

"Voices of the unheard"

The recent riots have polarised opinion as riots always do. There needs to be a debate but we believe our stance must be clear: firmly on the side of the poor and oppressed and firmly laying the blame at the feet of our rulers.

Fundamentally, riots are acts of rage about social conditions. That they often do not have clear political objectives, or targets for bringing about change, doesn't change that basic fact. Before the riots the governor of the Bank of England, Mervyn King, had expressed his surprise that there hadn't been more social unrest in response to the government's cuts, but for the most part our rulers complacently presumed they could do what they liked. While they walked about with their eyes in their pockets, below the surface, people were seething, bitterness was increasing and the air is still saturated with anger. The issues? The cuts for sure – and they're set to get worse, a lot worse. But it's also years of feeling that life at home and at work has deteriorated and millions of workers and the poor feeling that life is only ever getting worse.

No Justice-No Peace

All it needed was a trigger, a spark and... Bang! Just as the Rodney King verdict unleashed fury across Los Angeles in 1992, in this case, it was Mark Duggan shot dead by racist police in Tottenham. Attempts to suggest there was a 'fire-fight' and that Mark Duggan shot a police officer proved to be a lie. We know the police are racist. We know they lie. We know they're killers. But why now? After hundreds of black deaths in police custody over the years; the execution of Jean Charles de Menezes; the murder of Ian Tomlinson; and so far this year alone, five black people killed by the police or, as with Smiley Culture, dying in suspicious circumstances involving the police.

Frankly, enough was enough for a whole generation of black and white youth. The shooting of Mark Duggan lit the fuse which blew the powder keg of very diverse, very deep grievances sky high. Martin Luther King said that riots were the 'voice of the unheard'. Was Mark Duggan just going to be another black man shot by the cops? In a way, these things happen so often and are followed by the usual outrage and inquests that it seems to have become 'normal'. But there isn't anything, and never can be anything, 'normal' about filthy racist coppers shooting black people on the streets of Britain.

Moral crusaders

Yes, during the riots there was more looting when compared with the closest equivalent, the 1981 riots. But come on. History is made in circumstances NOT of our choosing. Is there any wonder that there was more looting for consumables when over the past thirty years we've been told that the 'Market is supreme', 'Neo-Liberalism Rules OK'? Remember Thatcher: "There's no such thing as society, only individuals"? Ideas don't fall from the sky and nothing comes to us in a dream, a socialist once said.

But what of the violence? The deaths are tragic. But we don't need Cameron and the political class teaching us morals. They call the rioters "sick", "yobs", mindless violent thugs" etc. But hold on, aren't these the same people who teach us violence *does* resolve conflict? What about Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya? What about the fact that the police have essentially been escorting the racist EDL around the country to run riot in each city and town they descend upon. What about Cameron's response to the riots: "we'll fight fire with fire"? What do you think that means? It means, we'll deploy more filthy racist thugs (otherwise known as the police) and we'll deploy some of our armoury (after all they do have the monopoly on the tools of violence) to teach these kids a lesson... water cannon, rubber bullets....

Then they talk of moral standards and justice! They're a bunch of thieves (expenses scandal) and downright sick scum (the phone-hacking scandal). How can someone preach moral standards when he employed, knowingly, Murdoch's man, Andy Coulson. A real piece of scum who thought it was ok to hack into the phone of a dead girl!

Think about it, how can mass arrests solve the problem? Why is it an MP who claimed £8,750 'expenses' for a Bang & Oulfsen system is made to pay it back while a young woman who grabs herself a B&O system worth £750 gets six months in jail?

Have our moral crusaders even thought about how it can be right that while they demand to know why parents don't know where their kids are at night they permit an 11 year old boy to be held overnight in a police cell? An 11 year old boy! What does that say about our society? How can it be right that the family of one youngster who was charged, including his 8 year old sister, is now under threat of being evicted by Wandsworth Council? How will that resolve issues? The *revenge* the Tories are exacting through the courts (and ripping up legal processes and procedures to do it) can only, will only, *deepen* the anger still.

The world economy on the brink

The reality (and whether all the rioters see it this way or not is not the point) is the cause was poverty. Poverty breeds despair, and despair leads to violence. That poverty and despair is only going to deepen as the world economy, over which these politicians and their friends the bankers and multi-nationals preside, teeters at the brink. An economic depression looms which will spiral millions more into poverty.

The response from our rulers has been to make us pay the price for a crisis they created. The poverty and despair and the violence were not caused by the riots. The riots, the burning and the looting, only made it plain for all to see. Where I live in Brixton, off Coldharbour Lane, youth unemployment (16-25 year olds) stands *officially* at 65%. Imagine what it really is. So what do you do if you're young, living in overcrowded run-down flats, with no local youth services, no EMA to go to

college, University well out of reach, and of course no job? Talk about looting the future.

This is not going to go away. It's going to deepen. It will get tougher, harsher. It will become more volatile and explosive.

Where's the fight?

There's another side to riots that needs mentioning. The failure of the opposition. The Labour Party (lets skip for now the 13 years they were in power!) have made some attempt to differentiate themselves from the Tories by insisting there's a need to 'understand' the riots. But at the same time they talk about increasing police numbers and go along with the Tory agenda of differentiating between the deserving and undeserving poor. And on this one let's be clear – there can be no justice unless there's justice for all. But why do Labour end up echoing the Tories – playing on people's fear while skirting the real political issues? Because up and down the country Labour Councils are slavishly implementing Tory cuts to jobs and services.

