



London Calling

News and views from RMT's London Transport Regional Council

www.rmtlondoncalling.org.uk

February 2009

Decent Pay, Secure Jobs ... and Open the Books!

By Janine Booth, Regional Council Secretary

As the recession bites, we need decent pay and job security more than ever. But London Underground is cutting 1,000 jobs; TfL is to cut thousands more; and our employers are paying themselves shedloads of money but do not want to increase our pay.

Some people tell us that during an economic crisis, we should forego a decent pay rise and be grateful to have a job at all. But that is nonsense. If we go without, it will not help the economy recover. If we let jobs be cut, then unemployment will grow; if we have a tiny pay rise, then we will not be able to spend money which Gordon Brown says is necessary for economic revival.

Most importantly, we did not create this economic crisis, so we should not have to pay for it. Bankers and the capitalist system they serve caused it, and if the government can bail them out then it can fund London's transport too.

If you are in TfL or LUL's non-operational grades, your job is on the line. If your role is not 'mapped' directly into the new structure, you will be expected to compete with your workmates just to stay in work. 'Voluntary severance' will not be an attractive option when unemployment is rising so sharply in London. How long might it take you to find another job?!

Even if you are not one of the up-to-1,000 people who find themselves out of work, the fact that so many posts are to go will leave you with more workload and less support.

This affects LUL operational staff too. Departments having jobs cut include Line Upgrades, Projects and SQE (Safety, Quality and Environment), showing that these job cuts will affect the operation and improvement of London Underground, despite management's claims.

"If LUL's problem is funding then they should seek more money from government rather than put their own employees on the dole. If money can be found to subsidise banks to the tune of billions of pounds, then it can be found to subsidise London's railway infrastructure and services."

Bob Crow
RMT General Secretary

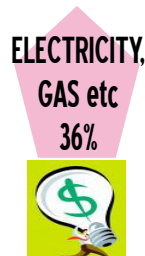
At the same time, London Underground is pressuring ticket office staff to drive customers away from the window in preparation for future job cuts, and few of us can feel secure in our jobs with the company's harsh attendance and discipline crackdown.

TfL/LUL should open their books and allow full scrutiny of their finances by the unions and the public, so that we can challenge their financial justification for these job cuts and pay restraint. We could find alternative savings to job cuts, and could make the case for decent public funding to a public transport service.

Deflation? Not For us!

Headlines tell us that inflation is falling towards

zero, and there may even be price deflation. But behind the official statistics is a reality of rising prices for working people. Luxury goods may be falling in price, but the things we have to buy are still going up sharply. Here are some current annual rates of price rises [Financial Times, 18 February].



Join

- Get an application form from your local RMT rep
- By phone: 0800-376-3706
- Join online:

www.rmt.org.uk/join

RMT Prepares for Strike Ballot as London Underground Plans to Scrap 'Jobs for Life' Deal

By Steve Hedley,
RMT Regional Organiser

London Underground management is not carrying out genuine consultation over the proposed 1,000 job cuts.

This is just the first stage in plans to cut TfL's budget by £2.5bn. TfL inherited a £2bn+ debt from failed privateer Metronet. Instead of getting rid of parasitical private contractors, cutting top managers' inflated salaries and opening the books to public scrutiny, TfL/LUL are trying to cut with thousands of jobs.

If TfL/LUL implement their new budget, wave upon wave of job cuts affecting frontline staff will be made. TfL senior managers are mooting 2,000 job cuts.

Management negotiators were trying to get around the 'Jobs for Life' deal by introducing an organisational change policy which provided for compulsory redundancies. The 'Jobs for Life' deal means that no-one can be made compulsorily redundant. In times of recession and job insecurity, RMT will not allow this valuable agreement to be undermined. London Underground Employee Relations Director Gerry Duffy claims that the 'jobs for life' deal is "not enforceable and does not mean no compulsory redundancies", and that former Metronet staff "are not entitled to jobs for life".

RMT did not dignify this farce by remaining in the meeting. With our fellow union Unite, we refused to collaborate in doing away with our members' jobs. The seriousness with which LUL viewed the consultation

could be seen in the fact that before they had even outlined the plans to the reps, managers were informing staff that they would have to reapply for their own jobs. No safety review was carried out into the implications of the job cuts, which is necessary by law, and LUL even tried to dictate how many people RMT should have at the meeting.

Refusal to Talk about Pay

In a cynical attempt to avoid pay talks and wait for inflation to fall, LUL/Metronet and TfL negotiators have stalled negotiations with the union about pay. No serious union can tolerate this. RMT wrote to your employer in November 2008 outlining our pay claim in full. We met with LUL on December 16th, but management refused to give any meaningful reply to our claim.

