



tubeworker

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THE FIGHT IS ON

News this morning is that management have gone to ACAS. Given that they offered nothing in yesterday's talks, we can only assume that this is a PR exercise to make them look like the conciliatory ones and us look unreasonable ie. the opposite of the truth! Unless London Underground management behave totally differently at ACAS than they did in yesterday's ten-hour talks marathon, it will come to nothing.

Those senior managers who want a confrontation with us seem to be getting their way. So rather than offer anything meaningful, they offered zilch. Perhaps they will come up with a few crumbs today, but it is highly unlikely to be anything worth us backing down for.

We now need to stand firm. Remember that the issues we are striking for are vital - the principles that our income should keep up with our cost of living; that no-one should be chucked onto the dole against their wishes; that we are entitled to dignity at work and not to be persecuted by managers.

Staff are being put under a lot of pressure not to strike by management propaganda, by a media anti-strike campaign, by ASLEF and TSSA's refusal to defend their members, and by a general atmosphere of fear brought on by the recession. We can keep the action strong by continually telling staff the

truth and bolstering confidence, and by refusing to be dragged down by a small minority of people determined to strike-break.

Members of other unions should join the RMT strike. You are affected by the issues in exactly the same way that RMT members are. The fact that your union leaders have refused to stand up for you is to their shame, but it does not mean that you can not stand up for yourself. You can not be disciplined for striking, and if you want to feel extra-secure, you can always sign up to RMT, even if it's just for the duration of this dispute!

We need big, effective, lively picket lines, covering as many workplaces as possible. These will help persuade the unconvinced not to go to work, will give us a high profile and a chance to leaflet the public, and will be a great place to boost our morale and talk to each other about strategies to win.

www.workersliberty.org/jobspayjustice

CONCESSION SHOWS WE MUST FIGHT ON

Predictably enough, management made a concession last week: a two-year pay offer. Given that it was our preparation for a strike that got us this far, pressing ahead is the only way to win more.

Management's 5-year offer was rightly described by ASLEF as "too flippant to bother responding to", although it took RMT's action rather than other unions' inaction to push the company into retreating from it. RMT members should feel proud that their effort so far has scuppered management's pipe dream of a pay freeze over the Olympics.

Management want you to think that because it is not as bad as their original insult, the new offer is perhaps OK. But it amounts to a 'choice' between a four-year real-terms pay cut and a two-year real-terms pay cut. If this had been their first offer, we would have rejected it and taken action against it - so we should have the same attitude if it is their second, third, fourth or hundredth offer.

And remember - they have offered **nothing** on the rest of the pay claim, **nothing** on job cuts and **nothing** on management bullying. Any union would be daft to accept this, as it would leave members with less real pay, everyone's job insecure and managers free to continue their reign of persecution of staff. We would be fools if we sold off our job security for a pay offer which doesn't even amount to a pay rise.

RMT is asking LU to honour an agreement it made with unions back in 2001, the so-called 'Jobs for Life' deal. ASLEF and RMT members struck (for RMT members the action was unofficial following an injunction against its strike) to get an agreement that noone could be made compulsorily redundant on LU or any of its subsidiaries. LU now has an Organisational Change Policy: if your job goes, you are placed in a pool for 16 weeks and if you don't find a job, you're out. Why will management offer no guarantee of no compulsory redundancies unless they are planning some?! We know they will, with a near £3 billion deficit to recover.

Previous union struggles on LU have won very valuable job security for us. We will not give it up! If LU think they can get away with it, they can expect a very strong strike!

A WORKERS' PLAN FOR THE CRISIS

Why should workers pay for an economic crisis that we did not create? How did this crisis come about, and why will capitalism always create crises?



Is tinkering with the system enough, or do we need more radical policies - a workers' plan?

This new pamphlet from Workers' Liberty looks at all these questions. Subscribe to *Tubeworker* and get a free copy.

Tubeworker is produced by Tube workers and published by Workers' Liberty, an organisation fighting as part of the labour movement 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.

Stop the killings in the Niger Delta!

Solidarity with the Cleaners!

The Nigerian military has launched a massive assault on the Niger Delta region, the oil-producing region of the country. Around 1,000 people have died in the past two weeks. British oil company, Shell, is the largest investor in the area and has financed this violence in order to protect its interests.

