

RMT up front



The newsletter for London Underground drivers

Issue 3, March 2010

LU's attack on station staffing levels is an attack on all grades

London Underground has just announced their intention of slashing hundreds of station staff jobs. LU is looking to cut station numbers to the bare minimum at many locations.

How does this affect me as a driver I hear you ask? Well these job cuts and the associated Operational Effectiveness Programme (OEP) represent the biggest changes to the role of driver since the introduction of OPO. When, incidentally, we were promised that there would always be station staff on site to assist should they be required.

It is no coincidence that LU also want to roll out the Operational Effectiveness Programme (OEP) which should be called the Stitch up the Drivers Programme. This set of proposals is a review of many procedures that drivers currently perform, and change them so that the driver can manage on their own without the need for station staff. For example with defective OPO equipment it would appear that LU want the driver to somehow check the platform, get back to the cab, then proceed. It gets worse, for overruns they are suggesting that drivers notch it in reverse back into the platform. There is a distinct lack of station staff in the new proposals.

In other words LUL wants to cut station staff and give the responsibility to drivers and other grades. They are also drawing up plans to reduce driver numbers, even though many depots can't cope properly as it is.

If they cut station staff they will increase burden and responsibly on

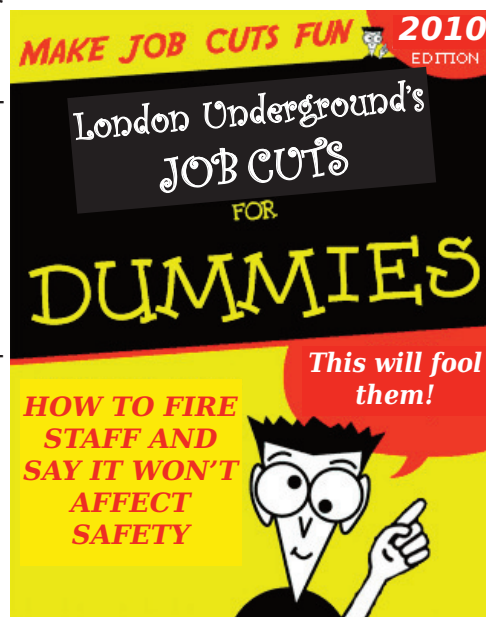
the driver: there will be more work for us to do, more for us to get wrong and more chance of us losing our job. With, for example, one unders, the driver is usually in no fit state to

alism was at an all time up; this year, train mileage is up and SPADs are down; LU have just won Public Transport Operator of the year, for the 3rd year running! How do they reward us? By giving us a pay rise and job security? No. By slashing jobs, increasing our workload and making the Underground less safe for our staff and the travelling public alike.

Many drivers will have seen the Queen on telly last week visiting Aldgate Station. Lizzy was there partly to meet and greet the staff who performed heroics in the aftermath of the 7/7 bombings. It's a good job she went when she did because if she had left it any later there might not be any station staff there to visit!

Drivers should ask themselves how many procedures might I be required to perform, in the normal course of my duty, where the assistance of station staff might be needed. To mention but a few we have: emergency evacuations, passenger collapsed, calls for ambulance, police or fire brigade, one-unders, stalled trains in tunnels, SPADs, defective OPO alarms, defective OPO equipment, detrainments, door defects, defective radio, not to mention bombs on trains, the list goes on and on and on! Make no mistake; drivers need station staff to carry out the safe and professional operation of our railway.

Your union has made it clear we are not willing to see cuts in safety and staff.



think straight, understandably; we reply on station staff to assist us. What if there were no station staff available or you had to wait for them to arrive from a couple of stations down the line? It would be chaos!

If stations are understaffed (and in some cases even unstaffed) there is an increased risk of hooliganism and aggression and nobody to deal with the public.

After the bombings we were the best staff in the world, the eyes and ears of the network; Tim O'Toole then told us we were carrying more passenger than ever and profession-

One union for drivers - All grades united

Why we need station staff...

