



HOW OUR BOSSES LIVE

JOB CUTS FOR US – JACKPOT PAY AWARDS FOR THEM

We've all heard the heart-wrenching tales about how hard-up the country is (especially since all those bankers and speculators ran off with our money) and of how difficult it is for London Underground to cope on their shoestring budget. We all have to 'tighten our belts' because we're all 'in the same boat', bosses and workers alike. Or are we? While we were forced to accept a pay rise of 0.5% above inflation, LUL bosses (our shipmates, remember) were tightening their belts with rather less enthusiasm, as the following figures from the company accounts show.

The number earning £60,000 to £69,999 has tripled to 931.

Those earning £70,000 to £79,999 has more than doubled to 440.

222 people are now earning between £80,000 and £89,000 compared to 106 last year.

Those earning between £90,000 and £99,999 has also more than doubled to 136 people.

75 people earn between £100,000 and £109,999 and 40 people between £110,000 and £119,999, again both of these figures have nearly doubled.

25 lucky managers get between £120,000 and £129,999 and 24 more get between £130,000 and £139,999, again significant increases from last year.

The greed and avarice continue with 12 people "earning" between £200,000 and £300,000.

Two people are earning over £400,000 and one is on over £570,000.

Under exceptional items IN expenditure is the £104,750,000. *Yes, over one hundred and four million written off after the disastrous privatisation of Metronet failed and was brought back in-house.* Add to this the release from the finance creditor of one thousand seven hundred and five million and a goodwill write off of £97.6 million and you reach the almost unbelievable total of *one thousand five hundred and three million pounds* squandered.

To help pay for this maladministration and greed, LUL want to get rid of 800 jobs. *The RMT will give you the opportunity to oppose this by voting YES in our upcoming ballot and taking part in our staff our stations campaign.*

Euro demo against Rail Privatisation – a personal report

I arrived at St Pancras at 07:00 and was lucky to bump into one of the organisers, who took me to the meeting area. I knew that most of the members of the Finsbury Park Branch wouldn't be able to make it, but still, I was scanning the growing crowd to spot anyone I knew....no luck though. I was starting to feel like a spare part. Everyone else was with at least one other person and most were in groups. Then, the organiser I met earlier came over. She noticed I was on my own and introduced me to a lovely group of people from South West Trains, and they made me feel very welcome.

Finally, we arrived in Lille.....and didn't the locals know it! With around 200 RMT members coming out of Lille Eurostar station all blowing horns and whistles! A handful of members from TSSA were there, but no sign of ASLEF. We joined our French brothers and sisters who were already positioned right opposite the

there too, but she was too shy to speak, although, I know she would have been given rapturous support if she did.

I must mention the guy who was introducing all the speakers, he was brilliant! I was most impressed with him translating French into English and English into French....and probably other languages too. I happened to say to one of the guys I was with...'that man's doing such a great job, he's fantastic!' He agreed, then went on to tell me he was the new RMT president, Alex Gordon!



Rail workers from across Europe make their point outside the European Railway Agency in Lille

When Bob Crow arrived, he gave a pre-demo speech and thanked everyone for turning up. Then, much to everyone's delight, we were entertained by the Alabama3 - apparently, they were on their way home from a club; how fortunate for us! By now, the place was buzzing. At last, it was time to board. Unfortunately, I was in a different car to the people from South West Trains. My seat was with three other people; the two guys knew each other, but the woman happened to be sitting on her own. As it turned out, they were all lovely...they made my day. We ended up spending the rest of the day together.

European Railway Agency on the Boulevard de Leeds. The barbecue was cooking, the music was playing and the bar was open. It reminded me of the picket line during the Victoria line strikes....only much, much bigger!

The speeches kicked off with Bob Crow, rallying our brothers and sisters in unity with his usual style, and ended with a rousing speech (in French) from one of the SUD Rail workers that, up until then, had been on strike for 6 days! In between those speakers, we heard from comrades from other parts of Europe including Spain, Italy, Portugal and Germany. A woman from Budapest was

At one o'clock, the SUD Rail worker who had spoken earlier, handed in a letter to the European Railway Agency. This was done to a fanfare of horns and whistles, which then turned into chanting – 'the workers....united....will never be defeated!'. That was the finale of the protest.

A couple of us swapped hi-vi jackets and enamel badges with two of our French sisters....reminiscent of the swapping of shirts at the end of a football match! After that, most of us went off to explore Lille for a few hours. Our group went for a wander and ended up in a little cafe/bar to partake of some liquid refreshment....very civilised. Funnily enough, several other people with orange hi-vi jackets ended up there too! Then, all too soon, we had to leave. What a fantastic day! *Au revoir, Lille.*

Volcanic Ash – the fallout for staff

LUL tells staff to give up annual leave or lose pay

London Underground has issued advice that staff unable to attend work due to being stranded by the grounding of flights will either have to use their annual leave entitlement or take special leave unpaid. In other words, staff will lose pay or annual leave due to a natural phenomenon entirely beyond their control. In these exceptional circumstances any reasonable employer would give special paid leave upon receipt of documents proving that they were indeed stranded.

