



# tubeworker

[www.workersliberty.org/tubeworker](http://www.workersliberty.org/tubeworker) <> [tubeworker@btopenworld.com](mailto:tubeworker@btopenworld.com)

## Defend Your Pay, Jobs and Rights: VOTE YES!

**every vote counts <><><> other unions should join fight**

**I**t is good news that RMT is pressing ahead with an industrial action ballot. The union is balloting all LUL grades - stations, revenue, trains, service control, admin, managers, ex-Metronet, the lot - and its members on TfL too. The ballots should lead to strike and other action over jobs, pay and the attendance/discipline crackdown.

ASLEF and TSSA members should ask their unions why they are not doing the same. Surely it can not be because they think that the five-year pay cut, the 1,000 job losses and the crackdown are OK? Or that polite negotiations with no threat of action will get them anywhere?!

The ballot's timing marks an important departure from the failed strategies of yesteryear. RMT has accepted we should fight over pay when our pay rise is due, not several months later! Maybe the imminent threat of job cuts forced the national RMT leadership's hand on this, but *Tubeworker* reckons that rank-and-file opinion, the recent regime change in RMT's regional leadership, and our own persistent pressing of this issue have something to do with it too!

The old habit of dragging out pay fights always led to momentum draining as Christmas loomed, and inadequate deals accepted with a rueful shrug. If a union does not show a sense of urgency then it can not expect members to. Now that has changed, and we expect that members will respond with a big Yes vote.

There is more at stake this time round than for many years. Previously, our employers have not tried to cut our pay, tie us up in a half-decade deal, and at the same time slash jobs. Don't think that if we take no action, things will just trundle on as usual. They will not. We are in a fight whether we like it or not: our choice is whether to fight to win or to roll over and surrender.

Everyone must prioritise getting the biggest possible Yes vote. *Tubeworker* will be covering the dispute in great detail as it progresses, offering our ideas on the issues and strategies. So make sure you get your copy by subscribing!

### **B**ut workers in other industries are losing pay and jobs ...

The destruction caused by capitalism's profit-driven madness has torn like a hurricane through peoples' lives, taking casualties every step of the way.

Other workers have taken the hit because their unions have chosen not to defend them. Woolworth's union USDAW shrugged its shoulders and let tens of thousands of workers join the dole queue. The GMB union agreed pay cuts for members to prevent job cuts - only to see the employers come for the jobs a few months later, once the union had proven itself too weak to fight.

No-one wants this crisis to deepen, with more jobs lost and homes repossessed. To anyone who says RMT members are selfish for striking, we defy you to find one RMT activist who does not care about suffering in wider society. *The solution to this suffering is not to accept it.*

Many workers can not defend themselves as we can: either they have a union that accepts employers' attacks or they can't make as big an impact by striking. We can fight back, so we should.

### **L**UL argues that since the economy is changeable, we need the 'stability' of a five-year pay freeze/cut.

In fact, the opposite is true: economic unpredictability is a very good reason to negotiate pay each year, rather than put on the straitjacket of a multi-year deal.

LUL's reasoning is like hearing a forecast that the weather will be changeable over the next week and instead of putting on clothes suitable to the conditions each day, committing yourself to shorts and flip-flops for the whole week and hoping for the best!

*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.*

### **W**hat Action Should We Take?

We should not just wait for union head offices to tell us what action we will take. It's our strike, so we are entitled to a say.

A 24-hour strike will not work. We have lost a day's pay enough times to know it is about letting off steam rather than winning.

So, 2 days, 3 days, a week? Two separate days in one week? Overtime ban, work-to-rule, refusal to do some aspects of our job? Would different actions work in different grades or workplaces? Workers should discuss ideas and between us come up with the best plan. Discussions at work should feed in to discussions at the strike committee, with everyone free to suggest ideas and nothing dismissed out-of-hand.

Unlike in failed past disputes, we need a democratic, thought-out, effective strategy.

### **W**ill we get £500 or £250 for our Customer Satisfaction Bonus?

We're waiting for last quarter's results at the end of March before we know for sure. Some rumours circulated by management said we would just miss the £500 because of the snow day, some that we've worked very hard so of course we'll be rewarded.

It's all management mind-games. They either lower our expectations so we feel grateful for anything at all, or raise our expectations, trying to bribe us to 'behave' and not strike. They might pay us the £500 this year to try to convince us this bonus is good for us and stifle our contempt for it.

We will not be so easily fooled, and will not be bribed not to strike. The bonus should be made into part of our salary, not left to the whim of management to withhold at the end of the year depending on how 'good' we are.

## ISS RENEGES ON LIVING WAGE PROMISE

**I**SS has announced that it will not pay cleaners the London Living Wage of £7.45 from April after all.

The cleaners' strike last year was halted when most companies began paying the London Living Wage. ISS, contracted by TubeLines, said it would phase it in. They paid a 60p increase in September and promised the rest in April.

