



tubeworker

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Tories plan new restrictions on rail strikes

Vote Labour

Fight to abolish all anti-union laws!

On 12 December we have the chance to kick out the Tories. *Tubeworker* encourages all readers to vote Labour. A Labour government will:

- renationalise the railways
- repeal anti-union laws
- increase public transport funding
- control rents
- make prescriptions free
- end outsourcing in the NHS
- tackle the climate crisis with a Green New Deal
- strengthen laws against disability discrimination

Tubeworker would like our unions to issue a joint statement demanding that Labour commits to restoring and increasing the TfL subsidy, slashed to zero by the Tories, and ends outsourcing across TfL by directly employing workers such as cleaners. If you agree, propose that at your next union meeting!

Three of our four unions - ASLEF, TSSA, and Unite - are affiliated to Labour, and must use that direct link to make these demands. Although RMT is not affiliated, it is linked via its Parliamentary Group of Labour MPs.

SOCIALISM

A socialist Labour government could socialise the immense wealth concentrated in banking and finance.

This could be used for socially and environmentally necessary projects such as mass council house building and expanding renewable energy and public transport.

Some *Tubeworker* activists want Labour to be bolder and more radical on the issue of Brexit, committing more clearly to Remain, and are campaigning alongside Labour for a Socialist Europe during the election. For more, see labourforasocialisteurope.org

One of the most pressing reasons why we need a Labour government is to get rid of anti-union laws, which recently scuppered RMT's cleaners' ballot. ABM cleaners voted

by a 98% majority for strikes, but anti-union laws bar them from taking legal industrial action.

Of 620 cleaners balloted, 294 voted for strikes and only five against. The turnout was over 48%, but this fell short of the 50% required by the 2016 Trade Union Act.

This majority and turnout would be seen as a legitimate, indeed overwhelming, mandate in any other democratic vote. For example, it is a higher majority and turnout than the election that made Sadiq Khan Mayor of London in 2016.

The Tories claimed their laws ensure that strikes have enough support in the workplace, but if just 11 more cleaners had voted *against* the strike, RMT would be allowed to call action, despite this showing a higher level of opposition!

LESSONS

RMT resourced and ran an energetic campaign to mobilise turnout, but most of the work was done by a core of activists.

Next time we must ensure that every branch officer, rep, and activist makes the ballot a priority. Reps for directly-employed staff on stations, trains, fleet and elsewhere need to see organising and empowering cleaners in their workplaces as their responsibility as much as recruiting and organising their LU workmates.

But our anger and frustration should not be directed inwards, but towards the injustice and affront to democracy that the anti-union laws represent.

The cleaners' ballot result follows swiftly from the High Court injunction (i.e., banning) a Royal Mail strike, after bosses claimed their union, the CWU, had "interfered" with the ballot process by... actively campaigning and encouraging members to vote yes! The ballot result had sailed past the thresholds set by the 2016 Act, but older laws imposed by Thatcher and Major, and never repealed by Blair or Brown, are still used to obstruct workers' action.



FIGHT TO FREE OUR UNIONS

We can take a huge step towards scrapping anti-union laws by electing a Labour government committed to repealing anti-union laws.

We will need to fight to hold that government to account, and to push it to implement Labour conference policy to abolish all anti-union laws.

The Tories, not satisfied with the shackles already on our unions, intend to restrict our limited right to strike even further. The plan a new law to force us to run a minimum service during our own strikes!

The Free Our Unions campaign, supported by three national trade unions (RMT, IWGB, and FBU) and dozens of union branches and regions, including RMT London Transport Region, provides resources and a vital network to help us do this. More at bit.ly/FreeOurUnions.

At some point, we may need to consider collectively defying these anti-democratic laws.

MAINTAIN MOMENTUM IN CLEANERS' FIGHT

To keep up momentum after anti-union laws scuppered the strike ballot, RMT must call further activity in the "Justice for Tube Cleaners" campaign.

Any and all suggestions should be considered. How about demonstrations at City Hall, or key TfL/LU office buildings such as Palestra or 55 Broadway?

