

London Calling



News and views from RMT's London Transport Regional Council

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National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers

Get ready for pay fight

by Steve Hedley, RMT London Transport Regional Council Secretary

TALKS start soon about your next pay rise. You deserve a decent rise, and your union, RMT, is determined to fight for that.

You need 20% more money to fill up. The staples of life - bread, rice, milk, other food - are rocketing in price. According to the Daily Telegraph, food prices are accelerating at their fastest rate since records began, increasing the average family's annual shopping bill by £750.

Gas is up nearly 40%. Even the tame BBC News runs critical reports on the profiteering energy companies paying out massive dividends to shareholders at our expense. The government refuses to levy a windfall tax on them; Gordon Brown refuses to help pensioners and the impoverished pay their bills. Age Concern tells us that this year, 750,000 more pensioner households could be in

'fuel poverty'.

The business leaders, money men and politicians continue their lavish lifestyles unaffected by their own mistakes.

Our pay should not only meet these expenses but also bring a real improvement in our lives. Your union will demand a pay deal which meets the real increase in our cost of living and not just the RPI (Retail Price Index), which does not truly reflect the staggering extra amount that working people have to pay out.

We should reject any attempt to handcuff us with a multi-year deal that takes away our trump card of negotiating in the run-up to the Olympics.

Your union will campaign hard for a decent pay rise. We plan to win the battle of ideas, and are willing to strike if necessary. ■



It's alright for some: Our bosses' pay

The highest-paid director's earnings:

London Underground	£522,123 (2007)
Metronet	£212,947 (2006/7)
DLR	£136,833 (2007/8)
CBS Outdoor	£477,000 (2006)
TfL's Transport Commissioner Peter Hendy's salary:	£320,000 + up to 50% bonus (2006)
Tube Lines: 15 Directors, average salary	£660,000+ (2007)

by Vaughan Thomas, RMT London Transport Regional Council President

THE media often accuses Tube workers of being overpaid and under worked.

But they fail to consider the unsocial hours: starting at 4.45am, finishing at 01.30; working weekends; being at work when our friends and family are out celebrating.

We don't get paid these wages because Tim O'Toole and Boris Johnson are nice people. The **only reason** we get a half-decent wage is because we have a strong union that has fought for years to improve wages and conditions.

Capitalism is in crisis: banks collapsing, national economies in recession, rampant inflation, rising unemployment. As always when capitalism is squeezed, it's workers who suffer. As Londoners we

face the highest prices in the UK.

It's crucial that all grades stand shoulder-to-shoulder to get a decent wage increase. LUL's wage anniversary isn't until next April, but there's no time to waste. We won't hang around for months while LUL considers 'what they can afford'. Productivity has increased, we are carrying more passengers than ever, so we deserve a proper wage rise. And we should have it in April.

RMT will be organising special meetings to discuss what we want from the wage talks. Look out for the meeting notices, and let your reps know how you feel. Whatever you do, **Get Involved!** ■

All grades united for workers' rights and public transport

Defend your workmates, defend your union

by Steve Hedley, RMT London Transport Regional Council Secretary



AN all-grades, all-companies ballot is essential if we want to stop sackings, harassment, victimisation and bullying. The very future of the union is at stake.

It doesn't matter if you are a driver, station staff, controller, cleaner or engineer, you will know someone who has been harassed back to work when sick, been sacked for attendance or suspended for carrying out union activities.

Andy Littlechild on Metronet is a case in point. Andy is one of the best, most dedicated and effective reps I've ever met. A health and safety rep for twelve years, he has achieved wonders for permanent and contract staff making sure safety is paramount whatever the cost to management. Andy is a workplace leader who played a major role in the recent Metronet strikes which stopped massive job cuts and won pay rises, free travel and a TfL pension for all Metronet staff.

Unable to attack Metronet workers as a group because of their strong organisation, managers are attempting to destroy the union by making an example of one of our best organisers.

A manager unilaterally rewrote a risk assessment to demand that hard hats are worn, breaking the procedure which says he must do this with the RMT rep, Andy. Management then carried out an 'audit' when Andy was working, asking him where his hat was. Andy explained that he didn't need one as management can't change an assessment on their own. A belligerent manager ordered Andy off the site.

When Andy returned to work, managers sprung a 'fact-finding interview' without notice and threw him onto the street at 3am without transport home. Andy is currently suspended, barred from Metronet premises and

ludicrously 'forbidden' to talk to any other employee.

RMT members' response has been swift. Leaflets have gone into depots; the union's Executive has agreed to our demand for an immediate strike ballot; and workplace meetings are being held.

We must now start the same process in other companies where management are ignoring negotiating procedures and sacking our members. We are an industrial union: we need to act like one. Small, localised disputes can be ineffective. We must defend our activists by balloting all grades across all companies.

The list of victimised RMT members is growing. Sarah Hutchins sacked for being pregnant; Jerome Bowes sacked for defending himself against assault; Mo Makhboul sacked for complaining about an abusive customer; Karl Niles sacked for needing time off to recover from asthma attacks - plus many others bullied by power-crazed little Hitlers who have no regard for their own attendance and sickness procedures.

