



tubeworker

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SHORTER HOURS, BETTER LIFE

It's a tough job, physically and mentally. Workload, anti-social and irregular hours, stress and trauma ... all of this and more leaves many of us feeling exhausted even when we are not at work. We need more quality time away from the job.

There is plenty of research showing that shift work causes health problems, including increased risk of heart disease and certain cancers. It also affects our relationships and our mental well-being.

Full-time London Underground Ltd employees are now on a 35-hour week. We want this reduced to a 32-hour, four-day week!

NO CUT IN PAY OR CONDITIONS

We want a shorter working week without strings. The benefits of working three hours less will be lost if we end up doing more for less when we are at work.

A cut in the full-time week without loss of pay will mean a rise in the hourly rate, which will increase part-timers' wages even while their hours remain the same. So we will all benefit.

Of course we want a pay rise as well as a shorter working week,

especially for lower-paid grades, but for many of us, a cut in hours is just as – or maybe even more – important.

PROGRESS OVER TIME

Ever since rail workers formed trade unions, we have been fighting for shorter and more regular hours.

Nearly a century ago, the 1919 national railway strike – involving both NUR (RMT's predecessor) and Aslef won a maximum eight-hour day and a levelling-up of wages.

Many of us have been on the Tube long enough to have worked 40-hour weeks when we started, and have fought as part of our unions to steadily cut that since then. Sometimes those shorter working weeks have come with more strings, sometimes with fewer.

IS IT PRACTICAL?

Some people think that the demand for a four-day week is unrealistic. But it is standard on the national railway!

Moreover, London Underground, along with many other employers, continually argues that technological advances make the job less labour-intensive and use that as a pretext to cut jobs. Why not instead cut hours?

Then we will get the benefits of technology without sacrificing jobs.

So ... Where LUL is proposing to cut jobs, let's cut hours instead. For example, the new Hammersmith control centre, or the introduction of new signalling kit that needs less maintenance, can be staffed without any reduction in jobs if the working week is cut.

Where LUL has already cut jobs, for example on stations, staff have a heavier workload and inadequate staffing levels. So we want a shorter working week, and an increase in jobs to reverse the damage.

And where LUL has not (yet) cut jobs, for example in the driving grades, we can have a shorter working week and create new jobs. This will have the knock-on effect of boosting promotion opportunities and reducing unemployment.

AN EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGN

We can win this with a strategy that works. We can learn from what worked, and what didn't work, in previous campaigns.

For example, when drivers got their 35-hour week in 1996, they paid for it with a three-year pay freeze, and the cut in hours was largely achieved through shaving minutes off shifts: that was not ideal. When station staff got their 35-hour week ten years later, there were no overall job cuts and they got 52 days off, but they also got a "re-rostering" that created some real howlers.

Learning from these experiences, the key features of a winning campaign are: to be confident in our case; to take strong industrial action; to refuse unacceptable compromises; and to be open about what is happening in talks.

Tubeworker will be supporting and reporting on this fight as it develops.



The fight to reduce working hours has been a key battle for the labour movement. This picture originates from the 19th century, when 10-16 hour days were common.

JUBILEE LINE: SOLIDARITY WINS

Unions have settled the dispute on the Jubilee Line, after the threat of strikes forced concessions from bosses.

This dispute was based around a new timetable on the line which has seen an increase in weekend working. This and other concerns were raised by reps, and ignored by management, before new schedules were even completed, and since the implementation of the timetable, further problems have become apparent.

The resolution will see an additional line of "pool cover" added to sheets at Jubilee Line depots, covered by the most senior pool driver, but with a guaranteed Saturday rest day.

This dispute has shown that solidarity between unions, and a militant approach to opposing a deterioration of working conditions, is a winning formula which can see detrimental changes rectified.

What we need now is full solidarity between all Tube workers, with one workplace union to combine us all.

PROTEST TRUMP'S VISIT!

The far-right US President Donald Trump plans to visit the UK on 13 July.

Protesters will oppose his racist, sexist, nationalist agenda.

As Picc Line drivers will be striking at the same time at Trump's visit, we can make it a day of protests: from the picket line to the demo!

Meet: 14:00, Friday 13 July, @ BBC building on Portland Place (nr. Oxford Circus)

More: stoptrump.org.uk

ALL OUT ON THE PICC!

RMT drivers on the Piccadilly Line will strike from 11-14 July.

This is a bold and assertive strategy, striking for multiple days and including a Friday night in order to mobilise the Night Tube drivers.

The dispute has been prompted by management adopting an increasingly disciplinarian and authoritarian approach, including obstructing union reps from carrying out union duties. Bosses have also failed to honour agreements made in previous disputes.

See you on the picket lines!

BOSSES OUT OF CONTROL ON AAW

There is a combine-wide management offensive underway on attendance.

Managers are using Section 5.2 of the Attendance At Work Support Pack to convene meetings with workers who are in work, with no LUOH restrictions, and threatening them with redeployment or medical termination on the basis of their attendance history going back years.

Our unions must resist this.

Tubeworker encourages all readers not to attend any informal meetings with managers to "chat" about attendance. Always take a rep!

STAFF EVENTS PROPERLY!

Special Requirements Team reps are pushing management on the issue of staff shortages on the Jubilee Line.

Understaffing of stations is piling pressure on SRT workers working events at Wembley, the O2, and Stratford, as well as the local staff at these stations.

The company must staff events properly. If they refuse, a dispute must be considered.

STRIKES DUE AT TRANSPLANT

Fleet workers at the ex-AP JNP Transplant depot have voted for strikes.

Action is due in two separated disputes, over pay parity and train prep. Stay tuned for announcement of dates.

FAMILIAR STORY FOR CLEANERS

In a development that surprised absolutely no-one, many ABM cleaners have found themselves one day short in the latest pay packet.



Short payment was an all-too-regular feature of life under ISS and Interserve and, once again, it seems to be a case of "meet the new boss, same as the old boss" with ABM.

To compound matters, ABM is operating a policy of not issuing physical copies of pay slips to cleaners, meaning anyone without regular access to the internet or a printer can struggle to check whether they've been paid properly. When workers have consistently pestered their supervisors and managers, paper payslips have usually been issued. The lesson there is: make a fuss.

The question of how the short payment will be resolved remains open. Tubeworker understands that RMT reps are preparing a collective grievance.

If the money isn't paid immediately, further action will be needed.

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.

Email: tubeworker@workersliberty.org

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