



London Calling

News and views from RMT's London Transport Regional Council

www.rmtlondoncalling.org.uk

June 2010

Support These Strikes

Tube Lines Strike for Jobs, Pay, Conditions



Following a 9:1 vote for action, RMT members on Tube Lines are to strike to demand firm assurances on jobs, pay and working conditions. Members will not book on for any shift starting between 19:00 Wednesday 23 June and 18:59 on Friday 25 June and between 19:00 on Wednesday 14 July and 18:59 on Friday 16 July.

RMT General Secretary Bob Crow said: 'We have given TfL, and their newly-acquired subsidiary Tube Lines, plenty of opportunity to give us assurances that staff won't take the hit for the failure of the doomed privatisation project.

'If the shareholders of Tube Lines can walk away with £310 million of Londoners' cash in a 'golden-goodbye', after milking the contract for every penny, why should our members be expected to take a kick in the teeth on jobs, pay and working conditions?

'The fact that Tube Lines have made an inferior pay offer to RMT than to other unions was always going to be a recipe for industrial relations chaos. I would urge TfL/Tube Lines, even at this late stage, to get back around the table and give us the perfectly reasonable assurances that we are seeking.'

The absence of Tube Lines workers during the strike will cause safety concerns for other grades working on London Underground. Your RMT health and safety reps will provide advice about this.

DLR Strike over 3-Car Running



RMT members on Docklands Light Railway will strike on 23-26 June after the company refused to give workers any reward for their co-operation with the introduction of new three-car trains.

The extra carriage on each train means that PSAs work with 50% more capacity, so in effect, DLR is saving the cost of half a PSA - around £25,000 - per train. Yet it refuses to share the benefits of three-car running with staff.

Passenger Service Agents (PSAs) and Panel Control Team Leaders voted 109-18 (86%) for strikes and 114-12 (90%) for action short of strikes. As well as the three-day strike, they will not work overtime on Monday 28 June.

More than 50 staff attended a meeting held by the RMT DLR branch and discussed the issues in the dispute. Staff feel strongly that they have shown the company a great deal of goodwill over the years but have received little in return. In the DLR's 15-year history, its passenger numbers have risen from 40,000 to 80 million per year, and yet instead of seeing an equivalent improvement in their pay and conditions, employees have lost bonuses and now face an increased workload without reward.

RMT to Ballot to Staff Our Stations

RMT will shortly be sending ballot papers to London

Underground

members

to decide

on

industrial

action to

stop the

company

cutting 800 stations and other jobs.

The job cuts will strip stations of their staffing, displacing many staff, and leaving others vulnerable, unsafe and unable to provide the 'customer service' that LU claims to value.

The cuts will affect all grades. LU is trying to change rules to make drivers self-despatch, notch back after a SPAD and even detrain in a tunnel with no help from station staff. Engineering staff have been warned of job cuts in a leaked management document which warned of cuts on 'a huge scale' and labelled staff 'ageing and entrenched'.

Passengers want staff on stations. We have given out loads of leaflets, and have thousands of signatures on our petition.

RMT has attended dozens of meetings with LU management, but LU will only tell us how they intend to cut jobs, not listen to our arguments as to why they should not. They have even refused to go to ACAS for talks. ***We know that only industrial action will make them listen.***





On Monday 24 May, the re-opened and extended East London Line officially welcomed its first weekday passengers. RMT reps - including Janine Booth, Carol Foster and Olly New (pictured) - were there, handing out leaflets explaining that while we welcomed the extension, we believe that the line should have remained in the public sector, rather than being privatised as part of the London Overground franchise. RMT wants to see all London Transport brought into an integrated, publicly-owned TfL.

RMT Win on Ill-health Pensions

RMT has successfully defended your right to an ill-health pension if you became unfit to do your job.

For the last few years, the employers in the TfL Pension Fund have been trying to weaken our rights by changing the rules so that you would only get an ill-health pension if you became unfit to do any job, not just your own job. Far fewer of us would have qualified for an ill-health pension.

In 2007, RMT members voted for industrial action on this issue, and the employers had to back off. RMT has taken a resolute stance in negotiations, and now, finally, those negotiations have concluded with an agreement that your ill-health pension rights are safe.

RMT made the following suggestions to London Underground for how it and TfL could save money without cutting jobs:

- ask for extra government grant
 - take Tube Lines back inhouse without paying its former owners
 - take all functions back inhouse
 - stop 'fat cat' salaries by introducing a maximum wage for LU/TfL employees
 - stop advertising and paying commission to external ticket-selling outlets
 - minimise Employment Tribunal payouts by stopping managers acting unlawfully against employees
 - open the books: allow trade union and public scrutiny to identify additional savings
- Surprisingly(?), management rejected them all.



London Pride, on Saturday 3 July, is a great event for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people to stand up and be counted. RMT is a union proud of the diversity of its members and we can demonstrate this by taking part in the march.

Last year's Pride had a strong turnout of RMT members - all of us standing out in pink RMT T-shirts and being heard with horns and whistles. Let's see if we can do it again this year. If you would like to march alongside your fellow RMT members, email your Regional LGBT Officer, Peter North: lgbt@rmtlondoncalling.org.uk and we can organise a great day out.

Stop These Anti-Union Injunctions

John McDonnell MP is to propose a Private Members' Bill to tackle abuse of trade union ballots by employers.

John, the Convenor of RMT's Parliamentary group, said: 'As we have seen in the current BA Cabin Crew dispute and many other recent disputes, employers have been able to exploit a loophole in the existing law by using minor technical errors in a trade union ballot for industrial action to frustrate the democratic decisions of trade unionists who wish to take action. The courts are being dragged into disputes and used as weapons in the hands of bullying employers. Even where there have been overwhelming majorities in ballots in favour of strike action, minor technicalities which would have no material effect on the outcome of the ballot, are being exploited to negate the democratic decision of the trade unionists involved.'

RMT is also taking this issue to the European Court of Human Rights.

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