



# tubeworker

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## KEEP UP THE FIGHT FOR JOBS!

Our first strike was superb. More station staff took part than ever, TSSA striking for the first time alongside RMT. Lots of stations closed. *We can knock on the head the idea that station staff 'don't strike' or are 'weak'!*

Support from drivers was stronger than many had feared. RMT drivers were solid, and many rank-and-file ASLEF members respected picket lines despite the Society's leaders sitting out this vital struggle.

Service control, engineers and others also contributed to a strong day out. There were more picket lines than we had ever organised before, and they were lively and effective.

Now we have our second strike, and we have to keep up our commitment to this battle. All our jobs depend on it.

### WHAT NEXT?

Talks have so far proved fruitless. But it is vital that our negotiators go to those talks with action still on, pressure still on management. They are right to insist that action can not be suspended unless the job cuts programme (the OSP) is suspended too.

Our overtime ban is biting (see below). It may need to be amended for some grades in engineering, and is irrelevant on trains, but on stations, there can be big disruption. We are now adding further 'action short', eg. a boycott of the £5 minimum Oyster top-up.

We need to strengthen the unions in the workplace, building RMT in particular.

LU will dig its heels in. PPP's collapse has left it short of cash, a crisis it will seek to resolve in the same way as our government of toffs is doing in the country: workers and service users sacrifice to resolve a mess we didn't create, while private firms profit and bosses get fat salaries and bonuses.

Taking on LU, we are going head-to-head with those in power and challenging their ideology that you resolve a financial crisis to benefit the rich at the expense of everyone else. No wonder LU is not going to give in easily. We need to prepare for a long battle.

We must fight on, knowing we can win. Twice, the Tories have walked out of a

Greater London Assembly meeting to stop it voting against the job cuts. They can't do this forever. If every strike costs £50m, Boris' City friends will get on his case; the Tories will know it's time to stop messing around.

Polls show that the public oppose the job cuts. Disabled groups are campaigning against the staffing cuts, and even the mild-mannered London TravelWatch has 'severe concerns' about the ticket office cuts.

**LU does not want another solid strike. If we keep hitting them, they will be forced to concede something. How much depends on how much pressure they feel. We need to hit them harder before talks produce results. We are on the right track.**

### OVERTIME BAN BITES

Arsenal, Green Park, Lambeth North, Charing Cross, Liverpool Street, Regent's Park, Elm Park, Turnpike Lane and others have closed due to the overtime ban. Ticket offices have closed at stations from Upton Park to Victoria, with passengers travelling free. Managers are having to leave their desks and cover duties. (With managers having to do actual work, who is going to fill in all those important forms?!) Engineering works have been cancelled, and trains taken out of service.

The overtime ban is having the desired effect - keeping up the pressure on LU, keeping up the momentum between strikes.

It can be frustrating if you are in an area where it seems to have little effect, and it is galling to see people defying the ban - but remember, there are only a tiny minority of them, and lots of us!

It can also be hard doing without overtime if you have come to rely on adding to your income. But remember, overtime will be the least of your worries if your job goes!

### FUNDS FOR HARDSHIP

While some people say 'I can't afford to strike' as an excuse for scabbing, others genuinely struggle with the loss of pay. Unions should organise hardship funds so members can claim some financial help.

The unions officially have these funds, but are loathe to pay out. Rank-and-file members and branches should set up our own hardship funds. Get donations from supporters; hold fund-raising events. People lucky enough to have the strikes fall on their rest days or leave can put their hands in their pockets.

The point of industrial action is not to make a glorious sacrifice - it is to win. And if helping people out helps us to do that - then let's go for it.

## ELECT JANINE BOOTH

The campaign to elect Janine Booth to the RMT's Executive is gathering momentum, with at least half of RMT branches now backing her campaign. Janine stands for:

- Involving members in the decision-making of the union. Decisions in disputes to be democratically-decided. The voices of ordinary members encouraged and listened to.
- No grade or worker should feel like a second-class citizen. Station staff, cleaners, or people working for contractors should feel that their issues are taken just as seriously as those of other grades. RMT is an all-grades union and its strength lies in working together.
- Defend our class from attack. No compromise with job cuts.
- Imagination in our tactics: action short of strike as a complement to strike action, as well as reaching out to the public.
- Equality! Women, LGBT workers, black workers all have issues that affect us at work, from childcare to harassment and bullying. they should be at the heart of RMT's work.

You will get a ballot paper at your home towards the end of next month. *Tubeworker* has been campaigning for these ideas to improve the union for years and will get behind Janine's campaign 100%. If you'd like to help the campaign, contact us.

Workers' Liberty forum

## **Made in Dagenham: the true story of the Ford 'equal pay' strike and its lessons for today**

Thursday 21 October, 19:30-21:00  
Lucas Arms, Grays Inn Road,  
King's Cross

## **NOT-SO-RED ED**

The man the right-wing press are calling 'Red' Ed Miliband has won the Labour leadership election, beating his more-Blairite brother David to the top job. The media are painting this as the 'death of New Labour' and the unions 'taking back' the Labour Party. Neither of these things are true (and there's nothing really 'red' about Ed Miliband's politics), but the fact that the media is portraying things in this way is significant.