The Delta region is the same place many Tube cleaners are from, some having fled the military regime. Many cleaners have consistently referred to this experience of struggle back in Nigeria during the struggles on the Tube, that they are part of the same fight.

The defence of migrant workers must be central to our fight against the exploitation we face at the hands of the bosses' class, against the wars they launch and against the way they exploit other nations. We are a global class and our fightback should show that. RMT should object to the violence in Nigeria and link the issue to its efforts to organise and win for cleaners.

Just as we have said about Sri Lanka, about Palestine, about Iraq, we need a workers' movement that makes concrete working-class solidarity. And when there are people in struggle right now on our railways who were flung here by this conflict, this solidarity begins at home.

Join the RMT protest to call for a living wage for cleaners on the underground, an end to victimisations, pensions rights, 28 days holiday a year, sickness pay and papers for all. Meet 9.30 outside City Hall, nearest station London Bridge on Wednesday June 17th.

www.workersliberty.org/world/international/africa/nigeria



Want to get every issue of *Tubeworker* (published at least monthly)? Send us seven quid (cheques payable to *WL Bulletins*) and your address!

Got a story for *Tubeworker*? We welcome reports & comments from all Tube workers.

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Winning Ways

In several ways, this dispute has been run better than previous ones, but in other ways, there is still room for improvement.

What's better:

- There has been more involvement of rank-and-file reps and members in running the dispute, especially through the strike committee.
- There has been more and better information from the union.
- The union has not let the fight for pay drag on for months and months past the due date.
- We have not been expected to mess around with a token 24-hour walkout which would achieve nothing, but are taking action which could be part of a serious strategy.
- There has been a bit more effort to win public support.

These are all things that *Tubeworker* has consistently argued for, and we are

pleased to see them happening. But to win more, Tube workers also need:

- to all be in one union full democratic rank-and-file control over our disputes
- to organise hardship payments for those who struggle with losing money during strikes
- stronger organisation in the workplaces on day-to-day issues as well as the big fights
- to act as part of a wider workers' movement, taking on the politicians as well as the bosses, and taking up community and international solidarity

Tubeworker is a regular bulletin which has been produced by and for London Underground workers for nearly 20 years, and which organises around these ideas. It is pro-union but independent of union head offices. If you like what we do, get involved.

Ideas for Freedom 2009:

Socialists, the capitalist crisis and the working class

Friday 10 - Sunday 12 July, central London - a weekend of socialist discussion.

- why does capitalism have crises? - how economic crises transform politics: the 1880s, 1930s, 1970s - People's Charter or Workers' Plan? - the state of the labour movement: a panel discussion - lessons of the Visteon dispute - social work and child protection - what's wrong with the Green New Deal? - how and how not to fight the BNP
- should the left say 'No2EU'? - community struggles and workers' representation - the rising tide of class struggle in France
- the politics of Northern Ireland, in 1968 and today - revolutionary anniversaries: world revolution 1919, Cuba 1959, Iran 1979, miners' strike 1984-5 - the war in Sri Lanka - Workers' fight against the army and the Taliban in Pakistan

Book online at www.workersliberty.org/ideas

EURO ELECTION: RIGHT ON THE RISE

New Labour have been virtually wiped out in the European Elections with just fifteen per cent of the vote!

Gains have gone to the right wing. Labour have been beaten into third place by the Tories and UK Independence Party. The fascist BNP won two seats.

Traditional Labour voters just stayed at home. Working-class voters see Labour as just another party for the rich that no longer represents us.

The BNP made gains because as well as their racist filth, they talked about jobs, housing and services which are a genuine concern to people.

We need a workers' voice in politics that fights on issues like jobs and housing and demands that we don't suffer the effects of capitalism's crisis. This would challenge the BNP on issues where they gain.

RMT's 'No 2 EU, Yes to Democracy' coalition got 1% of the vote, showing not many people were interested in its narrow anti-EU-ism, and reflecting the union's failure to involve its own members in deciding its election platform. Next time, the union should back something better. We need a new Socialist Alliance, uniting trade unionists and socialists to provide the working-class voice we need.

Tubeworker's weblog - daily updates - www.workersliberty.org/twblog