



tubeworker

a regular bulletin by tubeworkers for tubeworkers ♦♦♦ 27 november 2002

STAND UP FOR SAFETY!

♦ support FBU strike ♦ keep fighting PPP ♦ join the public sector revolt ♦

LUL has admitted that 355 of us refused to work on safety grounds during the first, 48-hour, FBU strike: a lot more than the 'under a hundred' that the company said at first! It is an impressive total given the courage it takes to stand up to management like that.

LUL's response was deplorable.

Despite their pretence, the company did not take our genuine safety concerns seriously; instead, they sent staff home without pay. Faced with having their pay stopped, workers had no choice but to return to their normal duties.

Recent events have laid bare who really cares about safety: **us, not LUL.** Their excuse – the HMRI approves! – really is a joke. The HMRI always ends up rubber-stamping whatever the government wants it to. **The HMRI said that BR privatisation was safe!**

This is a clear case of LUL running an unsafe system due to political pressure.

WHAT NOW?

We all know that the Tube is not safe without the Fire Brigade. **If it were, we wouldn't call them out so often when they are not on strike.** So, what should Tube workers do now?

- ♦ Register with LUL that you are working under duress – submit a memo, get it logged, tell your union rep.
- ♦ Be vigilant. Any new concerns – raise them with managers, involve the union, consider refusing to work.
- ♦ Get our unions to campaign vigorously to reinstate the docked pay and challenge legally LUL's victimisation of workers who stood up for safety.
- ♦ Organise campaigning action to highlight our continuing belief that LUL is putting us and the passengers at risk. The top union reps should continue to insist that the safety case is nonsense.
- ♦ Through our unions, we should demand further safety measures during

FBU strike action – eg. double-staff trains, bring back extinguishers in all carriages, extra cleaners to stop litter build-up, further station closures. Some measures can be negotiated locally, some at the company-wide level.

Our action so far has slowed the job down.

Engineering work is lagging behind because of the ban on hot work and other restrictions. Stations closed for fire alerts are taking more than an hour to re-open, instead of the usual ten minutes or so. **It all helps to ensure that it is not just the government that it putting pressure on LUL - it's us, too.**

STRIKE BALLOT?

On the one hand, it is good to see the RMT wants to stand up for its members (unlike, for example, TSSA). If the ballot happens, we should vote Yes.

But on the other hand, we question it as a tactic. The timescale for a strike means that we couldn't take action until nearly Christmas, so it does not address the issue of what we should do now.

Our refusal to work a couple of weeks ago showed the power of rank-and-file organisation. It was sorted out by union reps and activists at a local level – people who have the confidence that comes from being part of a union.

But the situation we are in now also shows that **better, clearer leadership could take us even further.** Our pay strikes were called off without even a referendum on the 'deal', and now there is a new strike ballot when we haven't resolved the outstanding one over PPP!

The unions' strategy should be made through democratic decision-making. **Members should be able to feel confident in our unions' strategy.**



Photo: firefighters attend Southall rail crash

PPP – IT'S ALL GONE QUIET

PPP privatisation has not happened yet, so we should still be fighting it. Yet, after a one-day strike in July, nothing further has happened.

PPP has hit more obstacles, and the contracts which were supposed to be completed this month are still unsigned. Amey - part of TubeLines – has hit financial crisis, and Ken Livingstone is talking about yet another court case.

We have known all along that PPP will be a disaster for Tube safety. **So we should not give up our fight against it while we still have a chance to win.**

JOIN THE REVOLT

There is a revolt spreading through the public sector. Teachers and Council workers are striking for better London Weighting. Postalworkers are gearing up for a fight about job losses and privatisation. Higher Education workers have held strikes over pay.

The Government thinks it can face down the Fire Brigades Union. Arrogant Cabinet ministers think that they are worth £140,000 a year, whilst firefighters should risk their lives for £6 per hour.

But Blair is scared of an uprising from public sector workers together, united. **We are part of the fightback in the public services.** The best solidarity we can show with the FBU is to get our PPP strike action back on track.