

RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker

On the front line

Tube staff cope magnificently in the wake of the London bombings

AGM 2005

Full report inside

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...



RMT DEFENDS TUBE FIRE-SAFETY RULES
PAGE 10



CLEANERS GET ORGANISED
PAGE 21



BUSWORKERS STRIKE AT DEVON AND CORNWALL
PAGE 7



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contents

Page 4
BRUSSELS GOES ON OFFENSIVE
AGAINST PUBLIC OWNERSHIP

Page 5
ORGANISING THE SOUTH WEST

Page 6
DEFEND TUBE'S ACTON WORKS

Page 7
BUSWORKERS STRIKE AT FIRST
DEVON AND CORNWALL

Page 8
KEEP SOUTH EASTERN TRAINS
TICKET OFFICES OPEN

Page 9
PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Page 10
LONDON BOMBINGS

Page 12
ON THE FRONT LINE

PAGE 14
CLEAN UP YOUR ACT!

Page 15 - 21
AGM 2005

Pages 22
ORGANISING FOR THE FUTURE

Page 24
SHIPPING

Page 26
LEGAL VICTORIES

Page 28
BILL AND JOE'S
BIG CUBAN ADVENTURE

Page 30
A NIGHT OF SOLIDARITY FOR CUBA

Page 31
INTERNATIONAL FOCUS

Page 32
INTRODUCING THE RMT MEMBERS'
EXCLUSIVE HOLIDAY CLUB

Page 34
ANOTHER WORLD IS NECESSARY

Page 35
MAKING HISTORY AGAINST POVERTY

Page 36
TRADE UNIONISTS FLOCK TO
TOLPUDDLE

Page 37
CLASSIFIED/CROSSWORD

Page 38
HOW TO JOIN THE CREDIT UNION

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EDITORIAL

ON THE FRONT LINE



Following the appalling terrorist attacks on London, it is clear that nothing will be the same again and measures must be put in place to protect staff and passengers.

However, despite recent events, LUL is still planning to reduce station staff numbers, refuses to consider additional staff on stations and trains and continues to reject our requests for additional training, breathing apparatus and other measures.

We are also seeking assurances that no further attempt will be made to scrap or weaken fire-safety regulations brought in after the Kings Cross fire.

These plans to replace safety regulations with risk assessments would seriously downgrade fire safety standards and security on Tube and mainline stations just at the time we need them most.

London Underground once declared that its staff are the "eyes and ears" of the network and "remain the most effective tools in the response to terrorism".

However, management now proposes to slash over 800 jobs through the closure of ticket offices and reducing staff numbers. Similar staff cuts and office closures are also proposed at South Eastern Trains and these also should be abandoned in these uncertain times.

LUL staff on the front line acted selflessly and professionally and they have serious concerns and proposals that deserve serious consideration.

We want to see dedicated gateline staff on all station gatelines, and plans to monitor them remotely dropped.

We want an assurance that there will be fully trained supervisors present at all times when contractors have access to stations, and we want a commitment to direct employment and reducing the number of agency staff.

Your concerns will also have been fuelled by the revelation that an innocent Tube driver found himself with a police gun at his head during the incident in Stockwell station in which a suspect was shot dead.

No apology could ever be enough ever take away the trauma that that driver has suffered and there should be a full inquiry into the handling of the incident.

RMT shares the widespread revulsion and condemnation of these dreadful bombings, which only entrench hatred and misunderstanding and do nothing for the cause of peace.

However, heavy-handed and violent attacks by armed police on staff should not be tolerated as a result of this new dangerous situation we find ourselves in.

It is also unacceptable that Balfour Beatty can plead not guilty when facing charges of corporate manslaughter and negligence over the fatal Hatfield train crash and then change their plea once the judge has told them they won't be found guilty.

This sort of collision will not create the conditions for a safe railway or inspire confidence in the legal system in general.

On a brighter note, congratulations to the two Merseyside revenue protection staff who have been re-engaged following a campaign by the union. The pair, who became known as the 'Champions Cup two' were sacked by Merseyrail for tuning in to the incredible match between Liverpool and AC Milan on a broken TV. The company has now done the right thing and we hope this will lead to better industrial relations between RMT and Merseyrail and the resolution of other issues such as the introduction of the 35-hour week.

Members at Virgin Cross Country and 'One' have successfully concluded deals over the introduction of new technology after tough battles. Members at Devon and Cornwall First and Midland Main Line have also shown great resolve in their struggle for better pay and conditions.

The fight to keep Caledonian MacBrayne ferry services in the public sector has taken an interesting turn. While the Scottish parliament rejected the privatisation of CalMac, Brussels has ordered that the lifeline routes be put out to tender. This once more highlights the undemocratic nature of the EU and puts the onus of the Scottish Executive to fulfil its democratic mandate to defend these services regardless of what faceless unelected eurocrats say.

It has been a harrowing time for many and hopefully some of you can now look forward to a summer holiday rest.

Best wishes

Bob Crow

BRUSSELS ATTACKS PUBLIC SERVICES

The European Commission has proposed that local transport companies that enjoy a monopoly in their home market will be banned from obtaining business elsewhere.

Brussels hopes the plan will put pressure on cities, such as Paris, which have so far refused to privatise public transport systems.

