With the publication of TfL’s latest pensions review, we have some more detail as to the attacks the employer plans to make.

The review lists a number of possible “benefit reforms”, which could save TfL between £79.3 million and £182.4 million per year. The review is categorical that “almost all of the benefit combination scenarios see reductions in the future service benefits available to members, and increased contributions compared to the current position”. In other words, workers will pay more, and get less.

Proposals for cuts include limiting the amount of our pay which is pensionable, and reducing the ratio of employer/employee contributions. Although the review stresses that implementing reform will be a drawn-out process, we cannot be complacent. The only way TfL will abandon plans for cuts is if they are forced to by sustained industrial action.

**JOBS AND CONDITIONS**

**Pensions** is only one of three central issues in RMT’s dispute, which delivered magnificent strikes in March.

The other two issues, jobs and working conditions, must remain prominent. LU is pressing ahead with 600 job cuts on stations, and imposing new framework agreements on the revenue department and SRT. However long pension reform takes, these are attacks we face now. LU has already confirmed it plans similar cuts to jobs and “reviews” of framework agreements across every area.

We must name further strikes as soon as possible. We landed a major blow on LU with our 1/3 March strikes, but a fight rarely ends with a single punch. They are still coming for us, and we must continue to fight back.

**Tubeworker** advocates that RMT names an ongoing programme of action, and explores possibilities for area-by-area action to keep up the pressure in between all-out strike days. Branch hardship funds must be levied to ensure lower-paid and part-time workers can afford to participate in sustained action. We also need a public, political campaign to demand adequate funding for TfL.

And members of other unions on LU should join any action RMT calls, and mobilise within their own unions to get them off the sidelines.

**Solidarity action can win P&O fight**

Workmates across the job reacted angrily to the news that ferry firm P&O had summarily dismissed 800 workers, trampling on (already weak) employment law in the process.

The replacement agency staff are paid poverty wages, and some P&O ships have been prevented from sailing due to safety concerns. As *Tubeworker* goes to press, the Transport Secretary is making noises about legislating to force P&O to rehire them. If that happens, it will be because the atmosphere of pressure created by the union campaign makes it impossible for the government not to act. Crucial to that is solidarity action by other workers.

Action by some Hull dockers and river pilots delayed the relaunch P&O ship the Pride of Hull. Another P&O ship was delayed in Holland after dockers there refused to unload it.

Dockers in ports where P&O operates have immense potential power. Other workers, particularly transport workers like us, have potential power too.

Solidarity action has been illegal since 1991; action without a ballot and a long notice period is illegal too. But P&O’s CEO openly admitted that the company broke the law when carrying out the mass sackings. Why should workers respect laws introduced to prevent us from defending and fighting for our rights and from supporting each other?

As well as discussing possibilities for solidarity action, we must continue to support RMT/Nautilus demos against the sackings, and demand the government nationalises P&O if they are not reversed.

---

**Labour Movement Solidarity with Ukraine: demonstrate on 9 April**

- **Russian troops out**
- **Support Ukraine’s trade unions**
- **All refugees welcome**

**Assemble 12 noon, Parliament Square, SW1A 0AA**

Supported by PCS, Aslef, NUM, BFAWU, the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine, and the Ukraine Solidarity Campaign
Step up fight for cleaners’ conditions

RMT must dedicate more resources to empowering ABM cleaners to step up their fight for improved conditions.

Disgracefully, Sadiq Khan looks set to re-tender the contract to ABM without even stipulating any improvements to cleaners’ conditions, such as travel passes.

But as RMT cleaners’ strikes on the mainline show, cleaners don’t have to wait for contract renewals to fight for better conditions.

A renewed campaign could demand immediate improvements from ABM and TFL/LU, such as increased pay, whilst maintaining pressure for the ultimate in-housing of the contract.

How about starting with a mass protest outside City Hall to shame our Labour mayor for continuing to oversee the second-class status of thousands of migrant workers at the heart of the capital’s transport system? RMT’s London Transport Regional Council has the clout and resources to call such a protest, and build it in the wider labour movement.

Let’s crack on.

“A TALE OF TWO DEMOS

Tubeworker was pleased to see that the Greater London Authority called a demonstration in support of Ukraine on 26 March.

But if the GLA can call demos, why has it not called one to demand proper funding for TFL? The Mayor and GLA are quick to blame Tory government funding cuts for the threats to our jobs, conditions and pensions, but they could try putting up a fight for more money rather than passing on the cuts to us and our passengers.

And by “a fight”, we mean mobilising public support, not just saying stern words in meetings.

JOHNSON’S FOLLIES

None of Boris Johnson’s pet projects from his time as Mayor are ever threatened by TFL’s financial crises.

Take the cable car. Generally unsuccessful from day one as it goes from nowhere to nowhere, and now its sponsorship deal is ending. TFL has cut the sponsor fee 75% but still can’t find anybody interested. Yet, TFL must keep paying to run it regularly, at great cost, because it was dreamt up by Johnson!

Cable car workers’ jobs must be protected, but would the funding for the service not be better spent redeploying them to roles elsewhere within TFL, and levelling up their terms and conditions?

WILLESDEN OR WON’T...

Staff from Bakerloo North and the SRT were surprised to be told to work at Willesden Junction, a non-LU station, to do assisted despatch.

We’re not familiarised at non-LU stations, and they’re not subject to our rules and procedures. Local reps got on the case straight away and we expect the instruction to be withdrawn.

Isn’t it ironic, though, that it comes just as LU is proposing to cut platform duties from Bakerloo stations like Queen’s Park, Stonebridge Park, and Harrow & Wealdstone? If having staff on platforms is so important that LU wants to send us to non-LU stations to do it, maybe they shouldn’t be cutting it on our own stations.

VICTORIAN VALUES

“Special service” has become the norm on the Victoria line. On some days, it has been as low as 14 trains.

Management blame it on “operator unavailability” or “train cancellations”, meaning: “we don’t want to admit it, but we don’t employ enough drivers”.

The upshot? Heavy demands on drivers and over-stretched stations.

BAGEL FACTORY

The old ticket office at Oxford Circus is now an outlet of “Bagel Factory”.

Getting the ticket office back might have been a big ask, but the fact LU didn’t even consider using the space to improve staff facilities (the main messroom is cramped and overcrowded) says a lot about its priorities. Rental revenue comes first!

NO TO LONE WORKING

A recent LU bulletin makes it clear lone working will increase following planned stations jobs cuts.

Proposed mitigations include the “buddy system”, where one lone worker phones another lone worker to check on them. Not much help if there’s an incident taking place then and there.

What’s next? De-staffing stations entirely and having multiple stations monitored remotely by a single member of staff in a control centre looking at monitors? We wouldn’t put it past this lot.

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

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