Enough is enough. We cannot sit idly by and let our union be dismantled. Management are aware that without activists we become weak, disorganised and easily defeated. We must stand up for ourselves and our activists - stand up for our union's very future.

Stop the victimisations. Defend Andy Littlechild. Defend every RMT member. ■

Unscrupulous management harass drivers

by Bill O'Dowd, Trains Council

LUL management can't get a new Attendance At Work policy, so say they will 'enforce the existing one'. This means there will be no more 'not normally counted items' such as medical treatments at hospital, unless it is an emergency admittance!

At most depots, everyone is now sent to Local Disciplinary Interview (LDI), and gets the maximum 26-week warning for a first offence (even if it's only two one-day items in a 13-week period). If you go

for a second LDI (stage 2) you will then get a 52-week warning. After that, it's a full Company Disciplinary, where you could be dismissed.

Management have put in a new 'three and out' system on so-called staff errors. If you were to, say, pick up late three times (or be blamed for it) in a 13-week period, you could very likely go to an LDI and receive under the code of conduct, up to 52 weeks warning! It is easy to blame the driver for others' mistakes: wrong road

given in depot, wrong platform written for pick ups, to name just a couple.

So it is attendance clampdown, then performance monitoring. Either way they are gonna get you!

Make sure you are well insured! At this time of credit crunch, job losses and recession, it is no time to gamble with who represents you.

Join RMT - that's if you aren't already a member like the majority of drivers on LUL now! ■

Service control victimisation

by **Kebba Jobe**, RMT health & safety rep, LUL service control

IN February, Jo Duffy was re-elected RMT representative, but his local Service Control Manager refused to recognise his position, despite the fact that a local rep had been negotiated for Jubilee line service control eight years previously and they had recognised me when I was the rep for five of those years!

A campaign of bullying was then levelled against Jo, with his Service Control Manager bad-mouthing him and criticising his work. Not once did the manager formally speak to Jo about his performance or take disciplinary action.

On 18 August, Jo was in charge of the Jubilee line as Service Manager when there was an incident involving the Platform Edge Doors at Canary Wharf station. Jo used his knowledge and experience to work around the problem to offer a solution that was safe and in customers' interests, preventing a loss of service at Canary Wharf and ensuring no further disruption.

A service controller on duty disagreed with Jo's course of action and reported this to another Service Manager. An investigation recommended that the

matter did not warrant a CDI.

Despite this, the Service Control Manager, who has taken a dislike to Jo, suspended him from work on full pay on 15 September pending another fact-finding interview, despite Jo having been allowed to continue in his safety-critical role for a month.

The Service Control Manager has told Jo's colleague Service Managers that he was going to send Jo to a CDI before the interview happened: a blatant pre-judgement.

Jo is the target of management bullying, intimidation and victimisation, born of a dislike for Jo's work as a union rep, his campaign to improve working conditions and reduce staffing cuts in service control.

This situation has had a detrimental effect on Jo's wellbeing, causing him stress and anxiety. He is a lone parent of two young children who needs his job to support his family. His 'caring' manager is aware that Jo recently lost his mother.

It is despicable that this sort of behaviour by management is allowed to go on in this day and age. ■

Defend our cleaners

by **Becky Crocker**,
Cleaners' Co-ordinator,
RMT Camden 3 branch



WHEN cleaners took strike action, the cleaning companies victimised key activists.

Stonebridge Park RMT rep, Godday, organised a 100% solid strike at his depot. The day after, he was suspended without pay, removing this inspiring and effective rep from his workplace. Godday has been out of work since early July.

Others have been suspended for unproved 'breaches of procedure', or for recruiting members to the union. The companies have hit cleaners with immigration law. Dozens of cleaners who have worked for years have been forced out of their jobs by these union-busting tactics.

The cleaners' strike won the London Living Wage but the battle will not be over until cleaners get their jobs back. ■

