



Bakerloo news



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August 2024

Unite against the far right

- ➡ Migrant workers are not the enemy
- ➡ Don't let bigots divide us

WHAT'S GOING ON?

An upsurge of street protests, rioting, and violence by a loosely organised far-right network is taking place.

So far, its main targets are immigrants, including refugees and asylum seekers, Muslims and other ethnic minority communities, and trans people. Although the movement encompasses a number of strands, its political core is provided by a virulently racist, sexist, transphobic, and homophobic strain of English nationalism.

The far right has seized on the horrific stabbings in Southport to further its agenda, but the current upsurge predates that event. Over 20,000 people attended a far-right march on Saturday 27 July, called specifically to coincide with, and oppose, Trans Pride.

This is part of an ongoing global wave of insurgent nationalism, also expressed by the National Rally in France, AfD in Germany, the Trump movement in the USA, and others.

WHY IS THIS A UNION ISSUE?

RMT is anti-racist. We are for rights for migrant workers, and for equality for women, LGBT+ people, and people from ethnic minority communities.

RMT was one of our 20 unions which co-signed the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants' Migrant Workers' Pledge in 2023. We have many migrant worker members, including on London Underground.

We aim to build unity between local and migrant workers; attacks on migrants, and on immigration, weaken that unity and divide our class.

Attempts to divide working people on other bases, including by targeting trans people, also weaken our efforts to stand together against our employers. RMT supports trans rights.

You don't have to subscribe to a particular political ideology, or vote for a particular political party, to be a member of RMT. You don't have to agree with every union policy. But we urge any RMT member who feels any sympathy with the current riots, or the who thinks the rioters may have a point, to reflect on this in the context of their union membership. Being in a union is about solidarity and unity; the far right want to divide us on the basis of skin colour, national origin, gender identity, and sexual orientation.

Which side are you on?

ISN'T THERE A REAL PROBLEM WITH IMMIGRATION?

Immigrants, including refugees and asylum seekers, are not our enemies.

Most immigrants are working-class people like us who have moved to this country seeking to make a better life for themselves and their families, something we all aspire to.

The far-right narratives that we are being "swamped" or "invaded", and that Britain is "full up", are fabrications. The reason housing, healthcare, and other essential services in this country are creaking and crumbling is because of decades of government cuts and underfunding. Successive governments have legislated heavily in

the interests of the rich and business rather than in the interests of working people. This is who we need to blame for poverty, lack of opportunities, and social alienation – not migrants, Muslims, or trans people.

In fact, with a mass programme of social housing construction and investment in services, we could both improve conditions for British-born workers, and accommodate much higher levels of immigration.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

RMT encourages members to attend counter-protests opposing the far-right. Please attend in groups, with workmates and others from your union branch.

Attend as an organised RMT contingent and march with union flags and banners. If you want more info about upcoming mobilisations, speak to a rep or branch officer.

We also need to discuss these issues in our workplaces. Use this newsletter as a way to start a conversation with your colleagues.

If you're from a group targeted by the current violence (for example, from a migrant background, a Muslim community, or a trans person), you may understandably be feeling particularly threatened. Your union branch has your back. If you have personally experienced verbal or physical threats recently, speak to a union rep in confidence.

RMT also has active equality networks for Women, LGBT+, Black and Ethnic Minority, and Disabled members. Speak to a rep to find out more about how to get involved.

Prepare to ballot for action on pay



LUL's pay offer to trade unions for 2024-5 is for a 3.8% increase, with an additional £1,500 flat-rate for grades earning below £40k.

This is an improvement on the initial offer of 3%, with no flat-rate minimum, but falls short of meeting RMT's demand for an above-inflation pay rise. With other public sector workers such as teachers and health workers set to get a 5.5% increase, we should not settle for anything less, and should aim for more. The offer also includes no movement whatsoever on key union demands such as a reduced working week.

Worse still, there are considerable strings attached. Yet again, LUL is proposing to freeze pay bands, so members in banded grades near the top of their current band will only receive a non-consolidated lump sum rather than a consolidated increase.

Outsourced workers' charter launched

RMT London Transport Region has launched a new charter setting out our demands for outsourced workers across TfL and LU.

Demands include:

- £15/hour minimum wage
- Full company sick pay from day one
- Improved pension arrangements
- Guaranteed hours for all workers
- Union recognition across all outsourced contracts.

Our ultimate aim is to win the in-housing of all outsourced work,

Longer term, the company has indicated its intention to move all workers, including drivers and station staff, onto banded pay via grouping our roles into "job families". This is also a threat to company-wide collective bargaining, as bosses say they will unilaterally determine which bands within each "job family" will receive pay settlements.

For all these reasons, RMT has formally rejected the offer and will be moving to ballot. Reps and activists from across LUL, along with reps from TfL, where workers are also in dispute over pay, met on 7 August to plan to next steps in the campaign.

We know from our experience last year that the threat of sustained action, that will shut the job down for a week or more, can force concessions from the employer. We were less than 12 hours into a planned week of strikes when the Mayor's office contacted the union to make a new offer.

The first step is to ensure we win a ballot mandate. Keep an eye on emails and text messages from the union confirming when the ballot is due to start. Vote yes for action!

including cleaning, catering, security, and track protection.

As major outsourced contracts with companies such as ABM, Mitie, and Sodexo come up for renewal, RMT will be pressuring TfL, LUL, and City Hall to demand the work is brought back in house.

The RMT rep for ABM cleaners on the Bakerloo line is Alina Belciu (Oxford Circus). Contact Alina on alina.alina5791@gmail.com.

PUSH LABOUR TO GO FURTHER

Every trade unionist should be pleased to see the back of the Tories, a party with a deep hatred for our movement.

But how much the Labour government improves things depends substantially on how much pressure they're put under by working-class people, via unions, community organisations, and within Labour itself.

Labour has committed to repealing the two most recent sets of anti-union laws. We want them to go further, and repeal all legal restrictions on our right to organise and strike.

For more, see freeourunions.org

IT'S YOUR UNION

We recently elected new reps in two of our constituencies:

- North Group Stations (H&S) - Kevin Pinnock (07904 152832)
- Special Requirements Team (IR) - Ajaz Miumtaz (07956 202356)

We have vacancies in these locations:

- Special Requirements Team (Health & Safety)
- Sodexo Canteens

Bakerloo branch secretary Mel Mullings, RMT delegate to the TUC Race Relations Committee and liaison for transport, attended an extremely positive TUC advisory committee meeting on black women and sexual harassment in the transport sector on 24 July.

If you would like to get involved in this research and receive updates, contact Mel on mellbmullingscomms@gmail.com or 07718 645817.

RMT Bakerloo meets on the FIRST TUESDAY of every month, 16:00. We meet at the Community Hall on Gorefield Place, NW6 5TB (Kilburn Park)

ALL MEMBERS WELCOME

Bakerloo News is a monthly newsletter from the Bakerloo branch of the RMT union. To submit a story, or to contact the branch, email melbmullingscomms@gmail.com, or ring Branch Secretary Mel Mullings on 07718 645817