



tubeworker

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TICKET OFFICES:

DON'T SIT BACK AND WAIT

LUL has delayed implementation of the ticket office cuts and closures until autumn 2008. But management are clearly determined to press ahead with the cuts. Infraco surveyors continue to visit stations and measure ticket offices for demolition.

We can not take our foot off the pedal and sit back and wait for this attack to return. It is good to see the unions still campaigning, but nothing puts on pressure like industrial action. RMT and TSSA should tell LUL that unless they withdraw - not just delay - these plans, and unless all preparation work is stopped, then they will be in dispute.

www.workersliberty.org/ticketoffices

WEMBLEY WAY

Bakerloo line management took station staff on a trip to Wembley Stadium's sumptuous hospitality facilities - to schmooze them about their plans for the transferring Silverlink stations.

The luxury could still not persuade staff that security guards and agency staff are a good idea. But the event should convince the unions that LUL has no intention of backing down. Time to put up a fight.

www.workersliberty.org/silverlink

DETRAINMENT DISPUTE:

WHAT NEXT?

The last Bakerloo detrainment strike was once again solid. But again fighting alone - and with managers and RCIs doing their duties - it sadly had little effect.

Detrainment staff remain determined to stop management imposing lone working, but are asking how best to carry on this campaign. It may be best to integrate it with the campaign over Silverlink transfer, since these are the stations where they work.

If LUL imposes rosters that leave staff detraining alone, the unions should add this to the list of issues (along with agency staff, security guards and mobile supervision) on which they are battling management, and about which they should very soon ballot for action by all grades across the combine.

www.workersliberty.org/detrain

GUN CRIME: PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

Gun and violent crime has become a big issue, with several murders this year alone, many in London. The media and politicians don't help us to understand this issue.

We may have ideas about why gang violence happens, and some of us will have experiences. As working-class people, we need to start rejecting our government's 'solutions' and thinking about what we would put forward instead.

After a spate of gun crimes in south London in April, Tony Blair blamed 'black culture' as 'a specific problem within a specific criminal culture'. He turned gun crime into a race issue, rather than a problem with the society he ruled over. He blamed the black community as a whole and used old racist stereotypes of black people as criminals, which have been around since anti-immigration writers invented this as a scapegoat for society's problems.

Blair's 'solution' is to say black people should sort their own communities out. Police measures target black people: you are six times more likely to be stopped and searched if you are black than white.

David Cameron weighed in with a Tory 'family values' accusation that single-parent families and absent fathers are the problem. Again, this shifts responsibility away from causes within government control. He's saying that the working class needs to solve our own problems. And if we don't, we need more police to whip us into shape.

Neither of these look at the context of gun and violent crime. While it's not a 'race' issue as Blair insists, black people are especially likely to be affected by or involved in violent crime. Shootings and murders involving black people under 20 in London have more than doubled in the past 4 years from 31 in 2003 to 76 in '06. Over 50% of murder victims are black.

Black people face huge discrimination. In 2005, there was 11% black unemployment, compared to 5% for white people. 22.7% of African Caribbean boys get 5 A-C grades at GCSE, compared with 36% overall. More

black people are in prison than in university.

In 2001, a quarter of London's homeless households were African and Caribbean, although they are only 12% of London's population. Racism, not 'race', is an issue.

It would be too simple to say that black people commit crime simply because they are face racism: the causes are more complex. But that should not be an excuse for our politicians to do nothing about racism and deprivation, which provide the context for much of the crime we see.



In our class-divided society, the people at the top who have never seen an estate or known anyone affected by gun crime, are interested in maintaining the unequal system they rule over. They moralise to us, and demand that people correct their

behaviour, because, unlike social problems, this can be done without interfering with their interests.

Crime does not happen in a vacuum, but in a capitalist society where people are scrambling to survive, with no access to resources unless they work punishingly hard. It is not just that people lack opportunity to get out of poor backgrounds, and 'get to the top'. It is that there is a 'top' and a 'bottom' at all, where the majority are kept low to make the profits for those higher up.

The ruling parties are not serious about sorting society's problems. Working-class people, in unions and communities, need to come up with solutions that we would like to see - better education for everyone; publicly-owned, cheap housing; jobs and wages that lift people out of poverty; facilities for young people instead of closed youth clubs and expensive leisure centres.

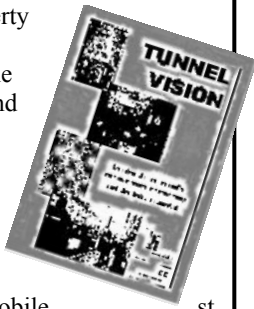
Tubeworker's weblog
- daily updates! -

www.workersliberty.org/twblog

AS WE WERE SAYING ...