Now it says the money from near-bankrupt TubeLines is unavailable. But we don't care where they get the money, they have an obligation to pay the meagre London Living Wage. ISS is a multinational, profit-making company. They can afford to lift their cleaners out of poverty!

This is a big blow to cleaners who were relying on the promised increase. Cleaners are angry, but worry whether RMT will call action. ISS has sacked reps and union members in a union-busting mission since the strike. RMT has to do a lot of work to rebuild for a fightback. One suggestion: employ some of the sacked cleaner reps as union organisers to get the cleaners' fight back on its feet. We also need to step up the campaign for immigration rights, otherwise any union organisation will be imperilled by the employers' immigration policing.

We cannot wait before responding. We must use the opportunity of a big union fightback in other grades to raise the issue of the cleaners' pay. After all, a union is defined by how it treats its lowest-paid members. We should push for failed contractor TubeLines to be brought into public ownership, so no cowboy contractor has an excuse for paying poverty wages. The fight is still on and the union needs all the activists it can get.

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

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

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## BACK SLAPPING

**A**s management tell us that we have to lose jobs and pay due to the crisis, you may wonder if this is the right time for them to live it up at a back-slapping awards bash. But they went to a nice hotel for a lovely dinner and to hand each other gongs at the annual London Transport Awards.

LUL picked up a few awards. But there are dozens of categories and only a few London transport providers, so maybe their success is not as big a deal as they'd like us to think. It's like the radish winning Best Small Red Vegetable at the annual Salad Ingredients Awards, fighting off stiff competition from the cherry tomato.

Whatever good transport services earned LUL their awards were delivered by the hard graft of the workforce. So how about giving us an award in the form of a decent pay offer? Or has all the money been spent on back-slapping nosh-ups like this one?

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

## ONE AT A TIME PLEASE

**A** cutting west of Acton Town needs stabilising. Metronet bosses have come up with a bright idea for organising the work - but although they reckon their idea is safe, it is far from it.

Plant will be moved onto the site during engineering hours but the work done during traffic hours. How will workers get to the site? A Protection Master will stand on the cutting side, and in between trains, will call over workers one at a time. On your marks, get set, hurry up and don't for gawd's sake trip over.

Now, a sensible person might suggest that a temporary footbridge would allow quicker and safer access. So why not? Cash, maybe?!

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

## WILLESDEN GREEN VOTES YES

**W**illesden Green station staff have voted 2:1 Yes to strikes and action short of strikes, against bullying local management.

Since the rest of us are now catching up and are balloting for action against management bullying (and for pay and jobs too), it might make sense for Willesden Green's strike days to coincide with the company-wide strikes. But joining in with everyone else must not lead to the specific issues on Willesden Green group being lost.

Meanwhile, the law requires the first industrial action to take place within 28 days of the ballot result. So we might need an action on Willesden Green group before the rest of us join in. If so, it should be down to the members on the group to decide what it should be (and let's be imaginative!), and everyone else should give it our full support.

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

## OVER THE RAINBOW

**L**UL's 'Rainbow' software sounds the alarm whenever it spots a 'pattern' of non-attendance. They are even picking up on absences for which you should not get even the hint of disciplinary action.

Vic line drivers have had 'rainbow' letters include assaults, one-unders and near misses! In one case, a driver had his trauma from the 7/7 bombings included.

No wonder staff are concluding that LUL operates a very sick system. And no wonder people are voting Yes to action.

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

## DEFEND CARL CAMPBELL!

**L**UL is using its own tight-fisted refusal to install Correct-Side Door Enabling on the Vic as a stick to beat drivers with.

Driver Carl Campbell accidentally opened the doors on the wrong side. Even though he quickly corrected his error, Carl has been sacked, losing his livelihood at a time of rising unemployment.

It seems our bosses can make mistakes and get away with it, but if one of us makes one small error - even one that could not have happened if the company used the right equipment - there is no mercy.

Carl's workmates have asked RMT for a strike ballot to demand Carl's reinstatement and the installation of CSDE equipment. The union should organise the ballot pronto and everyone should vote Yes.

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

## CLEANER REP SACKED

**F**red Dappah, RMT cleaner rep at Hammersmith depot, has been sacked. Despite having permission to work while his status is under consideration, his employer decided to sack him for not having permanent papers! Or perhaps it was for being an assertive and effective union rep?!

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## TSSA TO BALLOT? WELL ...

**L**UL's ridiculous £5 minimum Oyster trial has gone off like a damp squib, with most staff quite rightly ignoring it and selling customers what they ask for.

RMT advised members not to co-operate, but TSSA refused for fear of unlikely legal action. TSSA is to ballot members to refuse to take part in the trial, despite being unable to use any mandate until the trial has been running for over a month, and despite the fact that RMT (and many TSSA) members see no need for a ballot to ignore this trial and do their jobs.

TSSA's ballot is silly and pointless. By implying that selling customers the tickets they want is industrial action, TSSA risks undermining the stance that ticket office staff are taking rather than bolstering it.

TSSA fails to act over 1,000 job cuts and a five-year pay freeze, but ballots when there is no need. You couldn't make this up!

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