As for the unions, it has to be asked: where's the fight? The great demonstration on 26 March and the public sector strikes on 30 June showed the potential power that could be unleashed to bring down this government. But that would mean raising our game and organising action on a far greater scale. We also need to widen our approach to defend not only the jobs of 'our members' but of 'our class'. We cannot continue to cut deals short of a strike to secure the livelihoods of our members alone while the employers' raise the ladder from the unemployed and young school-leavers. The fact that the unions have not led a serious fight on this can also, in part, explain the riots - they've filled a vacuum left by the organised sections of the working class.

Something's happening here...

The one thing that stood out for me on the streets of Brixton was, as in Egypt (though, obviously, on a lesser scale), the youth have lost their fear of the police and the authorities. This is a good thing. But, in the final analysis, riots can't win. They rise like a rocket and fall like a stick. However, they have in a massive way concentrated people's minds about the shape of things to come if the Tory cuts go through unchallenged. The riots have therefore raised the consciousness of the mass of the population.

Maybe the likes of David Cameron really don't understand what is happening here but we need to respond to this change, this shift, and *prepare* for the fights to come. It's up to us to unite the struggles on the streets with the struggles in the workplaces. It's up to us to unite the struggles of the young and old, employed and unemployed, black and white and channel it against our real enemies. The trade union movement must lose it's fear – we have a key role to play in offering the arguments and the *organisation*, politically as well as industrially, that can shape the *direction* of the inevitable struggles to come.

Unjum Mirza, LTRC Political Officer

London Transport Regional Council Political Report

Special issue 1 of 5



Management are preparing their attacks now...

After the Olympics, its all out war!

Management Prepare

Everything management do now is *preparation* to take us on, all of us, each grade, *after* the Olympics.

Make no mistake, no stone will be left unturned as LUL aim to transform the job root and branch. As a previous leaked document revealed, they're making no bones about using the economic crisis to launch the attack.

The LUL document leaked by RMT early last year explained: "*The recession helps – now's the time to make changes*". That's why they need a multi-year pay deal, preferably five years, in order to maintain industrial peace to enact those changes. Don't let them get away with it.

This political report will explain the attacks, grade by grade, over five special issues, each fortnight.

Put these notices up on your union boards. Place them in all staff trays. Keep a copy for reference... you'll be coming back to them again and again. Prepare now to fight!

This issue deals with a familiar story – Ticket Office closures. So you think you know the whole story? Read on....

30. It's the magic number

Let's start at the end. By 2015 there'll be, *at most*, just 30 Ticket offices left across the entire combine! Just in case you didn't quite hear that right, we'll repeat it: by 2015 there will remain, at most, just 30 ticket offices across the *entire* combine.

While that sinks in and you figure the number of job cuts that will mean we'll offer some detail.

Oyster

Oyster technology has been used by LUL to reduce ticket office demand by at least 28% over the past few years. The OSP changes last year that resulted in us taking strike action has led to at least 35% reduction in ticket office duties across the network. In light of our campaign, LUL were forced for political reasons to maintain at least one ticket office at each station that had one operating during at least part of the day.

Wave Goodbye

After the Olympics its time to slash and burn. Oyster has done its job. It's time to roll out "Wave and Pay" that will lead to wholesale passenger self-service with machines offering virtually every ticket and ticket related transactions.

LUL hope at least 30% of passengers will take up 'Wave and Pay'. They aim to combine that with a deliberate policy to run-down ticket office usage further by encouraging passengers to use POMS and increasing the Top Up minimum from £5 to at least £10. Come 2015 the deed is done and it's *goodbye, Au revoir, Auf Wiedersehen* to our ticket offices.

Consequences

Heard enough? Well hold on, there's more...

What happens to the staff? LUL are looking at a number of combined options.

- 1) Getting staff to sell their own jobs (on the cheap) through voluntary redundancies which, coupled with natural wastage and loss of positions, shrinks the overall workforce considerably and pulls the ladder up from the unemployed (see back page if to understand the consequences).
- 2) They aim to have SAMF knowledge used on the gatelines to help passengers self-serve at the POMS. That is, you train passengers to help do away with your job.
- 3) Already they are trying to get CSA's to 'voluntarily' take up

assisting passengers in a wider range of transactions at POMS aiming to further under-cut their colleagues in the ticket office.

- 4) They want to develop the CSA job description, combining CSA and ticket office knowledge, on a *voluntary* basis so that when any challenge comes up to changes to CSA job descriptions they'll state it's been 'working practice' for some time. What they'd have actually done is create a new job: SuperCSA.
- 5) They aim to create a greater pool of reserves which will open up various options to them including line cover.

Fundamental

Such fundamental changes to our jobs, roles and responsibilities will have a massive impact on our conditions, our pay and ultimately the numbers employed on the tube.

Ticket office closures cannot be fought on their own in isolation. They form just one part of the jigsaw puzzle that these Special Issue leaflets will piece together.

As an overall strategy we can stop management in their tracks. In the meantime, do not take up any duties and tasks outside your job description voluntarily. You'll only be slitting your own throat in the long run.

Feeling safe as a station supervisor? Don't! Look out for the next issue when we will explain what changes are prepared for you.



SHEER CRIMINALITY: DON'T LET THEM LOOT OUR FUTURE



They're running riot...



Cameron

"Sick"



Clegg

"Copycat"



Miliband

"Coward"



Johnson

"Senseless"



King

"Greedy"



Murdoch

"Scum"



Godwin

"Thug"



Employers

"Vandal"