



## NO MERCY FOR SACKED REP

**O**n 29<sup>th</sup> January 2010, after 9 months of delay, time-wasting and cruelty, unintentional or otherwise, LUL confirmed at Director's Level the sacking of former RMT Green Park Group Rep SAMF Mercy Odisi.

Mercy was eventually dismissed for alleged discrepancies on her account amounting to approximately £450. As the case is on its way to the courts, we can't say too much at this point. However, it is our view that Mercy has been victimised and treated unfairly. We hope our opinions will be shared by those sitting in judgement in the courts.

*We wish Mercy all the best and hope that she is not finding the ordeal too unbearable.*

### *In this issue...*

**1. Keep your job - advice for SAMFs**

**2. Do company policies apply to managers?**

**Tetra radiation: unions seek the truth**

**3. Whose stethoscope are you under? LUL managers become doctors!**

**4-5. Branch roundup**

**6. Haiti Earthquake report and Branch vacancies and meeting dates**

## Play it Safe and Keep Your Job

**P**artly as a result of what has happened to Mercy, our branch has decided to produce the following guidance for SAMFs which, if followed, should protect ticket office staff from suffering the same fate as befell Mercy:

- 1. Be extra careful with money transfers and float/deposit safe audits.**
- 2. If you are doing POMs and are unhappy with the**

**amount you have taken, compared with the amount recorded that you have taken, log it and tell ESAF on the autophone.**

- 3. Secure your TOMs and your cash drawers when appropriate.**
- 4. Check your money before you declare it as an 'uncounted bag'. You can get your TSDA through ESAF on the TOM. Check**

**the details. If you have a discrepancy of £5 or more, get 2 flags of the TSDA. Keep one, attach the other to the station log book and make a log entry. Job done. If it is a 'lot' of money, do the above BUT TELL THE SS FIRST. Await instructions.**

This is not about NOT trusting each other. Most of the time the system rectifies itself; for example, you make a mistake in

a transfer, you are £10 down, the other SAMF's account is £10 up. The system sees what has happened and rectifies it. If you haven't done any of the checks listed above, you would be none the wiser. You and your oppo hear nothing about it (when was the last time a DSM talked to you about

discrepancies on your account? Thought not) until management decides that you have had too many discrepancies on your account and call you in for an interview with the Men in Black. This is what happened to Mercy.

Management would like us to see this process as being both fail-safe and politically neutral. We don't.

*If you have any queries concerning the guidance contained in this newsletter, please contact one of your local reps.*

## ARE MANAGERS IMMUNE TO COMPANY POLICIES?

It sometimes seems as though staff and management are subject to entirely different company disciplinary procedures. Why? Consider what would happen if you were accused of kicking another member of staff or of racially abusing someone in full view of a customer. Yes, you guessed it; you would be stood down pending investigation. But not if you are a manager, apparently! An Arnos Grove DMT was recently alleged to have assaulted one of our driver members by kicking him, but incredibly remains at work. At

the same time, a senior manager on the Finsbury Park Group is currently under the spotlight after a customer made a written complaint alleging that the manager had racially abused a member of staff. Has the company followed its own disciplinary/harassment policy and suspended the manager? Have a guess.

The case at Arnos Grove will be brought up by local reps at the forthcoming Level 1 meeting where a full investigation will be argued for and an explanation of why the

company policy has seemingly been flouted.

The case at Finsbury Park, however, is merely the latest example of a culture of institutional racism which exists on the group and which will be pursued by the union as a part of this broader problem. Monthly News cannot say any more about this case at present, as it is in the hands of the union's legal department and the police. However, we will bring you more details as and when it is appropriate to do so.

## TETRA EMISSIONS: UNIONS SEEK THE TRUTH

RMT and ASLEF Health and Safety reps at Arnos Grove depot have written a joint letter to their Train Operations Manager to express their concerns with the constant low intensity radiation emissions given off by the Tetra system recently installed throughout the London Underground railway system.

In the letter, the reps point out the need for greater scrutiny of the new radar system on the grounds of health and safety.

They asked LUL to supply them with copies of all risk assessments carried out on Tetra systems underground and information on any funding that has been made available for independent monitoring of the equipment and any effects it may have on the health of LUL staff.

### **Atrial Fibrillation**

Several drivers at Arnos Grove have developed the medical condition known as atrial

fibrillation. The number of drivers with the condition does not reflect the national average ratio of sufferers per population and nor does the age group affected.

Thanks to the local reps at Arnos, LUL are now taking our concerns seriously with a review of the available information being undertaken by the health department. The union is concerned that, unless sufficient health screening is put in place, there may be many

more drivers who have the condition without knowing it.

### **Health Fair**

The union has requested that a health fair visits Arnos Grove depot as soon as possible in order to begin the screening process. Drivers at Arnos are urged to take advantage of this and get checked out before it's too late.

### **LUL Denies Problem**

At a recent Tier 1 meeting at Arnos Grove depot, reps were given a presentation on atrial fibrillation by a company doctor. It became clear that the company was not yet prepared to admit that atrial fibrillation might be a combine-wide problem. Instead, they preferred to believe that the higher than average number of cases of the condition at Arnos was a one-off quirk. This position, of course, allows them to let the Tetra system off the hook.