Miliband's first speech contained plenty of criticism of 'irresponsible and reckless strikes' and was incoherent on many issues. But he did make some anti-cuts posturing and express some pro-union sentiments that would have been unimaginable from the mouths of Blair or Brown. He was elected by union votes and obviously feels under some pressure; we should help increase that pressure and try to make some of it tell, even if we're sober in our assessment of how likely that is.

RMT was expelled from the Labour Party in 2004, but ASLEF and TSSA are still affiliated. Whether affiliated or not, all three unions should try to assert pressure on the leadership and direction of the Labour Party, putting maximum pressure on Labour politicians not to enact policies that attack the movement which founded their party. ASLEF and TSSA can use their affiliation to do that; RMT can demand commitments from its Parliamentary group (made up entirely of Labour MPs) not to vote for any cuts, and pressuring Labour councils at a local level to defy Tory cuts.

Ed Miliband's election will not magically turn the Labour Party into an adequate working-class party, but it might create some openings.

*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.*

# DISPATCHES HATCHET JOB

Did you watch the Dispatches documentary, 'What's the point of the unions?'. They seemed to be saying RMT strike ballots are held at meetings where members are intimidated into voting yes for strike action - postal ballots were 'overlooked'. Then went on to say that RMT is striking too early - disregarding the fact that staff cuts have already been imposed, and that the first strike wasn't until SIX MONTHS after the job cuts were announced! - a question which wasn't put to the union, or at least not aired.

And the doc certainly didn't answer the question 'What is the point of unions?' but rather picked a few stories of alleged impropriety none of which was particularly balanced or looked into what other justifiable explanations there could have been instead.

We'd all like to see our unions get a better hearing in the media, and many of us think that the unions could try harder to explain our case, but this piece of TV showed that it is not in the media's interest to put the workers' side of things across. It might get people thinking - and we can't have that.

**Tubeworker's weblog - daily updates - [www.workersliberty.org/twblog](http://www.workersliberty.org/twblog)**

## **DRIVERS' SAFETY WIN**

It looks like LU has caved over plans to dilute drivers' safety procedures in order to help cut stations jobs.

The company had planned a range of wild changes, eg. notching back into platforms, detraining along the track alone, self-despatching from Cat A platforms. Why? So incidents could be 'dealt with' without station staff, getting the service running again sharpish regardless of doing it safely.

But LU has backed down, pulling some of the procedures and sending the others back to the drawing board. It's a victory for the unions, and for the workforce who saw that all grades are threatened by LU's increasing willingness to try ever more daft measures to pare staffing levels to the bone.

Why did management back down? Flash of enlightenment? Probably not. Persuasive arguments from union reps? Maybe, as reps did some good work presenting their case. Industrial action putting massive pressure on them? That's more like it. Management realised that the OEP firmed up drivers' support for the fight against stations job cuts. They may hope that pulling the OEP will weaken drivers' support. But drivers should draw the opposite conclusion - that sticking together with other grades to deliver solid industrial action pushed LU into retreating, so if we keep on pushing, we can get the job cuts scrapped too.

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

## **TBTC TROUBLE**

Last weekend's TBTC trial on the Jubilee Line was beset by problems.

The line was suspended Waterloo to West Hampstead for most of evening, then two trains were stuck at 5mph due to more faults. There were axle counter faults ... again. West Hampstead sidings problems ... again. Countless untrained drivers and no Instructor Operators for them ... again. There were reports of managers not even bothering with briefings for drivers who have not driven past Waterloo.

As the service finished late, London Bridge, Southwark, Canary Wharf and North

## **Greenwich all shut before last train due to the overtime ban.**

The word 'shambles' springs to mind.  
[www.workersliberty.org/jubilee](http://www.workersliberty.org/jubilee)

## **TOP UP AT THE SHOP**

LU's latest ruse is to give the shop on the Liverpool Street station C gateline the right to top up Oyster. It's less than ten feet from the ticket office. And, of course, it would be allowed to top up Oyster for whatever amount the customer wants - no £5 minimum here!

This amounts to a form of contracting-out. LU even pays a fee to shops ('agents') to sell the its own products, reckoning that the fee is cheaper than paying its own directly-employed, unionised staff.

This would be a joke if the implications weren't so serious.

<http://www.workersliberty.org/handc>

## **TAKING RISKS**

Twice in the last week, managers have forced Green Park to stay open, despite being below minimum numbers. The second time, they eventually had to admit defeat and close it.

District Line management came up with some novel interpretations (otherwise known as breaches) of the rules to keep the service going when it had been hit by the overtime ban.

There are plenty of similar examples. They show that management are prepared to take risks with both our and our passengers' safety in order to 'win' this dispute and enforce their job cuts. How will they justify this if someone gets hurt - or worse?!

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