

tubeworker

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FOR A WORKERS' EUROPE!

The Irish people have voted to reject the EU's Lisbon treaty. As it has to be ratified by all 27 members, the Irish vote should kill off the treaty. But Gordon Brown says the treaty Bill will continue through Parliament. This stupidity portrays European integration as an undemocratic, elitist project, driven forward against the will of the people by arrogant, corrupt and self-serving politicians and bureaucrats. For democracy's sake:: the Lisbon treaty is dead and should be publicly laid to rest.

Despite the Irish vote, we Europeans now live in something like a United States of Europe. That is progressive for workers. But, you may object, isn't this capitalist integration? Yes, the European political system embodies domination by bigger European capitalist powers over smaller powers. We cannot welcome a common defence force in Europe. And the expansion of Europe will increase the ability of European capitalism to prey upon weaker capitalist nations.

But the 'alternative capitalism' of national conflict and war would be a lot worse! Today it is inconceivable that France would go to war with Germany, or Britain with France. European powers still take part in wars and persecute minorities and refugees. Yet rigid national barriers that once existed have weakened. That sets the stage for a united struggle by European workers against the European ruling class.

We should not chime in with the Daily Mail's anti-European rants, nor pretend that every bad law or policy comes from Brussels; Britain's rulers attack workers with or without the EU's help! We should fight for another kind of Europe, a workers' Europe – replacing the EU's bureaucratic structures with democratic ones; levelling up working-class living standards and conditions; Europe-wide public ownership of the big banks and democratic control of monetary policy; halt all privatisation; a Europe which respects the environment; a Europe open to the world; the scrapping of the European defence force. We also need a united workers' movement, with Europe-wide shop stewards' committees in the big multinationals and major industries.

www.workersliberty.org/EU

CLEANERS: THE FIGHTBACK HAS BEGUN

RMT cleaners have voted by a massive 99+% for strikes, with a very creditable turnout of 40%. For comparison, this is a significantly better majority and turnout than for the LUL casualisation ballot earlier this year.

This superb vote is a result of both the hard work of activists and the genuine anger of cleaners at poverty pay and appalling working conditions. This vote has proved wrong those people who thought that cleaners were 'too hard' to unionise, could not stomach industrial action, or that a largely migrant and/or female workforce was too weak to fight back.

These 'difficult to organise workers' are now taking on the might of the multinationals, proving that not only is it possible to fight big capital, but that even the most vulnerable workers can do it. The cleaners' readiness to fight should be an inspiration to all workers in all grades.

The cleaners' dispute is for a 'London living wage' of £7.20 per hour, plus holidays, sick pay, pensions and an end to 'third party sackings'. But it is also about something more fundamental: our right to respect and dignity at work. The cleaning contractors behave like slave owners, bullying and exploiting their workers. Cleaners are saying "We are not slaves."

Cleaners know that this could become a historic battle. As workers, we know what we want and our destiny is in our own hands. We just need to organise effectively enough and we will win.

On the strike days, we will be picketing major workplaces. RMT cleaners will be solid, and we will also be asking T&G members to join the strike, since their union, disgracefully, is sitting out this fight. We want London Underground operational staff to think about whether their train or station is safe to be in passenger service if it is not clean. Remember that spillages cause falls and that build-up of litter is a fire hazard.

We also plan rallies, meetings and protests in support of the strike.

Importantly, cleaners need and deserve financial support from the union to get through the hardship of the strike – every



worker and supporter can chip in to help this happen.

Tubeworker will be producing a special issue next week looking in more depth at the issues involved in this dispute and the strategies that can lead to victory. Take out a subscription to ensure that you get your copies.

www.workersliberty.org/tubecleaners

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.

GIMME SHELTER

Willesden Junction staff got booted out to Stonebridge Park on 18 May. The facilities are a disgrace. One small GLAP on the Northbound platform. Little shelter for staff or passengers: a small canopy covering the last two cars' length of the platform. Passengers get soaked and gather at the rear of the platform obstructing the stairs and blocking the T/Op's view of the PTI. If the train is a short-tripped Harrow, passengers have the hump due to being turfed off and getting wet. We get abuse and even assaults. Of course they might have got the hump at Willesden, but at least they were dry.

The platform is too narrow and can't cope with too many consecutive tip-outs as the football playoffs and Foo Fighters concerts showed. There is no local PA so staff have to shout information down the platform.

Still, at least the union negotiated a priority move out of the place for everyone displaced there against their will.

www.workersliberty.org/bakerloo

SUSPENDED DUE TO STATIC

For years, there has been a problem with the train radio on the Edgware branch. Controllers and drivers complain, but management have done nothing to fix it. It seems that under PPP, it is always someone else's job to mend it.

