



tubeworker

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TORIES BRING BACK THE WORKHOUSE. MAKE LABOUR FIGHT FOR US!

At the Conservative Party Conference, George Osborne and David Cameron showed they want to return to the Victorian era. They announced that benefit claimants will have to 'work for your dole', an extension of their already-hated Workfare scheme.

This echoes the Victorian workhouse, built to deter the poor from seeking help, where 'inmates' worked in prison-like conditions. Like Victorian times, the Government wants to blame unemployed people for unemployment and use compulsory work to punish them for it.

If anyone deserves punishing for unemployment, it is businesses that lay people off but continue to pocket profit. But the Government will not punish business. Cameron closed his party conference by praising business and 'profit' and 'tax cuts' for the rich. The Tories boast of cutting corporation tax to the lowest levels of any developed nation. This Government is on the side of the rich and acts for them.

WHO ACTS FOR US?

The Labour Party is funded by our trade unions. In our unions, we can have our say about what society should look like; these views can then be channelled into the Labour Party. Through its links to the unions, the Labour Party is the closest thing we've got to a party that will stand up for the needs of working class people.

At Labour's Conference, Ed Miliband sounded vaguely on our side with promises to repealed the Bedroom Tax and freeze energy prices.

But we want much more. Through our trade unions, we can push for Labour to commit to:

- Take all energy companies into public ownership. Why stick to freezing energy prices?
- Kick private companies out of the NHS; reverse the Tories' NHS privatisation; take contracts for delivering NHS services away from

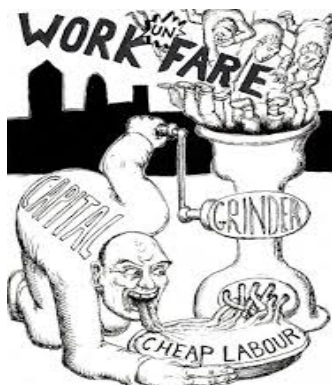
vulture companies like SERCO and Virgin so that NHS care is provided as a public service, with no motive to make profit. Cancel the NHS's colossal debts to private companies.

- Tax the rich to pay for public services. A tax of the top 1% of this country (with 20% of total income, £240 billion) could pay for a lot, while the rich wouldn't even feel it! There is no need for Labour's promise to stick to Tory spending cuts.

- Renationalise the railways. Our own unions, TSSA and ASLEF, pushed a motion on renationalising the railways through this recent Labour conference. All unions, including RMT, which is not formally affiliated to Labour, should get behind the campaign to make this policy into part of Labour's manifesto at the next election.

- Renationalise Royal Mail (if the Tories succeed in selling it off). The postal workers' union, CWU, got a motion passed through Labour conference to get Labour to commit to reverse the Tories' potential privatisation of the postal service. We must push Labour not to ignore this conference decision!

Unlike the rich, who can buy whatever they need, the working class relies on public healthcare, housing, education, benefits and services. We need to fight for the Labour Party to listen to us and to put our needs first.



CLEANERS' COLUMN

CLEANERS' JOBS CUT

In the year to October 2011, the Metro's owner paid up to £3m a year to TfL. When the contract was first awarded to Metro in 2010, LU said: 'The revenue from this lucrative contract will go straight back into funding improvements to public transport in the Capital and will also include new measures to reduce the number of copies left behind at the end of the distribution period every day'.

So that would mean more cleaners and train litter pickers, then? So why do we hear this week that ISS has cut one cleaner off every station on every shift? ISS has cut back on stock, supplies and cleaning materials.

With the colossal quantity of free papers, it's already back-breaking work for cleaners; a huge amount of unsafe lifting. But LU piles work onto cleaners, shirks the blame for their conditions and watches the cash flow in.

ISS was awarded the contract by TfL on the basis that ISS would deliver 'efficiencies'. LU has, in effect, asked for these cuts to supplies and staff. At the same times it earns millions for distributing the papers the cleaners clear up. It's win-win for LU and lose-lose for the cleaners.

GIVE BIOMETRICS THE FINGER

ISS cleaners have voted overwhelmingly to take action against biometric booking on. We will not share our personal data with our bosses who have openly said they will share it with the Home Office. ISS is wobbling, delaying the imposition until at least January, but is installing the machines, so still intends to proceed. As well as boycotting the machines, let's use the vote to take some more action - and hold protests too!

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Want to get every issue of Tubeworker (published at least monthly)? Send us a tenner (cheques payable to WL Bulletins) and your address.

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

Contact Workers' Liberty, 20E Tower Workshops, Riley Road, London SE1 3DG

020-7394-8923

Tubeworker's weblog - daily updates -

www.workersliberty.org/twblog

We're on Facebook too.

Make Tubeworker Bulletin

WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?

Interesting figures in a TfL equalities report. Women are over 50% of London's population, but only 22.5% of TfL employees. Only 15% of operational grades are women!

Why? It's taking time to break down the barrier that the railway is 'men's work'.

Despite equality policies on paper, LU does little to challenge the sexist culture that many women face at work. One in seven people in any workforce are carers, the majority women. So LU's failure to meet flexible working needs excludes women.

It is not enough to have some women senior managers. Equality has to include the majority, not just the elite. In our unions and workplaces, we must fight so that no section of our class is sidelined.

