



# Help us defend jobs, safety and working conditions

## An open letter to our ASLEF colleagues

As you will know, RMT is balloting its members across the combine and in all grades for industrial action over the company's plans to axe 800 jobs. Our members could be taking strike action before the end of August.

### What's it all about?

On the face of it, the dispute is about the company's plan to cut 800 operational jobs, mainly on stations. However, these proposed job losses are merely a part of a much greater plan by the company to fundamentally change the way the whole job is run. Even if LUL's plans began and ended with these 800 job cuts, the safety of all operational staff and passengers would be adversely affected. However, these cuts are only a part of the picture...

### What's happening?

Under cover of the recession, the company is hoping to save money. Hundreds of millions of pounds was lost as a result of the disastrous PPP which we and many others opposed from the very start, and hundreds of billions was handed over to the banks after they brought the world economy to its knees, *yet it's us ordinary workers who are now expected to pick up the tab*. LUL's contribution to the tab is to cut station staffing levels to the bone. Is this a driver's issue? You bet it is! Already there have been many instances of stations being left unstaffed or 'babysat' by a CSA – with the job losses, these instances will rise dramatically. The company knows this and has realised that there is a problem; *the present safety rules need to be rewritten to take account of the reduced numbers of staff*. That's why the company is now proposing rule changes that would require drivers to:

- **Reverse blindly back into a platform after an overrun;**
- **Self-despatch from stations with defective mirrors/monitors by changing the majority of cat A stations to cat B;**

- **Detrain in a tunnel with no assistance in the event of stalling and with no communications**

And this is just for starters. In addition to this, our training is being speeded up and dumbed down; what was a five-day CDP course is now only four days and is planned to be reduced to three.

### **Broken agreements and shattered lives**

According to the company, they have about 300 drivers too many. And they want to get rid of them; but how? You already know. Everyone knows someone who has been sacked for an error which would have previously attracted a caution, final warning or a couple of years as a CSA. In a new development, drivers have even been dismissed at medical case conferences *even when fit for work*. In short, the company now feels it can work within the agreed procedures whenever it feels like it, ignore any agreements it finds inconvenient, and 'interpret' others to suit its own needs. If you think about it, this means that agreements are no longer worth the paper they are written on and that you can no longer rely on them to protect you during the course of your work. This is a critical situation, because if management's actions are allowed to go unchallenged then our future with the company (if we have one) will not bear thinking about.

### **We need to work together**

Despite differences of opinion between ASLEF and RMT over the years, we have worked together in the past and supported each other's disputes. This unity has been effective, and has delivered results. When Arnos driver Mario Vachos was sent to stations with a pay cut of £15k a few years ago, RMT members respected ASLEF's picket lines and helped Mario get his job back.

As committed trade unionists, we are willing at all times to work together. The company is hoping that we will be divided – this will make it easy for them to force through their plans, plans which will have an adverse effect on all of us irrespective of our union affiliation. We hope that we will be united, that you will support us if, as we expect, we take action to oppose the company's plans.

Let's put our differences aside and face up to the company's challenge. If you help the company to beat us, you are helping them to beat you. We are all in this together. If we show our spirit and demonstrate our unity, we will win.

**Dean O'Hanlon, Branch Secretary,  
On behalf of Finsbury Park 0543 Branch**

