



tubeworker

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LU pay fight:

BALLOT FOR ACTION!

After months of negotiation, LU's latest offer on pay and conditions comes nowhere near to meeting our demands. The company won't budge except under the pressure of industrial action, so we have to ballot immediately.

REMEMBER WHAT WE'RE FIGHTING FOR

Fights over pay/conditions are our opportunity to go on the offensive for improvements and gains we want, rather than fighting defensive battles against management cuts.

All four our unions have similar demands at the core of their claims:

- A substantial pay award, with RMT, Unite, and TSSA demanding a flat-rate minimum for the lowest paid
- A four-day, 32-hour week.
- Equalisation of staff travel facilities.

RMT's claim also includes the crucial demand to equalise the CSA grade on stations. What LU has offered is an insult. Its two-year offer would make little noticeable material difference to most workers given sharply rising costs of rent, etc., and its offer on staff travel facilities, which would give them option to level them down, not up, is risible.

We work in a shift-based, fatigue-inducing industry where extreme shift working and unhealthy conditions risk taking years off our lives in retirement. We owe it to ourselves, and to the workers who'll come after us, to fight for better conditions.

SUPPORT THE 20 SEPTEMBER CLIMATE STRIKE

On Friday 20 September, school students have called on workers to join them in striking to demand radical action from governments on climate change.

Several RMT branches have committed to supporting the strikes. This could take the form of something simple, like taking pictures in the mess room or outside the workplace of workers holding up signs/placards supporting the strike, or something more substantial like joining local protests.

If any local disputes are in a position to name strikes around 20 September, we should coordinate them on that day, allowing us to link up with the school strikers.

For more on this, see the last edition of our bulletin: bit.ly/tw-Sep20



We generate around £300m per day for the London economy, just by turning up to work. It's our labour - not that of the bosses in Palestra and Broadway - that creates that wealth. We shouldn't accept the company's claims that there's no money to finance our demands.

IS A REDUCED WORKING WEEK POSSIBLE? HOW WOULD IT AFFECT ME?

There are different ways a shorter working week could be modelled. What we are fighting for is more time off work with no loss of pay.

The easiest way of implementing a reduced working week would be to reduce contractual hours, then reimburse any hours worked over the reduced amount as additional banked rest days, which could then be rostered into the job. This would obviously necessitate a significant increase in the staffing level, in order to cover the extra time off, which means the pay/conditions fight is also a fight for more jobs.

LU says they can't afford to implement this. We should continue to fight against the removal of the subsidy as a core issue, but despite this, LU is profitable and has money. It makes an annual surplus of around £300m. Much of that money is reallocated to other part of TfL, such as privatised bus operations. Industrial action can pressure the company to make alternative choices about how to use their resources.

FIGHTING ON TWO (OR MORE) FRONTS?

Workers in parts of engineering and fleet are facing job cuts as part of the "Transformation" scheme.

RMT recently called off a ballot for strikes over that, showing there's more work to do. Some have argued we can't fight on two fronts at once.

The reality is, we don't have a choice. We can't roll over and accept a substandard pay deal out of a desire to concentrate on the "Transformation" fight. All that will do is embolden the bosses to attack us harder.

We have to fight on two fronts - in fact, on more than two, given local disputes involving drivers on various lines and staff on some station groups. The momentum of each dispute can be used to galvanise others.

We have fought on multiple issues in parallel before. It's not the ideal situation to be in, but it can be done. And we should link the fights by retaining a focus on removal of the subsidy as a key underlying cause.

WINNING THE BALLOT, STRIKING TO WIN

This will be the first combine-wide, all grades ballot RMT has undertaken since the new anti-union laws were imposed.

We should take heart from the fact that our last such ballot, in 2015, would have exceeded their thresholds had the new laws been in place.

The campaign to get the vote out can be broken down into manageable units, do reps can take responsibility for meticulously canvassing individual members in their area to ensure they vote.

We also need to discuss in advance what kind of action we take. A token one-day strike won't shift the bosses. We need to call sustained and escalating action, possibly starting with a two-day strike and building up from there.

COORDINATE WITH THE CLEANERS

ABM cleaners in the RMT are also preparing to ballot for strikes.

We should ensure the directly-employed workers' fights over pay and conditions and "Transformation" is coordinated with the cleaners' fight for travel passes, sick pay, and improved holiday and pension arrangements. That might mean striking together, or it might mean scheduling strikes in a creative way to maximise impact.

Unions should also raise outsourced workers' concerns in pay talks with LU, and demand that, even short of taking outsourced worker back in house, LU instructs ABM to improve cleaners' conditions.