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Anatomy of massacre

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Stunning victory for Tube workers

★ STAR EXCLUSIVE

LU staff prove action works as bosses cave in on cutbacks

by Paul Haste
Industrial Reporter

LONDON'S Tube workers proved that strikes work yesterday after London Underground bosses caved in and withdrew their threat to make 1,000 redundancies.

The stunning breakthrough in the RMT union's long-running fight to defend jobs and beat back Tube bosses' attacks on workers' conditions was revealed exclusively to the Morning Star last night.

RMT leader Bob Crow said that, following the huge capital-wide strikes in June, "London Underground has now agreed to the union's demand that there be no compulsory redundancies."

"As a result of our members standing firm, management has agreed to abide by the key security of employment clause in our union agreement and this will apply to all LUL operational staff," he emphasised.

London Underground had threatened to tear up a hard-won union agreement that protected jobs from being cut after the Tube lines were privatised and handed over to Metronet and Tubelines.

But, after the privateers ran

up £6 billion in debts proving that they couldn't run the Underground, the government renationalised the franchises.

LUL executives then tried to renege on the union deal to protect jobs and forcibly sack a thousand workers in what the RMT feared was just the beginning of the bosses' demands to make their staff pay for the debts.

But facing down virulent anti-union tirades from London Mayor Boris Johnson and the right-wing press, thousands of Tube workers walked out in a 48-hour strike this summer, in what has now proved to be a successful fightback.

"Thanks to the two days of strike action, we have safeguarded members jobs and forced management to abide by negotiated agreements," Mr Crow stressed.

"To win a commitment of 'no redundancies' from an employer at a time when bosses are threatening redundancies every day is a massive victory and shows what can be done," he declared.

"The stand that RMT members have taken has proved that, by sticking together, the union can protect jobs and conditions."

In a letter to union members,

RMT organiser Steve Hedley added his praise for the stand that Tube workers had taken.

"I want to thank everyone of you who showed steadfast support for your colleagues who were at risk of being made unemployed," he wrote.

"In particular, I would like to thank all the reps and activists and those who manned the picket lines that made our 48-hour dispute a huge success," he added.

Mr Crow said that the fight will now move on to securing a pay deal, highlighting that LUL bosses had already been forced to tear up their offer for a five-year agreement that would have raised wages by barely 0.5 per cent.

"This was unacceptable," he insisted.

"But, as well as securing the agreement on jobs, we have forced LUL management to back down from victimising workers taking sick leave and we will now be meeting with ACAS and the other Tube unions to discuss the outstanding issues around pay," Mr Crow added.

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WORTH IT IN THE END: Commuters walk to work during the strike. Bosses have confirmed that they are withdrawing the threat of 1,000 redundancies hanging over RMT members

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