Clearly, LUL is not a reasonable employer, as it beggars belief that the company could stoop so low as to penalise its own staff for something over which they are helpless. RMT Regional Organiser, Steve Hedley, has written to the company asking it to reconsider its position and give special leave with pay to all affected employees. The matter will also be raised at the next Company Council meeting. *In the meantime, if you have been affected by the grounding of the airlines and told by the company to lose annual leave or pay, contact your local rep immediately.*

RMT defends agreements at Arnos Grove depot

Recent attempts by management to unilaterally rip up local agreements at Arnos Grove depot have been met with a solid response by local RMT reps. Reps had been informed by management that two local agreements were to be terminated on April 1st this year.

Remote Booking On and Off Payments

The first concerns the long-running remote booking on and off payments of 15 minutes' pay given to drivers whose duties book on or off at Oakwood. This payment was agreed 10 years ago when it was accepted by everyone that Oakwood station did not have the facilities expected of a fully functioning trainstaff depot. It was to remain until such time as the facilities were brought up to scratch and could only be ended by agreement. Following local RMT pressure and a petition signed by many at the depot, management backed down and agreed to retain the payments pending a review of Oakwood's facilities involving local reps.

Pool Operators' Rest Day Roster

The second agreement threatened by management was the pool operators' rest day roster. This was a considerable achievement by the local reps, as such a roster does not exist elsewhere on the combine. It allowed pool operators to know what their rest days would be in advance, in the same way as for rostered operators. Local reps stood up to management's threat to abolish the roster; it will now remain in place while management negotiate with the union as they should have done in the first place.

Branch to March on May Day – Long Service Members Honoured

The Branch will once again be marching on 1st May from Clerkenwell Green (near Farringdon Station) at noon to Trafalgar Square in recognition of working class struggles throughout the world and a celebration of the trade union movement. Members who have been in the union for 10 years and 25 years have also been invited to receive awards after the march from 1600 onwards at the Theodore Bullfrog Public House, John Adam Street, near Charing X. **ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME TO CELEBRATE THIS ACHIEVEMENT. A COMPLIMENTARY BUFFET AND LIMITED DRINKS WILL BE AVAILABLE**

ASLEF CLAIM CREDIT FOR SUNNY WEATHER!

The pay rise for the second year of our current 2-year deal is in and, based on the 3.7% inflation figure of February this year, has given us an increase of 4.2%. This is fortunate for us; when the deal was made last year, no-one knew what the inflation figure for February 2010 was going to be, and certainly not ASLEF's leaders. However, true to form, ASLEF is now trying to take credit for this stroke of good fortune by telling anyone who will listen that it was all down to their negotiators – their policy of talks, talks and more talks was what got the deal. No doubt the current improvement in the weather is also down to ASLEF's expertise which seems to know no bounds!

All Mouth and Trousers

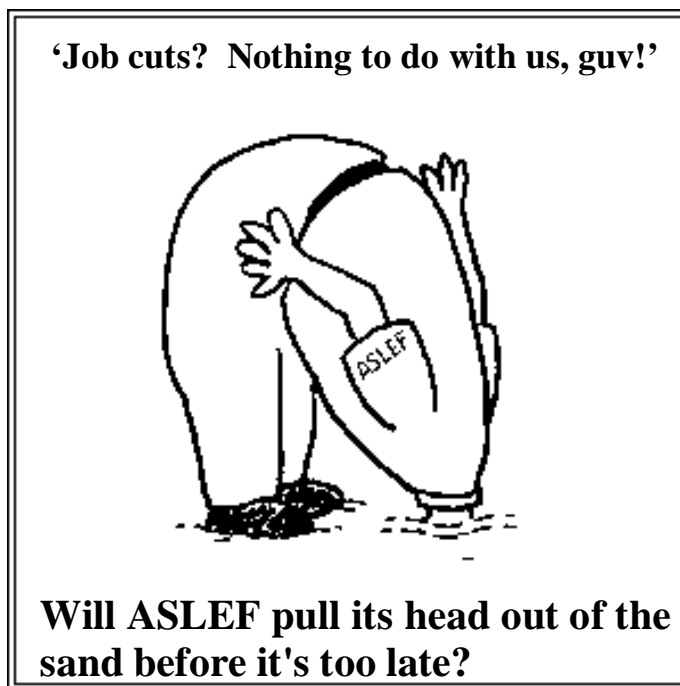
The sad reality is that ASLEF contributed precisely nothing to this pay award. Their clairvoyant negotiators spent a whole year talking the talk while our union made it clear that we were also prepared to walk the walk. In the end, ASLEF's refusal to join with us in a united fight for a decent pay and conditions award undermined and ultimately scuppered our hopes of achieving one. The company will no doubt be very grateful to ASLEF's leaders for throwing away an opportunity to gain a decent deal for the members who pay their wages. What ASLEF's members think about it is another matter.

