



tubeworker

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ALL OUT FOR TUBE LINES STRIKE!

Tube Lines engineers on the Northern, Jubilee and Piccadilly lines will strike for 48 hours from 23 to 25 June. The strike is about jobs and safety. Tube Lines want to reduce the number of safety inspections and will not guarantee that this won't cost jobs.

With TfL's purchase of all Tube Lines' shares, the PPP has now come to an end. And now Tube Lines workers are striking to make sure they don't pay the price.

PPP has been a disaster as we all predicted. It has just emerged that five years' worth of Tube Lines contracts haven't been completed. A recent safety inspection on the track around the Piccadilly Line derailment found 231 track faults in a 1km area. There were 10 faults with safety implications over 600 days old at one set of points at Boston Manor. The PPP has been no more than an unaccountable, profit-making machine for multinational companies.

But despite making a killing, Tube Lines is spending its last days trying to make workers pay for its failures. Tube Lines workers are in a no-man's land: they feel vulnerable. Are they to be re-packaged and sold to private interests in the near future?

We should all give this strike our maximum support. It will show TfL that they cannot push the cost of PPP onto our shoulders without a fight, as they are also attempting with the London

Underground job cuts. It will protect the future safety of the network. This is TfL's showcase: whatever erosions of safety standards they get away with here could be replicated elsewhere.

With JNP Tube Lines workers on strike, there will be no maintenance on the signals and track, no train preparation, no-one to attend to faults on stations from defective OPO equipment to lifts stuck in the shaft.

As Tube Lines runs the Emergency Response Unit, it will also be striking, so the entire network will be without the specialist staff who attend emergency incidents. To keep yourself and the public safe, remember you have the right to refuse to work on safety grounds.

Tubeworker thinks it is excellent that another 48 hour strike has already been named for July. This piles on the pressure and sends the message that we are not going to give up easily. We are going into this dispute determined to win.

www.workersliberty.org/tubelines

LU BALLOT: WHY ARE WE WAITING?!

RMT members got a letter from the union promising that we will receive a ballot paper 'shortly'. Just as we were thinking 'About time too!', 'shortly' has turned into several more weeks. We see no sign of TSSA's promised ballot either, and no-one seems quite clear yet whether ASLEF are going to fight the job cuts at all, despite the adverse affect on drivers.

While the unions have taken literally months preparing this ballot, LU has ploughed full steam ahead with its job cuts. It is freezing vacancies, stopping movements, drafting new rosters, issuing preference forms, and going through the motions of 'consulting' unions which are part-paralysed by their failure so far to ballot for action.

Reports of 'talks' show LU ignoring workers' concerns expressed by our union reps. The simple fact is that management are not interested in our objections to their job cuts - the only reason they have meetings with unions at all is that they have to, under both the law and their own policy. But they don't have to take any notice of what is said - unless we make them. The start of the ballot will remind us all that this fight is actually still on - in fact, it is only just beginning.

The main reason for the ballot delay is the anti-union laws. But the union bureaucracies shoulder responsibility too. The unions take so long over a ballot because they are not run by the rank-and-file members whose jobs and conditions are actually under threat.

Tubeworker's weblog - daily updates - www.workersliberty.org/twblog

SUPPORT THIS PRO-UNION BILL

John McDonnell MP is to propose a Bill in Parliament to stop employers being able to get strikes declared illegal for minor technical errors in the ballot.

This would put an end to the ridiculous shenanigans that saw our pay strike delayed last year, our jobs ballot delayed seemingly-interminably this year, and pantomimes such as Unite's BA Cabin Crew strike getting an injunction which was then lifted on appeal. It would reaffirm that it is legal for us to strike for our rights.

So it is very important that we support this Bill - and not just by admiring from the sidelines but by actively mobilising to support it. Such a campaign would increase the Bill's chance of being passed - though probably from negligible to minimal - but more importantly, would raise awareness as to the injustice of the current laws and the way that judges almost always interpret them to the benefit of employers and against unions. It would help to ensure that if and when our strike is injunctioned, we will all understand how unjust this is, and will therefore be more willing and confident to find ways to defy it.

Tubeworker is produced by Tube workers and published by 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.

Ideas for Freedom 2010

socialist discussion weekend, 9-11 July

Friday 9, evening: film showing at the Exmouth Arms, Starcross Street, Euston
Saturday 10 / Sunday 11: discussions at Highgate Newtown Community Centre, Archway
Debates include: ■ 'progressive' politics or class politics? ■ What openings for struggle in the Labour Party? ■ How do we make the workers' movement fight the Tories? ■ Is capitalism in decline? ■ Israel-Palestine: what should the left say?

Plus: ■ the economics of the crisis ■ class struggle against the Liberal-Tory coalition ... in the early 1920s ■ working-class environmentalism ■ Trotsky on fighting fascism ■ protest songs and working-class culture ■ women's oppression and liberation ■ the working class and the Eurozone crisis ■ and lots more

Creche and cheap food provided. Weekend ticket: £20; day ticket £12.

