



tubeworker

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REJOIN LABOUR AND FIGHT!

RMT is currently debating whether to reaffiliate to the Labour Party, which it helped found, having been expelled in 2004.

A majority of the workers involved in producing *Tubeworker* support reaffiliation, and our main article this month reflects that view. However, some *Tubeworker* supporters take a different view, which is also reflected here. The decision will be taken at a Special General Meeting on 30 May. RMT branches will be holding special meetings prior to this: speak to your rep for details.

The Labour Party was founded in the early 1900s because the most active unions at the time had arrived at an important political conclusion.

They realised that making deals with friendly MPs in the Liberal party, or even the Tories (the only two major parties at the time), was not good enough. Organised labour needed its own political party, based on and linked to workers' basic organisations: trade unions. Thus the Labour Party was born.

A great deal has taken place since, and much has changed. But that basic reality - that our class, the working class, needs independent political representation via our own party, linked to our unions - remains.

Despite the best efforts of the likes of Tony Blair, right-wing Labour leaderships have not been able to entirely break Labour's links to the working-class movement. Now, under the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn, the party is undergoing a process of transformation of a different kind: making it more radical, and returning it to its foundational aim of representing working-class political interests.

That radical transformation is far from complete. There is still a substantial Blairite element within the party. The force that can defeat them, and carry through the radical transformation of Labour, is the combined weight of the hundreds of thousands of new members, many of them young, who have flooded into the party in support of Corbyn, and the affiliated trade unions. RMT should rejoin their ranks.



By reaffiliating to Labour, RMT can have a direct voice within party structures. RMT activists could stand in internal selections against right-wing Labour candidates. RMT could propose policy at Labour conference, and have a representative on Labour's National Executive Committee. RMT branches could affiliate to local Labour Parties, guaranteeing local representation and giving us an opportunity to mobilise within Labour in support of our industrial campaigns: against job cuts, and for better pay, terms, and conditions.

In London, affiliation to Labour would allow us to directly challenge, within the party, Sadiq Khan's failure to offer any meaningful resistance to the Tories' slashing of the TfL budget. Direct pressure within his own party, combined with industrial action to resist the cuts, could have an enormous impact.

We should not see our union's political strategy in isolation from the wider labour movement. Our aim should not be an "independent" strategy, but to be part of a collective effort of the entire labour movement, or a substantial part of it, to secure working-class political representation.

A Corbyn-led Labour Party, bolstered by hundreds of thousands of new members, in a state of clear political flux with great potential to become more democratic and more radical, offers the best vehicle for pursuing that aim. RMT should reaffiliate to Labour and join the fight.

AN ALTERNATIVE VIEW: RETAIN THE STATUS QUO

We are a member-led union. Our members, especially those in Scotland, do not want to change our political strategy.

Many believe that the Blair/Mandelson project of turning Labour into a bosses' party may be reversible. There is hope for the future. However, the changes are currently at a point where RMT needs to maintain pressure from outside, not inside.

Our Labour mayor presides over "transformation" cuts and the exploitation of cleaners, despite all the promises of change. Labour MPs are queuing up to undermine the leadership.

Lambeth Labour councillor Rachel Heywood had the whip withdrawn for fighting local cuts. An affiliated RMT would be prevented from supporting people like Rachel as it would involve going against the official Labour candidate.

The vast majority of RMT members in Scotland are vehemently opposed to affiliation to Labour. To affiliate would be to completely abandon our Scottish members.

Much of the promised influence is already available to anyone who joins as an individual member. Losing our independence is too high a price to pay. Affiliated member or not, you only have one vote in your CLP!

Even the last manifesto falls short of promising to scrap Driver Only Operation and all anti-union laws. The reason for that is the stranglehold that the right wing still exerts on the party structures.

Affiliation at this time would tie our hands and prevent us from pushing the very changes that we need. We are stronger outside. We must keep our current political strategy.

CLEANERS' COLUMN

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS FOR ABM

Cleaners have major questions for ABM. Some of these are as fundamental as: who do we actually work for?

Tax letters from HMRC say we're employed by... GBM Services Ltd! It makes it hard to assert your rights when you don't even know who your employer is!

ABM have also hurt us financially. ABM has demanded recent bridging loans to be paid back in only two repayments.

Many ex-ISS cleaners are still confused about their status. They were sent P45s when ISS's contract ended, suggesting their period of employment may be considered to start anew from the point at which ABM took over. ABM also refused to consolidate ISS's workplace pension scheme into their own.