In the French capital, RATP, which runs the Métro and bus services, has successfully bid for contracts in other French cities. The group also has a stake in a company that operates bus services in London.

The proposals are a brainchild of Jacques Barrot, the French EU transport commissioner, former Paris mayor tainted by corruption charges and the main architect of the proposed privatisation of lifeline ferry services in Scotland.

"You cannot have a monopoly at home and at the same time try to sell

your products in other markets," he said.

His proposals state that any public monopoly operator may "not take part in competitive tenders organised outside the territory of the competent authority".

RATP president Anne Marie Idrac warned that moves to end the group's monopoly would undermine the benefits of an integrated public network and pledged that the group would defend the present regime.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said it was further evidence that the creation of a single market within the EU was all about handing public transport networks to private operators at the expense of the travelling public.

"The privateers want to cherry-pick profitable services and abandon the rest, creating the conditions for the transport chaos that currently exists in Britain," he said. ■

Centra busworkers strike after pay talks fail

Around 100 RMT busworkers at Centra buses in south London took strike action for 24 hours last month in a dispute over pay and conditions.

The busworkers have already taken action, although a strike scheduled for May was suspended to allow talks to take place.

Police were out in force to allow strikebreakers to take out buses, and one strikebreaker was allowed to smoke while driving.

"Our claim is for a basic £500 weekly wage, equal contracts with equal pay for all employees, no zero-hours contracts, adequate annual leave, sick-pay from day one of employment and full rostered earnings for victims of assaults at work," RMT regional organiser Bobby Law said.

"Today's action is as solid as the first strike last month and shows how frustrated our members are that the company has failed to negotiate seriously with us.

"If Centra put as much effort into negotiating as they have put into intimidating our members with night-club bouncers and organising a heavy police presence on the picket line, this dispute could be settled easily," Bobby said.

EWS WOLVERHAMPTON GROUNDSTAFF TAKE ACTION

RMT groundstaff at EWS's Wolverhampton Steel Terminal launched six consecutive days of strike action recently against the imposition of rosters and the withdrawal of vacant posts without consultation or agreement.

The company has imposed new rosters that reduce members' hours and earnings and have cut five posts at the

depot without a word of consultation or negotiation.

The five jobs were not included in a list of potential redundancies put forward recently by the company at national level.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow made quite clear that the new rosters were unacceptable, but the company has imposed them anyway.

"It is disgraceful that that the company should see fit to discuss with haulage contractors when our members should take their meal breaks without consulting the people affected.

"EWS have brought this action upon themselves by ignoring their own agreements," Bob said.

If the company wants to settle this dispute it should now

withdraw both the new rosters and the job cuts and talk seriously to their workforce. ■



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ORGANISING THE SOUTH WEST

The union's organising strategy continues to roll out into the regions in the form of 'organising weeks' designed to stimulate regular activity

The most recent campaign was completed in the Wessex and South West region and efforts were concentrated on the Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, Exeter and St. Austell areas.

Regional activists Neil Hooper, Keith Murphy and Mark Hackett helped out on the ground whilst lead recruiter Keith Erskine helped organise and plan the week.

Non-members were encouraged to join the union and existing members appreciated the time taken to talk to them about their issues

and to clarify a few of the additional benefits that comes with RMT membership.

Workers were contacted from an array of different companies including Southern Vectis Bus, Island Line Trains, At Seat Catering, Rail Gourmet, South West Trains cleaners and platform Staff, Whitelink and Network Rail track staff.

Keith Murphy said that the organising weeks were helpful in identifying areas where the union need to organise more effectively.

"As a branch secretary, I am

grateful for the additional resources that are now available, not to mention the help I received from our Organising Unit's Donald Graham," he said.

National Organising Co-ordinator Alan Pottage said that every RMT region held at least one organising week each year and encouraged members interested in helping to build the union to get involved.

"Elected reps should apply for paid leave but resources are also available to help those who cannot get paid release. Our teams are then issued with organiser bags stuffed full of quality materials to give out during our campaigns," he said.

The next organising week shall take place in the South Wales and South West region at the end of July. ■

RMT BALLOT AT WESSEX TRAINS OVER REDUNDANCY

RMT IS balloting members at Wessex Trains for industrial action over the compulsory redundancy of a member of staff.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the dispute was about as straightforward as they get.

"Wessex have an agreement with us that there will be no compulsory redundancies and they have broken it.

"Wessex Trains have driven a coach and horses through their own procedures," he said.

There has been no consultation with the managers' sectional council, the company withdrew its offer of an alternative job after a transfer date was agreed, and another alternative post at the members' own Bristol depot was frozen.

"Wessex are heading for a confrontation despite the fact that there is plenty of work at Bristol which is being covered by overtime," said Bob.

This is a crude attempt to reduce staff numbers before re-franchising, which is due next April, and members have indicated that they are not prepared to see the company tear up agreements.

"RMT has worked hard to avoid a dispute, and will continue to do so. It is a pity that Wessex has not done the same" Bob added.



ORGANISING: Keith Murphy on the organising trail in the South West region



DEFEND TUBE'S ACTON WORKS

Tube privateer Metronet must not be allowed to sell off London Underground's Railway Engineering Works and Traction Maintenance Unit at Acton.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow has written to London Mayor Ken Livingstone and LUL managing director Tim O'Toole urging them to block the sale.

