



tubeworker

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KNOW OUR STRENGTH - AND USE IT!

As we gear up for a re-ballot to defend our pay, jobs and rights, it is essential that we recognise our power as workers, and use it to its full extent.

We can expect a further legal challenge to our planned strikes for jobs, pay and justice. LUL has already said it is looking for more anomalies in the union's ballot notification. If management fail to find anything, they may marginally improve their woeful pay offer and try to get our action declared illegal on that basis. Don't put any trick past them, and don't fall for any of their ruses.

LUL would like its legal action to demoralise us, but it should anger us instead. In some sections - such as ex-Metronet office workers - staff are joining RMT in droves, disgusted by LUL's legal manoeuvring to prevent workers using our democratic right to take industrial action.

Overleaf, we tell the story of when Tube workers defied legal action in 2001. Today, other workers - eg. at the Visteon car parts plant in Enfield - are also rebelling, and we can learn some lessons from them.

When Visteon workers heard that their jobs had been axed, they

occupied their factory, demanding their jobs back or a decent redundancy package. Management started negotiating with them, because the workers had something they wanted: the plant and its machinery. The workers spoke at an RMT mass meeting. They were inspiring us all, and the news of their resistance spread across the country.

But pressured by leaders of their union, UNITE, they left the factory after a week and started a 24-hour picket instead. They went from a position of strength, where it was hard to see how the law could be enforced against them, to a more vulnerable position, without winning anything from management.

The lesson for us is that we must not underestimate our own strength. 83% of us have voted to go on strike and management are terrified. When our next 'yes' vote comes back and we are ready to strike, we must not give up our strong position for anything. We are going to go for it and we can win.

SUPPORT VIC DRIVERS' STRIKE!

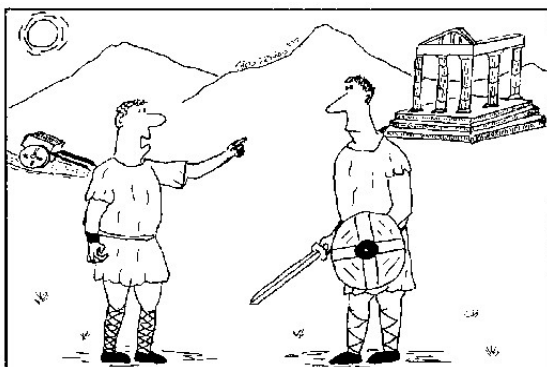
Tuesday/Wednesday's Vic line drivers' strike looks solid. ASLEF members have found themselves needing the protection of two unions at this time, so despite the Society's failure to ballot, all drivers can join in anyway!

Faced with solid action, LUL management should reinstate Carl Campbell, agree to install CSDE, stick to agreements and get off the case of Glenroy Watson. Unless they do all this, the strike goes ahead, whatever ruse LUL management may come up with to stop it.

LUL may also like to reflect on other injustices on the line, such as the sackings of Karl Niles and Jamie Witchell, otherwise they may face more action soon.

Station staff and others should ensure that management don't get away with trying to run a sub-standard, unsafe service on the strike day. Remember: you are duty bound to protect the safety of yourselves, your workmates and the public, so let's see stations and platforms closed rather be allowed to get overcrowded or otherwise unsafe. Oh, and a strike is not a 'special requirement'.

Union activists will be dishing out leaflets to the public explaining how LUL's refusal to install CSDE kit on the Vic line puts them at risk. When passengers ring up and complain, that should rattle management.



"Unfortunately, Spartacus, we're going to have to postpone the slave revolt for now because the Romans' lawyer has found a slight error in the notification you sent them."

TA VERY MUCH, TIM!

Thanks, Tim O'Toole, for announcing we will get the £500 bonus. Extra cash will come in handy right now, especially when your pay offer is so pitiful!

But don't be under any illusion that we think this £500 bonus reflects the job we do. If we had got £250 - or nothing - we would still know how hard we work. The fact that the meaningless Customer Satisfaction criteria have judged we deserve £500 doesn't make us think this system is fair. We know it is politically motivated: trying to keep us on-side with LUL rather than strike for a better wage.

We can see right through it, Tim. But thanks anyway. That's £500 strike pay you've just given us.

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 HISTORY LESSON

In early 2001, at the height of our fight against PPP, RMT and ASLEF held a joint strike ballot, and, encouraged by this new and welcome unity, members of both unions voted massively for action: RMT 89%; ASLEF 75%.

London Underground ran to the courts. On 1 February, Justice Gibbs granted an injunction banning RMT from striking. The 'grounds' were that RMT had not provided LUL with sufficient information as to who would be striking.

Under a previous Tory anti-union law, unions had to give employers the names of workers who would strike. Labour had replaced this with a new rule compelling unions to give detailed information instead. Gibbs ruled that this meant a spreadsheet listing numbers of members in every grade and work location. Across London Underground, that meant over 400 locations and dozens of grades. Each week, around 150 LUL staff changed grade and/or location.