**"Management's approach is nothing but blatant cynicism. We are willing to talk, but not to engage in a sham."
Olly New,
RMT Executive**

Gerry Duffy said that he would not discuss pay at the Metronet and LUL Company Councils separately, and proposed instead a hybrid Company Council to sit above the existing ones to talk about pay and the 'machinery of negotiation' (the rules under which unions and employers discuss issues with each other). The proposed body included few RMT reps, leaving us heavily out-numbered by other unions despite having more members than all of them put together. We could not agree to a new body on which we did not have a strong enough voice to represent your concerns.

On 6 February, I and your Executive representative Olly New met Gerry



RMT members protest against the job cuts outside LUL HQ on February 11. Watch out for more protests like this!

Duffy to demand pay talks, but he answered that he will not talk about pay until we set up an interim machinery. RMT reps asked for a Metronet Company Council meeting to talk about pay but were refused. LUL wants to scrap the Metronet Company Council in order to undermine a well-organised group of workers, and is therefore refusing to negotiate pay with them.

We continue to demand pay talks, and on February 27th, LUL's Company Council will finally discuss pay. Check the Regional Council's website for a report: www.rmtlondoncalling.org.uk/pay

Pensions are also under threat. Managers are floating the idea of getting rid of current staff who enjoy a final salary pension scheme and employing new people without these pension rights.

We Have to Fight Back

All this amounts to a massive attack on our jobs, pay, terms and conditions. In an uncertain world, buffeted by the credit crisis, we must stand together to protect our hard-won job security and collective bargaining rights. The RMT will not stand idly by and let our members bear the brunt of the mistakes made by bankers and politicians.

It seems that our managers understand only one language: industrial strength. The union has received ballot requests from our TfL, Metronet and London Underground members. We have listened to what our members want and are prepared to take strike action if necessary.

Reps should distribute 'RMT London Calling', hold workplace meetings and organise for the coming ballot and dispute. We are an industrial union and together we will fight off management's attempt to use the credit crunch as an excuse to put our members on the dole.

TfL Top Bosses Splash The Cash ... On Themselves

These figures - from a recent article in the Evening Standard - point to how TfL/LUL could save money instead of by sacking staff. They also back up RMT's demand that TfL and LUL should 'open the books'.

- 123 TfL managers were paid more than £100,000 each in 2007/8. Only 3 of these posts are among the 1,000 or so jobs to be cut.
- TfL Commissioner Peter Hendy made between £425,000 and £450,000.
- The average pay, benefits and bonuses of TfL's top management last year was £140,000.
- At least three managers were paid £100k+ salaries for running projects that no longer exist.

The 'Jobs for Life' Deal

This agreement was made in 2001 between trade unions RMT and ASLEF, and employers London Underground Ltd, the PPP infracos and their subsidiaries. It followed strike action prompted by the impending imposition of the Public-Private Partnership. The press coined the term 'Jobs for Life deal'.

You and your workmates won this agreement through your determined action. Do not let management tear it up.

The agreement includes these commitments ...

It is the policy of LUL, the Infracos and their subsidiaries to work with the trades unions to avoid compulsory redundancies and provide job security (including one job offer to any member of staff who becomes surplus and is displaced).

This agreement applies to all staff employed by LUL, the Infracos and their subsidiaries. It will pass to new employers as part of any future transfer arrangements of relevant staff.

Within the individual redeployment process, should an immediate alternative job offer not be available, the member of staff will remain employed and be 'used to best advantage', until a suitable alternative job can be offered.

As a result of this agreement no compulsory redundancies will take place, on the basis that everyone concerned abides by this agreement.

Any staffing level changes with safety implications will be dealt with through the Safety Review and Change Control process.

Read the agreement in full here:
www.rmtlondoncalling.org.uk/jobs4life

"TfL/LUL are jumping on the bandwagon of the recession, using it as an excuse to cut jobs. If we let the company get away with cutting admin/non operational grades, it will make everyone's life harder as admin jobs are vital to the safe operating of the railway and the care of employees; and it will make it easier for them to slash operational jobs.

"We are an all-grades union, and this is now being tested by the company. This is our chance to prove to TfL/LUL that we will back our members 100%.

"We totally oppose these job cuts, even if there are no compulsory redundancies, as they will contribute to unemployment, increase workload of those remaining, and damage services."

RMT TfL no.1 branch

STILL NO JUSTICE - Appeal sends Zak Khan to stations

LUL has decided to re-employ Zak Khan as a CSA with a 52-week suspended dismissal hanging over him, and to take away his driver's licence. With the company still 120 drivers over establishment, this is a heavy financial punishment with little chance of him returning as a driver after 52 weeks. And the slightest mistake in the next year could see Zak thrown to the wolves again. 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."



Zak Khan: "gutted"

The outcome of 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.

Nothing less than full reinstatement as a driver (with a caution and action plan) would be fair. When management kept postponing the appeal decision: they were calculating what to do to avert a strike without giving Zak his job back. They figured that giving Zak a CSA job would do it. But we're not falling for it. The strike ballot will go ahead and Piccadilly line drivers should be receiving ballot papers within the next couple of weeks.