"Metronet's desire to offload the only purpose-built train overhaul and modification unit in the southeast shows once again that the privateers are more interested in making money than in providing a service," Bob Crow said during RMT's annual general meeting in Exeter.

Acton Works has been maintaining Tube trains since the 1930s and remains vital to the efficient and safe running of the network.

It was Acton Works that came to the rescue after the Central Line derailment a couple

of years ago, modifying 3,000 motors to get the service running again, and which worked round the clock to modify brackets on District Line trains that had been causing motor problems.

Metronet claim that falling work streams and the optimistic expectation of the arrival of new rolling stock in 2007 and 2008 justify the sale.

But not only is there is no credible evidence that workloads should be falling, there have been alarming reports that Metronet may be deliberately scaling down repairs on the existing stock to save money in anticipation that the new trains will arrive on time.

The sale would mean even more fragmentation of the Tube's infrastructure and further sub-contracting of essential maintenance and repair work with the cost of yet another privateer's profits being passed

on to taxpayers and commuters who are already paying through the nose.

"Any attempt to make our members pay for this sale with their jobs will be resisted, with industrial action if necessary," Bob Crow said.

The sale of the Acton Works in the run-up to the part-privatisation of the Tube was blocked in the late 1990s after a campaign which included demonstrations outside the office of the deputy prime minister. ■



UNITED: RMT's stall at London's Burgess Park free music festival provoked a lot of interest. The event was initially planned as 'Rise', London's annual anti-racist concert, but organisers changed the theme to 'London United' in remembrance of all of those who died in the terror bomb attacks on July 7.

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PROTECTING AND PROMOTING OUR MEMBERS' INTERESTS.



BUSWORKERS STRIKE AT FIRST DEVON AND CORNWALL

More than 650 RMT busworkers at First Devon and Cornwall took two days of solid strike action in July, in a dispute over pay and conditions, after voting by more than five to one for action.

Delegates at the union's annual general meeting in Exeter also authorised a week-long ban on voluntary overtime.

"Our members have voted by more than five to one for strike action and that reflects their enormous frustration at the company's failure to implement the commitment it made two years ago to eliminate low pay," RMT general secretary Bob Crow said.

In 2003 the company agreed that it would take steps to erode

pay differentials between big-bus drivers and drivers of smaller vehicles, but have failed to table any proposals to deal with the problem.

The busworkers have shown a tremendous loyalty to the travelling public but are no longer prepared to subsidise the company's profits, and the money on the table so far will only compound the problem of low pay.

Many members have to claim tax credits because the pay

levels are so poor, and that means that taxpayers are also being asked to subsidise First Group's enormous profits.

There has been a of public support for the strikers, with local businesses donating gas and food for picket line barbecues.

"We have been very patient and more than willing to take part in talks at conciliation service Acas, but our members are now fed with being strung along.

"The company know they can avoid industrial action by honouring their commitments, sticking to their promises and negotiating seriously," Bob Crow said. ■



TfL staff strike again over breakdown in relations

RMT members at Transport for London took further 24 hour strike action earlier this month in their continuing dispute over the breakdown in industrial relations.

Union members voted by a margin of six to one to strike following failure by the company to resolve a series of disputes affecting members in TfL's call centre and information centres, the London Transport Museum, as well as office staff, revenue control inspectors, bus controllers and staff instructors.

"Despite a meeting with the company, no headway has been made in resolving any of the many problems that exist at TfL

and further strike action is our only option," RMT general secretary Bob Crow said.

"Our members are not prepared to accept the imposition of the TfL code of conduct, the removal, without consultation, of the Travel Information Centre to West Brompton or job cuts at the London Transport Museum, and their anger has been further inflamed by the vindictive victimisation of RMT reps and activists

"Our strike on May 5 was absolutely solid and our members

remain determined to achieve a just settlement to this dispute.

"We have made it clear that we are prepared to negotiate at any time, but it seems that TfL management prefer to keep their heads buried firmly in the sand," Bob said. ■



STAGECOACH "MINTING IT AT THE TAXPAYER'S EXPENSE"

Rail operating group Stagecoach has notched up a 13 per cent increase in group profits thanks largely to an increase of 10.2 per cent in its rail profits to £48.6 million.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said it was no wonder that Stagecoach's profits are soaring as they received three times the subsidy that British Rail got.

"It's like winning the national lottery every day. Like all the privatised rail operators, Stagecoach are minting it at the public's expense," he said.

Stagecoach, which runs South West Trains and Island Line on the Isle of Wight and has a 49 per cent stake in Virgin West Coast and Virgin Cross Country, is among the companies shortlisted to run South Eastern Trains if it is re-privatised.

However, since Connex was sacked from the franchise, SET has been costing the taxpayer £1 million a month less in subsidy.

South West Trains bagged £92 million in public subsidy in 2003-04, and the two Virgin operations, which Stagecoach owns half of, got more than half a billion.

But the privateers still want to increase fares, cut lifeline trains and close the stations they can't squeeze enough out of.

"When it comes to the next pay round our members will no doubt remember that Stagecoach's shareholders are set to receive a 15 per cent dividend rise.

