



London Calling

News and views from RMT's London Transport Regional Council

www.rmtlondoncalling.org.uk

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Defend Trade Union Rights

Judge Bans DLR Strike



On 19 January, the High Court granted Serco Docklands an injunction preventing RMT from holding a strike on the Docklands Light Railway. Yet again an employer ran to a High Court judge to use anti-trade-union laws to

ignore the democratic will of union members. This decision has ramifications across the whole trade union movement and is the latest of many court decisions against trade unions.

RMT has been in dispute with Serco Docklands for most of the last year, as the company attacked the workforce in several ways. On 11 January, our ballot result showed an 80% majority vote for industrial action over a 'breakdown in industrial relations': the company's failure to consult over redundancies and introduction of new grades; imposition of new pension arrangements; imposition of altered walking times and spreadover times; maintaining different working hours for different staff; and sacking two members.

A 48-hour strike was due to start on Thursday 20 January. Rather than negotiating a resolution to the dispute at pre-arranged ACAS talks, the company decided to focus on running to the courts to seek an injunction over an obscure administrative point of law.

The judge found that RMT had not broken existing standards in law, but extended the law and declared the union to have broken that! He ruled that the union's explanation of how we compile balloting information should be much more detailed, even though the explanation used the same format that RMT has used without legal challenge for several years.

RMT is seeking to appeal this decision, and will re-ballot DLR members if the appeal fails.

RMT General Secretary Bob Crow said: "This latest judgement demonstrates just how the anti-trade-union laws are being exploited to prevent unions calling lawful industrial action. The burdens being placed on unions to administer ballots are becoming ever more onerous and we cannot allow this decision to go unappealed. This case yet again highlights the need for all trade unionists to support the campaign to repeal these disgraceful anti trade union laws."

More info: www.rmtlondoncalling.org.uk/dlr

Defend Your Reps

London Underground has sacked three RMT reps.

Eamonn Lynch, Bakerloo line drivers' health and safety rep, has been sacked for following an instruction, despite another driver receiving just a warning following a similar incident.

Arwyn Thomas, Northern line driver and longstanding RMT activist, former rep and branch secretary, has been sacked following allegations by strike-breakers.

Peter Hartshorn, RMT rep on Green Park stations group, has been sacked for allegedly swearing at a manager, even though several witnesses stated that they did not hear him swear.

Eamonn and Arwyn have already won Tribunal cases for 'interim relief', meaning that LU has to keep paying them until the full hearing because the Tribunal believes that their sackings were unfair and were carried out because of their trade union activities, which is unlawful. Peter is also applying for interim relief.

A resolution passed by RMT's Executive (General Grades Committee) proposed by our Region's representative Janine Booth, described the sackings as 'a concerted anti-union campaign by the employer that must be met by a concerted campaign in defence of our union and its representatives and activists'. If LU succeeds in picking off union reps, then it is not just the reps who suffer - *it is every member of every union*.

Drivers on the Bakerloo line and at the Northern line's Morden depot have already taken two days strike action in defence of Eamonn and Arwyn, and RMT is now preparing to ballot members on the Piccadilly line to demand Peter's reinstatement.

The union is running a major campaign - planning to raise the issue in Parliament, gain media coverage of these injustices, and mobilise the whole trade union movement to defend our union and our reps.

Public meeting: Defend Our Union Reps!

Thursday 17 February, 6-8pm

Friends House, Euston Road

Speakers include Bob Crow and sacked reps

Speakers also invited from other unions.

All welcome

Update: LU Job Cuts

New Stations Rosters - Minus Jobs!

London Underground's new stations rosters - minus hundreds of jobs - are due to come in on 6 February. Staff will be expected to work even more anti-social hours with staffing levels so low that stations will struggle to cope. Ticket offices will be open for significantly shorter hours, causing huge extra workload for staff in the ticket hall and elsewhere around the station - and yet, despite LU's claims, their numbers are being cut too.

There will be hundreds fewer station staff available to assist drivers, service control or engineers during incidents and emergencies. We expect these job cuts will be followed by even more in stations and other grades - the company has admitted as much already.

Keeping Up The Fight

RMT and TSSA continue to oppose these job cuts. The unions have not called further strike dates at present, but continue to take 'action short of strikes' to keep the pressure on management.

The two unions are taking part in a review of the job cuts, overseen by the conciliation service ACAS, which we hope will lead to many of the cut jobs being restored. There are four strands to the review:

- safety
- issues raised in collective grievances by local union reps
- ticket offices
- equalities



You can ensure that the problems that the job cuts are causing you are raised in this review by talking to your RMT rep. If you think that your station or your working conditions have become less safe, if your new roster is more anti-social, if your ticket office opening hours do not meet customer demands, if you feel that you or others are being discriminated against, tell your rep, who will pass on the information to the functional council reps who are taking part in the review.

Discrimination Against Part-Time Staff?

London Underground has issued notices displacing full-time staff only within the group of stations in which they currently work, but has issued notices displacing part-time staff to locations beyond their current group of stations, in some cases some distance away. It also intends to alter the working hours of some part-time staff in a way that is detrimental to them, and has failed to adequately consider part-time workers in its Equality Impact Assessment.

RMT believes that LU may be breaking the law which bars employers from treating part-time workers less favourably. If you are one of the part-time staff affected, please speak to your RMT rep or email janine@rmtlondoncalling.org.uk immediately.

Unstaffed Stations Breach Safety

RMT has called for a full investigation into breaches of safety on London

Underground after the union's safety reps revealed that stations along the Central Line were left unstaffed during the weekend of 22/23 January due to cuts-led staff shortages.

Buckhurst Hill, Theydon Bois, Debden, Chigwell and North Acton were all left unstaffed. In a flagrant breach of safety regulations, both North Acton and Debden

Protest against the EDL

The English Defence League (EDL) is a racist organisation - but not just that. For all its ludicrous claims to represent the 'white working class', it attacks working-class people fighting back against cuts.

The EDL has denounced British Airways strikers, disrupted socialist meetings and attacked Swansea Trades Council's May Day march. Now it is attacking student protesters against cuts and fees.

The EDL is holding a demonstration in Luton on 5 February. Anti-racists will be mobilising against them.

RMT is providing free transport for members to go to Luton to protest against the EDL's divisive bigotry, leaving RMT HQ at 9.15am. To book your seat on our coach, email financialsec@rmtlondoncalling.org.uk

were left without a Supervisor even though they have points at the stations which are required to be under the watch of the Station Supervisor at all times.

On the Monday morning, hundreds of thousands of London commuters faced a chaotic journey as signal failures knocked out large sections of the Jubilee and Metropolitan lines leading to severe delays in the latest of a continuing list of infrastructure failures over-shadowed by TFL's £5 billion cuts programme.

Passenger Attacked At Unstaffed Station

A customer was assaulted whilst West Finchley station was left unstaffed on the evening of Sunday 16 January.

Passengers tried to get assistance for the victim who was kicked and beaten by four men, but were unable to get help as the station was unstaffed. This incident followed the release by RMT of LUL documents revealing that nearly a third of stations could at times be unstaffed.

RMT alerted the press to this shocking incident, and the Evening Standard ran the story on its front page, stating that 'The attack brought immediate demands for employee cuts to be halted and stations to be staffed all the time trains are running.'