



tubeworker

a regular bulletin by tubeworkers for tubeworkers <><><> 23 June 2004

RMT PAY & CONDITIONS STRIKE:

ALL OUT FOR A BETTER DEAL

<> do not book on for shifts that commence between 18:30 on Tuesday 29 June and 18:29 on Wednesday 30 June <>

Well done to the RMT executive – it has put the strike action back on following the failure of talks with LUL and Network Rail management concerning this year's pay and conditions claim. The offer for LUL operational staff is a 3% pay rise followed by a further 0.5% in October in return for future 'flexibility and a new approach to rostering'. LUL has also promised to implement a 36 hour working week as soon as possible which on past experience could be as far as 3 years away.

WHY STRIKE?

This falls miles short of the union's claim: a 32-hour, 4-day week, a substantial pay rise for all staff, basic wage for an SA to be raised to £22,000, and equalisation of priv travel facilities.

As the saying goes, it has more strings than the London Philharmonic. Of course, we could consider later finishes, earlier starts and special events – if management made it worth our while by agreeing to the 4-day week. But other strings, such as job cuts or reduced sick pay, are out of the question for Tube workers.

Arguments against this strike will come thick and fast from the media. But more and more Tube workers are realising that the only reason we have relatively good wages and conditions is because we have taken industrial action in the past.

Without that, our year-on-year pay rises would have barely kept pace with inflation, and our conditions would have come under even further attack from a layer of narrow-minded LUL management whose biggest achievement would be to slash the wages bill for the company.



UNITY IS STRENGTH

We have all heard rumours about the possibility of hundreds of job cuts planned on the Underground, and ticket office staff are staring right down the barrel of a gun at the moment.

If you are a driver, don't think that station job cuts won't affect you. With fewer station staff, who is going to help you with detrainments, or violent incidents, or one-unders? And when they

have finished decimating the station staff, who do you think they will come for next? Don't forget that Bombardier reckons that it can bring in driverless trains.

All the more reason to stand united now. If LUL detects division between grades, or weakness in the membership, it will not hesitate in pushing ahead with cost cutting, casualisation, and watering down of health and safety rules.

It is essential that we all remember the golden rule of trade unionism: you never cross a picket line. We have been at our strongest when people have upheld this.



MEANINGFUL DISCUSSIONS?

This lousy offer is the result of the 'meaningful' discussions Livingstone promised once RMT head office had suspended the 10 June strike. It comes nowhere near meeting the union's claim. Which begs the questions: Why are ASLEF and TSSA not putting up a fight? And why did RMT suspend the action without anything tangible on the table?

The feeling among RMT members is that Bob Crow did Ken a big favour by suspending the strike, but in return we have gained nothing, whilst having the momentum knocked out of the dispute. Other unions' members are frustrated that their leaders have yet again failed to stand up for them.

Now it is again the job of the reps and activists to convince the doubters to take strike action following this surrender by ASLEF and TSSA and woeful tactical failure by the RMT executive.

But we were right to push for this action

in the first place, and we must now work as hard as possible to get as many workers not just out on strike but out on the picket lines. This could be a very effective strike, with the potential to cause maximum disruption.



RANK-AND-FILE CONTROL

This is *your* dispute about *your* pay and conditions. Take part in it, and also take control of it. The running of the strike should be devolved to strike committees run by workers and not by bureaucrats.

Many RMT branches meet on the day after the strike – an ideal opportunity to assess the action and decide what we think should be done next. Representatives from the various branches should then get together, agree a strategy, and pressurise the Executive to follow the wishes of the rank-and-file. And we should welcome the involvement of members of other unions who want to be part of this fight.

So all out on Tuesday/Wednesday. Let's show them that we mean business. Everyone must respect picket lines and most importantly, get involved.

**national rally and
lobby of parliament**
for re-nationalisation of the railway
Tuesday 20 July, starting at 11am

called by



Tube workers need a 4-day 32-hour week NOW!

EURO 2004

A major festival of the beautiful game, or an excuse for LUL to bully sick people again? Yes, some managers got it into their heads that they could demand sick notes right from the kick-off ie. from your first day of illness, conveniently forgetting your legal right to self-certify for seven days, and their own company policy!

Fortunately, the union reps were having none of it, so the company had to kick that bit of foul play into touch.