"The private sector has cost our railways more than £6 billion since privatisation – it's time they were brought back into public ownership," Bob Crow said.

SAVE OUR RAILWAYS

KEEP SOUTH EASTERN TRAINS TICKET OFFICES OPEN



RMT has launched a postcard campaign to stop South Eastern Trains slipping through major reductions in ticket office opening times and slashing station staff.

SET is required to consult its passengers over plans to reduce ticket office opening hours so the union distributed thousands of postcards at major stations to allow passengers to write to the Rail Passengers Committee and SET itself to oppose the cuts.

The planned cuts would leave stations severely understaffed or not staffed at all for long periods and would cost 100 jobs at a time of heightened fears of violent attacks.

Some ticket offices would be closed for ever and most would be open less often.

Rail passengers want to see more staff on stations, not fewer, and at a time when passenger numbers are expected to rise by 28 per cent in the next ten years, RMT believes that the proposal is fundamentally wrong.

Since Connex was removed from the

franchise, SET has made good progress in restoring staffing levels that were slashed to the bone, but the latest plan threatens to throw the whole process into reverse.

NO CUTS

It all adds up to a worse service for the travelling public, and the prospect of less security and more vandalism and more assaults on passengers and our members.

The Southern England Rail Passengers' Council and the London Transport Users' Committee have both condemned the planned cuts and closures in the strongest possible terms.

Following RMT pressure, the consultation period was extended and the union is now awaiting the results of the exercise. ■

RMT has lodged a formal complaint with the Information Commissioner over the Strategic Railway Authority's refusal to provide information requested under the Freedom of Information Act over the future of the SET franchise, which is to be renamed the Integrated Kent franchise.

Ask your MP to sign early-day motion, EDM 395, on South Eastern Trains, tabled by Clive Efford MP:

"That this House remains deeply concerned that, despite public subsidy being more than three times the amount received by British Rail, passengers continue to endure far worse punctuality rates than under public ownership; welcomes the improvement in reliability and punctuality of South Eastern Train services

since the decision of the Strategic Rail Authority in November 2003 to return the service to public ownership; notes the report by the Catalyst think-tank that public ownership of the railway would save a minimum of £500 million a year; is further deeply concerned that the Government intends to re-privatise South Eastern Trains;

regrets that South Eastern Trains was not allowed to tender for this franchise, removing any public sector comparator; and therefore calls upon the Government to allow South Eastern Trains to submit a public sector bid to ensure improvement and value for money on the UK's rail network".

Save Northern Rail



Thousands of prepaid postcards are being distributed by the union for rail users and rail workers to send to MPs and the transport secretary to demand that any plans to cut services are scrapped.

The postcard points out that, following the reprivatisation of Northern Rail services last year, plans were drawn up to impose deep cuts in timetables, replace trains with buses and increase fares.

A Strategic Rail Authority review is now taking place and you can ask your MP to sign Early Day Motion 351 which asks for services to be protected and points out that there is no appetite among commuters and rail workers for yet more cuts, 'bustitution' or massive fare increases.

Postcards are available for distribution and campaigning. Don't delay, make a difference and send your postcard to your MP. You can also:

- Find the name of your MP by visiting www.locata.co.uk/commons
- Encourage your family and friends and workmates to send postcards. Extra postcards can be obtained from regional RMT offices and Unity House by contacting info@rmt.org.uk or calling free on 0800 376 3706
- Write a letter to the government, your MP, or the local press ■

'ONE' WORKERS WIN IMPROVED OFFER

Over 270 RMT conductors, ticket examiners and revenue protection inspectors at 'One' railway voted overwhelmingly to accept an improved offer from the company over the introduction of new technology.

Following the suspension of planned strike action, the company agreed that following training in the use of Avantix machines, staff are entitled to receive an increase in commission of 1 per cent for a period of 12 weeks.

Staff who transfer to a paperless accountancy system for ticket issuing, ie machines replacing paper ticket issuing facilities, will be entitled to receive an Accountancy Automation Allowance of £75.

In respect of both conductor grades and former GE and former WA Revenue Protection Inspectors, there was an agreement to commence harmonisation talks for each group and for Stansted Express cabin crew and customer service agents included in the retail harmonisation.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that there was no doubt that the company was taken aback by members' determination to stand up and be counted. ■

NO PPP ON THE TYNE

RMT has insisted that much-needed new investment in the Tyne and Wear Metro must not lead to a "dog's breakfast" of the London Underground privatisation fiasco.

Politicians, trade unions and operator Nexus are all agreed that the 25-year old light rail network is in dire need of investment.

Nexus has put forward a 20-year programme, known as Project Orpheus, which includes plans for a new fleet, signaling, improved station equipment and revamped tracks and stations.

However, Transport Minister Alistair Darling has insisted that funding comes from the private sector, leading to fears that staff and passengers could suffer at the hands of greedy contractors.

RMT regional organiser Stan Herschel, who chairs the network's joint trade union committee, said that he has asked Nexus director Mike Parker for some key assurances.

"We've asked him to pledge that, whichever funding scheme is used, there must be no franchising out of the service and our members must remain directly employed by Nexus," he said. ■

VICTORY AT VIRGIN

Following a ballot result in favour of industrial action short of a strike, Virgin Cross Country agreed to withdraw the current £1,000 threshold on commission payments and to introduce a flat rate of five per cent on all Avantix takings on new chip and pin technology.