VIRTUAL TICKET SELLER

Tubeworker hears that Cubic has produced a prototype for a new ticket machine: a person on a screen will talk to 'customers' from somewhere else and sell tickets in different languages.

People want to speak to a human being, so LU twists this into a remote 'virtual SAMF'. By replicating the very human beings it wants to remove, LU is tacitly admitting that it needs staff. It would rather invest a fortune in developing virtual staff than employ the ones it has. A classic, if ridiculous, example of the way employers use technology!

This story shows that LU is worried about its image if it removes staff completely. We can get the public on our side in our fight to save station staffing.

NEW LU UNIFORM?

We're glad LU is reviewing the uniform. But this should not be about promoting a new glossy company image. Our needs and comfort should be at the centre of this redesign.

After some forceful campaigning led by an RMT safety rep, LU has agreed to issue thermal under trousers. This shows that if LU does not willingly listen to our needs during this review, we can force the issue when we feel strongly enough.

DEMOCRACY AT WORK?

LU is to consult the public about the Bank station upgrade. How about consulting the people who work there?! The people who get squashed with their back against the wall of a crowded platform during service disruption; the people who have done platform duties in stifling temperatures during the recent

heatwave.

From our attempts to help passengers in difficult circumstances, we have an insight into what they need. We know what we need to make our workplace a less suffocating, uncomfortable and stressful environment. We live in a 'democracy' but have no say on the place where we spend most of our waking life! That's one of the biggest holes in capitalist democracy.

SOLIDARITY WITH STRIKING FIREFIGHTERS

On 25 September, firefighters walked out for four hours as part of their fight against attacks on their pension rights.

Firefighters keep us safe at work every day. So if they are not there, we are not safe. Hats off to the Tube workers who refused to work on safety grounds, although it is a shame that more did not do so. If the unions could disseminate information and ammunition more thoroughly and promptly, that would help.

MORALE BOOST?

A recent Chief Operating Officer's update opened, 'Last week we had five lost time injuries (LTIs) which of course is too many!' It sounds like the 'lost time' (ie. sick pay) is the problem, rather than the injury! It continues, 'Last week saw a mixed service, with all areas combined not reaching their performance targets'. London Underground, in aiming to inspire us to achieve management targets, adopts a tone of censure in its employee communications. This style reveals that they don't relate to us as people.

It's a reminder to us that we need to look after ourselves, organise and place little trust in management's measures of 'success' for securing our jobs and futures.

No 'ROVING' SUPERVISORS!

The Traffic Circular advert for 'roving' station supervisors confirmed our suspicions about LU's plans.

This threatens supervisor jobs across the network. If LU gets away with it on the Wembley Central Group and at Kew and Gunnersbury, how long before it's tried wherever LU is not confined by minimum numbers regulations?

Tubeworker has had enough of unions talking about their determination to fight in the future. Unions should have already entered into dispute over this, since LU even wrote to unions last month about these plans. Now LU is openly pressing ahead with them, there can no longer be any excuse for avoiding a fight.

VICTORY ON THE VIC?

Tubeworker is pleased to report that Victoria Line managers have been much better behaved since RMT members voted 'yes' to strike. LU has agreed to meetings to resolve issues. RMT put on an imaginative form of action, threatening to refuse to drive any more than four rounders. Action produces results! We don't have to just put up with being bullied.

BAD BARRIERS

A Central Line train packed with Notting Hill Carnival partygoers partially overran the platform at Holland Park station. Passengers panicked thinking there was smoke on the train, trying to force the doors open and climbing out of the train in between the carriages using newly fitted inter-car barriers as climbing steps. These are the barriers management claim are so secure that we don't need staff on platforms!

Rightly, RMT has told LU that if it does not guarantee not cuts in station staffing, then we are in dispute.

SWIPECARD?

We hear that LU has been consulting Supervisors at Every Journey Matters workshops about bringing in swipecard booking on for LU staff. The machines would move responsibly for booking on away from the SS and onto individual staff, and facilitate non-SS grades working alone. No more checks that someone is fit for duty. No 'duty of care' when staff can be cut! This mirrors plans for biometric booking on for cleaners. Let station staff and cleaners unite to stop biometric booking on and to keep supervisors on every station!

VOTE BRIAN MUNRO FOR RMT LONDON TRANSPORT REGION COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVES REPRESENTATIVE.

BRIAN HAS LED WINNING CAMPAIGNS, E.G. REINSTATEMENT OF SACKED DRIVERS' REPS EAMONN LYNCH AND ARWYN THOMAS AND THIS YEAR'S BAKERLOO LINE DETRAINMENT DISPUTE.

BRIAN IS THE DYNAMIC, KNOWLEDGEABLE AND EXPERIENCED REP WE NEED TO DEFEAT JOB CUTS AND ATTACKS.

RMT MEMBERS WILL GET BALLOT PAPERS FROM 15TH OCTOBER. SEND YOUR BALLOT PAPER BACK BY POST.

Tubeworker is produced by Tube workers and published by Workers' Liberty, an organisation fighting as part of the labour movement for a socialist alternative to both capitalism and Stalinism, based on common ownership and democracy.

We want one democratic, fighting union for all railworkers. We reject artificial divisions between workers of different grades. We oppose racism, sexism, homophobia and all prejudice that divides us.