The underlying message of the cleaners' campaign is that cleaners are as much part of the permanent London Underground workforce as drivers, station staff, or engineers, and as such deserve equal treatment.

That's a message that TfL/LU bosses and the Mayor need to hear loud and clear.

DEFEND RCI JOBS

Sounding a loud fanfare about how much they care about us being battered at work, LUL management are promising what looks like an increase in staffing but on closer examination amounts to undermining us.

Management say they will recruit 60 new revenue staff, but they are calling them "Revenue Control Staff", who'll be paid nearly £20,000 less than existing RCIs.

There will also be 150 more CPOS staff (lower-paid TfL workers), 50 more coppers, and an enlarged Workplace Violence Unit. In fact, there will be more of everything except what we actually need ... station staff.

The company does little enough to protect us from violence at work. The fact that it is willing to use the rising tide of assaults as a pretext to extend the use of lower-paid grades is an indication of how low it will go.

WOT NO RADIO?

LU has recently shipped in TfL Surface Transport staff for patrol duties at LU stations.

Not only does this undermine Tube staff, it also puts the Surface Transport staff in danger, as highlighted by a recent incident at Barking.

A Surface Transport worker attended a suspected stabbing, but instead of thanking and supporting him, management told him off for not having a radio - that'll be the non-existent radio that they don't issue to these workers! Management were quick to point out that there is a lengthy document with some small print saying that you can have a radio if you ask nicely, but that's not good enough.

We need proper staffing to protect us against violence at work.

GET ASSAULTED? GET AN LDI!

Central line staff have been shocked to be summoned to LDIs for absences that include assaults.

The policy on this is very clear - as is the basic human morality! If you are assaulted at work and need some time off sick, then you deserve support not punishment. It is a breach of the policy to even count this as an item, let alone to call an LDI and issue a warning. It is not good enough for management to say that a warning can be overturned at appeal, as the member of staff should not have to go through this in the first place.

To top it all, this is happening while management are trying to convince us how much they care about staff assaults. This really is adding insult to injury.

TIME FOR A BALLOT ON INTERSERVE

We've previously reported on the struggles faced by outsourced security workers in depots, sidings, and office buildings, employed by Interserve.

A number of them began getting organised through RMT, with the Piccadilly and District West branch taking a particular lead. Plans were laid for a dispute and ballot against cuts planned by Interserve, which would have seen many workers lose hours and pay. Things stalled at RMT head office, but local reps in the branch are pushing to get things back on track.

Our unions must empower the struggles of all members. Time for a ballot on Interserve!

ANTI-UNION LAWS SCUPPER VIC LINE STRIKE

The Victoria Line drivers' strike planned for 27-28 November has been called off, after the bosses threatened to take the union to court.

The threat appears to have been issued during negotiations, after reps raised current safety issues that have arisen since the dispute began. LU claimed that, as these were not part of the original trade dispute, the suggestion that they might inform some element of the strike invalidated the entire dispute.

Yet again, the bosses have wielded the anti-union laws against us. It's utterly artificial to insist that new issues are not raised in long-running disputes.

More evidence for why we have to fight to scrap the laws!

GET MOVING WITH BALLOTS

The longer our unions go without launching ballots over LU pay/conditions, the more momentum we hand to the bosses.

Delaying only benefits the employer. RMT announced an aspiration to have its ballot ready by the end of November; members have a right to expect these aspirations to be followed through.

Negotiations have secured important concessions but it's workers' action, our ability to stop the job, that will force real movement from the bosses.

The same goes for ongoing issues on stations and revenue over workplace violence and understaffing. There's a strong mood across the job for a fightback over these issues, and several branches, and the RMT London Transport Regional Council, have now passed policies calling for disputes and ballots.

We need to get moving. Khan faces re-election in May 2020, and if we're not in a position early in the new year to announce a programme of strikes leading up to that election, we'll be missing a golden opportunity.



Tubeworker supports Jayesh Patel for RMT National Executive Committee. Use your vote! The election closes on 1 December.

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



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Got a story for Tubeworker? We welcome reports and comments from all Tube workers.

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