The company had tried to impose new chip and pin technology without any financial compensation to those using it despite the obvious improved productivity that would have followed.

"This excellent achievement has come about through both the determination of you and your colleagues to take action and through the skills of our negotiating team, for which all involved should take the union's congratulations," said RMT general secretary Bob Crow.

"Be under no illusions, this is a victory which will serve as a great example to members of your union in other train operating companies," he said. ■

Parliamentary column



A PROGRESSIVE RESPONSE TO TERROR

It is hardly surprising that over two-thirds of British people believe there is a link between the occupation of Iraq and the dreadful events July 7.

A recent report by the establishment thinktank Chatham House also admitted that "there is no doubt that the situation over Iraq has imposed particular difficulties for the UK".

There is a general perception that we are reaping the whirlwind for launching an illegal war and backing the United States' role as a rogue superpower.

However, this is a complex question and we may never fully understand what transformed a young classroom assistant into someone capable of murdering so many innocent people.

Pointing the finger of blame at anyone other than the bombers themselves and their mobilisers is futile. Yet seeking to understand why this tragedy occurred is in no way saying that callous murders were understandable or justified.

After the terrible carnage of 9/11 and the London bombings, a natural reaction is one of shock, then outrage, followed by sadness and a grim solidarity with the victims against the murderers.

This coming together of a grieving nation puts great power and responsibility in the hands of the country's political leadership.

They have the choice over how that power is used to respond to the threat.

US president George W Bush used that power to launch long-planned invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq to consolidate US control in the oil-rich Middle East.

Domestically, he launched an onslaught on civil rights, providing the state arbitrary powers under the Patriot Act, long-dreamt of by his neo-conservative advisers.

However, there is an alternative and it is one we must demand of our government.

Our mission must be to prevent conflict, not provoke it.

For as long as Britain occupies Iraq, the terrorist recruiters will attract more susceptible young recruits to their jihad.

For as long as we fail to speak out

against human rights abuses in Guantanamo Bay and Abu Graib, we stand condemned as hypocrites when we demand adherence to the rule of law.

For as long as we ignore the plight of the Palestinian people, the Middle East will remain the cradle of Muslim anger and the suicide bomber.

We must never again alienate so many people from the democratic process by rejecting the valid concerns of our own citizens in the interests of a foreign power.

The Labour Representation Committee, which RMT is affiliated to, can play an important role in framing a progressive response to this terrorist attack.

We must say to the prime minister and other ministerial commentators; please do not tell us that the war in Iraq played no part in it. These assertions are simply intellectually unsustainable.

It was not just the anti-war movement that warned you that if Britain participated in Bush's illegal invasion of Iraq there would be an upsurge of terrorism. The Butler inquiry revealed that even our own security services warned of such consequences.

Firstly, we must condemn this barbaric attack on London. It was the working class people of London who suffered as it is the working people of Fallujah, Baghdad and the Gaza Strip, who continue to suffer.

Second, we must stand in solidarity against any attacks on the Muslim community in Britain.

Thirdly, we must oppose attempts to use this tragedy to undermine civil liberties here or support any further illegal military aggression abroad.

We must also demonstrate that through democratic political activity that we can address grievances and, yes, change the world.

The LRC offers itself as a vehicle for political engagement to all those who wish to challenge the injustices of our present society.

John MacDonnell MP



RMT DEFENDS TUBE FIRE-SAFETY RULES

Following the appalling attacks on London Underground in July, RMT called for the withdrawal of plans to scrap Tube safety rules and planned station staff job cuts.

RMT has joined Labour MPs to demand the withdrawal of plans to scrap vital safety rules introduced after the 1987 King's Cross fire tragedy. The union has also called on London Underground to drop cost-cutting plans to axe hundreds of station staff jobs.

"The introduction of these cost-cutting measures were unacceptable before July 7 but these terrible events show just how vital safety rules and the presence of trained uniformed staff are," said RMT general secretary Bob Crow.

FIRE-SAFETY RULES

The Fire Precautions (Sub-surface Railway Stations) Regulations 1989, introduced following the Fennell Report into the Kings Cross disaster, are applicable to 115 LU stations and a number of mainline stations.

These regulations set down wide-ranging fire fighting and precaution measures including means of escape, means of firefighting, minimum staffing levels and standards of staff training, plus the means of detecting and warning of fire.

The withdrawal of these tried and tested rules could lead to large reductions in staffing levels and safety measures.

It was only interventions by the Commons select committee on regulatory reform, following heavy lobbying by the RMT parliamentary group, which stopped ministers from carrying out these plans last year.

The government agreed to review the order and "return after consultation about guidance." It now appears that the "consultation" has run its course and new Labour seems anxious to impose its original plan.

However, plans to replace safety regulations with risk

assessments would seriously downgrade fire safety standards and security.

As a result, RMT group chairman John McDonnell MP put down early day motion 549(below) in Parliament stressing that "these minimum standards are even more essential in light of the recent terrorist attacks".

Speaking on behalf of the 25-strong Socialist Campaign Group of Labour MPs, John said that it would be astounding if the government were to press ahead with its new Fire Safety Order.