For more details, including timed agenda, and to book online:

www.workersliberty.org/ideas

DLR STRIKE

DLR workers will strike at the same time as Tube Lines, having asked RMT to move their original strike dates so that the two workforces will strike together and therefore maximise their effectiveness.

DLR has increased train length from two to three cars, and while this involves more work for staff, the company will not put its hands in its pockets and give some reward. This week's strike is of PSAs and Panel Control Team Leaders only, but the issue affects all grades, so if the company does not back down and pay everyone a bonus, it should be followed by a strike of all grades.

www.workersliberty.org/dlr

COLLISION COURSE?

Vic Line management want to introduce 'auto start' when an '09 train stops. But if a driver auto-started a '67 stock, the train might miss braking commands. Possible result: collision.

Managers have a 'solution' to prevent this outcome: a sticker in the cabs of '67 stock suggesting that using auto start may not be a good idea. That's OK then.

www.workersliberty.org/victoria

WOT NO DRIVER?

The GLA Tories are proposing driverless trains on LU. Why? It will save £141m a year in wages and 'end the strangle-hold militant unions have on the city's tube network'. They want to take away our livelihoods and our only source of power.

Insultingly, the Tories claim that new technology has 'reduced train drivers to door openers'. All TfL could say in our defence is that drivers provide reassurance and get doors opened and closed quickly.

Any drivers still think your job is untouchable? We need all hands and all grades on deck to defeat the current round of job cuts, because if your job is not in this round, it will be in the next one.

www.workersliberty.org/stop-job-cuts

UP THE ARSENAL

Management tried to impose without consultation new Congestion Control Evacuation Plans at Finsbury Park group stations, which would cut

staff numbers to no way near enough staff to deal with incidents when Arsenal play!

But following pressure, management backed down. LU is coming for our staffing levels from every angle, but at least this shows that we are capable of defending them when we kick up a fuss!

www.workersliberty.org/piccadilly

NO GLAP? NO WORK!

Wembley Central group station staff are refusing to work on the gateline on safety grounds. Unlike other stations, they don't have a GateLine Assistance Point (GLAP), to which you can retreat if you are in peril. Several GLAPs are stored in a local cupboard, but LU is in no hurry to install them as the electricians are not yet sorted.

So CSAs have used their legal right to refuse to work where they have a genuine safety concern. Management are rattled, and union reps (with one unimpressive exception) are backing the CSAs. Stand your ground - you're an example to us all!

www.workersliberty.org/bakerloo

LONE WORKING ASSAULT

When a 'non-essential' duty at Hounslow Central was not covered, the ticket office had to close and the Supervisor helped customers with the machines. One lost money in the POM, but did not appreciate the Supervisor's help and abused then assaulted him, injuring his shoulder.

It's a glimpse of the future under if LU management gets its way. And another reason to fight the job cuts.

www.workersliberty.org/piccadilly

BYE BYE BONUS?

LU promises a 'CSS bonus with a difference'. The difference? We won't get as much. The new set-up sees £100 up for grabs each quarter and £100 for the full year, rather than £500 for the year as now. That's for passing the target: no mention yet of the £250 we now get for meeting it.

Say the target is 80, and we score 79 in Quarter 1, 79 in Q2, 84 in Q3 and 79 in Q4. That's an average of just over 80, so under the current system, we'd get £500. Under the

new system, we'd get £100 for Q3 and £100 for the year as a whole: total £200. There are a couple of unlikely scenarios where we could get a bit under the new system where we would have got nothing under the old one, but overall, the new maths is a formula for giving us less.

The unions should demand that the full £500 is added to our wages, without being subject to this silly and arbitrary CSS system. Oh, and how much satisfaction are customers going to feel when there are 800 fewer staff to help them?!

www.workersliberty.org/pay

£30M OYSTER WINDFALL

TfL may be sitting on a £30m windfall, after a big rise in the credit added to Oysters but then not used for over a year.

Those customers may pop back later and use their credit, but it's unlikely. So the beneficiary of Oyster is not just the customer whose journey is made smoother (unless they have a glitch), but for the most part, the company. TfL saves money on ticketing, uses Oyster as a pretext to cut jobs, and is now getting money for nothing too.

Just think, with a windfall like this, maybe there is no need to cut 800 jobs after all.

www.workersliberty.org/fares

WOT NO FIRST AID BOX?

Has anyone noticed that first aid boxes on stations have been removed and replaced with a notice saying we only need one per 50 staff? In a by-pass of common sense, DSMs don't seem to have realised that the main purpose of first aid boxes is for use on customers! And we have a good deal more than 50 of them. Hundreds of thousands a day, in fact.

Is LU so desperate to save money that it will penny-pinch on essential safety items? Or is this just a case of a DSM over-eager to impress in order to save his job?

LU has cleverly included one rather popular element in its current plans: the cut in the number of seemingly-useless DSMs. This is superficially common-sense. But as it comes alongside nonsensical and disruptive reorganisation of station groups, and the reduction of hundreds of stations jobs, we oppose the entire plan. Maybe we could do without some DSMs, but LU should look at creating new CSA jobs in their place.

www.workersliberty.org/LTsafety

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