

RMT up front



The newsletter for London Underground drivers

Issue 11, May 2011

Drivers vote to stop victimisations on the tube



What a result! Train drivers and Instructor operators on LU were asked "are you prepared to take strike action over the victimisation of Eamonn Lynch and Arwyn Thomas?" 64% of drivers responded with a resounding yes vote on a turnout of nearly 50%

This is a major achievement for the union and shows that drivers across the whole of the combine and in every depot are determined to stop the victimisation of our fellow drivers. Never before has the union escalated an individual case across the whole of the tube network. Support for RMT campaigns combine wide are normally based on pay issues, terms and conditions or safety. To gain the support of our driver members the length and breadth of the combine for these two individuals is a fantastic show of solidarity for our victimised work mates. This result sends a clear message to LU bosses that drivers have had enough of the abuse of procedures and the oppressive management regime in force.

This result also shows that our members understand that these unfair dismissals represent an attack upon us all and that they are not prepared to stand aside and allow the company to get away with it.

Eamonn's Employment Tribunal fin-

ished over six weeks ago, but the Tribunal judge has still not issued his decision. We expect the judgement very soon, and the union will be holding a press conference on the day it is delivered. Arwyn's Tribunal will take place

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during the week of 23 May. Both Eamonn and Arwyn have already won 'interim relief' at earlier hearings, so we are confident that their Employment Tribunals will uphold their complaints of having been sacked unfairly due to their trade union activities. However, even if the Tribunals order London Underground to reinstate them, LU can refuse to do so. That is why the RMT cannot rely on the legal process, but has had to organise campaigning and industrial action.

RMT has again asked LU management for talks aimed at resolving this dispute by getting our sacked reps back to work, and we await a response from them. The union is preparing a leaflet for the public, and is working with our Parliamentary group of MPs and sup-

portive Greater London Assembly members to pursue these cases through political channels.

But should management not respond to this lobbying, we will have to hold strike action.

Eamonn and Arwyn's interim relief cases show that they have been sacked for their trade union activity and LU have been ordered to pay their wages, pensions and to maintain all LU privileges including staff passes. This is an absurd situation where two experienced drivers are being paid to stay at home when all they want to do is book on for work as normal.

The RMT General Grades Committee has considered what action to take to resolve this situation to see Eamonn and Arwyn back on the front of trains where they belong. A meeting of drivers' reps and activists on the day the ballot result was announced agreed

that a one-day strike would be ineffective as management are prepared to ride one-day strikes through. The consensus at the meeting was that a protest strike is simply not good enough. This dispute will not be won until and unless both men are reinstated. We therefore need a strategy, carefully thought out and executed to maximum effect - a strategy to win.

The General Grades Committee has called 4 days of strike action. Two days for early turn drivers - two days for late turn drivers (see overleaf). This will cause maximum impact and disruption to LU and will minimise the financial consequences to our members.

This is of course a last resort as we await and hope for constructive talks with London Underground.



TRAIN DRIVERS COALITION OF SOLIDARITY

Ballot result exceeds 'Boris Test'

No doubt our enemies in the Mayor's office and the media will tell the world how wrong it is that our union can win a mandate for strike action on a 46% turnout. Nice try, but here is the logical conclusion to that line of argument:

- Boris Johnson should not have been allowed to become London Mayor (turnout for 2008 Mayoral election was 45%);
- The Conservatives should not be in a position to form a government (only 36% of those who voted in the 2010 General Election voted for them);
- Local councils would cease to exist (since 1996, the average turnout in council elections is 35.4%)



The fact is that the turnout in our ballot was above average with a majority of nearly 2 to 1 for strike action. That is a sound mandate which, as we have shown, not only exceeds the 'Boris Test', but has far greater democratic legitimacy than this government of the rich and privileged forcing its austerity agenda on the people of this country.

Pay cut on the cards and not even a bronze medal award for the Olympics!

Management arrogance does not just stop at trying to humiliate and bully you in the workplace. Whilst they are receiving gongs such as 'train operator of the year' and boasting that we are moving more people in living history, they want to reward you with a multiyear pay cut! With inflation running at over 5%, interest rate rises on the way and cost of fuel and other living costs going through the roof all they have offered is 4% for the first year and RPI + 0.25% for the following 4.

They have rejected all other items in our claim unless they are 'cost neutral'.

For the first time in living history tube unions have united in presenting and rejecting a pay claim offer - that is, with the exception of ASLEF, who seem to be pursuing a separate agenda which does not help in getting the best deal. The latest position is as follows

"RMT, TSSA and Unite reject London Underground's pay offer. The offer is not enough in money terms, and constitutes a real-terms pay cut; at five years in length, it covers too long a period of time; and it fails to address most of our claims for improved conditions for our members.

We invite London Underground to make a revised offer, with a pay rise above RPI (5.5% in February 2011), covering a reduced number of years, and agreeing to discuss all our conditions claims, not just the two mentioned in the current offer.

We request release for all our representatives to discuss this issue."

Meanwhile in Olympic talks management have said there is no money and have rejected our claim for two weeks' additionally rostered leave and have offered two days' additional leave. But, as we know, it is becoming increasingly hard to get this leave granted anyway...not exactly a place a on the podium for you when we are meant to be a world class metro for a world class city! Talks continue.

Management Clampdown Coming your way? – We say no way!

However much you try to keep your head down and get through your shift, the oppressive breath of management is there, scorching the back of your neck. Eamonn and Arwyn's sackings are not random: they are part of a management strategy to remove RMT from the workplace and, with it, any resistance to what they want to do to you. This can be seen in the latest initiatives such as 'valuing time', chasing drivers for as little as 30-second delays, asking for memos for the most trivial of things including making PAs, and asking for almost hourly updates when you are sick. They are also breaking every procedure in the book. This includes their invented and unagreed attendance target of 96% and their constant changing of the SPAD policy to satisfy their latest whim. With big brother looking at you from CCTVs, black boxes, secret shoppers

and overzealous duty managers, you will soon need a barcode in your neck to book on! Matters that used to be dealt with locally are sent to CDIs, leading to more and more drivers being sacked, whilst they cut pool operators and make it harder to get spare days' annual leave, and make you go for hospital appointments in your own time. The list goes on. It is time to show management that whatever union you are in you want to be treated with respect. Such respect will only come when they start respecting your union, so supporting the upcoming strikes for Eamonn and Arwyn is not only right from the point of view of fighting two unfair dismissals - in the long run you will also be helping the union make your life better at work and make sure you are not the next victim.

Decision of the General Grades Committee:

All London Underground train driver members are instructed not to book on for any duty that commences:

- between 21:01 on Monday 16 May and 11:59 on Tuesday 17 May
- between 12:00 on Wednesday 18 May and 11:59 on Thursday 19 May
- between 12:00 on Friday 20 May and 21:00 on Friday 20 May

One union for drivers - All grades united