



# London Calling

News and views from RMT's London Transport Regional Council

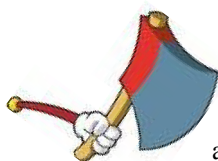
[www.rmtlondoncalling.org.uk](http://www.rmtlondoncalling.org.uk)

May 2009

# Vote Yes for Jobs, Pay and Justice!

## Under the axe:

### YOUR PAY

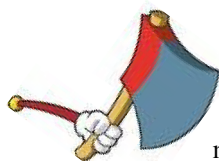


RMT asked for a one-year deal, a substantial pay rise, a minimum of £26k, and improvements to conditions.

LUL has offered a real-terms pay cut of 1% for 2009 and RPI+0.5% for the next four years. LUL is using the recession as a smokescreen to get the Olympics on the cheap. TfL has not even made an offer!

Both employers have refused to even consider our other claims, on issues such as medical redeployment, shorter working hours and family-friendly policies.

### YOUR JOB



London Underground is shedding 1,000 jobs. TfL may cut 3,000 jobs over the next 18 months. Neither will rule out compulsory

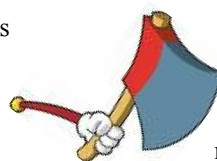
redundancies.

LUL says that these are 'only' admin jobs. But transport needs administrators as well as frontline staff. Some job cuts are in SQE, the department that looks after our safety! Unlike your employer, RMT values all our members' jobs.

LUL/TfL are pushing through an 'Organisational Change Process' which allows for compulsory redundancies, in breach of an agreement it signed with RMT (and ASLEF) in 2001.

If LUL gets away with tearing it up, then no job is safe – including engineering and operational grades.

### YOUR RIGHTS



LUL admits to implementing its attendance and discipline policies 'more rigorously'. For staff, this means: sick pay stopped; pay

docked for emergency domestic leave; endless contact when you are sick; over-the-top disciplinary punishments; warnings given with no discretion; managers spotting fictitious 'patterns' of non-attendance; union representation denied; sickness treated like a crime.

Many actions by managers are aggressive and punitive, and many are outside the company's policies and agreements. Management have created a regime of fear, where people even come to work when they are sick.

We all know a workmate who has suffered under this harsh regime – or perhaps you have suffered yourself. So many staff have complained that managers have denied their rights that these abuses appear co-ordinated.

## HOW TO VOTE

Fill out your ballot paper straight away. Do not ignore it, leave it on the fridge or stick it in your bag and forget about it!

RMT recommends you vote YES to both 'strike action' and 'industrial action short of a strike'. You do not have to choose one or the other: vote YES to both.

Action short of a strike means things like work-to-rule. It means we can vary our tactics to have the best possible impact.

Send your ballot paper back in the freepost envelope to arrive by May 28.

A big Yes vote will put pressure on management and give us a mandate to take action if necessary. Every single vote puts RMT in a stronger position to defend your job, your pay and your rights at work.

1. Are you prepared to take strike action?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
2. Are you prepared to take industrial action short of a strike?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

# Management Say ...

## **A five-year deal gives us security.**

No, it gives us *insecurity*. It ties us to a set formula regardless of what economic changes lie ahead. It is like committing ourselves to wearing bermuda shorts and flipflops regardless of changeable weather and storms on the way.

## **The pay rise should be based on RPI: it always has been in the past.**

Remember LUL's 'Breakout' campaign? It told us not to be afraid to do things differently if it means doing them better. LUL/TfL also tell us that we are in unusual economic times. Because of this situation, RPI is no longer a good guide to real inflation: CPI is better.

## **LUL might be able to cut the jobs without compulsory redundancies.**

'Might'? RMT will not take that risk. LUL does not have enough volunteers for redundancy, despite increasing its pay-off under pressure of RMT's ballot.

None of us should stand by while our workmates face being forced onto the dole at a time of rising unemployment.

Even if jobs are cut without compulsory redundancies, workload will rise for those remaining and the service to front-line staff and passengers will worsen.

## **The 1,000 jobs that are going are all posts duplicated in LUL and Metronet.**

Not true. Most of them are not.

## **The job cuts only affect admin grades; there is no threat to operational jobs.**

Admin jobs today, operational jobs tomorrow. LUL has already cut service control jobs, and is attacking stations and revenue jobs by refusing to fill vacancies and cutting ticket office posts. Drivers are not safe, as LUL looks for new ways of working that will allow it to reduce the number of drivers it employs.

## **RMT has not substantiated claims that managers mistreat staff.**

Yes we have. We have continually provided management with evidence of exactly how managers are mistreating staff. LUL either defends these actions or sweeps them under the carpet.

In 2008, Employment Tribunals found LUL guilty of unfair dismissal, disability discrimination and race discrimination. LUL should re-examine its management regime rather than snub RMT complaints.

## **If managers are breaching procedures, then RMT should raise this through the procedures.**

We can not have faith in procedures when our complaint is that managers are breaching procedures!

