



tubeworker

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

Bosses treat us like equipment. We say:

FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM!



It can sometimes be difficult to see beyond the small battles we fight all the time at work; these can lead to two attitudes.

One is to say, “Why are we banging on about socialism, we’re Underground workers, what’s that got to do with us?”. The opposite is, “what’s the use? Even if we win this small battle and they’ll just come back at us with something else.”

However, there is a very simple reason why these small battles are not only important, but expose the very nature of the system we live in.

Whether we are defending an individual member who the company wants to get rid of, fighting for a reduced working week, or campaigning against red tabards, we are saying one thing: we are not robots, we are not pieces of machinery. We are complete human beings entitled to a home life, to leisure, relaxation, and fun. We do useful work and many of us are proud to work on the Underground, but work is not what we are *for*. It’s not the reason for our existence.

The reason we have to fight for this to be recognised is that we live in a capitalist society.

London Underground has to quantify everything in monetary terms. When our system breaks down, the impact is measured in terms of money lost to the economy. When a part of the machinery breaks, it must be repaired as quickly as

possible or thrown away if it will take too long to repair. London Underground sees us in the same way.

The system works a lot more efficiently if all of its parts (us!) are obedient and trouble free. If we’re on strike, it costs money; if we’re sick, it costs money; if the system can be run with fewer of us, it saves money; if each unit (person) performs more tasks, it saves money.

PEOPLE BEFORE PROFIT

The needs of the system are completely opposite to the needs of the workers because of this contradiction.

When we fight the smaller battles mentioned earlier, they are a direct product of that. When we fight against a member being medically retired, we are saying, “No, she’s not a piece of broken down machinery, she’s a human being and must be treated like one.”

When we fight against red tabards, we’re saying, “No, we won’t help you pretend to the customers that the only thing wrong with your programme of cuts was a mistake in the colour of the uniform.”

When we fight for cleaner air, a shorter working week, longer holidays, we’re saying, “We are entitled to this because our purpose as human beings is to live healthy, happy lives. We are not profit producing robots”.

Capitalism must be resisted, and we will fight to chip away at it until we can abolish it altogether. Socialism means an end to class exploitation and work for use, not profit. Socialism is a society run democratically for the welfare of the people living and working in it.

That’s what makes it worth fighting for.

WE NEED MORE TIME AWAY FROM WORK

RMT’s pay claim includes a demand for a 32-hour week.

As new studies have reconfirmed how terrible the air quality on the Tube is, more time away from work could literally be the difference between good and ill health, or even length of life.

All workers deserve to work less and have fulfilling lives outside of work, but the dust, bacteria, and the detrimental health effects of extreme shift work we have to deal with make it an urgent question for us.

TABARD TROUBLE

LU has announced a launched date of 10 February for the ludicrous red tabards it wants station staff to wear.

Bosses claim they’re necessary to increase “staff visibility”, but the problem isn’t “visibility” but lack of number resulting from LU’s job cuts.

Tubeworker wouldn’t advise individuals refusing to wear them in ones-and-twos, but if collective mass refusal to wear them can be organised, why not?

Will LU discipline everyone?

DEFEND ZAHRA TIRMAZI, DEFEND YOURSELF!

Walthamstow Central CSA Zahra Tirmazi faces disciplinary action, and possible dismissal, because of a passenger incident in which she was the victim.

Zahra was spat at, racially abused, and put in a headlock. Instead of supporting her, LU is threatening her with the sack.

Zahra’s is not the only case where LU is blaming the victim for an assault. If we don’t defend Zahra, any one of us could be next.

STATIONS SHORT STAFFING FIGHTS SPREAD

Station staff on the Northern and District lines are set to follow in the footsteps of Bakerloo South and ballot for strikes for better staff coverage.

In the stations around South Ken and Hendon Central, duties are regularly left uncovered and staff left to run stations alone. Lone working is dangerous and stressful, and staff have had enough.

