigns by the United Voices of the World union and the Independent Workers' union of Great Britain have secured the in-housing of outsourced services at Imperial NHS Trust, Great Ormond Street Hospital, London School of Economics, Goldsmiths University, and the University of London.

REINSTATE GARY CARNEY!

Central Line driver and RMT rep Gary Carney booked off sick after vomiting at work.

For most people, this would be a cause for compassion. For LU management, it's a reason to sack him.

The company's pretext is that he avoided a Drugs and Alcohol test - but as we all know, when you are summoned to your manager's office for a test, you are not told you are being summoned for a test - so how could he have been avoiding it?!

"Gash" is well known around the job for his support for others through his involvement in RMT. Whenever a workmate is in trouble, he stands by them. Now it's down to us to stand by him.

STATION STAFF FATIGUE

Staff at Redbridge and other stations on the cover group have been running around on cover weeks to keep stations open.

Management are now making desperate calls to cover shifts on overtime. You cannot continue to flog a dead horse. Selective station closures must be considered to take the pressure off staff.

With the pandemic taking its toll on everyone, LU needs to get serious about staff health. Fatigue can take a serious toll on our immune systems; good work/life balance could be a matter of life and death.

NO RACE TO THE BOTTOM IN REVENUE

A group of TfL TSEOs recently assaulted a member of LU staff at West Ham.

The incident occurred after a misunderstanding over a face covering, which the LU staff member had temporarily moved down to take a drink, was needlessly and aggressively escalated.

Recent Yammer posts from TSEO managers revelled in the physical side of their role, mocking "the look on Londoners' faces when they find out we're able to restrain them."

Rather than creating new, lower-paid grades to act as bouncers, all enforcement work on LU stations should be done by LU RCIs, on existing terms and conditions. The RCI grade has been deliberately understaffed for years. This must stop. RMT and TSSA must work with Unite, which organises the TfL TSEOs, to fight the race to the bottom.

FIGHT CUTS AT QUEEN'S PARK

RMT's Bakerloo branch plans a campaign to resist attempts to cut the workforce at Queen's Park depot by 10%. LU wants to reduce the rostered driver establishment from 101 to 90, and the number of pool drivers from six to five.

Unless they are stopped, management in other parts of the job could be given the green light to start salami-slicing staffing levels.

Drivers on the Bakerloo struck in February 2020 in a dispute over working conditions.

With this recent history of struggle, *Tubeworker* is hopefully we'll see picket lines on the Bakerloo again if management don't abandon their cuts plan.

VACCINATION QUEUE

With the government announcement that every adult should be vaccinated by July, there is discussion among different groups of workers over who should be prioritised.

An expansion of the vaccination programme, based on the requisitioning of "Big Pharma", could ensure everyone has access to the vaccine quickly.

The scientists' decision to prioritise by age and clinical vulnerability is not wrong. We should focus on getting more people vaccinated and not on who should "jump" the already existing queue.

A LONG NIGHT?

The decision of the new Brixton AM to send a blanket email saying staff should stop splitting shifts begs the question: where do you expect Night Tube staff to spend the shift?

With strict enforcement of social distancing in mess rooms and control rooms, should someone sit in the GLAP until 5am comes around?

Local management should facilitate arrangements deploying the strict minimum needed to close and open the station. If CSAs can go home while the station is closed, they should be able to do so.

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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