



# tubeworker

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## UNION FIGHTBACK SLOWS, BUT DOES NOT STOP, MANAGEMENT ATTACKS

**T**hrough our unions, Tube workers have slowed London Underground's drive to casualise our job - but if the unions had avoided mistakes, they could have stopped it in its tracks. For the first time, TSSA joined RMT in balloting for strikes. And RMT took the right step in calling an all-grades ballot. Members voted by over 80% to strike; the Executives called a 72-hour stoppage. (ASLEF, true to form, sat it out repeating the nonsense mantra that 'these issues don't affect drivers'.)

This pressure forced LUL to: scrap plans for mobile supervisors; withdraw a new, weaker procedure for 'refusal to work on safety grounds'; improve protection for signallers whose jobs are to be scrapped; and back down on some other attacks too.

But we judge management's position not on how much it has changed, but on what it says. It leaves ex-Silverlink stations without supervisors overnight, private security guards patrolling the stations instead. It leaves the ticket office cuts sure to come back another day; does not give a satisfactory result in the Bakerloo detrainment dispute; will not end the chaos and unfairness in the promotions system; and has several other flaws.

The unions needed to reject this offer and continue fighting it. But they called off strike action, not just because of the progress achieved, but because they feared that they could not deliver a solid strike. TSSA remains a union that has not taken strike action on the Tube since 1926.

MT made mistakes too. Firstly, members felt ill-informed. With management pumping out propaganda, it was vital the union gave members up-to-date information on developments and issues. But with head offices leaving this to rank-and-file activists, workers often did not know what was going on, finding things out

Tubeworker's blog has a series of articles that provide an indepth analysis of the dispute:	
<a href="http://www.workersliberty.org/whatitsays">www.workersliberty.org/whatitsays</a>	What management's document actually says
<a href="#">/stumbles</a>	Stumbles along the way - the unions' mistakes
<a href="#">/crossgrades</a>	Cross-grades solidarity put to the test
<a href="#">/24/7</a>	Defend round-the-clock station supervision
<a href="#">/repsmeeting</a>	Report on RMT reps' meeting
<a href="#">/moved</a>	Have management moved?
<a href="#">/allchange</a>	All change, please!: rethinking dispute strategies
<a href="http://www.workersliberty.org/casualise">www.workersliberty.org/casualise</a>	Review the whole dispute
<b>Tubeworker's weblog - daily updates - <a href="http://www.workersliberty.org/twblog">www.workersliberty.org/twblog</a></b>	

from the press rather than our own unions.

Secondly, although balloting all grades was the right decision, it was taken rather late in the campaign, so the head-in-the-sand sectionalism promoted by ASLEF had a headstart amongst drivers before RMT started chasing after it. It is wrong that station staff ready to fight were held back by perceived reluctance from other grades.

Thirdly, the unions made organisational errors. eg. RMT's balloting period was so short that only a quarter of members voted.

Nonetheless, the action could and should have continued, perhaps in a different form, such as two 24-hour strikes in one week rather than a 72-hour strike starting on a Sunday. But TSSA reps voted to call off the action, and then a majority of RMT reps took the same view (but without a vote).

Management will come back with more attacks, the most certain being the ticket office cuts. Several issues are now in 'working groups', which LUL will use to sneak in their attacks again and demobilise our opposition. And we are already in the run-up to the next pay claim. So the unions must learn from these mistakes. Or we will be in the same place in a year's time, holding back a tide of cuts and casualisation

but conceding a few more points because we still think we are not strong enough.

Why do management attack Tube workers? Because they can. They are training managers in union-busting strategies because they know that if they can break our unions, there will be nothing to stop them doing exactly what they want to us and out jobs. These are not the old days any more; the people running LUL now are serious players who won't give up at the first sign of a one-day strike.

The big question is: Are we still able to defend and advance our conditions in this new climate? We need to rethink our tactics and strategy in our ongoing battle to secure the best possible working conditions.

We should consider new tactics such as hardship payments to workers who struggle financially with strikes; imaginative forms of industrial action; and stronger links with the wider trade union movement and public. Crucially, decisions about strikes must be taken by the workers involved: after all, we would probably make better decisions!

Management have taken their first step along the casualisation road - but the unions' (albeit flawed) fightback at least prevented that step from becoming a leap.

**Workers' Liberty London forum**

## How Red is Ken?

**Thursday 17 April, 7:30-9pm**  
**The Lucas Arms, 245a Grays Inn Road, Kings Cross**

## NEW METRONET DISPUTE

**M**etronet management want to squirm out of the deal that last year's strike forced them to accept.

Workers could face transfers to other companies and compulsory redundancies, and Metronet refuses to deliver travel passes and decent pensions. Maybe Metronet wants to get rid of staff, and will not pay for benefits for people they are about to dump?!

Metronet RMT members have voted for strikes. The next steps are to ensure a 100% solid strike, and for LUL operational staff to remember that it is not safe to work without Metronet workers on duty.

