



tubeworker

www.workersliberty.org/tubeworker • tubeworker@workersliberty.org

Threat of strikes forces climbdown on train prep cuts **FLEET WORKERS WIN**

Bulletin

London Underground



Date: 14 May 2019
Issued to: LU managers & equivalents, Fleet train maintainers

Our proposals on train preparation

Dear all,

The safety of our staff and customers is always paramount. While our proposals to extend the preparation schedule for train units by Fleet train maintainers did not compromise this, we have decided not to change the frequencies of some less safety critical train checks.

In response to our decision, the strike action planned for Friday 17 to Monday 20 May and other industrial action has been cancelled.

We remain committed to improving the service we deliver for London through a more efficient, effective and modern asset function, and will work with our asset teams and our trade unions to do this.

Fleet workers have won a major victory by forcing LU management to abandon their plans to extend safety maintenance schedules on trains ("train prep").

Train prep currently takes place every 24 hours, but bosses wanted to extend this by varying amounts across different lines - to 96 hours, 28 days, or even to three months or longer.

RMT, which organises fleet workers, mounted a campaign against these cuts, rightly arguing they would dramatically compromise safety and put jobs at risk.

After a resounding ballot result, the union named industrial action, whereby fleet workers refused to undertake or participate in training for any work outside of their substantive role. This action was essential in order to prevent the company from training up managers to act as scabs, performing train prep during any strike. Some fleet workers found themselves sent home, effectively locked out, for participating in this action, but they and the union held firm.

Strikes were then called for 17-20 May, which happened to be FA Cup Final weekend, and the bosses' resolve crumbled. What joy it was, then, to receive the Employee Bulletin (above) announcing management's complete and utter defeat!

It's possible management will attempt to

bring these proposals back in some form in the future. Further action can be called from the same ballot mandate within six months. If there's any sniff of management attempting to reintroduce the plans, new strikes should be named.

But for now, a significant victory has been won. It was the action taken by fleet workers, and the decision to name a three-day strike rather than simply one day of token action, that has forced management's hand. Naming that action was only possible because of a determined and effective campaign mounted by RMT's LU Fleet branch to get the vote out in the industrial action ballot.

Bosses' attitude was: we've decided this is happening, therefore it will happen, these talks are just about discussing exactly how the implementation will be managed. Getting them to backdown was, they insisted, impossible. But by organising, taking action, and being prepared to take further action, workers have made the "impossible" possible. There's a lesson for all of us there: the bosses think they call the shots, but our power to stop the job, if we're prepared to use it in an effective way, can always force their hand.

Onwards to the next victory!

AS ABM SLASHES JOBS, CLEANERS PLAN STRIKES

Tube cleaners are planning for industrial action, as cleaning contractor ABM pushes ahead with a new wave of job cuts.

Numerous stations with three or more cleaners on a shift are losing at least one position, with any agency cleaners first in the firing line. Night shifts have also been hit. Many are being told they have to accept redeployment to a new station, often nowhere near their current one.

Some cleaners are being told by ABM supervisors and bosses that the pressure to make cuts is coming directly from TfL/LUL. We shouldn't allow ABM bosses to use that fact, if indeed it's true, to get themselves off the hook for making these cuts. But, if true, it does mean that we need to up the intensity of our fight against outsourcing. Instead of telling a contractor to cut jobs, TfL/LUL should be employing cleaners directly.

One pretext for the cuts, as we've previously reported, is that ABM committed to reduce the amount of agency labour on the job when it took over the consolidated contract. It has taken many agency staff from agencies like AGS on a permanent basis, but now appears to be trying to further reduce the amount of agency labour by... cutting jobs! We say: sack the agencies, not the workers!

RMT cleaners have been linking with cleaners in other unions, such as IWGB, to plan joint campaigns against outsourcing.



RMT's demands for cleaners are for free travel passes; company sick pay; better holiday entitlement; and direct employment. Strikes can win these demands. Let's build for action.

PAY FIGHT UPDATE

LU has now made a revised offer on pay and conditions, offering RPI + 0.1% this year, and RPI + 0.2 next year.

There has been no movement on any union demand: for a reduced working week, for a flat-rate minimum for lower-paid staff, and more.

This offer needs to be completely rejected, and a dispute declared.

No-one should be in any doubt that strikes will be required to win a decent deal.

We need to build for that now, and preparing for the hard work of achieving the required threshold in the ballot.