Back in 2004, the Workers' Liberty pamphlet 'Tunnel Vision' reviewed the fight against PPP and looked ahead to the attacks we might face. It predicted (amongst other things) ticket office cuts, use of agency staff, and mobile station staff. All these things are now in LUL's plans.

Subscribe to Tubeworker (see box) and we'll throw in a copy of the pamphlet.



FAT CAT PAY-OFF

Believe it or not, Metronet's bosses get to slink away from the disaster they created with more than a million quid of public money in their over-stuffed pockets. It's an incredible smash-and-grab raid.

Tubeworker wonders whether the same standards might apply to the mortal Tube worker. Perhaps the new disciplinary policy that LUL is cooking up could say ... If you are guilty of gross incompetence, we will sack you - and give you a million smackers so you never have to work again. Cool.

WOT NO COAT HOOK?

Some trains are missing cab coat hooks, and they are not being replaced because depot stores can't afford to buy any.

So all this money has been poured into Metronet for what, precisely?! Perhaps someone could ring the departing Andrew Lezales and ask if he can spare a few of his many quid.

www.workersliberty.org/metronet

MIND THE WAGS

Not the footballers' Wives And Girlfriends, but Wide Aisle Gates - like Manual Gates with a motor. Which sounds great: no more arm-ache, and a chance to get away from the gate and share the workload.

But management think it is a jolly wheeze for cutting staffing on the gateline, refusing to give guarantees not to. *Tubeworker* is a fan of new technology, but management use it for their cost-cutting agenda, not to the benefit of workers and passengers.

www.workersliberty.org/staffinglevels

Tubeworker is produced by tubeworkers in the Alliance for 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. Only our bosses benefit from a divided workforce.

ERU DEPOT CLOSURE

TubeLines plans to close the ERU's Tottenham depot. RMT has declared its intention to oppose this, so let's hope it does - with action if words don't work. After all, this small group of workers has a lot of muscle.

www.workersliberty.org/tubelines

NORTHERN LINE CLEANERS

Northern line ISS cleaners are badly messed around. Many have no fixed station, don't know where they will work from one day to the next, made to work on stations where they are not familiarised.

Fewer cleaners are doing more and more work. Just one cleaner covers Balham to Morden. At central London stations, there is usually one cleaner, where there used to be four or five. Their supervisors have been known to use threats to force them to travel without tickets on duty.

Some cleaners have resisted this regime, but so far on an individual basis. There will soon be a meeting for Northern line cleaners to work out options for resisting together. Station staff need to give solidarity.

THE VALUE OF TIME

LUL's new catchphrase is that its core value is time. As we know already, time is money. Go figure ...

10% WORST

Management have a new initiative in their relentless drive to persecute the sick: targeting the '10% worst attenders'. The unlucky tenth could find their names emblazoned across office walls, with little icons plotting how they will be poked and prodded back to work or off the books.

The '10% worst' will include people with serious injuries, life-threatening illness, and disabilities. Picking on the vulnerable? You'd have to be really sick to do that.

www.workersliberty.org/sicksystem

REGIME CHANGE

East Ham group's GSM is making himself unpopular with staff - managers turning up unannounced on

people's doorsteps, disciplining staff when they've done nothing wrong, ...

Staff are getting mightily naffed off, and are busy planning the fightback ...
www.workersliberty.org/district

OFF THEIR ROCKERS?

LUL's latest SPAD-reducing trick really takes the biscuit ... or some form of confectionary anyway. Bakerloo management made sticks of rock with 'Bakerloo' running through them, and a reminder message about SPADs on the wrapper. Yes, really.

They then had to remind drivers not to eat them in the cab, as it might cause a sugar rush and ruin their concentration, thus risking a SPAD.

Apparently, managers actually get paid for coming up with nonsense like this. More than we do, in fact.

www.workersliberty.org/SPADs

DELAYED TAKE-OFF

Chaos on the Picc on 1st November, when a shortish suspension led to delays late into the evening, no thanks to management not implementing an emergency timetable.

With half-hour gaps between Heathrow trains, punters were none too happy. At Northfields, up to five trains in a row tipped out their loads of airport-bound passengers. Three station staff is not enough for a situation like this: it's amazing no staff were assaulted.

www.workersliberty.org/piccadilly

WAKE FOR THE EAST LONDON LINE?

RMT will protest against East London line privatisation, just as the line closes for the extension to be built. Get yerselves along.

Thursday 13th December, 11am outside City Hall

Better to stop the privatisation than to mourn it. It is a major setback that we have got as far as the line's closure with no progress in our fight to stop the sell-off. There has been leafleting and lobbying, but protest postcards alone will not keep the line public. LUL has transferred staff off the line so they can hand an empty tenancy to the new operator, and the unions have let them do so without a sniff of industrial action.

The fight is never over until it's over. But the unions must raise their game.

www.workersliberty.org/ell

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

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