## **You should be grateful to have a job at all.**

We work very hard in difficult conditions. We get up at the crack of dawn or work through the night; we struggle to see our families and friends. We continually deliver a better service despite all sorts of obstacles. LUL tells us

that it is grateful for our efforts – it should not then send duty managers round workplaces telling us that we should be grateful to even have a job!

Yes, other industries have shed jobs. But if we refuse to defend ourselves because of a sense of 'gratitude', that will not help workers in those industries one bit.

If your home was robbed, would you refuse to

complain because you felt 'grateful' that it had not been burned down?!

## **RMT's ballot is premature.**

Your pay rise was due on 1 April. Our ballot is not premature: it is overdue!

LUL/TfL think it is OK to drag out pay talks for months beyond the deadline, keeping *your* money in their own coffers. RMT will not tolerate this way of doing things any more. We tried to get your rise agreed in time for its April due date, but management prevented this.

## **ASLEF and TSSA are not balloting.**

RMT tries to work with other unions when we can, and would welcome ASLEF and TSSA joining this dispute at any time. But we will not hold back from sticking up for our own members because smaller unions don't feel ready to do so.

## **LUL/TfL has to save money.**

TfL is planning job cuts as part of a £2.4bn cuts package. LUL inherited a £3bn debt from Metronet. The cost of Metronet's failure should be met by the companies that owned it, not by staff.

TfL/LUL could make some savings by cutting fat-cat salaries and other waste. But as a public service, the government should give it enough funding to do its job - run a decent transport service with well-motivated and decently-paid staff.



**"Sorry, I can't afford to give you a pay rise."**

# RPI? CPI?



The Retail Price Index (RPI) and Consumer Price Index (CPI) are two different measures of the

level of prices, each based on a 'basket' of products.

At present, RPI seriously underestimates real inflation as it affects working people: CPI more accurately reflects real price rises.

RPI is artificially low because of price falls for luxury goods and mortgage interest. But many of us do not benefit from mortgage interest cuts, because we rent or have a fixed-rate mortgage. RPIX, which excludes mortgage interest payments, is the relevant RPI figure for us: it was +2.2% in March.

Pay rises are based on February inflation rates. In February 2009, RPI was 0%, CPI was +3.2%. Prices of essentials such as food and fuel are rising even faster than this. The Office of National Statistics estimates that the effects of the Budget will add another 0.25%.

The government and banks both use CPI, yet LUL insists on using RPI. Why? Simply because it is lower.

RMT explained in detail to LUL why CPI is the better figure. Management did not contest our facts or our arguments at all. They just said that they could not afford to base your pay rise on CPI rather than RPI. (Yet they can afford flashy campaigns and events, fat-cat salaries for senior managers, etc.)

These figures mean that:

- Any pay deal lower than CPI is worse than a pay freeze: it's a pay cut.
- Even a CPI pay rise might not keep your income up with your expenditure.
- Inflation rates are changing rapidly, and their accuracy varies month by month, let alone year by year.

# Why You Have To Vote Again

In April, RMT members returned a massive YES vote for industrial action to oppose LUL's pay cuts, job cuts and mistreatment of staff. Over 83% voted for strikes; 94% for action short of a strike. This result sent a clear message: We will not stand by while you cut staff, attack our living standards and bully us into working when we're sick.

LUL should have heard this message loud and clear and tried to resolve the issues through negotiation. But no! Instead, our employer resorted to legal threats, having found some minor discrepancies in the information your union sent to them. Because of this, we have had to hold the ballot again.

The law requires RMT to send detailed information about its ballot to LUL. Laws such as this are not designed to ensure a fair ballot, but to make it as hard as possible for unions to organise industrial action. They enable an employer to dismiss a huge

majority vote by having its lawyers use trivialities and legal loopholes contained in anti-trade union laws to deny your democratic right to take action.

The company's ruse has cost time and money; but it has also increased staff's anger and merely delayed the inevitable.

RMT General Secretary Bob Crow says: "You returned a magnificent YES vote for action in the first ballot, but LUL turned to their lawyers and used technicalities that would have made no difference to the outcome to stop your union using that mandate for action. The best response to LUL's contemptuous attempt to thwart your democratic will is to return an even bigger majority for action.

"Do not let LUL get away with using legislation in place of negotiation. Please make sure you vote, and vote YES for strike action and action short of a strike."



"You have right on your side, and the support of trade unionists around the UK."  
**Hamish Drummond,**  
Scotland East Branch,  
PCS – civil service union

"I live in London and heck, you'd have my support if strike action were taken despite any disruption it would cause to me on an individual level."

**Owen Holland**

"We offer our full support to RMT members preparing for strike action over jobs, pay and management bullying on London Underground and TfL."

**Members of Croydon NUT – teachers' union**

"Best wishes for a successful outcome in your current struggle. You're fighting for the jobs and conditions of workers everywhere."

**Anne & Martin Brown, Hounslow NUT**

"From myself and many other members from North Wales working on the Irish Sea - keep it strong and good luck. You have my full support!"

**Gwyn Williams, RMT Young Members Committee**

"As a postal worker, I support your efforts to resist management's attacks on your jobs and pay. Action by any workers strengthens and encourages us all."