If you believe in justice and fair play, vote YES.

Emcor Rail: Success as Workers Fight Back With RMT

By Paul Jackson, Secretary, RMT LU Engineering branch

Staff at Emcor Rail, which helps maintain station infrastructure on behalf of TubeLines, were given notice that the company was laying some of them off and the rest faced massive pay cuts, ending of company sick pay, having to reapply for their own jobs and annual leave cut to the minimum. Bully-boy management were laughing in the face of the workers and rubbing their hands with glee at the thought of forcing the new conditions on their victims.

Unfortunately for Emcor, some staff had decided to join the RMT and it was time for the fight back to begin. RMT Regional Organiser Steve Hedley visited the workers and proceeded to organise them into a unified force able to stand up to management.

These cuts would leave people unable to pay their mortgages so workers had nothing to lose: they had to fight back. They agreed that none of them would reapply for the old jobs and that they would stick together as a collective unit.

Management were left with a stark choice: force through the cuts and they would have *no workforce*. The workers made it plain that they would not budge and had no intention of working under the new imposed conditions. RMT made it clear that it would support any action the workers needed to take. Management blinked first, and agreed a fair selection process for the new jobs, reinstatement of the old annual leave, and agreement to retain their pay.

It is possible to defeat the bosses by standing together. These workers are now all in the RMT and we will be looking to gain recognition there very soon. In times like this, it is *more* important that people join a union that is prepared to fight for them rather than sitting back and allowing the bosses free rein to attack their pay and conditions.

RMT's London Transport Regional Council and Finsbury Park branch invite you to a Reception to meet and support Tamar Katz (pictured), Israeli army refuser.

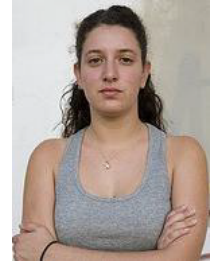
Thursday 5 March, 7-9pm, the Twelve Pins pub, next to Finsbury Park station

Tamar Katz is a 19-year-old woman who has refused to serve in the Israeli army. Israel requires all young men and women to serve in its army, and Tamar has served three prison sentences for her refusal. She explains:

"I oppose the anti-Palestinian policy of attrition and the oppression, not because I prefer the Palestinian society to the Israeli one, but out of an understanding that this policy has led us down a dead-end road politically and to immorality, forced especially on soldiers stationed in the Occupied Territories. I am not willing to become one of those holding the gun pointed indiscriminately at Palestinian civilians, and I do not believe that such actions could bring any change except ever more antagonism and violence in our region."

Please join us to hear more about Tamar's courageous stand, and to show your support to her and other refusers.

More about RMT's policy and campaigning on Israel and the Palestinians: www.rmtlondoncalling.org.uk/israelpalestine



RMT's London Transport Regional Council meets on the last Thursday of every month except June and December, 4.30-6.30pm at Somers Town Community Centre, Ossulston Street, near Euston / St. Pancras stations. All members are welcome to attend.

What's happening in the pay talks? What is the union's viewpoint? What campaigns is the union running?

Fed up with management spin?
Had enough of 'Valuing Time'?
Sick of management's
propaganda in your face
everywhere you turn?

Do you want to know what is
really going on?

When you book on for work the
Duty Manager will have posted
management's latest propaganda on
the noticeboard. But there are two
sides to every story.

That is why RMT's London
Transport Regional Council has
launched RMT London Calling. A
website for RMT members to find
out what is really going on and
comment on the latest issues
affecting you and your workmates.
Find out what is happening in your



Branch, download the latest leaflets,
be the first to know. Don't let
management keep you in the dark.

www.rmtlondoncalling.org.uk

RMT London Calling is a website
for RMT members. Only union
members can access the whole of
the website. Register then log in.
Once our administrators have
checked your membership you can
have full access to the website.

www.rmtlondoncalling.org.uk

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Know Your Rights!

With London Underground management
clamping down on attendance and
cranking up the pressure on sick staff,
make sure that you are armed to
defend yourself!

RMT has produced this Oyster-sized
booklet setting out your rights. So you
can check whether your manager is respecting your
rights rather than dispensing with them.

Get your copy from your local RMT rep, or contact
Regional Organiser Steve Hedley s.hedley@rmt.org.uk
07846-266934,



London Overground staff to ballot over breakdown in industrial relations

Nearly 300 RMT members
working for London Overground
are to be balloted or strike action.
The dispute involves several issues,
including failure to negotiate
seriously on restructuring proposals,
failure to improve facilities and progress
other welfare issues, and failure to confirm verbal
assurances that new trains would be staffed by
guards with full operational safety role and
control of doors.

The ballot, which will open on March 3 and close
on March 17, is being co-ordinated with ballots in
separate disputes in three other train-operating
companies.



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