

STRIKE UPDATE 7.9.10



Finsbury Park Branch



RMT & TSSA.....1

Management & Scabs.....0

Joint strike shocks company

For the first time in living memory, members of RMT and TSSA stood shoulder to shoulder on picket lines the length and breadth of the combine in the fight to save jobs and defend safety on the tube. Tuesday 7th September will be remembered as a historic day in the story of trade unionism on the Underground, the day when genuine unity amongst all grades became a reality which company managers just could not handle.



Members of RMT and TSSA unite outside Finsbury Park station

Congratulations

We must start by congratulating every member who answered the call to strike. The response amongst our members was superb, with only a tiny handful of members letting us and themselves down by breaking ranks and working. Drivers at Arnos Grove, Seven Sisters and Brixton were solid in their support and station staff successfully closed many

stations with the help of their TSSA colleagues. Of the stations which remained open, many were staffed, or understaffed, by managers and people without the necessary licences and no familiarity with our stations.

Thanks to principled ASLEF members

We would also like to salute our friends and colleagues in ASLEF, a majority of whom respected our picket lines and showed that they, too, understand the importance of this dispute for the future of the Underground. Management's faint hopes of inter-union disharmony vanished into the morning air as members of both unions remembered the unfair sackings, the bullying, the harsh approach to non-attendance, the total disregard for agreements and the lies endured over the past few years. This was the day when management's cavalier and disrespectful attitude towards us all came back to smash them firmly in the face.

Service? What service?

Watching management trying to run some kind of 'service' was interesting for two reasons. First of all, they failed quite miserably to offer anything deserving of the name 'service'. With many stations closed, the few scab-operated trains in operation offered little of use to the travelling public. Having failed to provide the public with anything useful, the company then grossly exaggerated the extent of what was on offer. The purpose of this was, as always, to try and demoralise us; it was an abysmal failure. We have, after all, become accustomed to their lies.

Management's future is bleak...

Secondly, and inadvertently, management demonstrated to everyone the kind of Underground we will have in the future if we allow them to keep wielding the axe. In their desperation to run some kind of 'service', safety standards were lowered or totally ignored, and a number of serious incidents took place. Two passengers let off a train at Bounds Green were stranded in the station for an hour; the station was closed! On the Central line, 150 passengers got off a train at Leytonstone and many of them began scaling walls to escape the station as it, too, was closed. There were also reports of trains running in service through areas where 4, 5 and even 6 consecutive stations were closed. Perhaps we should not be surprised at this. After all, if the scabs driving these trains cared at all about safety, then they would have joined the strike instead of giving comfort to management. Welcome to LUL's brave new world of cut-price transport, with under-resourced stations, poorly trained staff and drivers who are too scared to make the correct safety-critical decisions.

...But ours is worth fighting for

But guess what? We're not having any of this brave new world. We're not going there; we're going back to the picket line and we will keep going back until the company gets our message. **NO JOB CUTS; NO LOWERING OF SAFETY STANDARDS; NO MORE ATTACKS ON OUR TERMS AND CONDITIONS.** This is not about going back to the past. It's about deciding what kind of future we want. In a civilised country claiming to be the fifth richest in the world, is it too much to ask for a secure job with decent pay, proper training, a safe working environment, an adequate pension in

retirement and fair and friendly working conditions? We don't think so. Hopefully, the company will reconsider its position after this week's rock-solid display of strength and determination on the part of our members and colleagues. If not, we must return to our picket lines and remind them again that it is we and not them who make the Underground work.

What's next?

If the company fails to respond to the depth of feeling expressed by the majority of staff on Tuesday, we will give them a reminder of how we feel with another 24-hour strike on **Monday 4th October**. Two more strike dates have also been notified to the company in the event that they fail to get our message: **Tuesday 3rd November and Monday 29th November**. In addition to strike action, the unions have also agreed to an overtime ban which began at midnight on 7th September and continues until the dispute is resolved. **DO NOT DO ANY OVERTIME** until further notice. This tactic should cause many problems for the company with all the vacancies they have deliberately left unfilled. To add to the pressure, you are also asked to avoid any further goodwill. The company shows us no goodwill so we should refuse to give them anything extra.

Can we do more? Let us know

If you have any ideas for actions which could put more pressure on the company to listen to us, please pass them on to your local rep. Better still, why not come to a branch meeting and put forward your ideas? After all, you are the union and your ideas could help us win this dispute and win a better future for all Underground workers.

A message to all scabs

If you worked on Tuesday, why did you do it? Are you unaware of what the issues are? Perhaps you feel you are unable to lose a day's pay? If you are a manager, are you scared that you will face victimisation from colleagues or your boss? If any of these reasons apply, we would like to hear from you. We can answer your questions, allay your fears, and give you support. By working during a strike day, you are helping the company to push through its backward-looking, penny-pinching and frankly unsafe policies upon us all. (And, DMTs and DSMs, don't think that your white shirt gives you protection from the company's attacks on jobs, safety and terms and conditions; you are just as expendable as the rest of us.) By ignoring the democratic decision of your colleagues to strike, you are endangering your own future as well as everyone else's. You must remember that if you are not prepared to join your colleagues in the fight against the company's reactionary plans, the union will not be able to support you when you require representation. You will be alone. ***UNITY IS STRENGTH***

Get involved - Come to Branch

It is your Union you have a say on how we win this dispute and you can help win it. Hear reports on the latest talks with management and what is happening locally.

Next meeting 16th September - 12 Pins Public House near Finsbury Park Station - Meeting starts at 1600