"The very last thing we should be doing at this point in time is considering any reduction in fire safety staff in Tube or rail stations or any diminution of the essential fire protection measures we have in place," John said.

Therefore, John will be joining others to urge Downing Street to think again and commit itself to fully maintain the safety structure that has served us so well.

NO JOB CUTS

London Underground once declared that its staff are the "eyes and ears" of the network and "remain the most effective

tools in the response to terrorism".

However, prior to the bomb attacks, management made proposals for wholesale closures of ticket offices and staff cuts in order to pay for a 35-hour working week for station staff negotiated by RMT last summer. Such deep job cuts were not envisaged during the negotiations.

PPP

The introduction of PPP on London Underground and the privatisation of Tube maintenance and infrastructure has led to dangerous levels of fragmentation. Agency staff and contractors are being brought onto the Tube network as a result of privatisation, leading to a breakdown in communications.

For instance, contractors were recently given the keys to Cannon Street station to carry out work without any trained LUL staff supervision whatsoever.

Unfortunately, this is not an isolated incident and clearly raises a number of safety issues.

The question has to be asked, how does a growth in the number of unscreened casual contract and agency staff

working on the network assist in creating a secure Tube?

What's more, the private companies that make up the Tubelines and Metronet consortia, which won the lucrative infrastructure Tube contracts, have already been kicked off the mainline railway due to their inability to maintain the track.

PROFESSIONAL

Recently Transport Secretary Alistair Darling commended Tube staff for their courage and professionalism after the bombing outrages.

He should do the decent thing and reconsider the downgrading of safety measures, deep job cuts and the continuation of the PPP contracts.

Any attempts to remove fire safety regulations, causalise labour and implement job cuts would disregard widespread concerns for safety and security on the transport network.

"I am sure that Tube users would agree that we need more uniformed staff on stations, not fewer, and that safety regulations brought in after the Kings Cross fire should remain in place." said Bob Crow. ■

EDM 549 FIRE PRECAUTIONS REGULATIONS

John McDonnell MP

That this House condemns the terrorist attacks on London's public transport network and commends the bravery and professionalism of the emergency services, London Underground, national rail network and London bus service workers who were on hand to provide assistance and support in the immediate aftermath of the attacks; notes that the Government is set to review the Fire Precautions (Sub-surface Railway Stations) Regulations 1989 introduced following the Fennell Report into the 1987 King's Cross Fire disaster; further notes that the Regulations set out minimum standards for fire precautions in sub-surface railway stations including means of escape, means of fighting fire, minimum staffing levels and staff instruction/training; believes that these minimum standards are even more essential in light of the recent terrorist attacks; and calls on the Government to retain in full the 1989 Regulations.

KEY RMT DEMANDS:

- No reductions in station staff
- Keep fire-safety rules brought in after the Kings Cross fire
- A robust and reliable train radio for drivers
- That when any part of the system comes under attack that a controlled uniform network shutdown, known as a Code Amber, is implemented until the immediate danger has passed.
- That engineers look at the viability of strengthening the driver cab bulkhead.
- That the company review training its current suspect package procedure, known as HOT.
- That a second qualified member of staff/guard be on board the train in order to assist in emergencies
- An increase in station staff numbers and that all stations and depots are staffed.

ON THE FRO

Train operators Jeff Porter and Ray Wright and station assistants Helen Long and Olaniyi Falaiyi were just some of the many RMT members and Tube workers that played a key role in saving lives following the terrible bomb attacks on July 7. Here are their stories



Olaniyi Falaiyi

Olaniyi: 'Just doing my job'

Tube worker Olaniyi Falaiyi found a scene of horror after a bomb exploded on an Underground train near Aldgate station.

Olaniyi was at Tower Hill station waiting on the platform to get to work when he heard the blast and raced to the scene just minutes after the device went off and was one of the first on the scene.

"It was just carnage everywhere, blood everywhere. It was horrible," he said.

He joined other workers and emergency staff helping the injured out by walking down the tunnel to where the wrecked train had come to a halt. "When we got to the train we saw bodies on the tracks and a lot of wounded.

"We saw the damaged carriage. There

were still people in the carriage screaming.

"We were able to calm them down," he said.

Workers marshalled passengers down to the end of the train where they could get off.

At that point Olaniyi radioed the station supervisor: "Send the paramedics down here. There are people dying on the train."

He and the other workers sent walking wounded up the tracks to the station in groups of four or five to lean on each other as they made their way out.

Olaniyi spent more than an hour underground helping people out of the carriages, some of whom were lifted away on makeshift stretchers.

"When I first got to the damaged train I think I just lost all feelings. I just went numb. It was hours after that before I started feeling anything."

It was when he went into St Botolph's Church next door, where people were being looked after, when the realisation of what had happened came to him.

"I was really devastated. I shed tears. I was shaking and crying."

Olaniyi went back to work the next day to make sure his colleagues were all right and throw himself back into the job.

Asked if he was a hero, he said: "Not at all. There was no way I would see myself as a hero.

"I have been trained in evacuation by the London Underground. That is just what I do. That is my job," he said. ■

Driver leads over 1,000 passengers to safety

Tube train operator Jeff Porter describes himself as the "luckiest man alive" after leading over 1,000 commuters to safety following the bomb blast at Edgware Road on July 7.

