



STILL NO JUSTICE

Zak Khan sent to Stations – Now the Gloves are Off

The result of Arnos Grove driver Zak Khan's twice postponed appeal was finally given at a meeting on Thursday 12th February: the company decided to re-employ Zak as a CSA at Waterloo station with a 52-week suspended dismissal still hanging over his head and to take away his licence. With the company still around 120 drivers over establishment across the combine this is a heavy financial punishment with little chance of him returning as a driver after 52 weeks. Also the slightest mistake on the stations within the next 52 weeks could see Zak thrown to the wolves again.

Asked how he felt about the decision, Zak said, "I'm gutted, especially knowing that people have done worse and got off with only a caution! "Why discriminate against me - this is a £17k pay cut".

Reinstatement or else

Clearly, the outcome to Zak's appeal represents a step forward

from the dismissal of a few weeks ago, thanks to the work of RMT rep, Dean O'Hanlon, in exposing the many weaknesses in management's case and also to the strength of feeling amongst drivers who were ready to ballot for strike action to secure justice for our colleague.



However, it is not enough. We made it clear at the outset that nothing less than full reinstatement as a driver (albeit with a caution and necessary action plan) would be acceptable and fair in the circumstances; this has not happened. It's now clear what was going on behind the scenes when management kept

postponing the appeal decision: they were calculating what they needed to do to avert a strike without actually giving Zak his job back. They figured that giving Zak a job as a CSA would do it. Very smart, but we're not falling for it.

Vote YES!

The strike ballot will go ahead and RMT members at Arnos Grove should be receiving ballot papers any time now. The ballot closes on 25th March. All RMT members at Acton Town will also be balloting for action in opposition to the company's increasingly hard-line approach towards staff. If you believe in justice and fair play, you should vote **YES**. A big **YES** vote is vital if we are to concentrate management minds – please inform your local rep if you do not receive a ballot paper.

Stop press

Zak has now been granted a Director's level appeal which will be held on 31st March.

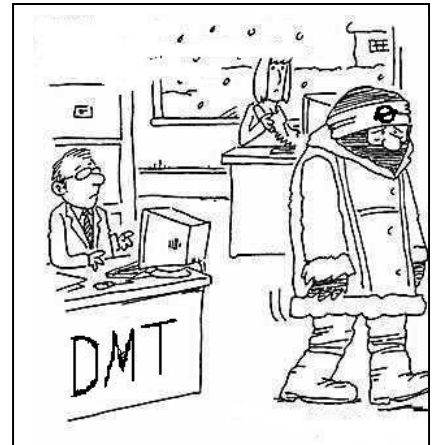
It's Snow Joke for Heroic Staff!

While London Underground's managers claim to 'value time', they clearly don't value their staff. This fact was brought home to us at the start of February when London and the south east was buried under a blanket of snow following a blizzard. In LUL's staff bulletin, Operations Manager, Howard Collins, praised staff for making 'heroic' efforts to get to work in the face of treacherous conditions and an almost non-existent public transport network. So how did the company reward its 'heroes': staff who failed to make it in to work were offered

a choice between taking a day's special unpaid leave or losing a day's annual leave. How petty; how pathetic. If this is our reward for 'heroism', what the hell will we get for slacking?

If you were penalised in this way as a result of being unable to get to work during the blizzard, please contact your local rep. The union is challenging the company on behalf of all affected members to justify its vindictive action. Given that London Mayor, Boris Johnson, advised people not to venture out unless absolutely necessary, it is outrageous that a public company reporting to him

should stop the pay of staff unable to reach work.



'Thank you for your heroic effort to come to work yesterday, Train Operator Smith. Now, do you want to take it as special leave unpaid or annual leave?'

