

# Open Letter to Mike Brown, Managing Director, LUL

DEAR MIKE,

The English Defence League (EDL) is a racist/fascist organisation with well known links to the BNP. The fascist gunman Anders Behring Breivik, who carried out the massacre in Norway, expressed his particular admiration for the EDL. On Saturday 3 September, the EDL held an anti-Islam demonstration at Aldgate. EDL leader Stephen Yaxley-Lennon (aka Tommy Robinson) appeared at the demonstration dressed as a Rabbi, breaking his bail conditions for a previous violent offence. This is a reprehensible organisation which is why it is an absolute disgrace that EDL members joining the demonstration were given *safe passage* through London Underground.

## EDL: They shall not pass!

As you are aware, under Police (Met) pressure, plans were drawn up to give the EDL safe passage through specially laid on trains from Hainault depot running non-stop through to Liverpool Street. These plans were dropped on account of opposition from RMT members. As the EDL admitted themselves in a news release on Thursday 1 September:

*“Until very recently, we had agreed with the police that the muster point before the demonstration would be Hainault underground station. We would then have taken the tube to Liverpool Street, and from there we would have walked to Tower Hamlets.*

*What no one thought to consider was the possibility that the RMT might get wind our plans and threaten to close stations by calling on their members to go on strike... the threat has been enough for the police to cave in to the pressure and abandon the previous plan...”*

## Responsibility

I am fully aware, and both acknowledge and accept, that personally, you have no time whatsoever for the EDL. This is not in doubt. However, as Managing Director, you are responsible for your management team and any decisions made, in collaboration with the Police (Met and BTP), in permitting this bunch of drunken, violent, racist, fascist thugs through our system. As Managing Director, you have a duty of care to your employees and passengers. You also have a duty to ensure a safe working environment. It is unacceptable that staff and passengers had to withdraw to places of safety for an event that was foreseen, indeed an organised and police escorted event, prioritising the transport of racist thugs. You wrote to me on Friday 2 September and explained: *“Let me again make it clear that LU is not and will not support the movement of this group of people”*.

## Safe passage

The very next day, the EDL were permitted safe passage through LUL via King’s Cross through to Moorgate and LUL managers did provide (supplementary to the Police) “support” for “the movement of this group of people”. Tony Gandolfi was on-site at King’s Cross as RMT’s Safety Representative. He will be providing a full and detailed Safety Report on events. Suffice to say, while King’s Cross was in evacuation mode, alarms continually sounding, the Police, with the aid of local managers, permitted the EDL access through to Platform level and onto the Northern Line. On-lookers were *paying customers*

who were told to remain in the booking hall area and wait. A number of call points were operated at King’s Cross at 13.19hrs (almost certainly by EDL members) and the station was closed until 14.00hrs. Meanwhile, Moorgate station was kept open (with staff located in places of safety) to allow them to egress to street level through Finsbury Circus and on to Aldgate. The decisions supporting “the movement of this group of people” could only have come from the top. The critical decision was permitting “this group of people” access to the system.

## Trouble... Inevitable really!

You will be aware that trouble sparked at Liverpool Street where bystanders were abused, a journalist was burnt as the EDL threatened to set him alight and there was continual racist and anti-muslim chanting. Again, later at Mile End the station was closed (from 19.07hrs – 20.07hrs) on account of an incident outside the station. This incident was caused when the Police allowed an EDL coach along Whitechapel Road. EDL members stopped outside the mosque and hurled abuse. Rightly, they were met with local resistance and they quickly boarded and moved on. Unfortunately for them, their coach broke down just before Mile End and the inevitable reaction ensued. It has to be said, the Police decision to allow an EDL coach along the Whitechapel/Mile End road was scandalous given it was clearly intended to be a deliberate provocation.

*“Let me again make it clear that LU is not and will not support the movement of this group of people”.*

Mike Brown,  
Friday 2 September

## LUL Image tarnished

No one expects LUL to organise its staff to protest against the EDL - the RMT is more than willing and able to do that. What we certainly do not expect is for LUL to play an active role in facilitating and co-ordinating transport for “this group of people”. With the Olympics fast approaching and the multi-racial, multi-cultural, multi-faith image of LUL as an organisation now tarnished, action must be taken to remedy the situation. To borrow from a Woody Guthrie lyric, the EDL walked across our cameras and you flashed LUL’s tarnished reputation to the world.

## Immediate recommendations.

- 1) A letter of apology to all staff, Asian, Black and White and passengers for the events on Saturday 3 September
- 2) An urgent meeting with the unions addressing safety issues including the fact that NO consultation took place at any level nor were any briefings offered to staff.
- 3) An urgent meeting with the unions explaining exactly how the Police are made accountable in such circumstances. It was primarily the Met Police that insisted on escorting the EDL, as they have across the country, with a flagrant disregard for staff and public safety. On what basis were the Police able to totally disregard TFL Railway Bye-laws.

One senior manager has told me that he didn’t see any need to consult us to address our safety concerns. Furthermore, he believed *“the EDL aren’t the problem, it’s the anti-EDL protesters, they’re the ones who’ll do the provoking”*. Is this the prevailing attitude on the senior management team - and the reason for this disgraceful series of events?

Unjum Mirza,  
Political Officer, London Transport Region RMT