**Pete Firmin, CWU – communications union**

"I support your struggle. I'm well aware how industrial action is frequently misrepresented in the mainstream media, and encourage anyone to look beyond this to other sources of information."

**Carl Mandy, Sixth form college teacher**

"Wishing you strength. Go for it."

**Vaughan, Finance Sector Union, Australia**

"I feel for your rights and am shocked by the manner in which your strikes attract criticism simply because it is the easiest way out for the media. It is my sincerest hope that your strike achieves its aims."

**Tanmay Shukla**

"It is right that workers who provide a vital public service and whose labour is taken for granted act to safeguard their position."

**Patrick Yarker**

"The way the employers are treating TfL and Tube staff is disgraceful. It's even worse that they dare tell you that you shouldn't fight during a recession. Someone needs to set an example and stand up against the bosses' crisis - you have my support."

**Edward Maltby, Education Not for Sale**

"All the best in the dispute, know that you are even supported by those of us who haven't even got jobs to defend due to the economic situation!"

**Graham Martin**

"I rely on TfL/London Underground workers whenever I use public transport. It is utterly unacceptable that employers should treat staff with such contempt given the key work they do and the current crisis. Solidarity to RMT members."

**Sol Gamsu**

## Now we've got our £500 bonus, maybe a pay rise doesn't matter so much?

The £500 bonus is just for this year – a pay rise is for every year for the rest of your working life. The bonus will not count towards your pension or help you when you apply for a loan.

If the £500 bonus is an excuse for a lower pay rise, then we will simply get the money in one pocket then lose it out of the other.

## Why can't these issues be resolved through talks?

If we could get a good deal just by talking, we would. But management have proved that they listen to action much more than they listen to words.

## Won't the public be hostile to us if we strike?

Look at the messages of support in this newsletter and on our website.

Workers who have defended their jobs and living standards, such as the oil refinery workers, have enjoyed public support.

RMT will try to get our message across to the public. But some newspapers and politicians will always try to turn people against us, because they want workers to be subservient. We can not let them stop us standing up for ourselves.

## Shouldn't RMT be 'reasonable' and not ask too much?

Look at our demands. Which one is unreasonable? Yet management said no to everything we asked. It is not 'reasonable' for a trade union to accept job cuts, pay cuts and management bullying.



Join



- Get a form from your local RMT rep
- Phone 0800-376-3706
- Join online: [www.rmt.org.uk/join](http://www.rmt.org.uk/join)





Victoria line drivers held a solid strike on 21/22 April. Still determined to win driver Carl Campbell's job back, and to improve safety and industrial relations on the line, drivers will strike again on Wednesday 20 May unless London Underground backs down..

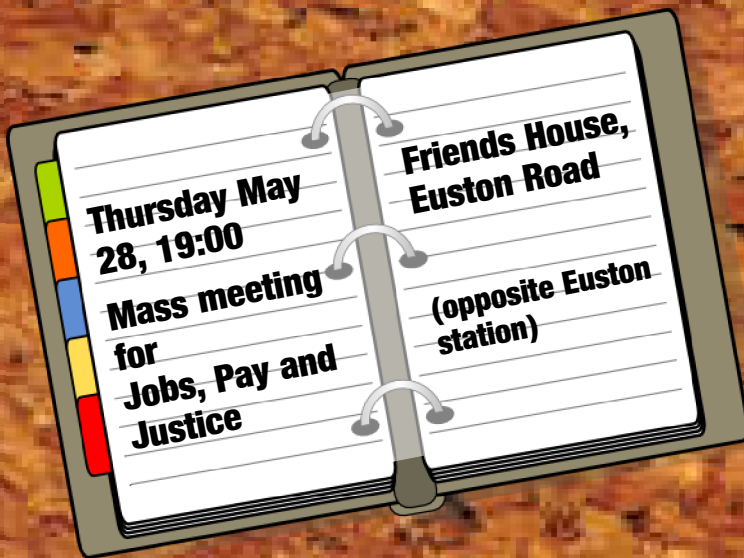


## UPDATE :

Control room staff on Docklands Light Railway are still fighting off management's attempts to impose a new roster that would lead to the loss of 24 rest days each year.

Virtually all DLR staff are RMT members, and a recent strike ballot saw a big Yes vote for action.

DLR management now say they will not impose the roster for at least the next three months.



**Thursday May 28, 19:00**

**Mass meeting for Jobs, Pay and Justice**

**Friends House, Euston Road**

**(opposite Euston station)**

[www.rmtlondoncalling.org.uk](http://www.rmtlondoncalling.org.uk)

Check it out for articles, reports, contacts, advice, information, downloads, events, and the very latest news on all the issues covered in this newsletter and more.

# WANTED

**Young members to get active in RMT.**

Contact your regional Young Members' Officer, Becky Crocker:

youngmembers@  
rmtlondoncalling.org.uk

07734-364302



May 11: RMT members protested against Israel Railways' plan to sack Arab rail workers for not having a firearms licence.