WRONG SIDE DOORS

Another driver pays the price for company's unsafe system

Carl Campbell is the latest Victoria Line driver to pay the ultimate price for the lack of investment by Victoria Line management in Correct Side Door Enable equipment (CSDE), enjoyed by drivers on all other London Underground lines. In fact, Carl paid the price despite the fact that the panel at his Company Disciplinary Interview accepted the video evidence that the pilot light could have only "flickered" off and on and that the doors could not have been open in any reasonable interpretation of the word. The fact is that management did not like Carl and certain managers in

particular gave him a hard time causing him to become stressed and uneasy at work and more likely to make mistakes. All this was ignored by management who seem to think the way to prevent wrong side door operations is to sack the drivers rather than manage the risk, even when in Carl's case there was no risk! This high-handed and arrogant approach goes right to the top. When local reps demanded an urgent meeting to discuss their concerns, they were ignored; one senior manager on the Victoria line even accused them of a "knee jerk reaction"! Well the only knee jerk reaction appears to be management sacking drivers! Some reaction considering there

has been an increase in wrong side door operations of 167% over the last 12 months!

At a recent 'Value – spend our money and talk – for time', Victoria Line drivers and station staff put the question to senior managers as to why there is no CSDE on Victoria Line trains. The answer was the same as five years ago – new stock, no fatality. **To managers, drivers getting the sack does not count as fatal!**

The union will not rest until management provide a safe system for door operation and nor will it rest until management give Carl his job back. At the time of writing, a joint union meeting

including RMT and ASLEF members at the depot was planned for Monday 2nd March to discuss, amongst other matters, Carl's

situation. The matter is also due to be discussed at the branch meeting on 5th March where all options up to and including industrial action

in support of Carl Campbell will be considered.

THE MODERN DAY SLAVE DRIVERS

CLEANING COMPANIES' DIRTY TACTICS EXPOSED

The callous sacking of Mary Boakye by ISS is yet another stark example of the brutal methods being deployed by dodgy cleaning companies to silence RMT activists. Her cruel dismissal bears chilling resemblance to other cleaning grade representatives who refused to be muted and have lost their jobs as a result. Cleaning companies are, without doubt, very exploitative, but that ISS in particular is just too brutal in dealing with cleaners is well-documented. With such an unenviable reputation, I was just gob-smacked when Pat O'Brien brought to our attention that ISS was given an international award as the most streamlined and efficient company. Mary's case clearly depicts cleaning companies as constantly and ominously breathing down the necks of activists (witch hunters, if you like), just to find faults with them. And once an aunt of mistakes is detected, because we're humans and thus fallible - it's swiftly and mischievously made to look like an elephant so as to warrant a maximum punishment.

I have said on numerous occasions, and it bears reiterating, that the

disproportionate use of agency staff is serving the selfish and outrageous financial interests of cleaning companies. Agency staff, indubitably the most vulnerable employees on this earth are, first and foremost, employed with an unwritten law that they must never join RMT. They are routinely abused, bullied, intimidated, threatened and forced to do more than one person's job. If any reason is required regarding why cleaning companies have recently taken to the use of agency staff and, as a result, pursued an actively hostile agenda to get rid of full-time staff, then one need not look further for explanation.

The late Bob Marley sufficiently captured this notion in the saying that "Babylon system is a vampire, sucking the blood of the sufferers".

Perhaps the most effective weapon being used to curb the activities of RMT members is the declaration of eligibility to work. Now it has become common at places of work for management to ask for one's documents as soon as one breathes protest against any decision.

Government's directive on the immigration check at work states categorically that all employees should be asked to provide evidence of their legal entitlement to work and thus

avoid unlawful discrimination. But the fact that only a few unfortunate people are targeted to undergo this obnoxious compliance check spells out how this exercise is being used by the unscrupulous managers to realise their selfish interests.

This "paper, please" is doubtless the most effective check on the fight against the endemic abuses being perpetrated by these incorrigibly corrupted managers.

The saying goes that "greedy folks have long arms", a reference to the ability of the greedy to obtain what they desire, by fair means or foul.

On the face of it, it appears embarking on a campaign for amnesty is the surest route to cripple these inherently anti-union managers and put cleaners out of this seemingly unceasing misery.