On both these groups, union members are asking RMT to call industrial action to force management to fill vacancies and cover duties.

FIT FOR NOTHING

If you're coming back from being off sick, a manager must conduct a Return to Work Interview with you, to see how you're doing and discuss any adjustments or support you might need.

In some areas, workers are being asked to sign forms to say they're fit to work before a proper RTWI is conducted. Don't stand for it.

Insist on your right to a proper RTWI.



Labour Party activists challenge Sadiq Khan over transport cuts. See bit.ly/l-l-m for more.

PREPARE FOR BATTLE OVER TRAIN PREP

RMT has declared an official dispute with the company as LU presses ahead with its plans to extend train prep.

Trains currently have basic safety checks performed on a 24-hourly basis by trained fleet workers, ensuring they're safe to run. LU is now proposing to extend that massively, up to 96 hours on some lines and on others, essentially doing away with many regular checks entirely and introducing a system where trains are only checked every few months.

This is not only a clear attack on fleet workers' jobs, it's a glaring attack on safety that will affect drivers, station staff, and of course the travelling public.

Given the severity of this attack, we need to consider an industrial response that builds for action not only amongst fleet workers, but across the job.

NO TOILET IN "TOMBSTONE"?

Station staff on the Wealdstone side at Harrow and Wealdstone, separated from the Harrow side by a long footbridge, still have no access to a toilet or running water.

LU insists that the local council, not them, are responsible for the plumbing so fixing it is out of their hands.

This is a matter of basic dignity. If it requires regular, coordinated PNRs to fix the problem, so be it.

No wonder staff nickname the station "Horror and Tombstone"!

POM PROBLEMS

Station staff across the job are facing discipline, and even the sack, for minor ticket office discrepancies.

We're rapidly losing faith in the technology we're working with, and in LU's ability to train us on it.

If you don't feel confident, insist on further training.

LU PAY: POSITIVE, PROACTIVE CAMPAIGN NEEDED

With our pay deal expiring in April, RMT has now submitted its new claim to LU. It's available to read online.

The union is demanding a "substantial pay award"; a flat-rate pay increase for the lowest-paid grades; and a 32-hour week.

We're a bit late out of the gates on this one... *Tubeworker* was saying "Start the pay fight now!" in May 2018. But now the claim's in, let's not allow the bosses to dictate the timescale. We need to set the pace of the campaign. Let's give bosses a deadline to reply and, if they say no, begin balloting for action.

That'll require an immediate campaign to promote the contents of the claim, producing specific propaganda, and getting our fellow workers ready to fight.

ACTON DRIVERS TO BALLOT

Management wanting to impose new rosters on Picc Line drivers at Bollo House depot in Acton?

Wouldn't have thought so. RMT members are preparing a ballot to resist the imposition. Let's see how the bosses' roster looks with all the drivers on strike.

CLEANERS' COLUMN

WIN IN JOBS FIGHT

Cleaners have scored a big win, with contractor ABM backing down from its proposal to cut the workforce by a third.



They would probably like us to believe that they have seen the error of their ways and revisited their sums, but we prefer to think that RMT's noisy preparations for battle pushed them back.

ABM still plans to employ 150 fewer cleaners than it promised in its contract bid, and it still denies those cleaners civilised conditions and pay rates, so let's use the momentum from this victory to push for more.

FIGHT FOR TRAVEL PASSES!

With no staff travel passes, and recent fare increases, a cleaner who works in zone 2 and lives in zone 4 is now paying £111.80 per month.

Cleaners living further out and/or working further are paying even more. This is a huge chunk out of their already shockingly low wage.

This is an utter disgrace, even more so as it is happening under a Labour Mayor. Let's start the new year with a renewed fight from all grades for cleaners' rights.

It's a matter of basic rights for cleaners, and basic solidarity with fellow workers for those in other grades.

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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Contact us: Workers' Liberty, 20E Tower Workshops, Riley Road, London SE1 3DG, tubeworker@workersliberty.org