



tubeworker

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- ➔ **Workers' unity against racism**
- ➔ **Curb police powers: fund mental health and community services**
- ➔ **End the ethnicity pay gap in TfL, end outsourcing**

Black Lives Matter!



Tubeworker supports the global protests against police brutality and racism.

The issues raised by the protests are not just problems in the USA. They affect us too.

Britain has its own history of police violence against people of colour, with campaigns like the United Families and Friends Campaign highlighting deaths in custody. And just as America must reckon with its history of slavery and segregation, so must Britain confront a history of slavery and colonialism.

Although we're brought up to believe the police "protect us", their history shows that, as an institution, their role is more about protecting property than people. We need adequate funding of mental health and community services to push back the role of the police.

Racial inequality is also something we experience directly in the workplace. 30.5% of the overall TfL workforce is BAME. In 2019, a white TfL employee earned on average 9.2% more than their BAME workmates*. This figure is based on directly-employed workers' salaries only; if outsourced workers were included, it would be even higher.

Outsourcing itself can act as a form of discrimination; by outsourcing sections of the workforce with high concentrations

of people of colour and migrants, such as cleaning, catering, and security, TfL/LU have created a situation where the majority-BAME/migrant sections of the workforce are those with the worst terms and conditions.

BAME workers have been disproportionately affected by Covid-19. This is because BAME workers are more likely to be in higher-risk, frontline jobs, with inadequate PPE, as the tragic murder of Belly Mujinga shows. Some TfL bosses have spoken up in support of BLM; they should start by addressing racial inequality in their own company.

ORGANISE

As workers and trade unionists, we need to organise.

Our unions must support BLM protests, and help develop a wider working-class anti-racist programme that demands equality in jobs, housing, services, and education. We also need to confront far-right counter-protests, and persuade white working-class people drawn to them that their interests lie in common struggle with workers of colour, rather than the toxic politics of nationalism.

There is work to do within our unions, too. RMT, the majority union on LU, has never had a black person, or a woman of any ethnicity, in any officer role (Regional Organiser, Assistant General Secretary, or General Secretary). In Aslef, TSSA, and Unite too, the higher up the union hierarchy you

go, the fewer black and brown faces you see.

Our unions must be more reflective of the workforces they organise. A good starting point is for BAME committees within unions to have more power to organise campaigns, rather than merely being "advisory".

We understand that some workmates have concerns about large demonstrations at a time when virus transmission is still a risk, and welcome creative thinking about ways to take action whilst maintaining social distancing.

But we also defend the right to protest, and think it's important to remember that it's failures of government policy that are to blame for the high death toll, not anti-racist protests.

* Source: TfL Ethnicity Pay Gap Report 2019: bit.ly/tfl-gap

US dock workers strike in support of Black Lives Matter
More: bit.ly/blm-strikes

More links and resources

Policy in support of Black Lives Matter passed by RMT Bakerloo branch: bit.ly/rmtbakerloo-blm

National RMT statement on BLM: bit.ly/rmt-blm

Aslef statement on BLM: bit.ly/aslef-blm

TSSA campaign for justice for Belly Mujinga: bit.ly/tssa-belly

Support the work of the United Families and Friends Campaign: crowdfunder.co.uk/unity-families-friends-campaign

Follow RMT's Black & Ethnic Minority Members Advisory Committee on Twitter at [@RMTBEMembers](https://twitter.com/RMTBEMembers)



SAY NO TO DRIVERS' OVERTIME!

LU has announced it wants drivers to

do overtime and rest day working. This has to be resisted.

We get a relatively decent wage, and if we want to earn more we must all stand on the picket line together to ensure the boss pays us what we are worth.

Overtime isn't a unifying force, it leads to a few people trying to get as many hours as they can, but then when it comes to fighting for a decent basic wage unity falls apart and the boss wins. The long term result? The basic wage drops and we need to work more and more hours overtime just to keep up with paying the bills.

The more flexible we are, the fewer of us LU will need to employ. If, for example a depot with 100 drivers each did a couple of hours of overtime a month, it would mean LU could employ fewer drivers at that depot. It is also far easier for LU to cover up shortages, if one person doing a couple of hours extra on the end of a shift means a train stays in service, rather than LU needing to employ an additional person to do that work.

In other grades the issues of overtime are already apparent. We should aspire to a clean wage so that working our basic hours is enough to provide for us financially. When it isn't, we can all fight together for a better wage.

If we want to maintain a relatively decent wage, we need to do it together on the picket line, not on an individual basis with those that can begging for extra hours but all of us suffering in the long term.

PAY US OUR BACK PAY!

LU has announced that the backpay we're owed will be staggered across several pay packets.

You've almost got to admire the company's nerve. Remember that this comes on top of LU's announcement, previously reported by Tubeworker here, that the company would be excluding anyone who left employment before the date at which the new pay arrangements were implemented (i.e., July 2020) from any back pay at all.

Official disputes and ballots are difficult in the current circumstances but they can't be ruled out. We can't let the company get away with pinching pennies on our pay.

NOT BACK TO "NORMAL"

Some LU managers are pushing for a return to "business-as-usual", with revised working arrangements under attack.

Some managers clearly need reminding that, whilst we are hopefully over the worst, we are in no way out of the woods. We won't be back to "normal" for many months, maybe years, and additional safety measures will need to remain in place.

ONE WAY, WRONG WAY?

Passengers arriving from Finsbury Park mainline are coming down to the Tube station, only to be told that they have to walk round to the other side of the station to get in.

Moreover, the system has removed step-free access for people exiting the station.

Station staff have been calling for the system to be reviewed and changed. Because, you know, those who work there know best what works.

CLEANERS NEED FULL SICK PAY

ABM is trying to weasel out of the agreement to pay full sick pay for cleaners who need to self-isolate or go sick.

The say there's a "cap" of 12 weeks per cleaner, which means that anyone who has needed to shield or distance for 12 weeks, as per government advice, will only get Statutory Sick Pay if they need to self-isolate or go off sick again.

This injustice and inequality must be rectified.

MASKS AND VISORS

There's been a generally high take-up from passengers since face coverings were made mandatory on public transport on 15 June.

There's some confusion, though, about whether staff need to wear them too and who might be exempt. Clarity is needed.

It's also positive that LU has now committed not to discipline any worker who chooses to wear one of the plastic face shields issued by the RMT.

LU says it is trialling its own face shields... we'll see how long it takes before they're widely available!

BANKING ON IT

LU wanted to deploy SRT staff at the bottom of escalators at Bank station, in a spot with no place of safety.

This reckless and unnecessary plan was fought off by union reps. It's another example of a dangerous "business-as-usual" push from some managers.

ALL RISK ASSESSMENTS MATTER?

Under pressure, TfL announced it would produce a specific risk assessment for BAME staff.

A hurried document was produced, which made no reference whatsoever to the trade unions (despite a legal requirement that health and safety reps are involved in risk assessments), quickly followed by another one which claims that BAME workers are at no more risk of Covid-19 infection if they are at work than if they are not!

Members of all at-risk groups need to be risk-assessed in their own right, and there also need to be "intersectional" risk assessments, for example for black disabled workers.

DON'T LEAVE NIGHT TUBE WORKERS IN THE DARK

LU says it's mothballing Night Tube until March 2021.

Night Tube workers jobs and conditions must be protected. Any attempts to compel Night Tube workers to work outside of their contracts needs a swift and firm response from our unions.

More on our blog!
workersliberty.org/twblog

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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