It's a tough fight but a good one and thus needs to be fought with all our might. I have an unshakeable faith in RMT's unrivalled ability to succeed in uncharted waters.

Their ability to marshal hitherto disorganised cleaners to stand up to their bosses, culminating in last year's historic strike speaks volumes of RMT officials' unwavering commitment to the cause of cleaners. "It takes tremendous courage, but we have the moral

authority”, as rightly observed by the new and energetic Regional Organiser, Steve Hedley. The good always overcomes the evil, so with determination, persistence and good strategy the battle will be won. The boundaries of hope and possibility are being pushed now. Obama’s overwhelming landmark victory should serve as a morale booster to the

underdogs and underprivileged class. **YES WE CAN.**

Mary Boakye’s case is monstrously cruel, but as sure as day follows night, she’s not going to be the last activist to be victimised.

Report by **Fred Dapaah**

Editor’s note: *Since writing this article, Fred has been ruthlessly sacked by his*

employer, the cleaning company, ICS. Fred now joins a growing but distinguished list of cleaner grade RMT activists who have suffered the loss of their jobs as a result of their principled trade unionism and efforts to get decent pay and conditions for cleaners working in the rail industry. Fred has written to Monthly News about his sacking and his letter is reproduced below.

Dear Editor,

The writing has been on the wall for a while now. So, I believe you won’t be completely taken aback to learn that I was callously sacked by my manager yesterday [25th February]. There wasn’t much fanfare about it. I was called to the office around midday to be told to leave the site immediately because my documentation to work has been found to be dodgy. RMT officials have been made aware.

After being in a stable job for 5 years, the unenviable and onerous task of looking for a new job has begun in earnest. When I would be successful is uncertain. Meanwhile, I’ve got to keep a family floating til something crops up. As a comrade, I know you can’t help but spare a moment of thought for me.

Encouragingly, I’m not unduly perturbed. I’ve indomitable character and a great strength of mind, which belie my diminutive figure. Armed with these weapons, it’s highly unlikely that this current storm won’t be weathered. I am surely taking it in my stride and will cope comfortably with it.

Now that I’m at home all day, my second wife – computer - isn’t given a breathing space, so I will not hesitate when the need arises.

Thanks
Fred

Branch remembers Pippa Sheane

Over £1,100 was collected by the Finsbury Park Branch towards the late Pippa Sheane’s chosen Charity, Just Jake. Thanks to all the members who attended the branch’s social event in Pippa’s memory and who helped to raise the £1,100 which will go towards the cost of sending Pippa’s nephew, Jake, to China to receive treatment for the cerebral palsy from which he suffers.

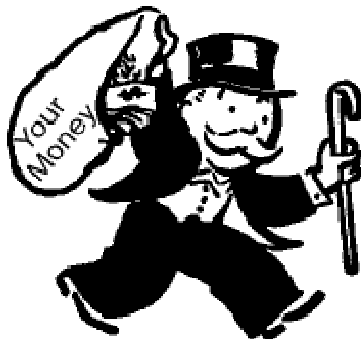
BOSSSES HAVE THEIR NOSES IN THE TROUGH

WHILE RUBBING OURS IN THE DIRT

The figures for the most recent completed financial year (2007/08) revealed that ...

- **Transport Commissioner Peter Hendy was paid more than £540,000: a salary of £334,720 plus a bonus of £115,200 and other benefits.**
- **Tim O'Toole, Managing Director of London Underground, received £283,254 and a bonus of £73,115.**
- **David Brown, Managing Director of Surface Transport, was paid £261,500 plus a bonus of £42,625.**
- **Two other senior Transport for London bosses were paid between £300,000 and £460,000.**
- **As well as the top earners, 123 TfL bosses received more than £100,000.**
[Evening Standard website]

Hendy's predecessor, Bob Kiley, coined it in big time in his final stretch in office, 1 April 2005 - 31 January 2006, as follows: **Salary £265,090; Bonus for 2004/05 £270,000; Bonus 2005/06 £237,500; Compensation for loss of office £745,000; Termination bonuses £181,250. And that's not including a house in Belgravia worth over £100,000 a year in rent, private health insurance and professional tax advice.** [TfL website]



Nice work if you can get it, huh? By the way, these are the people who tell us how tight the company is for money and that we must expect to 'tighten our belts' whilst working harder than ever!

