



STOP THE CUTS

IT'S TIME TO FIGHT OR DIE

The cat is out of the bag. LUL have told the unions bluntly that they intend to slash as many as 800 operational jobs across the combine. Recent leaked documents have shown that these cuts are merely the tip of an iceberg which includes sub-surface stations

having no more than minimum staff numbers, even during special events, and open section stations having no staff at all. This is a Company Plan with knobs on. These proposed cuts show that the company is prepared to play fast and loose with the safety of staff and passengers and to reduce the standards of service given to the paying public. Although the jobs under threat are mainly in the ticket halls and on stations, the safety implications are obvious and will affect all frontline grades, including drivers. And those who escape the axe will find themselves working under a far more stressful regime than ever before.



Kings Cross, 1987 - NEVER AGAIN

This latest attack on jobs must be seen in the context of the company's recent treatment of its staff: sackings of drivers for errors which would previously have attracted only a warning; maximum warnings given for sickness absence, even where members have otherwise exemplary attendance records; wilful disregard for agreements which no longer suit management aims; a 3-year effective pay freeze. In addition to this drift towards a draconian style of management, the company has hinted on more than one occasion its desire to greatly reduce its pension commitments – something that can be only achieved by either

cutting our pension rights or abolishing the current final salary scheme altogether.

The truth is that the company is under pressure from nightmare Johnson and the government to cut costs in order to help pay for a recession which we had

no hand in making. (The actual architects of the recession in the City of London were given hundreds of billions of taxpayers' cash to help them out of their own hole, much of which went abroad and can no longer be accounted for. How differently the rich and powerful are treated to the rest of us.)

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The inescapable logic in all this is that we now face a stark choice: do we put our heads in the sand and hope that everything will turn out all right, or do we stand up together and shout 'ENOUGH'? To ask the question is to answer it. If we do nothing, lots of members will become jobless whilst those who avoid the job centre will end up working in a stressful, poorly rewarded, dangerous environment under a dictatorial management unconstrained by a

strong trade union presence. Who is for that?

The alternative is to fight back. This will not be easy, but it holds out our only hope of stopping the company in its tracks, the only hope of protecting everything we now enjoy; reasonable pay and conditions, a safe working environment, a decent pension upon retirement, top class union representation when we have a problem, and much, much more. In short, everything that has

been achieved through strong, principled trade unionism over the course of many decades. If you want to see where you end up without strong trade unionism, check out the pay and conditions in Wetherspoons or Tesco. We got here through collective action. To stay here and to move forward, we need more of the same and we need it now. Come to the meeting on 31st March (details in this newsletter) and help start the fightback.

ALL GRADES TO DEFEAT STATIONS JOB CUTS

Will all grades come together to fight job cuts on stations? It should not be seen as 'will drivers support the station staff?' but 'will we support each other'? That's the true meaning of solidarity: our own interests are best protected when we stand together. In order to achieve this a 'General Strike' of all grades should be put to the membership across the combine under a single heading of 'job losses (particularly in operational grades) equals an unsafe tube'.

In the last month, two drivers on the Victoria Line have been sacked. One for wrong-side door opening after the company's own duty of care was removed, and last week a driver was medically terminated even though she was back at work! Reps protested at this perverse decision and were callously told, 'save it for the appeal'.

Whether you're a driver, service controller or station staff, your jobs are not safe. It is now widely known that General Managers have been instructed to look for spurious reasons to take staff to a Company Disciplinary Interview with a view to sacking them.

We will need an all-grades fight to defeat these job cuts. However, we do not want to repeat the last dispute's mistake of adding extra demands to appeal to specific grades, as 'attendance and discipline' was added to appeal to drivers. The concoction of demands confused people about what we were fighting for; management fed the confusion and played issues off against each other.

We need a strong, unifying demand. The main demand will be safety.

But all these attacks amount to an attack on working people by the Mayor, Government

and regime now in charge of LU. They have a vision of de-staffed stations and automated trains, a 'world class' railway without the workers. They are making us pay for the debt that private contractors have plundered from our public railway.

We need to drive home the point that PPP has come full-circle, but ultimately has made the workers and public pick up the cost. With this issue, we will get a lot of popular support. RMT Head Office needs to be pro-active with the media by pointing out the growing problems of job insecurity that we all face long before "operational restructuring" bulletins are released by LUL and our response is portrayed as over reactive fear-mongering by the press and media. We need more than one-off sound bites and Bob Crow on TV - we need a sustained public campaign which clearly points out where

we are now and, more importantly, where public transport is heading whilst in the hands of profit making business people. And because we can't rely on the media to be our friends, we need to go directly to the public with our message through leafletting and demonstrations.

As we go into this fight, the RMT needs to discuss honestly what demands all grades are prepared to fight over. We need to demand something specific

and winnable that will stop the jobs massacre, but it needs to genuinely motivate all grades and bring us together. We don't have long but we should use a little time to prepare the ground for a strong fight. Ultimately, as we saw with the last dispute, you can't fight effectively, let alone win, if you are dragging workers in on a pretext instead of on the issue at stake. You end up fighting on different fronts and winning nowhere. And this time, we can't afford to lose.

If we all decide to be 'although we've not backed one another in the past members' and not 'because of them not backing us we won't back them members' we are giving ourselves the best possible chance of defeating this management onslaught in a clear unified way.

Mark Walters, Health and Safety rep, Seven Sisters train depot

PLAN TO CUT BLOCK TRAINING TO 3 DAYS

Senior train operators will recall a time when LUL took their training seriously. With sole responsibility for several hundred passengers, often in inaccessible locations, it's essential that a driver knows how to take remedial action to get a train moving should it become defective. Likewise, drivers need to know and understand the rules and regulations that help make the underground system operate safely.

Defect handling and knowledge of rules and regulations are the two most important requirements of the job that not only allow drivers to undertake their roles and responsibilities in

a safe manner, but also protect a driver's livelihood by adhering to safe working practices. Drivers will remember when such refresher training was considered to require five days. These five days included, not only refresher training on stock and rules and regs, but also awareness training on various issues such as fire prevention, disability, assault prevention, line route knowledge, shift work, etc.

Management cut the five days' training to four last year and are now proposing to cut it to three in May this year. Do your own sums and see if you can find the logic behind the reduction in your refresher training. Your

TU Reps have explained to management that drivers need to know what they're doing in order for them to be competent and LUL have a duty to provide us with sufficient training on all aspects of our job. The rules are constantly changing and every day there seems to be another hot topic that LUL are keen for drivers to adhere to.

The bottom line is if LUL introduce three-day refresher training, and at the end of it you still feel uncomfortable undertaking all your activities, then demand more training before you pick up. Hopefully, LUL will see sense and maintain the status quo with regard to our refresher training.

Next Branch Meetings

Twelve Pins Public House (near Finsbury Park Station)

April 1st, 8th
starting at 1600hrs

PUBLIC MEETING AGAINST LUL'S JOBS MASSACRE

Wednesday 31 March, 6pm-8pm

Small hall, Friends House, Euston Road, opposite Euston station

Speakers:

Bob Crow, RMT General Secretary

Gerry Doherty, TSSA General Secretary

John McDonnell MP

Janine Booth, RMT stations & revenue rep

Also invited:

speakers from ASLEF and the Labour GLA group

All welcome. LUL's plans threaten to put hundreds of staff out of work, to erode safety standards throughout the system and to provide paying customers with a more dangerous and poorer service. It's in everyone's interest to stop LUL management's vandalism. Please come to the meeting and bring workmates, friends and family.



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of the RMT London Regional Council