



PAY DEAL: THE WAGES OF DISUNITY?

Once again it is nearly a year since we should have had a pay rise. It has been settled after a protracted campaign led industrially by the RMT while the other unions maintained a deafening silence (apart from a certain union leader who encouraged his members to scab in the summer). Thanks in part to the failure of these other unions to unite with RMT in a fight for something better, we have ended up with a two-year deal which is an insult to all of you who have worked hard to deliver a railway which continues to win industry awards – awards which are happily accepted by top management who bask in the glory whilst wielding a heavy stick in the workplace.

As usual, rumours have been doing the rounds concerning the dispute. Here are the facts. In terms of trying to get the pay settled our Union could not have done more. We put in an early claim in 2008 (with the anniversary date being April 2009) yet management did not even respond to it until February 2009 when they made their first derisory offer. They then launched a propaganda

assault to convince staff that, due to the recession, this was the best offer they could table. Not surprisingly, they failed to mention the millions which could have been saved by getting rid of expensive ‘consultants’, overpaid senior managers (we are not sure what 90% of them do!), and scrapping the disastrous PPP.

It was clear very early on that talks were getting nowhere, so we embarked upon a ballot for industrial action. The members returned a clear mandate for action. Rather than respecting this mandate the bosses ran to the courts and used the anti-union laws, claiming that there were discrepancies in the union’s membership records. This claim was totally spurious and irrelevant because management know where every one of their workers is employed and all members of the union were being balloted! This running to the courts by the bosses is now a regular feature of industrial relations; rather than attempt to resolve disputes, management try to frustrate the democratic wishes of our members by running to the men in wigs.

Predictably, LUL got the decision it wanted from the

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court. However, we updated our records, reballoted and gained another strong mandate for industrial action which we used to try and settle the dispute by negotiations. The offer on the table at this time amounted to about 1000 job cuts and a five-year pay cut. However, talks at ACAS went so well that, on the eve of the strike in June, Bob Crow was ready to sign an agreement with LUL. This was scuppered at the last minute by an act of political interference from the Mayor’s office and the deal was taken off the table. **Despite our union’s attempt to solve the dispute through negotiations, the political establishment were spoiling for a fight.**

It was around this time that the ASLEF General Secretary (what's his name again?) was telling his members to scab and cross picket lines. At Seven Sisters depot, managers were enlarging ASLEF notices and putting them in management notice cases encouraging members to scab! Thankfully, and to their great credit, many ASLEF members respected our picket lines and our branch salutes their principled support. Sadly, it appears that ASLEF's leadership is determined to oppose any sort of unity with the RMT, even to the extent of damaging the interests of its own members.

In the teeth of management propaganda and intensive efforts to undermine us, a heavy BTP presence on picket lines, a hostile media and political establishment, we carried out one of the most successful two-day strikes in history which actually got stronger on the second day when all our enemies were hoping it would collapse. This action alone secured an assurance that no RMT members would be made compulsorily redundant, saw management reduce their offer from 5 years to 2 years and meant that future talks would be more productive. It was felt that more time should be allowed for talks to work but, as in the past, we have gained very little from this lull and have allowed the other unions to pretend that doing nothing was the best tactic; under strong head office recommendation, TSSA and ASLEF persuaded their members to accept it. The RMT leadership and reps did not feel

that the current deal was as good as we could achieve so, with an eye on the anti-union laws, we reballoted our membership on the latest two-year offer. Due to a combination of factors, it appears that the call for strike action was not supported by a sufficient proportion of the membership. The executive committee of the union also decided that action short of a strike would not, on its own, secure a better deal.

There are concerns about the way in which the dispute was concluded. These will be fully aired at the Regional Council meeting on 28th January at the Somers Town Community Centre at 1630 which you should attend if you want to find out more or take part in the debate (ask your rep for more details).

The Deal

PAY

The deal on pay is 1.5% for 2009 and the RPI figure for February plus 0.5% in 2010. Currently RPI is at 0.3%. Therefore we are certainly looking at a rise of under 2% per year on average for the duration of the deal. Given that the real rate of inflation is higher than the government's RPI figure, we are really swallowing a pay cut. Back pay however should arrive in the February pay packet.

Every time you turn the TV on, politicians are competing to be the party of cuts and pay restraint. They have let the

bankers run amok and nearly bankrupt the country and now, rather than punishing them and the people who have got rich from this system, they want to slash jobs and pay in the public sector while allowing the fat cats who got us into this mess to return to their champagne and cigar lifestyle. This means that, whichever party gets elected in the summer, they will want you to pay and this means not getting a fair pay rise in the foreseeable future. This means the pay you get will stay about the same and may go down with increased taxes to pay for the mess. *Unless we do something about it.*

JOBS

The major concession we got out of management was on jobs; certainly no operational members have been made redundant thus far, but what can we expect in the future?

