



# tubeworker

a regular bulletin by tubeworkers for tubeworkers <> [www.workersliberty.org/tubeworker](http://www.workersliberty.org/tubeworker) <> [tubeworker@btopenworld.com](mailto:tubeworker@btopenworld.com)

## RIOTS, FEAR AND LOATHING

As riots destroyed local shops and left some people homeless, many working-class people looked on with fear. *Tubeworker* does not support attacks on working-class communities, firefighters or ambulance personnel. But as working-class people, we cannot simply cheer on the press and politicians' condemnation. To prevent divisive and destructive actions happening again, we need to ask why people, especially young people, are angry and alienated.

The police killing of Mark Duggan, the spark for disturbances, is part of a pattern of police violence: deaths in custody, under restraint, or in raids; stop and search; brutality against demonstrations.

Savage government cuts are weakening our communities and have fallen most heavily on the young, vulnerable and unemployed.

Inequality is at its greatest since the 1920s. Last year alone, the combined fortunes of the 1,000 richest people in Britain rose by 30% to £333.5bn. The rich bankers who caused the economic crisis continue to loot the system while the jobs and pensions of public sector workers - the people dealing with the aftermath of the riots - are under threat.

Margaret Thatcher preached that 'there is no such thing as society'. An individualist, consumerist culture has taken hold. Millions of working-class people, especially youth, feel that no-one speaks for or listens to them. John McDonnell MP was right when he said: *We are reaping what has been sown over the last three decades of creating a grotesquely unequal society with an ethos of grab as much as you can by any means. A society of looters created with MPs and their expenses, bankers and their bonuses, tax-evading corporations, hacking journalists, bribe-taking police officers, and now a group of alienated kids are seizing their chance. This is not to condone but to understand.*

We need to take positive action to challenge these deeper problems. We should support community marches like the one from Hackney to Tottenham the weekend after the riots. Our trade unions should work

More: [www.workersliberty.org/riots2011](http://www.workersliberty.org/riots2011)

with community groups, to campaign against cuts, for police accountability, for jobs, and for the rebuilding of working-class communities in the interests of residents. We need trade unions to reach out to unemployed, young and insecure, low-paid workers.

Courts are quickly handing out over-the-top sentences that stand in contrast to the slow process of bringing phone hackers, pension fund looters and corporate killers to any kind of justice. We should not allow understandable fear and alarm at the riots to lead us to cheer on the hang-'em-flog-'em brigade and rubbish ideas of human rights. If London Underground ran disciplinaries the way the courts are running these cases, we would be up in arms about the injustice of it.

Our rulers are spouting anti-working-class prejudice as if they were 19th century colonial masters. They have dubbed rioters 'feral'; David Cameron has called them 'sick'. We hear similar anti-working-class hatred when we stand on picket lines and City bankers, with the best education money can buy, shout 'scum' in our faces. They do this because they believe their place in the class hierarchy justifies thuggery against their 'inferiors'.

As workers, we need to go on the offensive against this crusade of class hatred and class scapegoating against the poor. The politicians are showing no contrition for threatening our communities, lumping us together as targets for their backlash. We need to unite our communities and stand up in defence of working-class people.

### THANKS, BOJO

BoJo has written to us thanking us for keeping London's transport running during the riots. Let's hope he puts his words into action and tells management to make us a serious pay offer! It's amazing how fast we go from being greedy to being heroes.

Oddly, when there was snow Boris shut down the bus network, but when there were fires, looting and attacks on some public service workers, the buses were expected to keep running.

Mike Brown's memo was more focused on continuing to provide a service and helping police rather than offering support or options to staff who had difficulty returning home after a late shift or working or living in particular areas.

### SUDDENLY SAFE

An e-mail to all staff from a Station Supervisor voicing safety concerns during the riots was met with LU's characteristic duty of care. He was told to retract the e mail or face disciplinary action.

*Tubeworker can just imagine that retraction: 'Dear all, upon advice from management, I suddenly feel very safe. Contrary to my previous e mail, I now see that the company is looking after me very well'.*

### RIOT DAY PAY?

LU management have told staff unable to attend work during the riots that they must take the day as unpaid or annual leave. If you have to leave for work at 4am but your street is closed off, buildings are on fire and shops smashed up, what are you supposed to do?!

Management really don't care about our well-being when we travel to work at unsociable times. They are only bothered about whether or not we turn up. So much for duty of care!

For a few days, people felt at risk. It is bizarre for LU to effectively punish us for being placed in this situation when we travel to work to keep their trains and stations running.

*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.*

## PAY: REJECT 5-YEAR OFFER

**L**U claims its latest pay offer guarantees us security for the next 5 years (below RPI this year, RPI+0.25% years 2-4, RPI+0.5% for year 5). Does this sound like security to you? It's like asking us to roll an unfair dice, to gamble when the odds have been set against us and we can't win.

One possibility is that RPI remains high. With their 'generous' offer a fraction above RPI, our pay would rise year on year.

But don't book your round-the-world ticket just yet. High inflation means high costs. For workers, RPI under-represents real price increases. The prices of the basics we buy are rising faster than the price of luxuries. Gas is up 16%. A weekly shop costs more than ever. 5 years of a fraction-above-inflation deal would leave us poorer by the end.

But if RPI falls, we don't benefit either. This deal gives us only a tiny cushion if RPI goes negative: any pay rise would be peanuts.

We should be wary of letting go of the reins on pay for the crucial years beyond the Olympics. Initially, it was puzzling to see LU pursue an RPI+ multi-year deal when it lost them money last time. But then think of the jobs they cut. In the second year of LU's last deal, 800 stations jobs. In the third year on TfL, they launched Project Horizon.