CLEANERS' COLUMN

ABM SLASHING JOBS

It appears that ABM is mounting a serious assault on jobs, with reports flooding in from across LU of positions being slashed.

Numerous stations with three or more cleaners on a shift are losing at least one position, with any agency cleaners first in the firing line. Many are being told they have to accept redeployment to a new station, often nowhere near their current one.

Some cleaners are being told by ABM supervisors and bosses that the pressure to make cuts is coming directly from TfL/LUL. We shouldn't allow ABM bosses to use that fact, if indeed it's true, to get themselves off the hook for making these cuts. But, if true, it does mean that we need to up the intensity of our fight against outsourcing.

One pretext for the cuts, as we've previously reported, is that ABM committed to reduce the amount of agency labour on the job when it took over the consolidated contract. It has taken many agency staff from agencies like AGS on a permanent basis, but now appears to be trying to further reduce the amount of agency labour by... cutting jobs! We say: sack the agencies, not the workers!

WOT NO PASSES?

Some ABM cleaners on the former JNP contract had their pictures taken, apparently in order to be issued with travel passes that would allow them to open gates while at work.

Some time has now passed, and there's no sign of the passes.

The way to resolve the situation is simple: LU needs to issue all cleaners with the same travel passes directly-employed staff receive.

PICCADILLY POWER WINS JUSTICE FOR SOPHIE

We reported a couple of months back on LU's scandalous decision to hand Sophie Kyei-Donkoh, a Piccadilly Circus CSA, a 52-week warning for the "crime" of being abused by a member of the public (who was, in fact, a serial vexatious complainer).

Sophie's colleagues, through their local reps and RMT branch, organised to take a stand, and committed to balloting for industrial action if the warning remained.

Fortunately, management saw sense and the warning was rescinded on appeal.

It's a good reminder of what some basic trade union principles mean in practise: an injury to one is an injury to all, and unity is strength!

CENTRAL LINE FIGHT NEEDS STRIKES

Central Line drivers recently returned a thumping majority for new strikes in a long-running dispute against bullying bosses.

So far, no action has been called. Many drivers are starting to ask why. The dispute hasn't been resolved, and the exceptional turnout and high majority for strikes in the ballot shows there is a mood to fight. So why hasn't the union named dates?

Strikes need to be named as soon as possible.

VICTORIA LINE DRIVERS HEAD FOR ACTION

RMT drivers on the Victoria Line look as though they may soon join their Central Line comrades in balloting for industrial action.

The issues are similar, focusing on management throwing their weight around in the depot. RMT has been arranging meetings of the relevant reps, but it's crucial that these are quickly translated into action.

As the fleet dispute shows, industrial action is often the only language LU understands.

WI-FI TRACKED?

The press has recently reported TfL's plan to track all wi-fi enabled devices through the Tube system, to measure passenger flows.

This technology could lead to important data gathering, which improves safety and staff deployment. But there's also a risk it could be used nefariously, either for advertising purposes or even to track individuals' movements.

If the technology is implemented, it needs to be within strict limits that ensures it can't be used in a way that compromises privacy.

FIRE BRIGADE WARNS LONDON BRIDGE

It has emerged that the London Fire Brigade issued London Bridge station with a notice on 10 April for breaching fire safety regulations.

Ultimately it is management's job to oversee that our workplaces comply with these vital regulations. How many other corners are they cutting, and where?

Workers need to feel empowered to blow the whistle. If your local management is cutting corners with safety, let a union health and safety rep know immediately.



SEAN HOYLE FOR RMT GS!
Tubeworker supports

Sean Hoyle's campaign to become the next RMT general secretary. Sean stands fighting industrial disputes to win, with rank-and-file members calling the shots through democratic structures.



SH4RMTGS

What is Tubeworker?

Tubeworker is a rank-and-file socialist bulletin, published at least monthly, written by Tube workers, for Tube workers. It is published by the socialist group Workers' Liberty, but is produced in editorial meetings open to all workers.

Supporters from outside London Underground can help with public distribution.

Email us at tubeworker@workersliberty.org

Tubeworker's blog — daily updates — workersliberty.org/twblog

Add "Tubeworker Bulletin" on Facebook, follow @Tube_Worker on Twitter

Subscribe!

Want to get every issue of *Tubeworker* (published at least monthly)? Send us your address along with a tenner (cheques payable to WL Bulletins)

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

Contact us: Workers' Liberty, 20E Tower Workshops, Riley Road, London SE1 3DG, tubeworker@workersliberty.org