At the time of writing, management are undertaking a review of their costs, in particular, staff costs. This means jobs, the way we do our job and the tools we are given to do our job. They are also driving towards skeleton staffing levels in train depots by removing team talks from rosters (cutting 35 drivers across the combine), leaving vacancies unfilled on stations and in other areas, and they are sacking members for disciplinary issues which previously would have resulted in only a warning. Your job and the way you do your job will be coming under attack. **Management want another company plan.**

PENSIONS

Another major cost for LUL is the pension that you are working towards and deserve. In fact, at a pay meeting this time last year, Howard Collins (COO) was on record as saying that they cannot afford current benefits. Therefore, it is likely that this is another hard-won condition that management will be looking to grab. *Unless we do something about it.*

WHAT IS THE ANSWER?

It is a fact of life that whatever job you do on LUL and whatever union you are in (or even if you are not) the only reason you currently enjoy today's pay and benefits is because of the previous struggles and arguments advanced by the RMT. Companies, including ours, don't pay any more than they have to. Some of the better deals that have been achieved in the past were gained when workers united and unions worked together.

So what of TSSA and ASLEF, and what are the chances of working together? Every year RMT writes to both unions and asks them to amalgamate with the RMT. The present divisions benefit management by

allowing them to play one union off against another. **We want to end these false divisions in the interests of all London Underground staff.** Imagine what could be achieved by a single strong, united and democratic union, fighting for the very best terms and conditions commensurate with the hard work we all give to the company. That should be the goal of any worker with an ounce of common sense; at the moment, RMT is alone among the transport unions in striving towards this goal. **To belong to RMT is to be part of the answer; to belong elsewhere is to be part of the problem.**

As a union, we could take a similar approach to the others and try to cosy up to management and say nothing. What would happen if we took that approach? Managers, who already feel confident after the last pay round, would ensure that your union is silenced in the work place. You would be more easily disciplined, more easily bullied, more easily persuaded to work outside your hours, more easily sacked. In short, your life at work would become miserable. At the same time, you will get no pay rise or even a pay cut, jobs will go (limiting promotion prospects), and your excellent pension

scheme will quite likely be shut down as has happened to many schemes in recent years where staff were in weak unions or in no union.

You may just want to come to work, get paid and keep your head down, but management have other plans for you. And they have these plans whether you like it or not, so there's nothing to be gained and much to lose by sticking your head in the sand. The only alternative is to build the union and be prepared to support it when it calls on you to take action to defend and improve your terms and conditions. This means encouraging every worker in your area to join the RMT and support your local rep and make sure they are working in your interests. This means trying to attend your local branch meeting (see notice board for details) or getting more involved in what it is doing to make our organisation more effective. We remain ready to work with the other unions when they support our approach and defend their members but we cannot rely on them. Contact your local rep or branch officer for more information on how to get involved. *Your job may depend on it.*

OYSTER CARD £5 MINIMUM TOP-UP: ADVICE FOR TICKET SELLERS

LUL have introduced a minimum top-up of £5 for Oyster Card prepaid transactions that take place at ticket office windows. This is an attempt by LUL to remove over 400,000 Oyster card transactions from ticket offices. As well as a blatant attempt to justify closing ticket offices, this measure discriminates against our poorer customers and also against people for whom English is not a first language.

At the last Branch meeting in January, it was decided that SAMFs should ignore the £5 minimum top-up instruction. The issue is being raised by the RMT at a combine-wide level. We understand that DSM Richard Chandler has already advised SAMFs at Green Park to "use their discretion" and our union endorses that advice.

GREEN PARK PLANS FIGHTBACK FOR MERCY

Sacked Green Park SAMF, Mercy Odisi, has been granted a Directors' Hearing in her fight for reinstatement. The hearing took place on 14th January but, as yet, there is no indication of how it went. Management said that a decision would be made within a week or two of the hearing.

Mercy was dismissed by LUL for an alleged ticket office loss which took place almost a year ago. The suspicion is that she was really sacked for being a good rep who had stood up for

her members against bullyboy managers on her group.

Ballot Result

RMT members on Green Park Group have been balloted for strike action and action short of a strike in support of Mercy. In a disappointingly low turnout, members voted narrowly for a strike and by a two to one majority for action short. In light of this result, the branch has agreed to build support on the group for a work to rule and overtime ban during forthcoming weekend engineering works. This action,

of course, will only be necessary if Mercy's appeal hearing is unsuccessful.