SNOUTS IN THE TROUGH

It was snacks and smiles at the opening of the new Arnos Grove canteen, as LUL finally realised that if you expect people to eat in half an hour, you have to provide somewhere to do it. (A vending machine is not good enough.)

Three cheers for the depot's RMT reps for fighting for this for so long. From now on, the company should accept that a canteen should be a standard facility in any depot.

DEEP TROUBLE

Hampstead is well known as the deepest station on the system, and last year topped the league of lift defects and incidents. So you'd think that a lift refurb would be a good idea, yes?

Allegedly not, if you are TubeLines and the refurb costs £80,000. TubeLines is busy denying this report, but the Evening Standard reckons it has seen a leaked document that confirms it. So we will leave you, dear reader, to make up your minds who you believe.

PENSION INJUSTICE

In a long-standing injustice, staff who are medically redeployed get an annual

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Got a story for *Tubeworker*? We welcome & will publish reports & comments from all Tube workers. Also get in touch if you want to come to our regular readers' meetings, or to get involved in action about any of the issues we've covered.

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Tubeworker p&p S. Matgamna

lump sum payment which is not pensionable. So as well as suffering the effects of their illness or disability, they also suffer a lower income in retirement.

Good news: LUL is reviewing this, thanks to persistent lobbying by the unions. So if this has affected you, make sure your union rep knows about it.

TELL US SOMETHING NEW

Two recent reports tell us what we already know: PPP is a disaster. The Audit Office (hardly a hotbed of militant propaganda) notes that the service is no better, and that in their first year, the Infracos caused 226 delays through overruns. Another report says that the system will be a 'virtual building site' for the next 10 years, and any improvements in the next seven-and-a-half years will be marginal.

This will come as no surprise to anyone, as Tube workers and our unions said all along that PPP would be awful. What we need now is a report on what we are going to do about it - a concerted fight to bring the Tube back into public ownership.

BITING THE HAND

That's gratitude for you. RMT helps Ken Livingstone get elected, then he damns our strike as inexplicable and not justified. Perhaps it's not too surprising, after Livingstone's scandalous support for LUL when they sacked Chris Barrett - a sacking which an Industrial Tribunal later found to be unfair.

Better Ken than Tory Steven Norris - the Chair of Jarvis, who thinks Tube strikes should be illegal! But workers deserve better than this 'choice'.

THEY'RE IN THE MONEY

PPP is a lucrative business. Not if you are a Tube worker, obviously, or a passenger. But if you are a private company, you are well and truly quids-in.

The Infracos received £1b in public funding, but paid out only £15.6m in penalties for their cock-ups. And in the process of setting up PPP, consultants and lawyers were paid a massive £109m, including £29.2 million to law firm Freshfields and £21.4 million to advisers

PriceWaterhouseCoopers.

No wonder there is 'no money' to give us a decent pay rise and shorter hours - it's all been creamed off by the fat cats!

MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS

On the subject of fat cats, TFL has advertised for a 'Director Group Equality and Inclusion' on '£ six figure package'. At a time when the pay gap between men and women is getting wider, and black people are still concentrated in some of the lowest-paid jobs in the industry eg. cleaning, this is a slap in the face to the very people who are supposed to benefit from 'equality'.

Or does 'equality' provide a nice little earner for a few people, while the majority still suffer inequality? It certainly looks that way.

DEAR TUBEWORKER

How many men does it take to change one light bulb? (Editors' note: I'm sure there is a good feminist answer to that!)

Answer: thirteen. Yes, 13. When it's over a Jubilee line escalator. I kid you not. That's ten to erect the scaffold, two to take possession of the machine chamber, and one to change the light bulb. The man who changed the light bulb could have taken possession as he had done that night for exactly the same reason on another set of escalators where his men had changed a light bulb off a pair of ladders. Apparently, using ladders is now OK on escalators. Their method statement said so.

I wonder how much this must be costing all of us in terms of pay and conditions. There's money to waste like this, but none for a decent pay rise.

Ideas for Freedom 2004

a weekend of socialist debate
Saturday 3 | Sunday 4 July
Highgate Newtown Community Centre (Archway)
- details and tickets from
Tubeworker



Tubeworker is produced by tubeworkers in the Alliance for Workers' Liberty, an organisation fighting in the unions, the Socialist Alliance and the Labour Party 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.

Tube workers need a 4-day 32-hour week NOW!