One Monday, the static problem was so bad that general calls to the Edgware branch could not be done, so the decision was made to staff all platforms - a struggle, given the low staffing levels. Drivers kicked up a fuss, so at 7pm, LUL had to agree to suspend the service.

You can't even trust management to fix the radio! They had better do so soon: the consequence of a train radio failure could be a lot worse than a service suspension.

www.workersliberty.org/connect

MILK OF HUMAN KINDNESS

You are not supposed to move someone who has a serious injury or health problem, right? Apparently not if managers are keen to get the service running.

When an unlucky passenger had a heart attack at Goodge Street, staff wanted to keep him on the train whilst waiting for the medics. The control room was glad to oblige - all other trains were in platforms, so there was no trainload of people stuck in the pipe with their well-being at risk too.

Was this good enough for management? Oh no: surely, they insisted, the poor chap could be hauled off the train so the service could resume. Do you need a humanity bypass to get into a management job?!

www.workersliberty.org/northern

RICKY STAFF SHOULD STAY PUT

Rickmansworth CSAs still face displacement as management make them suffer the consequences of a management cock-up. They have now had enough of the constant threats of displacement. Union representation has meant that the displacements have not yet gone ahead, but the threat remains, and if this is not sorted soon, there should be industrial action. This is a principle that could affect anyone in any grade. We should all support the Rickmansworth CSAs.

www.workersliberty.org/met

MORE DISPLACEMENTS

Charing Cross and Embankment are in the same boat as Ricky, with management forcing staff to move just because they put them in the wrong place to start with.

Remember those old war films with generals using funny sticks to push little toy soldiers round a map of Europe? Perhaps LUL management has Mr Beck's map in the Broadway bunker with some chappy with military pretensions pushing little model station staff around. If so, LUL management will soon find out that we won't be pushed around like toy troops.

www.workersliberty.org/staffinglevels

DEFEND JEROME BOWES

It's amazing how a member of staff can be a victim of an assault yet LUL management treat them as the villain.

That fate has befallen Jerome Bowes, Elephant & Castle CSA. LUL has sacked Jerome, after he witnessed a violent fight between two passengers and was then himself assaulted. The Met police allowed the assailant to walk away scot free, but Jerome has lost his job.

RMT has called a strike ballot to demand Jerome's reinstatement. They deserve everyone's full support.

www.workersliberty.org/bakerloo

AT THE MOVIES

Several stations now have moving-image adverts on a 10-foot-high screen on the platform wall aka. cross-track projection

This could distract passengers or the driver, but rest assured, LUL management have passed it safe. They carried out 'extensive trials and tests' on the Vic line. We can not confirm rumours that this consisted of a DMT watching the screens at Euston for a whole 15 minutes.

Why do management spend so many hours in pursuit of SPAD reduction, while taking risks with a system which could well cause SPADs? Anything to do with the advertising fees? You think?

www.workersliberty.org/SPADs

MINISTRY OF WELLNESS

Occupational Health says that staff who are sick would feel better being at work with colleagues than staying at home. Could this be because they would rather not be sick?! Oh no. Managers will no doubt add this bizarre 'survey result' to their ammunition for driving sick staff back to work. It's good for you!

www.workersliberty.org/sickssystem

YES OR NO?

District line management have got their knickers in a twist because East Ham staff are standing up for themselves.

The new Line General Manager has issued a flustered circular, urging staff not to tell their reps what they think. Those naughty reps are actually consulting their members, asking them if they have any confidence in the group's management and if they are willing to take industrial action.

Perhaps management fear unanimous No and Yes response to the questions. They should tell their managers to stop bullying staff rather than have a go at reps.

www.workersliberty.org/district

SACKED FOR A HAT

Just when you thought the cleaning contractors could sink no lower, ICS has sacked Hammersmith depot cleaner Michael Bonsu for wearing a hat: one that he got from the 'free issue' store in the depot, and which helps him to do his job safely in the absence of proper PPE from his employer. So - protect your head, lose your job!

It seems that a Metronet 'ambience manager' took a dislike to Michael and complained about the hat. Maybe workers protecting their health & safety is bad for the 'ambience' of the depot.

www.workersliberty.org/cleaners

BOOZE PARTY FIASCO

The proverbial hit the fan when the booze ban party turned nasty. Dozens of staff were assaulted and stations closed as the Circle line became a party venue. Trains were damaged and taken out of service.

Boris Johnson's opportunistic, headline-grabbing, rushed new policy prompted the chaos. LUL added to the problem with their lack of consultation with the unions, their unhelpful and inconsistent advice to staff, and their complacent attitude to the party.

Management and the Mayor have shown that they can not protect their own staff. We will obviously have to protect ourselves - by refusing to enforce their provocative, ill-prepared policy moves.

www.workersliberty.org/boozeban

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

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