One unders



I can still recall the event like it happened yesterday.

It's 16.45, I am running a little late but not to worry I have a long weekend coming up and I am going away on a beano with the lads. As I entered the final bend west bound at Holborn dreaming of the first pint, I notice something odd in the 4' a man was kneeling in between the running rails inside the tunnel mouth, I put the train into emergency, blew the whistle and watched while he looks up at me and then laid across the tracks!

When the train finally came to a halt I just sat in the chair wondering if this was all real, had it actually happened, there was a knock on my cab window, I opened the door and there stood a man who obviously couldn't speak due to the sign language with his hands and grunts from his mouth, he finished up pointing under the train and pointing to himself which I took to mean there is a man under the train I also took it that he was actually taking the P*ss and went for him, just at that point the cavalry arrived in the shape of station staff. They ushered the man away and brought me around to what I should be

doing, made me contact the line controller, get traction current off, assisted me to de-train and helped with those passengers who think you have done this on purpose (that is absolutely true), dealt with the emergency services, laid the SCD's and did their very best to get me away from the scene, they even helped when the police arrived and interviewed me while the body was being taken out from under the train by moving me and the police to the middle of the train so nothing could be seen. I don't suppose this is any different to any other one under except this was mine, it was personal and all very real, but most of all its now firmly in the past, which looking back now is all down to those station people who not only sorted out a painful incident by dealing with it in their usual professional manner, by doing what they did I actually think they saved my sanity, I dread to think what it would have been like if there were "NO" station staff, I truly believe I would still be there now wondering if it was all real. My worries now are about the reduction in station staff and who will save the next poor unfortunate train operators sanity!

Train Driver, Picadilly Line

Bombings



I was down in the tunnel at Edgware Road after the bomb on 7/7. Without our stations

colleagues, we wouldn't have been half as effective. Drivers and station staff worked together to get people off the trains, but more importantly to help them once they were back on the platform. The station staff at Edgware Road were real heroes, doing whatever it took to help people and

look after them – and they were back the next day helping people at neighbouring stations when we had no train service. We all think our jobs are important, but there's nothing more important than us working together, united. There was no difference in our grades on 7/7 – all that mattered was the uniform. We need to keep that spirit going in 2010.

Train Driver, Edgware Road

Assaults



When I was assaulted a few years ago, I could've been left completely alone. But a CSA

came to help me deal with the assaulter and stayed with me until help arrived. Because we sit in a cab away from the public, we often feel safer. But the truth is, we can be just as alone. If I had been on my own, sat down at an unstaffed station, I know things would've been a lot worse. As it

was, I had a colleague who instinctively came to help because he saw one of his fellow tube workers was in trouble. That matters – we should forget about the divide between stations and trains. What they're doing to stations staff right now is only the beginning. We need to stick together because if we don't, we'll be next.

Train Driver, Hammersmith

RMT AGREES RESOLUTION ON JOB CUTS

Immediately after London Underground's official announcement of the worst kept secret in years, the RMT called an emergency meeting of its General Grades Committee on March 11, 2010.

The following resolution was agreed:

"That RMT will not accept the disastrous plan by LUL Management and the Mayor of London to cut 700 – 800 jobs. The Mayor was elected on a promise to keep ticket offices open and is showing his contempt for electors, staff and passengers by cutting jobs. We note that LU are claiming there will be no effect on the service and safety, yet they are in the process of undermining long term safety procedures for stations trains and signals in order to run trains without station staff available. RMT will not accept these savage cuts to jobs and safety. The General Secretary is instructed to make this clear to LUL and to seek an urgent meeting. The GS is further instructed to run a high profile campaign involving our Parliamentary Group, a leaflet for the public, a public meeting and press releases. The General Secretary is to prepare a matrix that would enable industrial action, to liaise with other rail unions and to write to all members."

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