### **Suspicion**

However, there remains a huge suspicion and a growing body of evidence (notably from a Police Federation study) that radiation emissions from the Tetra system are harmful to those who receive doses of this radiation on a daily basis due to their work. Rest assured, our safety reps are on the case and will stay on it until the truth is established.

# **WHOSE STETHOSCOPE ARE YOU UNDER? LUL MANAGERS BECOME DOCTORS!**

No reader of Monthly News will be surprised to hear that since our strike in June 2009, there have been at least five more wrong-side door openings (WSDOs) with management trying to hush them up and rightly not referring any of the staff involved to disciplinary action. Management know that these incidents have only happened because of their failure to provide the safety device used on all other stock on all other lines - Correct Side Door Enabler (CSDE). No one has been sent to a disciplinary hearing, that is, except the person most unlikely to have been sent to one.

### **Medical Restriction**

We are expecting the outcome of a driver who, two weeks before he was involved in a

WSDO, had been put on severe restriction by London Underground's own occupational health service (LUOH) and ordered that he must not carry out ANY TRAIN OR TRACK WORK, AND SHOULD NOT MAKE ANY SAFETY CRITICAL DECISIONS due to his very high blood pressure caused by the harassment he was receiving due to an earlier incident.

### **Get back to work!**

The day after he handed in this letter to his manager, he was hauled into a meeting alone with his TOM and instructed to have two days off – one being his own rest day – and come back driving trains. When he mentioned the restrictions stipulated by LUOH, he was told that the manager will have a word with LUOH and get

them to change their minds. But this was 'high blood pressure' he insisted, 'How can having a word change that, or even having a rest?'

'Don't worry, I'll sort it out,' his manager assured him 'and when you come back, there will be a new letter from LUOH'.

'I cannot pick up until I have a medical decision,' insisted the driver.

'Don't worry' replies the manager, 'if its not here when you get back, we will get it for you'.

### **'Shut up and pick up your train'**

Everyday the driver reported for duty, he asked first for a copy of the letter restricting him, but it was refused. Then he asked for the letter lifting the restriction, or the letter standing him back up. Each time he was refused.

It got to the point where he was being told by one desk manager to 'shut up and pick up your train or you know what will happen to you'.

## **Selected for discipline**

Seven days after returning, he had a WSDO. Other drivers had also had WSDOs since Carl Campbell was sacked, yet he is the only driver being sent to a disciplinary hearing. When the brief was presented for the CDI, none of the paperwork about his retraction by LUOH was provided. Due to the insistence of the member and his representative, the hearing has been forced into a fourth day because they insisted that these and other pieces of evidence, which prove that our member's health and welfare has been totally neglected, should be made available to the CDI panel. As his representative said at the hearing, 'These managers, all of them who have forced this driver to work while restricted by the company's doctors, have been criminally negligent'.

## **Managers with stethoscopes**

At the time of writing it appears that once again LUL are attempting to change the Attendance at Work policy (you have guessed it to make it more draconian!), and the Government are putting GPs under pressure to decide on workers fitness for work. It is all an agenda to increase productivity at any cost and it is likely that LUL managers will be putting more pressure than ever on you to come to work when you are not fit in order to meet their targets. It appears they are prepared to go to any lengths to achieve this.

Again it is only the RMT who have consistently challenged the imposition of these draconian policies and you are strongly advised to make sure that you take an RMT rep with you at any meeting with management to discuss your employment.



*What kind of managers are they who, despite being unqualified in medicine, think they can make medical decisions without reference to a doctor or to LUOH?*

## **Around the Branch...**

### ***Arnos Grove Depot***

Drivers at Arnos Grove recently voted by 136 to 135 to trial a fixed link roster at their depot. The margin of victory was actually greater than the result suggests as the 42 drivers who failed to vote were counted as votes against. The new roster will allow drivers to select their preferred 'link', e.g. dead earlies, middles, dead lates, etc. There will also be a mixed link which will contain the whole range of duties just like the present roster. The trial will last for between 6 and 12 months at the end of which drivers will be balloted again to decide whether or not to make the new system permanent.

Safety reps have raised the issue of low level radiation emissions from the new Tetra system which has been installed across the combine, and the possible effects upon the health of staff (*see page 2 for a full report*).

## ***Arnos Grove Group***

Local and Level 2 rep, Neil Cochrane, reported that he had represented a member at a CDI where discrepancies in the ESAF system were recognised by management. This contrasts with the case of former Green Park rep, Mercy Odisi, where management chose to ignore such discrepancies. Proof, if more proof was needed, that the company was out to sack Mercy.

## ***Brixton Depot***

Management are continuing to refuse to provide a safe area for smoking. Drivers forced to smoke outside the building have been subject to verbal abuse and even threatened by knife-wielding thugs. Local reps reported that their Train Ops Manager was so deluded that he now thought he was a doctor and was taking on LUOH's job of deciding on the fitness of staff for duties.

