



9 DAYS TO LOSE YOUR JOB

How secure is your job? Find out by asking yourself the following questions:

1. Are you aged between 16 and 65?
2. Are you a Train Operator, an Instructor Operator, a CSA, SAMF, Station Supervisor or employed in any other LUL grade below senior manager?
3. Have you had 9 days or more sickness absence during the last year?

If you answered 'yes' to all of the above questions, *then you are in danger of losing your job*. This is not a joke; if you want to avoid the fate which befell Angie, below, read on.

Angie's Case

Angie (not her real name) was a driver at Seven Sisters depot – until recently. Angie is now unemployed as a result of a new Attendance at Work Policy (AAW) which the company has adopted despite union opposition and despite the existence of the agreed AAW.

Angie was summoned to attend a Case Conference to discuss her fitness for work. She and her rep were shocked to be told

that the company was terminating Angie's employment. *Angie was fit for work and had been driving trains right up to the day of the Case Conference!* How can someone be medically terminated when they are fit for work? Surely some mistake? Not according to the Appeal Panel which, incredibly and despite taking nearly 5 weeks to give its decision, upheld Angie's dismissal. It remains to be seen what the forthcoming Employment Tribunal will make of it.

9 and out!

What you want to know is this: *how was a manager able to breach half a dozen long-standing agreements in one sitting and get away with it despite an appeal?* The answer is: **the 96% rule**. Management is now saying that individuals must reach an attendance target of 96% in any given year. In some locations, including Seven Sisters depot, some staff are being told during their P&D that their attendance is below 96%; they are then asked to sign a form agreeing to improve their attendance to a level of 96% or above. This is later used against them. Do the maths here – a **96% attendance target is**

breached if you have 9 days' sickness or more in a year. How confident are you about escaping the clutches of this draconian policy? Many, many of us are now in a vulnerable position – the truth is that the company could do to any of us what it has done to Angie, if it wanted to. All it has to do is wheel out the 96% weapon, point it at you and pull the trigger. You will wake up in the job centre.

Spending cuts & job losses

This latest travesty of justice is merely one aspect of the company's drive to save money by shedding jobs. *Jobs in all grades*. 800 station jobs are on the chopping block, but train ops are also feeling the heat from dismissals for mistakes which would previously have attracted either a warning or a period of time as a CSA and, of course, from the 96% rule.

So what's next?

We can stay on our knees and pray for salvation (it won't come!) or we can stand together and fight for our futures.

Vote 'YES' in the forthcoming strike ballot.

VOTE YES – YOUR JOB DEPENDS ON IT

You will soon be receiving a ballot paper for strike action. The issues are as follows:

- **The company plan to slash 800 station jobs;**
- **Management’s crazy idea to weaken safety procedures, putting both staff and passengers at risk;**
- **The management bullying and dismissal of members on trumped up charges, particularly on the Victorian line;**
- **The tearing up of any agreements which get in the way of the company’s penny pinching schemes.**

Grand company plan

The truth is that these are not separate issues at all – they are merely different parts of a greater plan by the company (backed up by Mayor Johnson and a right-wing government) to create an Underground which runs on the cheap. To realise this aim, the company has to cut staffing levels to the bare minimum, force those remaining to work harder, relax safety standards by rewriting the rule book, and take an axe to our terms and conditions.

Destroy the unions

Moreover, the company knows that the only thing that stands in the way of this nightmare is the collective power of

Underground workers, expressed through our unions, particularly the RMT. They need to weaken, if not destroy, our unions in order to pave the way to their brave new world and that is exactly what they intend to do, as a leaked management memo recently showed.

United we stand...

You can close your eyes, cross your fingers or put your head in the sand – but none of this will



'Why don't we just get him on the 96% rule?'

go away and it *will* affect every single grade. It's showdown time. More than ever, we need to stick together and fight against this company plan. Unless you are happy to work in an unsafe environment with harsher working conditions, a muzzled union, and no job security whilst watching your colleagues being picked off by management, you need to vote 'YES' for strike action.

Vote 'YES' to stop the jobs cull;

Vote 'YES' for a safe workplace;
Vote 'YES' to defend our agreements;
Vote 'YES' for the reinstatement of all members unfairly dismissed;
And vote 'YES' to fight for your terms and conditions.

Fight for your future

This is a fight for the future of the Underground and we can't afford to lose it. Without us, there is no Underground; we need to remind our overpaid bosses of that fact. But words are cheap – only solid strike action will demonstrate our will to scupper their plans and deliver a future worth having. So let's get ready to rock...

Suspended for getting a coffee!