Members on the group should look out for further information about what is being planned or speak to their local reps. It is important that members at Green Park stick together right now – it is no coincidence that many of the management abuses which Mercy fought against when she was a local rep are now taking place with an even greater frequency. It is time to put a stop to this. *Mercy stood up for you; now she needs you to stand up for her.*

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Officer

At the recent Finsbury Park RMT Annual General Meeting, I was elected (unopposed) to be the branch LGBT Officer. If there are any issues, cases or enquiries where my input might be useful, I am available to help in anyway I can. I am not a member of the LGBT community myself but have an interest in LGBT issues, not least because a close family member is gay. I realise that some members of the LGBT community may think it inappropriate for a heterosexual person to take on this role. If any member of the LGBT community wants to take over the post from me, I will happily stand aside and second their nomination.

You can contact me in the following ways:

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Simon Strickland-Scott (CSA Russell Square)

Vacancies

**Branch Assistant
Secretary**

**Health and Safety
Rep, BCV
Revenue**

Next Branch Meetings

**At the Twelve Pins Public House (near Finsbury Park Stn)
February 4th and 11th starting at 1600hrs sharp**

LIES, DAMN LIES AND THE MISSING CCTV

Regular Readers of Monthly News will know that one of the causes of the strike on the Victoria Line – in the background, but nevertheless stated on the ballot paper – was the victimisation of our branch Chair, Glenroy Watson.

In March last year, Glenroy returned from annual leave at the start of the ballot about Carl Campbell who had been unfairly sacked for a wrong side door opening (WSDO).

As Chair, Glenroy felt it was his duty to come into his depot at Seven Sisters early, to help ensure all members were getting their ballot papers and were returning them.

Harassed

When management found out that Glenroy was in the depot, they started harassing him, calling him over the PA to report to the Duty Manager Trains (DMT).

One his way to his booking on point in Northumberland Park Depot, he popped into the DMT's office to be told that

they had some letters for him. He asked that the letters be put in his mailbox as he was running late.

Imagine his surprise when he checked later and found no letters in his mailbox. He was then subjected to numerous PA calls to the office during his meal break, so he again visited the office on his way out of the building.



Trains halted during previous strike

Stalked

Here, he was told again that there were letters, so he asked again for them to be put in his mailbox. Instead, a DMT followed him down to the northbound platform with a letter. He walked away before

it could be forced in his hand, as he was not prepared to read letters whilst being in charge of a train. However the same manager waited for him to return on the southbound platform. Now Glenroy was really concerned and had to hide in his cab from the manager who he was now convinced was stalking him.

Suspended

The next day he was suspended and almost a year later he has been sent to a Company Disciplinary Interview (CDI) for '*refusing to obey an instruction*' from a manager who had not spoken a word to him on the day concerned!

So far, the CDI has lasted two days. The first reason given for suspending Glenroy was that he had delayed the train service on the day by walking away from the DMT on the northbound platform and that the previous driver had had to shut down the train.

Witness gagged

No one can explain why a driver would do that with a DMT on the platform, but Glenroy was

on the platform and saw the train come into the platform as did another driver who wanted to give live evidence to the CDI. This driver attended the CDI in his own time on his rest day, but the Chairman of the hearing refused to allow him to give his evidence. He has since submitted a signed, written statement along with three other staff with two more on their way.

CCTV footage requested

On the 4th March, the day after Glenroy was stood down, Branch Secretary Dean O'Hanlon, acting as Glenroy's Advocate, put in two written requests for CCTV footage of both the north and south platforms at Seven Sisters.

During the investigation, management admitted viewing the CCTV and even providing Glenroy and his then Advocate Unjum Mirza with a reference number for the CCTV.

CCTV footage mysteriously vanishes

Yes! You guessed it. Almost one year later they cannot find the CCTV footage, so they have said the police have got it. When we speak to the police they say they have no record of ever taking it. When we speak to the station, they have no record of ever giving the tape to the police.

Some other things have come up which support the fact that

our Branch Chair is being victimised;

- When the company is considering sending a union representative to a CDI, they have to contact the rep's Head Office in order that the union can try to sort out the case. The RMT was not informed until the 6th October, the same day that the CDI papers were issue. This mean the union had no time to start talks.
- Glenroy and other RMT members held a meeting with the Victoria line performance manger as a result of their victory of stopping the increase of 5-rounder turns on the line. Four days later Glenroy found himself on a CDI for an issue which took place 8 months earlier.
- In September, at a line Level I meeting, management side – including the manager who wrote up the CDI brief – told Glenroy and other RMT and Aslef reps that there were no outstanding CDIs, even when they were asked '*what about Glenroy Watson?*'.
- The manager who put the CDI brief together had nothing to do with the investigation, but had always played a very big part in victimising Glenroy.
- The management sides of the CDI have been very embarrassed to find that almost every part of the brief has been incompetently put together.