LU tells us to expect more 'reorganisation' after 2012. We know from experience that they will attack grade by grade, and we could easily fragment into our own grades and allow LU to pick us off. Pay unites us all. Without this, *Don't be tempted to think we should sideline pay to defend jobs. We need to defend both.*

The bosses' offer of 'security' means only rising costs and potential job cuts. Employers are shifting the burden of the recession onto workers. Our only 'security' is to fight for our own interests. Why would we put our best weapon away for these five crucial years?

We are not daft. Most of us know five years is a no-go. LU is negotiating slightly on the amount of pay, but seem attached to the five years. The unions need to pile the pressure on LU, launching a high-profile campaign around the workplaces. RMT's members' meeting on pay and the Olympics in September is a start. RMT, TSSA and Unite should keep working together on pay, and ASLEF should join in too.

Some people may believe pay can wait; that proximity to the Olympics will give us greater bargaining power. But we are at the limit of our finances now. The pay was due in April.

If necessary, the unions should tell management that we want an above-inflation settlement for this year now, to get it in our pay packets well in time for Christmas, then we can carry on talking about future years. The unions should campaign on the basis that pay is as urgent as it is important.

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



**T**ubeworker is celebrating our 20th birthday this year. Since our first issue back in 1991, Tubeworker has been providing an independent platform for rank-and-file London Underground (and other London Transport) workers, putting forward strategies to win for workers and defend ourselves against management attacks, and telling you what the bosses and bureaucrats won't.

Make sure you get Tubeworker every month, and help us keep going into the next two decades. Under our special birthday subscription offer, a tenner will get every issue sent to you until the end of 2012. Send the money (cheques payable to WL Bulletins) to 20E Tower Workshops, Riley Road, London SE1 3DG, with your name and address.

## UNFAIR SACKING!

**A**n Employment Tribunal has ruled that LU sacked driver James Masango unfairly. Quite right. James had a doctor's note stating he was unfit to drive, LU made him drive anyway, and when he made an error, fired him!

**What Tubeworker wants to know now is: firstly, when does James get his job back?; and secondly, when does the manager responsible get hauled up for endangering public safety?**

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

## REINSTATED!

**L**eytonstone driver Tunde Umanah has won his job back on appeal.

A meeting organised by Tunde's RMT branch drew over 100 workmates in his support, both ASLEF and RMT members. The meeting resolved to strike if he was not reinstated, sending a strong message to management. As with the successful campaign to defend Eamonn and Arwyn, RMT has proved that fighting to defend sacked workmates can win.

[www.workersliberty.org/anti-victimisation-disputes](http://www.workersliberty.org/anti-victimisation-disputes)

## CROWD CONTROL

**R**ecently at Bank/Monument, staff were told to advise customers there was no Bank branch service due to a faulty train at Elephant. But this may not have been exactly true - more like an 'elaboration', a pretext for crowd control to avoid closing the station.

**Staff are insulted and abused enough when the service is disrupted without inventing phantom stories due to management pressure to stay open.**

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

## CONFERENCE CALL

**M**anagement have invited Wembley Central group detrainment staff to join a conference call about scrapping their jobs! As LU has not negotiated under the proper process so far, this conference call is yet another way of bypassing the unions.

LU is chopping around 30 jobs. After the OSP jobs cull, LU might drip-feed coming cuts, so we should resist every job cut or risk losing hundreds more jobs.

Agency staff in LU uniform work on these stations, though this was supposed to stop after our 2008 dispute. Some LU staff

feel aggrieved that their jobs are going while agency staff stay. Tubeworker thinks the agency workers should be brought under LU terms and conditions and the detrainment staff should keep their jobs. We need to defend all jobs, whether done by agency or LU staff.

These jobs could be cut by October, so the unions (mainly RMT: nearly all the detrainment staff are members) need to act fast to prevent this plan. The job cuts will also increase the burden on drivers, so all grades need to fight resist this.

[www.workersliberty.org/stop-job-cuts](http://www.workersliberty.org/stop-job-cuts)

## ONE BY ONE

**B**akerloo drivers have been pulled in one by one for a chat with managers about the pay offer. If they hope to find staff willing to accept it, they will be disappointed.

**Rather than undermine the unions as management hope, this tactic only gets our backs up. But it shows that LU is taking the pay issue seriously. The unions should do likewise and step up the campaign.**

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

## NOT GRASSING

**L**U's recent company bulletin about the new IT use rules tells us that if we receive 'offensive' material, we should not forward it on but delete it and inform our manager and HR immediately. 'Any breaches of these requirements may be regarded as gross misconduct and would normally result in dismissal.' So if you get something that offends you and say nothing, you will normally be sacked.

We also wonder about the definition of 'offensive'. Tubeworker has no truck with people e-mailing racist, sexist, etc stuff. But will we see staff sacked for sending (or not deleting/reporting) emails deemed (by who?) offensive cos managers don't like the opinions they give? The unions should oppose this sackers' charter.

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

## WHICH REMINDS US ...

**O**f when an RCI was stood down on the Northern Line when he refused to grass up his colleague. Fortunately, unions got involved to rectify this injustice, but it is a reminder of what management would get away with if we didn't have unions.

Tubeworker's weblog - daily updates -  
[www.workersliberty.org/twblog](http://www.workersliberty.org/twblog)  
We're on Facebook too. Make  
Tubeworker Bulletin your FB friend!