Both Tory and Labour governments had designed the law to force unions to help management undermine strikes. LUL was not asking the courts to uphold justice: it was asking them to take its side and stop the strike.

LUL did not seek to injunct ASLEF at this point, partly because ASLEF only represents train crew, and so its membership information is much simpler, and partly to divide the unions.

RMT's national leadership bowed down and complied. Jimmy Knapp rushed a personal letter to every member's home, telling them to work on the strike day. But the rank and file, and our local reps, were made of sterner stuff.

Activists organised to defy the judge. RMT members filled in ASLEF membership forms to get round the ban. We understood that if we all stood firm, management could not touch us. With the union head offices letting themselves be gagged by the law, independently-produced bulletins were more important than ever. As events developed fast, three issues of *Tubeworker* appeared during that week alone.

The Labour government, reeling from the ballot result, announced a new 'deal' to modify PPP and delay it until after the General Election.

On 5 February, ASLEF's strike went ahead, joined by thousands of RMT members, in defiance of management intimidation, the court injunction, and union head office instructions.

It was fantastically effective: only 8% of train services ran. The atmosphere on picket lines was great. ASLEF and RMT stood shoulder to shoulder; passers-by shook our hands.

LUL threatened legal action against named RMT reps and unspecified allegations of 'aggressive picketing'. But because we all stood together, these threats came to nothing.

It was the high point of the campaign. We tasted the strength that could have taken us on to victory against the hated Public-Private Partnership.

Read the full story of the fight against PPP in the pamphlet *Tunnel Vision*, free with every subscription to *Tubeworker*.



DEFEND ELAINE HOLNESS!

LUL has stood down Elaine Holness, Waterloo Group RMT rep, alleging racial harassment because she, a black woman, gave evidence against her white male manager in an employment tribunal! Managers are inventing a whole new concept of justice to suit their own ends, and trying to silence reps from speaking out against the company. They are saying that evidence in court can be a disciplinary matter!

These allegations distort the harassment policy. Workers fought for the principle that it was up to us to say whether we were being harassed, based on how we feel, so that harassers could not get away with the excuse, 'I was only having a laugh', etc. Now, this manager says he feels harassed by what Elaine said in a Tribunal and LUL has let him claim that the harassment policy applies to him. This is an insult to anyone who has ever made the difficult decision to use the harassment policy to speak out.

www.workersliberty.org/jubilee

GONE FISHING

Edgware group staff have found to their alarm that the ticket office safe is not, erm, safe. In an experiment, it took just six minutes to fish a cash bag out of the safe through the top.

So you could be totally honest, follow all the correct procedures, deposit your bag, only for some opportunist angler to nick it and you to be in front of a CDI and on the dole.

This design flaw was exposed 15 years ago when a ticket seller was sacked, only to be reinstated when his union rep carried out the same fishing demo in the presence of a gobsmacked disciplinary panel. Then, management promised to rectify the fault. Perhaps the disciplinary system should be looking at why management promises fall by the wayside.

www.workersliberty.org/northern

CHECKING UP ON STAFF

Noticed 5p-sized silver discs appearing on station walls? It seems this is management's idea of how to make us do security checks properly. We run around the station, touching every disc with a device - like something out of a kids' game show!

Don't they trust us to carry out our basic duties? If they accuse us of doing checks 'with our eyes closed', it's hard to see how touching discs will prove we are alert.

Perhaps we should play them at their own game: 'Did I miss an unattended bag? Well, you can't discipline me for

not carrying out my security check. I touched every dot!' If they want to introduce a bizarre system to check up on our behaviour rather than credit staff with the intelligence to do our job, they can expect worse, not better, results.

www.workersliberty.org/security

KING'S CROSS ROSTERS

King's Cross management came up with a new roster, but CSAs had a few problems with it. Local union reps went through the official channels to get the problems resolved, but this did not happen.

Now, management plan to impose the new roster. If staff are not happy, tough! They have even spread the lie that the unions have agreed to this roster.

Even on small things, management are not willing to cooperate with the unions. If management continue to act so unreasonably, they should remember that staff are capable of not co-operating with management and could make this imposed roster unworkable.

www.workersliberty.org/handc

DON'T BE LATE!

It seems that LUL has a lateness clampdown. It has produced a natty PowerPoint presentation telling managers to interview anyone who is late and initiate disciplinary charges at the earliest opportunity.

No-one likes it when someone turning up late means someone else doesn't get away on time. But zealous managers are now booking people for getting in just two minutes past time, subjecting them to a grilling and threats of a warning. It's another way of creating a climate of fear in the workplace and eliminating humanity or discretion.

Tubeworker wonders if this lateness clampdown will apply to those managers who routinely turn up late to appointments with staff. We also wonder whether the company itself could be disciplined for being late with our pay rise every year.

www.workersliberty.org/sickssystem

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