



THE FIGHT STARTS NOW!

London Underground and TfL have taken industrial relations to a new low with their recent disgraceful pay 'offer': RPI + 1% this year, followed by RPI + nothing for the next four. This 'offer' follows a period in which LUL has abused and misused the Attendance at Work Procedure in order to harass and penalise staff who have suffered illness or injury. And the company's latest plan is to renege on the 'jobs for life' agreement which was made at the time of the enforced introduction of PPP six years ago, opening the way for wholesale job cuts. Our union has been left with no alternative but to organize resistance to these attacks: a ballot of all TfL and LUL members is now underway and you are strongly urged to **VOTE YES** for strike action. Why? Well it's as easy as 1, 2, 3...

1. Pay

With RPI now heading below 0% and, in any case, consistently underestimating the real increases in the cost of living, this 'offer' represents a pay cut every year for the next five years. It's more than just a slap in the face – it's a knee in

the groin. There is no justification for cutting our pay in real terms for the next five years, despite the credit crunch. Banks and businesses may be going to the wall as a result of corporate greed and a government which allowed the rich bankers to 'regulate' themselves, but London Underground continues to carry more passengers than ever (up to 4 million a day, according to the company's own figures), and has consistently increased its fares by more than the inflation rate, including a whopping 6% this year.



RPI fails to reflect real cost of living rises. (Figures from 2008)

LUL also admits that staff sickness absence is at a low and that our excellent performance is reflected in the Customer Satisfaction Survey results. In a nutshell, our productivity is the highest it has ever been. So is a pay cut the right reward for this sustained effort? No, it is not. The company, which has not been affected by the credit crunch in the way many others

have, is using the credit crunch to bash its staff over the head. We would be mugs if we tolerated this. **VOTE YES** to fight for a fair pay deal.

2. Job Cuts

You've heard about the 1,000 staff LUL wants to axe from 55 Broadway; the company has made a lot of the fact that these staff are non-operational. However, the cuts won't stop at 55 Broadway if the company succeeds in tearing up the 'jobs for life' agreement which was made at the time of the imposition of the PPP. This agreement was meant to protect staff who were forcibly transferred to Metronet and Tubelines under PPP. The company is now hoping to tear up this agreement so as to be able to make wholesale job cuts much easier. If we allow them to get away with it, then our job security will fly out of the window. Only a fool would stand by and let that happen. **VOTE YES** for job security and a properly staffed Underground.

3. Agreements

Whilst our union fights for 21st century working conditions, LUL wants to return to the 19th

century when it was normal for bosses to rule by fear. What else can we conclude about a company which, over the last couple of years, has encouraged its local managers to hand out maximum length warnings for sickness absence, regardless of circumstances; a company whose managers routinely harass sick members of staff with unwanted phone calls and unannounced home visits, with the aim of bullying them back to work; and a company which continues to harass union reps such as our own branch Chair, Glen Watson (See *Strike Ballot on the Vic* in this issue). LUL managers across the combine

are misusing and abusing the Attendance at Work Policy to the detriment of our members in all grades. Other agreements are also being 're-interpreted' by the company, including the SPAD policy where drivers are now being sent to Case Conference after three SPADS (not four, as per the policy) in a 2-year period. 'Staff errors' are now being recorded on members' holistic reports for later use in disciplinary action – this is a crafty way of circumventing the Disciplinary Procedure as a rep cannot get involved until a disciplinary hearing is called. This drift towards a 19th century

workplace cannot be allowed to continue. Unless doffing your cap and wearing out the knees of your trousers is your thing, **VOTE YES** for decent working conditions. **VOTE YES** for respect in the workplace and for a company which abides by its own agreements.

The strike ballot closes on 8th April. If you do not received a ballot paper, inform you local rep immediately or phone 0800 376 3706.

Vote YES

Massive YES vote in Zak Khan ballot

Drivers at Arnos Grove and Acton Town depots have delivered a massive vote in favour of a strike or action short of a strike in defence of Zak Khan who was initially sacked before being sent to stations with no right to return as a driver. The results of the ballots are as follows:

	<u>Strike</u>		<u>Action short of Strike</u>	
	For	Against	For	Against
ARNOS GROVE:	81	3	84	0
ACTON TOWN:	54	11	60	11

This represents a huge show of support for Brother Khan and will hopefully concentrate management minds at Zak's Director's Appeal to be held on 31st March. Thanks to everyone who voted YES. Now let's do it all again for the main fight over pay and conditions.