What about the Jobs Massacre?

Most people who work on the job realise that the company is moving towards understaffed or understaffed stations and that this threatens the safety, not only of the remaining stations staff, but also of anyone who visits a station – *and this includes train drivers who stop at stations upwards of a hundred times a day!*

So, perhaps the “train drivers’ union” has something to say about the company's latest plan to axe 800 operational jobs? Er, no. Perhaps the volcanic ash from Iceland has descended upon their head office in Hampstead and clouded their vision? More likely it's their judgement that has been clouded by their hatred of the RMT and anyone not belonging to their grade. But this head-in-the-sand attitude does nothing for ‘their grade’ and, in fact, would put train drivers in a position of greater danger on a daily basis, should LUL's plans be allowed to go ahead.

What puzzles us at Monthly News is the continued loyalty of drivers - who are asked to pay £10 a month more than their RMT counterparts - to an organisation which so consistently sells them short. All sensible drivers will now be considering the alternative to an organisation which takes a lot of money from its members only to spend it on hot air. The RMT is the only union on the job which will fight for the pay, conditions, health and safety - *and for the jobs* - of ALL members.



WHERE IS OUR PAY RISE?

Not content with threatening 800 staff with unemployment, LU have decided to reduce the value of this year's pay rise by paying it late. In the past, we have received our pay rise some time around Christmas; but this was due to protracted negotiations. This year finds us in the second year of a 2-year deal which has already been agreed and so there can be no excuse whatsoever for the company failing to honour

the rise on the due date - April 1st. Perhaps our well-heeled bosses were so busy looking for new ways to cut costs that they forgot that it was time for our annual pay award. The latest advice we have is that the rise will be included in May's pay packet. *It could be the last rise some of our members ever receive if the company is allowed to implement its plan to slash 800 jobs.*

NEW SAFETY THREAT TO PLATFORMS

LUL wants to downgrade a large number of platforms across the combine from category 'A' to cat 'B'. At present, a cat 'B' platform is defined as one in which a driver is able to see the whole of the PTI from the normal driving position in the event that the platform mirror or monitors are defective. If this is not possible under normal circumstances, then the platform is classed as cat 'A' which means that the driver cannot leave the platform without assistance from station staff. All platforms which are on the opposite side to the driving position are cat 'A'.

The company has released plans to change the definitions of the categories: if a driver can see the whole of the PTI *from any part of the cab*, then the platform will be classified as a cat 'B'. This means that many platforms on the opposite side of the driving position will now be reclassified from 'A' to 'B' meaning that drivers will be able to self-despatch from those stations if the mirrors or monitors are defective.

The company has also stated that in-cab CCTV will be fitted to all new rolling stock. At present, lines which use in-cab CCTV, such as the Northern, have no cat 'B' platforms at all – if their CCTV fails, then assisted despatch is always required. However, the company plans to reclassify a large number of platforms on these lines into cat 'B'.

This relaxation of safety standards means one less safety critical function for many station staff and is another small step towards staff-free stations.

LUL WANTS DRIVERS TO DETRAIN - ALONE!

Read this and weep! The brains trust which runs LUL have now put forward an addition to the rule book requiring drivers to detrain after 30 minutes with no communications. In the event that we lose all comms, after 30 minutes they want the driver to detrain with no assistance from station staff. Monthly News will not insult our driver readers by listing the many potential pitfalls of this lunatic idea; just try and picture the scenario of walking up to 1000 people through a tunnel with no help and no idea what's going on. Needless to say, our union will not be agreeing to this.

Now here's a question for you. Why do you think LUL are so keen to bring in a rule which would force drivers to detrain single handed? *Er...staff-free stations, anyone?*



"...and the Dumb Idea of the Year Award goes to London Underground for their plan to make Train Operators detrain on their own in a tunnel with no communications!"

Defend the safety of the travelling public

No unsafe cuts in frontline multifunctional station staff.

Join the campaign on www.rmt.londoncalling.org.uk

Don't let this man break his promise to keep all ticket offices open.




Boris Johnson signs the petition against the ticket office closures outside North Harrow station, witnessed by Harrow councillor, Anjana Patel and Brent councillor, Bob Blackman. Below is the page from the petition containing Mr Johnson's signature.

Passengers united against ticket office closures

3449sayno.com

We the undersigned reaffirm our opposition to London Underground's intention to shut 40 ticket offices across the Tube network and drastically reduce the opening hours of hundreds more. We say this is NOT in our best interests as passengers and therefore petition London Underground and the Mayor of London to stop the closure of station ticket offices and to re-open those which have already been closed.

| Name | Address |
|---|---------------------------|
|  | House of Commons SW1A 0AA |

Next Branch Meetings

Twelve Pins Public House (near Finsbury Park Stn)

May 6th and 13th

Starting at 1600hrs