East Ham fights back

by **Rick Grogan**, RMT rep,
East Ham group

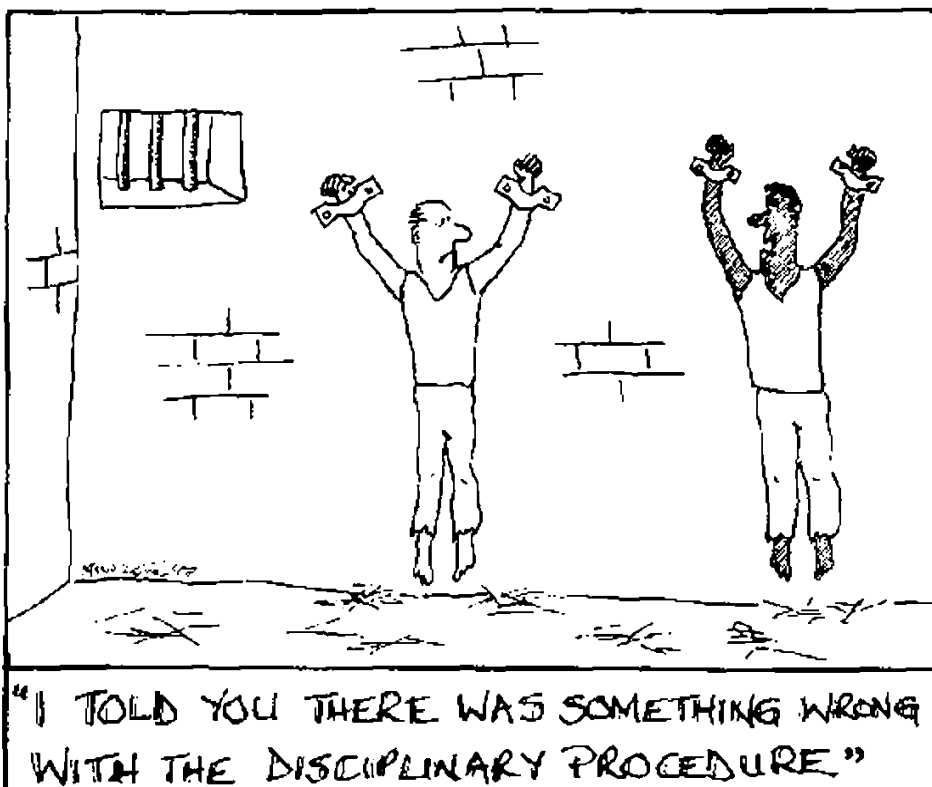
ON East Ham group there is an ongoing dispute due to management's disregard of proper procedure and the bullying and unfair sacking of staff.

A meeting with management made things worse, with management now saying you are not entitled to a union rep until you have been off sick for 28 days.

This opens the door to widespread abuse and bullying of staff. We have been struggling for over a year to get management to accept our agreements and now they have shown their contempt and torn up our right to representation when off sick.

We are witnessing a marked rise in intimidation of staff when off sick. If representation is denied before 28 days, staff will have no protection at all.

I have witnessed staff in despair after having their pay stopped illegally and then had to fight for months to get it returned. We have to stop this now. Ballot every grade in every department of the job and bring us all out against the attendance procedure. ■





London Calling

Defending jobs together

by Jared Wood, RMT rep, Rickmansworth group

WE remain in dispute over the enforced transfer of five CSAs from Rickmansworth group.

RMT's strike action was extremely well supported. 70% of turns did not book on; 25 members picketed. Several TSSA members and even non-union staff observed the strike.

LUL is picking local disputes with

station staff in an attempt to demoralise us by facing these down. At some point they will attempt a major cut in station staff numbers. This must not be allowed to happen.

Once station staff have been 'dealt with', LUL will come for drivers. **Defending jobs is an all-grades matter.** ■



TfL traffic enforcement job cuts

by an RMT rep

OUR Department Director has informed us of sweeping job cuts. It seems that management are bulldozing these cuts through. Rumours from worried senior managers are claiming that around 2,500 jobs are to be axed on TfL.

After giving us a slide show about 'proposed' changes, they then handed every member of staff a letter telling them whether their position had been ceased or not, and whether you would have to reapply for your own job.

The Organisational Change Process (OCP) seems to be designed to sideline the unions. Although RMT is not recognised we have about 20 members in our department alone. We can put pressure on our management if we have RMT leadership as all staff here, whatever union they are in, are bewildered by the entire process. It seems to be total diktat from management.

I have written to all members of the GLA, and all Labour London MPs (plus George Galloway). ■

Station staff in the firing line

by Janine Booth, Stations & Revenue Council

AS well as the Attendance Clampdown and unfair sackings (reported elsewhere in this newsletter), LUL management are attacking station and revenue staff's rights in several other ways:

- threatening to forcibly displace staff away from the station they enjoy working at;
- misusing the new Special Requirements Team (SRT) to cover for under-staffing of stations;
- denying loads of staff a fair crack at achieving promotion by allowing

the privatised promotion system to become chaotic and unjust.

- reorganising Revenue Control and making RCIs feel insecure about their jobs;

The Attendance Clampdown has seen managers: turn up unannounced on sick staff's doorsteps; stop sick pay unjustly; contact sick staff several times a day when they are trying to get some rest; hand out warnings with no discretion; and spot 'patterns' of non-attendance which are actually just coincidences.

Your six Stations & Revenue Council reps are on management's case about all these issues, pursuing them vigorously at talks. We are also working hard to help and support your local RMT rep. But we have unanimously come to the conclusion that we need all-grades industrial action to defeat these attacks and to assert all staff's right to dignity and fairness at work.

To follow developments and get involved, visit our website: www.rmtplatform.org.uk ■

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Secretary: Steve Hedley, 271 Lonsdale Avenue,
East Ham, London E6 3QA
07846-266934 stevehedley_18@hotmail.com

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All grades united for workers' rights and public transport