

Communist League
2nd Floor
83 Kingsland High Street
London E8 2PB

Glenn Hart
RMT

25 March 2016

Dear Glenn Hart

Many thanks for the opportunity to explain how my campaign for London mayor addresses issues of concern to the RMT.

As a lifelong union member, my record in supporting RMT and NUR strike struggles is without parallel among the candidates for mayor. It goes back decades.

I have always given my complete support to unions involved in fights with the employers and their government. In the late 1960s when I was first getting involved in the labour movement, I joined pickets of supermarkets in support of the Californian grape workers union strike. I was involved with the successful fight against the Labour government's In Place of Strife anti-union legislation.

Later, I was personally involved in helping to lead a successful unionisation strike at Colman Fasteners in Manchester, where I became convenor. The union at Colman's was well known for its support for other workers in struggle – in particular the historic 1984-85 miners strike. At that time, I worked with railworkers in Coalville who were carrying out militant solidarity action with the striking miners, helping to get them platforms in the UK and in the USA. I worked with railworkers building solidarity with the anti-Apartheid struggle in South Africa.

This week I joined the Arnos Grove picket line of RMT and ASLEF drivers on the Piccadilly line, on strike to resist the anti-union drive of the TFL bosses. I also recently joined the picket at Neasden when tube workers were on strike in opposition to the attacks surrounding the 24-hour weekend tube working.

Such activity stems from the fact that the Communist League starts from the interests of working people. All other candidates start from what they consider is best for "London". But London is a class-divided city. What's best for the propertied rulers in London are the very attacks on workers and our unions that the government is carrying out. What's best for workers is resisting these attacks, strengthening our unions, forging working class solidarity. At the centre of the Communist League's campaign are the following three points to advance the fight for working class unity:

- The unions must organise all workers – “permanent” and agency, British-born and foreign-born – and use union power to defend workers interests. No to the government’s anti-union bill!
- For a crash programme of government-funded public works to provide jobs at union rates, and build the homes, hospitals, schools and infrastructure that working people need.
- For a massive increase in the minimum wage.

These proposals are very relevant to the RMT. As you point out, in London the union faces job cuts, cuts to funding and crumbling infrastructure at a time of huge growth in journey numbers. Inevitably safety is on the line. And this is not just an issue for the RMT in London. Cuts in crew sizes is a major safety issue – as we see in Lac-Mégantic in Canada where 47 people lost their lives due to cuts in crew size and poor tracks. Worldwide solidarity is needed to opposed the Quebec government’s frame-up of railworkers Harding and Labrie. Rail safety can only be guaranteed by strong unions exercising workers control.

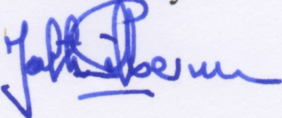
Of course railworkers, tube workers, seafarers also face the broader aspects of the crisis: social, political and moral. From the scapegoating of Muslims, the renewed rise of anti-Semitism, the erosion of our political space and other indignities.

Whoever is elected mayor, the crisis will continue. The erosion of living standards, job cuts, attacks on safety and working conditions are not London questions: they’re driven by a UK-wide crisis of profit rates, production and trade, part of the smouldering worldwide depression conditions. Resolving this crisis in the interests of working people cannot be achieved by pushing capitalism to the right or to the left. What’s needed is to get rid of the capitalist system.

Each year, I travel to Cuba where working people took the road of revolutionary struggle for a workers and farmers government. I am well aware that the RMT supports the fight to end the economic war on Cuba and for the return of Guantánamo, demands central to my campaign for mayor.

I would very much like to take up your offer to discuss these questions further, as you suggest, at a meeting of your Regional council. I enclose a flyer advertising a Communist League election campaign public meeting that will be held this Friday 1 April. You and any RMT member would, of course, be most welcome.

In solidarity



Jonathan Silberman
Communist League candidate for London mayor