



Bakerloo news



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December 2020

Gains made in Sodexo fight

Jobs saved at Elephant staff canteen

Multinational, multibillion pound outsourcing giant Sodexo, which runs TfL staff canteens, has been forced to back down from a plan to make 30 workers compulsorily redundant.

Jobs have been saved at the Elephant canteen (South London House), ensuring workers who wanted to remain working there can continue to do so.

The gains don't represent a total victory, as Sodexo's planned restructure is still going ahead. This means jobs will be lost through voluntary severance, and the service model in canteens will change from freshly-cooked food to reheated microwave meals.

RMT will continue to campaign around that, but securing a guarantee of no compulsory redundancies is a significant concession.

Key elements in the campaign were:

Resist all job losses

RMT refused to accept Sodexo's arguments about the economic necessity of cuts. We refused to simply negotiate the terms of defeat.

Although we haven't won outright, by taking a combative stance that opposed all job losses we put ourselves in the strongest possible position to save at least some jobs.

Basic organising

Leaflets were distributed at Sodexo canteens and a phone bank organised which rang every Sodexo member. This helped inform members about the campaign and build a mood to resist.

Using leverage

A petition campaign of train and fleet staff who use the canteens garnered over 600 signatures.

Challenging outsourcing

RMT took up the issues not only with Sodexo itself, but with TfL and LU, refusing to accept the logic of outsourcing where the central employer passes the buck to the outsourced contractor.

We can use this gain as a springboard for ongoing campaigning on the Sodexo contract. Sodexo workers: join RMT today at rmt.org.uk/join!

Bakerloo News is a monthly newsletter from the Bakerloo branch of the RMT union. To submit a story for *Bakerloo News*, or to contact the branch, please email jimmcdaid36@gmail.com, or ring Branch Secretary Jim McDaid on 07917 131692

TfL bailout agreed, but cuts still threatened

The government has agreed a further funding bailout for TfL, which will see the company through until March.

Commissioner Andy Byford has assured unions that there will be no changes to staffing levels, terms, or conditions during the period of this bailout. Good news... but this merely kicks the can down the road. TfL has committed to being "self-financing" by 2023, which makes further attempts at cuts almost inevitable.

TfL bosses have also told unions that they expect the next review of the pension fund to reveal a significant deficit, which opens the door to possible cuts to our pension terms.

We have to be prepared to fight any and all cuts, whenever they're proposed.

SRT update

RMT, working with reps from TSSA, secured an important agreement on SRT.

Management wanted to move SRT staff off their own rosters and rest day patterns in order to cover long-term absences on stations. Thanks to concerted union pressure, the bosses backed down from this and agreed to management deployment from within the SRT roster, protecting fixed links and rest day patterns.

A further agreement has subsequently been reached regarding SRT cover for short-term Covid-related emergencies (e.g., where short-notice self-isolation would lead to station closure, local Covid outbreaks, etc.). SRT cover will only be provided in genuinely emergency circumstance, where stations would be at risk of closure.

Both SRT and local staff should keep a keen eye on the circumstances in which SRT cover is being provided to ensure this agreement is enforced.

Centre Group update

RMT reps continue to regularly dialogue with Area Management.

We have concerns regarding positioning staff at the bottom of Marylebone escalators due to renovation works. Staff state they are struggling to socially distance from the public there.

We are pursuing the matter through the local machinery and hope for a resolution in the coming days and weeks.

South Group update

One AM has unilaterally imposed a return to full pre-pandemic working, breaching an agreement.

The union is pursuing this and will escalate the matter if it is not resolved.

A lack of cash facilities is causing problems with passengers. This is due to be discussed at the Level One meeting on 9 December.

Fare evasion and antisocial behaviour remains an issue, with lack of RCI and BTP presence frustrating staff.

RMT Bakerloo reps attend US trade union convention

Three activists from the RMT Bakerloo branch attended, via Zoom, the Saturday 21 November convention of the Vermont State Labour Council (AFL-CIO) as observers.

The convention was attended by nearly 100 delegates and guests, from local union branches and campaign groups, as well as a number of elected city councillors. The convention's two major items of business were to discuss a resolution calling for a general strike in the event of an attempt by Donald Trump to sabotage and obstruct the election result, and to discuss a series of democratic reforms to the union federation's own standing orders.

In the discussion around the general strike resolution, delegates emphasised that the purpose was not merely to defend the victory of one man, Joe Biden, against another man, Donald Trump, but to make organised labour and workers' action central to a wider movement against the authoritarianism, racism, and bigotry represented by Trumpism. Many delegates stressed their opposition to the neoliberal policy agenda of Biden and the Democratic Party leaders, and said the labour movement had to prepare for action to make demands of a Biden administration.

The resolution was carried with 39 in favour, five against, and one abstention.

Although Vermont AFL-CIO is a small federation, representing around 10,000 workers, the adoption of the resolution has significant symbolism. It shows that activists in the US labour movement are thinking



politically about the role of organised labour, including how to face down legal restrictions on workers' ability to struggle in defence of rights in the workplace and wider society.

A political general strike would, in both Britain and America, be illegal; whilst simply demanding workers take illegal action without adequate preparation and organisation would have little grip, unions must challenge and ultimately defy the laws that shackle us.

RMT supports the Free Our Unions and the Campaign for Trade Union Freedom, which campaign against anti-union legislation. Such campaigning has to be stepped up, especially in the context of Tory plans to impose further restrictions on transport workers' right to strike.

It was an honour to attend the convention and witness the adoption of a historic resolution.

We hope to be able to welcome Vermont AFL-CIO activists to an RMT meeting in the near future.

• **Abridged from bit.ly/vermont-report**

South London Mouse?!

RMT reps at Elephant depot are pressing management to deal with a mouse problem in the mess room.

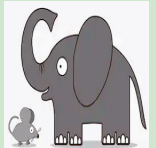
Thanks to union pressure, management have provided new, more secure, bins, and pest control have been engaged to come in to deal with the problem.

We're an all-grades, industrial union

- we want to organise anyone who shares our workplace. But we draw the line at rodents.

Staff at Elephant have the right to have clean, hygienic staff accommodation.

If the issue isn't dealt with, we need to consider if it's safe to work.



BRANCH MEETINGS AT 16:00 ON THE FIRST TUESDAY OF EVERY MONTH, VIA ZOOM. ALL MEMBERS WELCOME. CONTACT YOUR REP FOR THE LINK.