Ex-Vinci cleaners were robbed over their company sick pay, before stern resistance from RMT reps saw it restored. And ABM's complicated online system for viewing payslips, which were formerly mailed to many cleaners' home addresses, will make it more difficult for cleaners to check our wages.

In the workplace, ABM's QR-code booking-on system is barely functional, leading some cleaners to question whether they intend to bring in a new system, possibly reviving ISS's old biometric system, for which much hardware is still in place.

Cleaners' labour is vital for the functioning of London Underground. We deserve better than being traded between cowboy contractors and kept in the dark about the most basic questions relating to our jobs. RMT must continue its campaign to empower cleaners to fight back.

NO SHIT!

Cleaners are being pressured to clean pigeon muck at various stations. Any significant amount needs to be dealt with by specialists.

If you are asked to do this: refuse! Do not compromise your health and safety.

Pigeon and other bird guano can contain serious amounts of harmful bacteria, as the Health and Safety Executive website makes clear.

Station supervisors should not ask regular cleaners to deal with these problems.

Raise a job and have it dealt with by specialists, who will have respiratory equipment.

ANTI-UNION LAWS SCUPPER BALLOT

Aslef drivers at Earl's Court depot voted by a 77.8% majority for strikes over abuses of the SPAD policy, intending to join their colleagues at Acton depot who struck over similar issues on Friday 13 April.

However, the union is not able to call a lawful strike, as only 39.2% of those eligible to vote voted yes, rather than the 40% required by the Tories' 2016 Trade Union Act.

These laws constrain our right to withdraw our labour, which is a basic principle far more essentially democratic than arbitrary turnout thresholds and restrictions, the trade union movement needs to seriously consider confronting these laws. Unjust laws deserve to be broken.

JUBILEE DRIVERS SAY ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

A drivers' dispute over new duty schedules on the Jubilee seems imminent.

The key issue is work/life balance, in particular weekend working.

It was agreed in the 2015 pay deal that weekend working would go down. It hasn't, it's gone up. And not just on the Jubilee Line.

Jubilee drivers are right to make a stand.

WOT NO CLOSURE?

When a person was stabbed at Highbury and Islington station a couple of weekends ago, the Police asked for the station to close.

But a Service Manager somehow had delusions of authority over the staff on site and ordered the trains - which had already started non-stopping at Highbury - to start stopping there. The station did eventually close, nearly 20 minutes later.

If we don't have the power to close stations when we need to, we can not guarantee the safety of passengers or staff.

LOW STANDARDS

A scaremongering *Evening Standard* article about "extremists" working on the Tube led to a Muslim worker being verbally abused by a passenger who was (literally) reading out the article to him.

The article also said that autistic people are vulnerable to being turned into terrorists, and that the government was "seizing" them - ignorant, patronising and alarmist towards our autistic workmates and passengers.

We want Tube bosses to tell George Osborne's rag that the company will not allow its distribution on our premises unless it stops abusing its privileged access to encourage people to look on staff with suspicion and hostility.

MORE BTP NOT THE ANSWER

BTP seem to think they can step in to "help" during any conversation with a customer where there might have been a disagreement or where you've had to repeat something.

Most of us want to help customers, not treat them like they're scum. We need less of the BTP hanging around and more customer service staff!

PREPARE FOR BATTLE ON THE PICC

RMT drivers on the Piccadilly Line are heading for a dispute, after the two RMT branches covering the line passed motions noting "that due to continued mismanagement, morale levels on the line are at an historic low level."

Workers cite a raft of issues, including management obstruction of union reps; abuse of procedures; heavy-handed discipline; issues around safety; and more. We all know that solid action by drivers will massively impact the service. Hopefully it'll make the bosses sit up and take notice.

WOT NO PAYMENTS?

Overtime payments for some ex-TubeLines workers at Northfields Depot have gone missing.

Tubeworker isn't keen on overtime in principle, but we're also not keen on workers not being paid for work we've done, whether on regular shifts or overtime. Bosses must pay up!

Justice for sacked drivers: reinstate Paul Bailey and Luis Vigo! - bit.ly/reinstate-p-l

What is Tubeworker?

Tubeworker is a rank-and-file socialist bulletin, published at least monthly, written by Tube workers, for Tube workers. It is published by the socialist group Workers' Liberty, but is produced in editorial meetings open to all workers.

Supporters from outside London Underground can help with public distribution.

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