Jeff, a Tube driver of 18 years' experience and a longstanding RMT activist, was driving a Circle Line service running alongside the train carrying the bomb, which killed seven passengers.

As he neared the station, the train carrying the bomb left the station in the opposite direction in the double-width tunnel. The

first carriage had passed by when the device detonated halfway along the second carriage.

As the blast tore along the tunnel and engulfed his cab, the toughened glass windscreen shattered when it was hit by debris. Jeff said everything went quiet until the cries of help began.

"My passengers started banging on the door behind me. I opened it and the carriage was full of smoke and dust.

"I told everyone to stay where they were and nobody moved. They were remarkably

calm," he said.

Jeff then ran up the tunnel towards the station and shouted to uniformed staff for assistance.

"The staff were brilliant. They all came down to help without a second thought.

"I went through the train telling everyone to keep calm, we would get everyone off as soon as possible but there was an emergency," he explained.

Jeff could not get through to the control room on his radio or telephone and when he looked at the bombed carriage there was nothing above the seats.

"So I said to the guys go back and get help. It's bad, there are people dead," he said.

Jeff stayed with his train until everyone was off and emerged after more than an hour and called his wife Christine and their daughter Natasha, who is a District Line driver and had been following events from Barking Station.

Jeff has long been active in the union. He was assistant secretary of Stratford No 1 branch and has been both a rep and a health and safety rep at various times and was Hammersmith and City branch secretary from its inception in 1996 until 2002. He is also a Labour councillor. ■

ONTLINE



Helen Long



Ray Wright



Jeff Porter

Station assistant saves blast victim's life

Station assistant Helen Long helped save the life of a commuter who was badly injured in one of the Tube explosions.

She held the man's hand for almost two hours and chatted with him to keep him awake while paramedics treated his terrible injuries.

The man had part of his left leg amputated after being caught in the blast near King's Cross Underground station.

He was carried from the wreckage of the train by members of LU staff and taken to the ticket area at Russell Square Tube station.

Helen described how the Tube driver had used the man's own belt to stem the loss of blood from his injury which, she said, had saved his life.

Helen was on duty at Leicester Square when the explosions happened and was told to go to Russell Square to help deal with the injured commuters.

She spoke to around 25 people who were lying or sitting down with a variety of injuries, and gave her jacket to one young woman who was shivering.

She then turned her attention to the badly injured man.

"We had a laugh and a joke and he asked me to say the Lord's Prayer at one stage. He had a joke about the 2012 Olympic Games and said he would be the first paraplegic to take part.

"The bottom of his left leg was missing. He explained that his sister was pregnant and was

expecting a baby near Christmas and I told him to do the same exercises that pregnant women do by breathing in small pants.

"Every time he fell off to sleep I kept him awake. I had his hand in my hand and I kept squeezing it.

"He asked me lots of times to promise that he would not die. It was horrific but all the staff were calm and brilliant, even though some were in total shock.

"They helped out even

though they themselves were traumatised," she said.

Helen, who is trained in first aid, said that no amount of training could have prepared staff for what happened. A young girl died at the scene beside her while she was helping the injured man.

Helen said that she was offered some time off but she wanted to get back to work and normality as quickly as possible and reported for duty next morning. ■

Driver carries wounded from wrecked train

RMT train operator Ray Wright was riding in the cab with another driver on the Piccadilly line travelling west out of Kings Cross station when a bomb exploded in one of the carriages behind him.

"It all seemed to all happen at once, the explosion, the lights going out and the smoke filling the cab," he said.

In the pitch darkness Ray heard the screams from hundreds of passengers.

"We had no PA and no radio, we were on our own and knew we were in trouble," he said.

At the time Ray still believed it may have been a mechanical problem, either a power failure or an engine dropping off.

However, when he moved down the carriage he realised it was something more serious.

"We led the walking wounded down

towards Russell Square station and people were collapsing around us," he said.

Ray carried injured passengers to safety and helped carry more than 20 others up 157 steps to the station entrance.

"The station looked like World War Three had broken out and the entrance had been turned into a mobile hospital with the injured being cared for there and others being evacuated. ■

CLEAN UP YOUR ACT!



MEETING: London Underground cleaners meet RMT reps to discuss problems

RMT launches campaign to highlight the plight of London Underground cleaning staff who suffer low pay, receive no pension entitlements, no travel provisions or overtime payments, face intimidation and are generally treated as second class citizens

A meeting convened by RMT's Finsbury Park branch heard some shocking experiences from London Underground cleaning staff, including one member who was ordered not to speak at work.

"Cleaners are an important part of the London Underground workforce and here we are in the 21st century while they are suffering 19th century working conditions," said RMT regional organiser Bobby Law.

"While London mayor Ken Livingstone has talked about a living wage in London of £6.70 per hour, cleaning staff earn just £4.85 per hour and lower.

"On top of that staff often have to provide their own equipment, face intimidation and receive no pension rights," he said.

The union has established negotiation machinery with the employers recently and aims to ensure that every cleaner is represented and reps are put in place in order to deal with these problems.

