



tubeworker

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ALL OUT FOR PENSIONS AND TRAVEL EQUALITY!

From Thursday and over the weekend, Tube Lines workers will hit management hard to press our demand for pensions and passes equality. We want maximum support in every Tube Lines workplace to maximise our chances of winning.

Every RMT member should be out on Thursday, and members of other unions should remember the golden rule: you never cross a picket line. With ASLEF moving into dispute with Tube Lines as well, members can show their willingness to fight by respecting the picket lines today. Then, when we hold the line of doing no overtime over the weekend, Tube Lines will really feel the impact.

Early on in the dispute, we won Staff and Nominee Passes. It's amazing how something that was 'impossible' for years became possible when we put action on. But this was just one part of our demand, and a pretty negligible part if you live, and do most of your travelling, outside London. We need full travel equality.

Probably even more important is pensions. There is no excuse whatsoever for more recent workers having an inferior pension to those of us who date back to pre-PPP days. We should all be able to look forward to a comfortable retirement after years slogging our guts out on this job.

Even for those still in the TfL Pension Scheme, the pensions issue is important to every one of us – and to every member, and potential member, of the TfL Scheme. It is one of the best around, and to remain secure, needs to keep up its membership, with new employees joining and their contributions replacing those of members who retire. Getting everyone back in the Scheme protects all our pensions.

Underpinning both issues is the basic principle of equality: we and our workmates on London Underground and beyond should have equal rights. No ifs, no buts, no two-tier workforce.

Tube Lines management have put out propaganda that there's no point us striking as they can't talk to us about our demands while the future ownership of the company is uncertain.

They would say that, wouldn't they? Long experience tells us that "can't's" become "can's" under the pressure of solid action.

In any case, we have an opinion about that future ownership, and if a stropky workforce puts off potential private owners, then that's a bonus.

PricewaterhouseCoopers is compiling an options report on the subject – just like it did in the run-up to the notorious PPP. Will they recommend giving us back to Amey, selling us to someone new, keeping maintenance in-house and contracting-out projects and upgrades? The only acceptable solution to us is full reintegration into a publicly-owned London Underground, and the only options report we need is how to squeeze money from the rich and the capitalists to fund the job properly, and how we can democratise the job and wrest control from the managers who mess it up.



And after this weekend? The good news is that our fight has picked up again. It was allowed to lose a lot of momentum after April's strike, and we shouldn't let the union put too much faith in a hopeless Joint Working Party again. These talking shops only get results when they take place alongside industrial action, not in place of it.

We should be smart - keep hitting possessions and blockades, work out what will trouble management the most, whilst being sustainable for us. This needs pooling of information, and continuous discussion of tactics. Central to this is the strike committee, bringing together reps and members from across the job. Every Tube Lines workplace must ensure that it sends a representative to the strike committee meetings.

We may soon have the chance to co-ordinate our action with others, too. RMT is balloting Central and Bakerloo line drivers to refuse to take trains into depots or sidings without physical detrainment, and the union plans to call strike action across several cleaning companies later this month. With Tube Lines' cleaning contract up for renewal, we should kick ISS out and bring cleaning back in-house.

DEFEND EVERY JOB!

We all know that management plan job cuts across London Underground - in Tube Lines, LUL, and beyond. So should we defend every job? Or do we have to be 'realistic' and acknowledge that some jobs have to go?

An army wouldn't go into a war having already accepted defeat, and we shouldn't go into our battle to defend jobs accepting that some job cuts are inevitable. We'd be doomed to defeat.

Our trade unions must take a stance of 'no job cuts' and defend every job. If we accept any job cuts, we simply invite management to come for more.

It is not the role of our unions to help management cut jobs, or to limit themselves to fighting for 'less painful' job cuts. Drawing the line at 'no compulsory redundancies' rather than 'no job cuts' would be particularly weak in a company where the unions won a 'no compulsory redundancies' agreement over a decade ago.

There are probably three reasons that people give for the 'inevitability' of some job cuts:

1. *New technology means we need fewer workers.* But we still need staff alongside the technology, to make sure it keeps working and to pick up the reins when it doesn't. If new kit makes a job less labour-intensive, that's good. It doesn't have to mean job cuts – it should instead mean shorter working hours, more spare turns, more staff on standby. And if some new gear really does away with a job, there is always another one needing to be created elsewhere.

2. *There's a recession and the company has to save money.* TfL and London Underground should get more government money to maintain and improve services. This has happened during recessions in the past. In Paris, employers pay a 'payroll tax' to help fund the Metro: TfL should fight for a similar funding boost here. And if they must make savings, our bosses should look first to their own well-stuffed pockets. (Indeed, we'd be prepared to waive our 'no job cuts' policy in the case of senior managers.)

3. *The unions have proved themselves incapable of preventing job cuts so the best we can hope for is a decent voluntary redundancy deal.* Yes, we have had defeats – and avoidable ones, as mistakes were made. But job cuts would have been much worse if the unions hadn't put up some sort of fight, and there have been successes as well as stumbles. Voluntary redundancy means selling jobs and closing them to future workers.

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CENTRAL LINE CHAOS HIGHLIGHTS SAFETY CONCERNS

Wednesday morning's Central line chaos is a reminder both of our shambolic management, and of why working on LUL during the Tube Lines industrial action could very well be hazardous. We trust that everyone is aware of your right to refuse to work normally due to safety concerns, but just in case, the unions should issue a reminder.

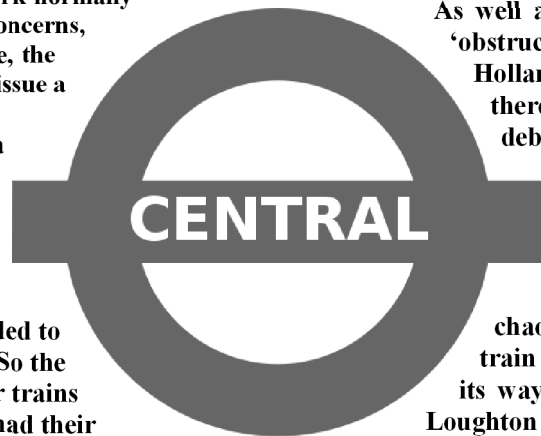
Last night, a shoe beam fell off an engineering train in the Holland Park area, and welded to the juice rail. So the first passenger trains this morning had their shoes ripped up and the track got even rougher.

One train got stuck, then another, then management sent a third train in to push out the second train and guess what? It got stuck too.

Some two-and-a-half hours later, two trainloads of passengers finally emerged. Police, medics and the ERU were on site – but will they be tomorrow when Tube Lines are on strike, or over the weekend when they have an overtime ban?!

As well as the 'obstruction' at Holland Park, there was also debris on the track at Chancery Lane. And this came on top of the chaos caused by a train gapping on its way out of Loughton this morning.

Management will no doubt issue the usual 'reassurances' that all is well and there is no need for us to worry our little selves. But we know better than to trust their spin.
What a way to run a railway.



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.