[www.workersliberty.org/metronet](http://www.workersliberty.org/metronet)

## TAKE ACTION FOR EVA!

**L**UL has upheld the outrageous sacking of Eva Bayford on appeal. Eva's workmates on Tower Hill group have decided to ballot for industrial action to demand her reinstatement.

Management seem to think that they can dispose of probationers at will. It is up to us to show them that they can't!

[www.workersliberty.org/district](http://www.workersliberty.org/district)

## BEWARE THE RAINBOW

**L**UL's latest wheeze for bullying the sick is the 'rainbow chart', identifying 'patterns' of sickness even for staff who have not triggered the attendance policy.

Maybe you had two days off in 2004, three in 2005 and one in 2006. That's good attendance. But the rainbow chart tells your manager that all three periods of sickness started on a Thursday, in a month with an 'r' in its name, and on a day when Luton Town were playing at home. Bingo! You're in a fact-finding, forced to explain to a manager with the scent of blood in his/her nostrils that you don't even support Luton Town.

You couldn't make this stuff up. At the end of this particular rainbow lies not a crock of gold but a crock of sh\*t.

[www.workersliberty.org/sicksystem](http://www.workersliberty.org/sicksystem)

*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.

## A LITTLE LONE WORKING PERHAPS?

*A member of Bakerloo detrainment staff writes.*

**W**hat does the suspension of strike action against casualisation mean in the lone working detrainment dispute? Good question.

RMT officials told reps that LUL had in principle agreed to no lone working, but did not want to put it in writing. LUL's offer actually states: **Should there be a time when there are insufficient detrainment staff, a member of staff will be moved from within the station or from an adjacent location to assist.**

What happens when there are no other staff on the station to assist? Which adjacent location will staff move from? How can somebody come to assist if they are not there?!

While this mystery person is making their way, what will happen until they arrive?

This statement is so ambiguous, detrainment staff do not believe it has solved the lone working dispute at all. Management have been giving us ambiguous words all along, and they are now trying to 'mug us off', trying to disguise it amongst the conceding of other points in the dispute.

This is not good enough. Detrainment staff have taken 7 separate one-day strikes. Every strike has been 100% solid.

We want it written in black and white that no detrainments will take place when there are insufficient staff to carry this out safely, and that if this is the case, then trains will be detrained at an earlier location.

[www.workersliberty.org/detrain](http://www.workersliberty.org/detrain)



## SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS?

**T**he Special Requirements Team has a sub-committee, where managers and union reps dig through the details. But the further they dig, the more LUL's real agenda emerges. *Tubeworker* suspects that 'requirements' may come to include not just events but keeping stations open when they are below minimum numbers and during strikes. It could be a tool in management's hands to renew its de-staffing and casualisation drive.

Word is that the sub-committee has broken down. Stand by for further news.

[www.workersliberty.org/staffinglevels](http://www.workersliberty.org/staffinglevels)

## WHY ARE WE WAITING?

**A**pplicants for SSMF have been left waiting for assessment dates due to the high demand for drivers' assessments.

CSAs going to drivers' assessments report being outnumbered by outside applicants. Lack of capacity to deal with these outside applicants is leaving internal applicants for other grades hanging on in the dark.

LUL is blaming this backlog on the transfer of the recruitment contract from Reed. Our future is in these peoples' hands, and should not be left to the whims and inconsistencies of subcontracting! LUL should do its own recruitment.

[www.workersliberty.org/promotion](http://www.workersliberty.org/promotion)

## MAKEOVER ALERT

**L**UL management reckon the Ticket Office Procedures Handbook is a

wee bit bulky; a tad old-fashioned; and not as user-friendly as it could be. So they plan to slim it down, chop it up into bite-size chunks and give it a make-over.

Worry not, there won't be any changes to the actual procedures. No way would you find LUL management trying to slip stuff in - or out - under the guise of a simple revamp. Oh, but that's what they said about the Rule Book ...

[www.workersliberty.org/fares](http://www.workersliberty.org/fares)

## WOT NO TRAINING?

**N**ew CSAs only get five days' training now! What a contrast to the month of intensive training gained by many older members of staff. It's cheaper to train us less; it is also easier for management to argue for replacing us with agency staff if workers are de-skilled already.

New CSAs are also passing out with a POM licence to service the ticket machines. So they won't give us enough training to do our own job, but they will train us to do somebody else's?! It's all part of preparing for a cull of ticket office staff.

[www.workersliberty.org/training](http://www.workersliberty.org/training)

## FRYING PAN. FIRE.

**L**UL plans to move detrainments from Willesden Junction to Stonebridge Park, which lacks the most basic facilities. LUL's solution is a 'bespoke two-person GLAP' on the northbound platform. A big box. Unless it's the Tardis, it will be entirely inadequate.

If you fancy a cuppa or nature calls, then you'll have to haul yourself 100m or so up and down stairs and through an underpass to get to the messing facilities and toilet. And you'd best hurry up or you might miss the next train.

[www.workersliberty.org/bakerloo](http://www.workersliberty.org/bakerloo)

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

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