Safety rep, Gary Doyle, reported on numerous problems with the TOM refusing him training and release to carry out his union duties. The branch advised both Brixton reps to put in a grievance against the TOM for trade union victimisation.

## ***Cleaner Grade reports***

It has been reported that the cleaning company GBM had lost its contract to Initial and was going over on 6th March. Managers were attempting to get staff to take all their leave by this date instead of 31st March and telling them that, if they did not, they would lose it. This seems contrary to TUPE regulations. The branch is seeking further advice on this.

A member was assaulted at a meeting by a manager who was supposed to be helping him find a placement following a medical issue. A grievance has been submitted and is awaiting a response.

## ***Finsbury Park Group***

There is some good news in that a supervisor who was dismissed has been offered a CSA job following a directors' hearing. The big issue on the group at the moment, however, is the racial abuse scandal involving a local manager (*see article on page 2 for a fuller report*).

## ***Green Park Group***

Local rep Peter Hartshorn reported that he had called an emergency level one meeting to deal with the introduction of highly unpopular rosters which the staff did not want. It was hoped that they could be rejected and proper consultation with the members take place on the type of rosters they wished to work. He also reported that there were a number of grievances outstanding against DSM's on the group who seemed to be have given the license to harass staff.

Of particular note was that of Bro Vuoto who had successfully sued the company for Disability Discrimination. Bro Vuoto suffers with Multiple Sclerosis. This case has been reported in previous editions of MN and amounts to a nasty act of discrimination by the GSM at the time who had granted him "reasonable adjustments" and then unilaterally taken them away and then sacked Bro Vuoto for not being fit for full duties! No doubt worried about his performance related bonus. The case has now been settled at the Court of Appeal (one of the highest courts of Law in the country) and resulted in a settlement in the region of £200k. It is remarkable that at a time of apparent financial austerity LUL allows managers like this to treat its staff in this callous way and waste public money by acting illegally and then being allowed to carry on managing staff as if nothing has happened. Unbelievable! Bro Vuoto intends to visit the branch when the weather improves, due to his incapacity and wanted it put on record his appreciation of the efforts of the branch and union in pursuing this case. We wish Bro Vuoto all the best and it underlines once again the importance of being in a union that stands up to management and defends its members all the way.

# HAITI EARTHQUAKE DISASTER: THE UNTOLD STORY

As part of the Branch's efforts to encourage debate and discussion on issues outside LUL but still relevant to the times we live in, this month we invited Cecil Gutzmore a lecturer at the University of West Indies, living in Jamaica.. Cecil is a pan afrikanist(a political ideology meriting more explanation than is available here but generally in favour of Afrikan Political unification and taking note of the effect of the slaving system that has created huge inequalities for people and nations of Afrikan origin today and generally advocating reparations to Afrikan nations from those countries that benefited from this system, in particular the United States) and on an extended stay in the UK to promote the campaign "Reparation Now. Haiti First! Haiti Now! It was the political and economic backdrop to the current humanitarian disaster that was explained at branch.

In particular it is not well known that Haiti was the first nation to break free from the tyranny of slavery by way of an armed rebellion. Independence was forged against France, the colonial occupier at the time and not long after the American Revolution against Britain. It was highlighted that the US revolution resulted in Britain being excluded from the US's development path, but in the case of Haiti France, the UK and the US colluded to impose a levy of 150 million French Francs (23 million US dollars) against Haiti due to the loss of revenue from the Slave trade! It was either a case of pay this or face a sea blockade and be starved to death. It was the backdrop of this huge imposed debt and subsequent US invasions and interference with the political independence of Haiti (e.g. the overthrow of the progressive Aristade regime, which got a massive 90% vote from the predominately poor population of Haiti) that meant that Haiti was unable to deal with the catastrophic events of January 12<sup>th</sup>. It appears its development has been stunted by aggressive interference from more developed nations such as France and the US which meant that the buildings were not of a standard such as those in Japan and California which are designed to resist earthquakes. It appears that the US has wasted no time using the opportunity to send in troops as opposed to significant medical aid and it was reported that countries like Cuba(which itself has been subjected to an aggressive US blockade) were better equipped to send in medical help to save lives. It appears that speculators are using the opportunity to grab chances to make money like buying over local radio stations and the local population has real fears of child abduction etc. It was agreed that efforts should be made to support grassroots organisations and the branch agreed to support a demonstration by "United Haitians in the UK" planned "for 24<sup>th</sup> March outside the US embassy and donations can we made by visiting their website at [www.ukuk.org](http://www.ukuk.org)

Visit [WWW.RMTLONDONCALLING.ORG.UK](http://WWW.RMTLONDONCALLING.ORG.UK) - the website of the RMT London Regional Council

## ***Vacancies***

**Branch Assistant Secretary**

**Health and Safety Rep, BCV  
Revenue**

**Industrial Rep Arnos Grove  
Group**

## ***Next Branch Meetings***

**Twelve Pins Public House (near Finsbury Park Station)**

**March 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>  
starting at 1600hrs**

*Nancy Taaffe, Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) parliamentary candidate for Walthamstow, will be guest speaker at the 11<sup>th</sup> March branch meeting.*