UNITED WE STAND, DIVIDED WE FALL

STRIKE BALLOT ON THE VIC

Victoria line drivers at Seven Sisters depot are to be balloted for strike action in response to the increasingly hard-line approach of management towards staff. The recent sacking of Carl Campbell for an alleged wrong-side door opening incident has pushed the

members at Seven Sisters beyond endurance, coming as it did after months of increasingly draconian management practices.

At a meeting of the branch, it was agreed that the ballot would focus opposition to the company over four related issues:

- 1. The grossly unfair sacking of Brother Carl Campbell;**
- 2. The company's refusal to install the same Correct-Side Door Enable (CSDE) equipment that is a safety feature on every other line on the combine;**
- 3. The continued harassment of Branch Chair, Glenroy**

Watson, by Vic line managers;

4. **The complete disregard by management of agreements, including misuse and abuse of the**

Attendance at Work Policy.

Enough is enough! Unless these four issues are addressed by management, industrial relations at Seven Sisters will

fall through the floor and will culminate in a complete shutdown of the line. Ballot papers should be going out shortly. Look out for further bulletins on this issue.

Stop press!

Victoria line management sack another driver – **Jamie Witchell** – sacked for trying to steal a laptop and not following lost property procedures (?) – in this case Jamie saw a member of the public banging on the doors at Stockwell just as he was about to leave for the next station, Brixton. Putting two and two together, he realised that the passenger must have left something on the train. On reaching Brixton he informed the driver taking over the train and they both started looking for the bag. Not the actions of a thief you might think? After a period of about 3 to 4 minutes when the bag was unattended, it was handed to Jamie by cleaning staff and he went to the drivers’ mess room to make himself a cold drink. He then handed it in to the DMT after having a quick look inside to identify the owner. The owner duly arrived and the bag was handed back. Soon after, she noticed her laptop computer was missing and management immediately suggested Jamie had something to do with it and, after it was found soon after, they wasted no time in assuming his guilt and getting him arrested, not even allowing him to use the toilet! This “open-minded” management team included a disciplinary panel which had on it a TOM from another depot which had previously given Jamie a warning for attendance and was the TOM at the depot which Jamie was soon to go to (no suggestion he has an interest in this case then and may not be completely impartial?!). They also ignored missing video evidence, the fact that Jamie was too unwell to go ahead with the CDI, and all other possibilities for how the laptop could have gone missing and found where it was and instead it was easier for them to scapegoat another of our members – there seems to be a pattern developing on the Victoria Line!

Show your support for Jamie at the next branch meeting and discuss what we can do to help him – he has been left on the dole with a wife, baby and new house. Another reason to vote **YES**.

WWW.RMTLONDONCALLING.ORG.UK - the website of the RMT London Regional Council

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Next Branch Meetings

April 2nd and 9th May 7th and 14th at 1600hrs, Twelve Pins Public House (near Finsbury Park Stn) - 1st May Special Branch (next page)

Vacancies

- **Brixton Group – Industrial and Health and Safety Rep**
- **Blackhorse Road Group – Industrial Rep**
- **Branch Political Officer**

MAY 1ST – INTERNATIONAL WORKERS DAY - BRANCH HONOUR LONG SERVICE AWARD MEMBERS

The branch will once again march the streets of London in celebration of international workers day on Friday 1st May. In these troubled times, when incompetent fat cats are being rewarded with fat bonuses and pensions, it is poignant to remember that the current crisis is really a crisis of capitalism. It is a system based on profit and exploitation which increasingly exploits workers across borders and is internationally orchestrated with transnational companies such as ISS exploiting workers and in our area the cleaners on an international scale. The 1st of May reminds us that it is important to retain this international perspective in terms of workers rights, dignity and international solidarity, and we have a place historically and moving forward to fight against unfettered capitalism and do our bit for social justice.

If you would like to have your voice heard and take part in a colourful and proud tradition then join us under the branch banner at noon on May 1st at Clerkenwell Green (near Farringdon station) as we set off for a rally and speeches at Trafalgar Square followed by a special branch meeting and social at ***the Clarence Public House, near Trafalgar Square starting at 1500*** where long service awards will be given to members who have loyally served the union through the years. These members have ensured that our union is both feared and respected by exploiting bosses and ensured that we have decent wages and conditions today. However, as the current dispute proves this position has not been reached without sacrifice and struggle and we today must do our bit.

The following members deserve special mention on reaching 25 years service this year and are invited to the March and social to receive their award and a complimentary meal and drinks:- Robert Sayer,

David Hutt,

Lee Kempton,

Patrick Maloney,

Mr Garmonsway.

Also there a number of members who have reached 10 years service and will receive a badge to honour this milestone.

We look forward to seeing you there.