Six night cleaners at Ealing Common depot have been suspended for 'vandalising' a coffee machine. The machine will not dispense drinks if the slop bucket inside is full. As the cleaners' employer does not provide night staff with a key to open the machine and empty the bucket, staff are forced to shake the machine to drain the bucket a little when they want a drink. *This is the kind of employer we'll all be working for unless we wake up and smell the coffee.*

TETRA – can it damage your health?

You should all have received a questionnaire concerning the health effects of the TETRA radio system now in use on the Underground. It is short and will take only a few minutes to complete. If you have not already done so, please complete the questionnaire and return it in the freepost envelope provided, *even if you have not suffered any of the ailments mentioned in the questionnaire*. It is vital that the survey be as statistically valid as possible and, for that, it requires as many people as possible to take part. The closing date has now been extended to 27th May.

What's wrong with TETRA?

That's what the survey is trying to find out. There is a large body of anecdotal evidence that TETRA can adversely affect the health of users (such as the emergency services and ourselves) and of people who live in the shadow of a TETRA mast. The Police Federation has reported that many of its members have suffered from nausea, headaches, stomach pains, irregular heartbeats (atrial fibrillation) and even epilepsy since TETRA replaced the old radio system for police communications.

Concerns for Underground staff

Health and Safety reps on LUL have also become aware of health problems amongst staff which could be related to TETRA. When these concerns were put to management, reps at Arnos Grove depot were told that the cluster of drivers with atrial fibrillation at the depot (there are 6 sufferers – way above the national average) was merely an 'anomaly', and that, as the problem did not exist elsewhere on the combine, they did not intend to investigate further.

Safety reps at Seven Sisters depot asked management to reveal how many drivers there suffered from atrial fibrillation and were told 'none'. This turned out to be a lie – there are in fact two, and the company was aware of this. Management also refused a union request to make the issue a standing item on the Tier 1 agenda. What have they got to hide? And how many other workers across the combine are suffering in silence?

These failures by management to acknowledge a genuine safety concern mean that the issue has now been escalated to Tier 2 of the safety machinery.

Find out more about TETRA

If you want to find out more about Terrestrial Trunk Radio and about how it might cause health problems, the following website will provide some excellent information:

www.tetrawatch.net

Mayday in pictures



LT Regional Council banner



Members of our branch put on a strong show



Veteran campaigner, Tony Benn, speaks at Trafalgar Square



Branch activist and Stations Level 2 rep, John Kelly (left), receives his 10-year badge from RMT President, Alex Gordon

Derailed – but why?

An engineer's train was derailed at Earl's Court on 12th May, causing a major shutdown on the Piccadilly line. An immediate investigation was carried out by LUL managers and the site of the incident was also visited by the RAIB and our own safety reps. The problem is that no-one can explain how the train came to leave the rails. The train's data logger showed that the train was

not speeding, and the word from management is that they are '95% sure' that nothing had fallen off the train. They also rule out a broken rail, although questions remain about the definition of a broken rail.

So how was the train derailed? The suggestion from those on site was that it was a case of 'gauge-spread'. But then how did that happen? And why have services been resumed before the Formal Investigation (FIR)

has been carried out? This is the latest incident to call into question the quality of the p-way and follows a recent spate of broken rails, temporary speed restrictions and emergency repairs on the line. Can we trust management to put our safety first? Our safety reps have told LUL that they want to be involved in the FIR. In the meantime, drivers are advised to be vigilant when out on the road. There are a lot of unanswered questions out there.

Depots admit faulty PA units

Depot managers on the Piccadilly line have admitted to our safety reps something that we all knew already - that the PA systems on the 73 stock do not all work. Depot staff are now checking the PA systems on all trains with a view to upgrading them.

False accusations

In recent months, drivers have been receiving letters from management accusing them of having failed to make PAs on their trains. Quite often, the accusation is false and what has happened is that the PA was made but was not heard by passengers due to a faulty PA system. If you are accused of not having made a PA, you should write a memo to a DMT (with a copy to your rep), giving details of the train in question and asking for a check of the train's PA system.

Beware the new NHS database

By now everyone should have received a letter and explanatory booklet from the NHS concerning their new database. The idea is that everyone should have a Summary Care Record on a central computer which allows NHS clinicians to access your medical records with greater ease than at present. It sounds good in theory. However, there is clearly a danger that, in the future, LUOH doctors may also be able to access your file and use it against you. **You do not have to be on the database.** However, to opt out, you need to contact your GP for an opt-out form. You can find out more about the new database (and download an opt-out form, if you wish) from:

WWW.NHSCARERECORDS.NHS.UK

Next Branch Meetings

Twelve Pins Public House (near Finsbury Park Stn)

June 3rd, 10th and 17th

Starting at 1600hrs