PAY INSULT

At the Company Council meeting of 27th February, LUL showed just how much it values its staff

by making an offer of a 5-year pay deal as follows:

Year 1: RPI + 1%
Years 2, 3, 4 and 5: RPI only

This is nothing short of an insult and would result in a real-terms pay cut for all staff for the next 5 years. Is that what you're worth? Is a guaranteed pay cut every year for the next 5 years a fair reward for the hard work and increased flexibility we have given to the company during the last few years? We think not: RMT will not stand by and allow the company to ignore our aspirations whilst rewarding our hard work with a derisory pay award which will see our members become poorer as a result of the real cost of living in London and the south-east.

FIGHT BACK

We need to get ready to fight to preserve our hard-won terms and conditions: the alternative is to stand idly by and allow it all to slowly ebb away. The challenge we face isn't just about pay. It's about the current wide-ranging attack upon all aspects of our working lives by a rampant management. These attacks will continue until management achieves its aim – a docile, fearful workforce – unless we unite and stop them. **RMT – never on our knees!**

BRIXTON DEPOT: THE START OF A TRAIN-SIDE SERVICE REQUIREMENT TEAM?

The opening of a new depot you think would always be a good thing because of the employment of more drivers to staff it, and giving other grades the opportunity to progress if they wish to become a driver, and therefore strengthens the job and the need for train drivers. However, the question we have to ask ourselves is: would this indeed be the case with the opening of Brixton and the subsequent plans to open up more new depots across the combine?

The date for the opening of Brixton is fast approaching, but no one even at this date still has any idea of how many drivers will be sent and displaced to Brixton from Seven Sisters. And the more worrying thing is that once the training for the new Victoria line stock is complete, what will happen to all those displaced

drivers who are now over and above the establishment numbers?

A paranoid and cynical person may think that they will be moved on to where ever the next upgrade would be, and therefore they would be constantly bounced around the combine filling training needs and holes at depots. If this were the case, what would then be formed in my opinion is a train side Service Requirement Team, and if that is the way the company is going then we need to stop this from happening NOW, because if we don't, any sort of promotion to the train side would be curtailed, if not stopped because this group of already qualified drivers would only require line and stock training and then they are out on the road. So any station staff thinking of becoming a train driver, sorry but they won't need you. LUL will save thousands of pounds in training costs.

If this is the case, it seems it is being allowed to happen because there seems to be nothing coming out about the future of displaced drivers to new depots and what will happen to them once upgrades and training is all finished. Let alone the issue of the East London Line drivers sitting outside the roster at Leytonstone; are they too going to be forced into this same situation?

We as a region and a Union need to take a good long look at what the future could possibly hold and do everything within our power to not only protect drivers jobs, but to protect the rights of other grades, so that they have positions that they can get promoted into, otherwise we could end up with SRTs in all grades and then there will be no need to employ staff in these grades anymore, just use the SRT for that grade.

**RMTLONDONCALLING.ORG.UK - the website of the
RMT London Regional Council**

Visit the site for the latest news about everything in London Underground

WRITE TO MONTHLY NEWS

Monthly News is a newsletter written by and for RMT members in Finsbury Park branch. We welcome articles on all work-related matters from any member with something they wish to share. Please feel free to email us with anything you would like to see published. We won't divulge your name unless you give us permission. All articles to be sent to:

monthlynews@tiscali.co.uk

Next Branch Meetings

March 12th and 19th at 1600hrs, Twelve Pins Public House, (Near Finsbury Park Station)

Vacancies

- Brixton Group – Industrial and Health and Safety Rep
- Victoria Group – Health and Safety Rep
- Branch Political Officer