- The charge put was not in the bundle
- No minutes were provided from when Glenroy was interviewed
- They have so far refused to write into the record the witness statements
- They have been asked several times by Glenroy's Advocate, Regional Organiser Steve Hedley, to 'throw out the case'. All they could reply was that they are not going to throw it out 'just yet'
- It is now clear they are under orders to find our Branch Chair guilty of something - anything - and to 'keep it going as long as you can'.

Under these circumstances, Glenroy is expected to be responsible, on a daily basis, for the lives of hundreds of London Underground passengers.

Industrial action

A long time ago, Finsbury Park branch passed a resolution which is still live, that if any unfair action is taken against our Branch Chair we will ballot all areas of the branch for industrial action and ask the union to expand the action across the combine.

We ask the CDI panel to think carefully about what those above them are asking them to do.

VICTIMS OF INJUSTICE ADDRESS BRANCH

Finsbury Park branch recently held an open meeting on the issue of the many legal injustices which have taken and continue to take place within our own country. At a packed Twelve Pins meeting room, RMT members from our own and many other branches listened, spellbound, as leading members of the Miscarriages of Justice Organisation (MOJO) gave impassioned and emotional descriptions of how they suffered at the hands of a justice system which gave them only the most brutal injustice.

Gerry Conlon was one of the Guildford Four, jailed in the 70's for a crime neither he nor his co-defendants had committed. Gerry was full of anger towards those in the police, the judiciary and the government who had conspired to keep him in prison and to prevent the truth about the Guildford pub bombings from ever seeing the light of day. He described the brutality he endured at the hands of the police, the dire reality of prison life, the duplicity of those in government at the time and the cold lack of support from the Irish government. But he praised our union for being the first to help highlight the injustice and to fight for the release of all those wrongly jailed. The Guildford Four were released in October 1989 after 15 years of campaigning.



Gerry Conlon

Paddy Hill was one of the Birmingham Six, also wrongly jailed for two pub bombings in Birmingham in 1974. He and his friends had also been subjected to extreme brutality at the hands of the West Midlands Serious Crime Squad, a police unit so corrupt that it was later disbanded. Paddy also spoke with real emotion about the miscarriage of justice which caused him and his friends to lose over 16 years of their lives in a violent and corrupt prison system, whilst the policemen, judges and government ministers responsible for sending and keeping them there went on to achieve higher offices. It was known right from the start that the Birmingham Six, Guildford Four and the Maguire Seven were all innocent of the heinous crimes for which they were framed and then convicted. Even worse, the authorities actually knew who had carried out the bombings, but kept this knowledge a secret whilst innocent men and women rotted in jail. Six of the Maguire Seven and the Birmingham Six were eventually released in 1991 after an investigation found that 'confessions' had been attained under torture, notes of interviews had been falsified, and information which would have cleared the defendants of any possible



Paddy Hill

involvement was withheld by the police. Patrick Conlon, father of Gerry, had died in prison in 1980.

Paddy also spoke about life after prison and said that this was an ordeal in itself, with the state offering released prisoners next to nothing by way of support. This lack of help is the reality for all released prisoners, *including those like Paddy who have been declared innocent and pardoned.* He said that MOJO had been set up to help people who have suffered from miscarriages of justice and to alert the general public to the fact that there are still hundreds of such cases every year; it really could happen to any one of us.

Paddy is now suffering from an extreme form of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as a result of his experiences. MOJO, in collaboration with the trade union movement, is planning to open a trauma centre in Scotland which will help both those who have been wrongly incarcerated, and union members suffering from traumatic experiences in their workplaces, to put their lives back together again. Our branch was the first in the country to affiliate to MOJO and we are proud to be associated with the work that they are trying to do on behalf of all those who have been wronged by our justice system.

FINSBURY PARK BRANCH OFFICERS 2010



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Branch Meetings

====2010=====

February	4	11	
March	4	11	18
April	1	8	
May	6	13	
June	3	10	17
July	1	8	
August	5	12	
September	2	9	16
October	7	14	
November	4	11	
December	2	9	

Other important dates in 2010

Mayday March and Rally, Saturday May 1st
 (To be followed by dinner, retired and long service awards – see local rep for more details)

Friday, November 19th
Branch Annual General Meeting (starting at 1700hrs)

Thursday, December 16th
Branch Xmas Social