PRIVATISATION

Current problems stem from the privatisation of London Underground cleaning contracts in the mid 1990s, which are now run by three main cleaning companies ISS, GBM and Blue

Diamond.

Previously, cleaning staff were directly employed, progressing through the industry to become station staff etc, and received full employment and pension rights.

However, privatisation has led to tenders being given to the lowest bidder and a spiral of cuts in wages and conditions in order to increase profits for the cleaning companies.

A multi-tiered workforce has developed with cleaning grades being denied the terms, conditions and benefits which are enjoyed by their colleagues directly employed by London Underground.

This experience is now being repeated in the engineering and maintenance grades with Metronet and Tube Lines following the introduction of PPP and the privatisation of Tube infrastructure.

Privatisation of Tube cleaning services has weakened trade union organisation in this grade. However, the nature of the PPP contracts makes 'ambience' one of the three key benchmarks (the other two are capability and availability) which determine whether monthly payments to the Infracos should go up or down. The inclusion of 'ambience' as a



LONDON CITIZENS: London regional organiser Bobby Law (far right) meets London Citizens volunteers and RMT cleaner co-ordinator Glenroy Watson

key benchmark potentially puts cleaners in a industrially powerful position.

A LIVING WAGE?

Earlier this year, Transport for London, the London Mayor and the London Development Agency published a report: "A Fairer London The Living Wage in London".

This argued that the high cost of housing in London required a higher minimum wage in London than in other parts of the country. The report calculated that for workers to avoid falling back into poverty they need to be paid a living wage of £6.70 per hour.

Fair employment strategies have also been developed by the Greater London Authority to stop poor employment practices encouraged by the private tendering process.

These contracts ensure that staff enjoy the same terms and conditions as if they were directly employed by the GLA.

As well as benefiting the work-force, GLA corporate services director Manny Lewis said that such contracts led to reduced staff turnover, lower sickness levels and increased staff morale, thus improving the

GLA's customer services.

As Transport for London are ultimately responsible for the operation of the London Underground network, the union is arguing that the contracts awarded by the Infracos to the cleaning contractors should have similar commitments written into them.

RMT will be campaigning for the contracts to ensure decent pension provision, annual leave entitlement, parental leave and paid sick pay for all staff.

ORGANISING CLEANERS

The Living Wage Project, run by London Citizens, has joined forces with RMT to recruit Tube cleaners to the union in order to fight for better wages.

The group was involved in a successful two-year campaign to raise the wages and benefits of cleaning staff at the HSBC bank's Canary Wharf tower. Night staff now get £7.10 per hour, day staff will get up to £6.40 per hour, with eight extra paid holidays, 10 days of paid sick leave and a pension.

This package should set the standard and RMT are pleased to have London Citizens on board. ■

AGM 2005

RMT pledges to defend transport industry

- p16* Taking action to defend services
- p16* Defend Northern Rail
- p16* No to 'bustitution'
- p17* End lone working
- p17* Role and responsibility of the guard
- p17* No to 'bustitution'
- p18* Zero tolerance of staff assaults
- p18* Stamp out bullying in the workplace
- p18* Ticket office staff face violence
- p18* Young Members' Award
- p19* Defending pensions
- p19* RMT Parliamentary group success
- p20* No to the EU Constitution
- p20* No more nukes
- p20* Stop the war in Iraq
- p20* No to ID cards
- p21* Venezuelan trade unionist electrifies conference
- p21* Zambian-style solidarity comes to conference

TAKING ACTION TO DEFEND SERVICES

Delegates unanimously backed calls to ballot 18,000 Network Rail members for national industrial action over Network Rail's proposed transfer of Merseyside's infrastructure to Merseytravel - which itself plans to subcontract to the private sector

With the likelihood of a strong Yes vote for action if the "vertical integration" goes ahead, a national NR strike would halt the entire network as thousands of signallers and maintenance workers walked out.

General secretary Bob Crow told the AGM how RMT had sought assurances that the proposals would be dropped and that its workers in the region would remain employees of NR.

"We have not received those assurances," he revealed.

Bob called the plans a retrograde step, after lethal corner-cutting from privateers like Jarvis and Balfour Beatty led to horrific disasters such as the Hatfield crash and forced Railtrack into bankruptcy - itself forcing ministers to create "not-for-profit" NR and take infrastructure back in house.

"Local vertical integration is a nonsense because it means more fragmentation, and it threatens the same spiral of cost-cutting that led to Hatfield and Potters Bar," he said.

"If the government is now seriously converted to the benefits of vertical integration why can't Merseyrail be taken over by NR?"

"We need just one company out there running the railways that knows what is happening across the network and serves the people of Britain."



Greg Tucker



Danny Ferguson



Alexander Holden

Bob rejected NR claims that the plans were a regional one-off, asking delegates: "Once they've done it with Merseyrail, who's next? Scotrail? GNER? Virgin?"

"They all want to run their bit of the infrastructure because they know there is serious money to be made," he said.

He insisted that "we would be failing our members if we left Exeter this week without agreeing that if they try to re-privatise us they will face a national rail strike."

Edinburgh and Portobello delegate Graham Buchanan

agreed and warned delegates that "if we fail to fight back we will be handing this country an unsafe railway."

Stagecoach Devon delegate

Danny Ferguson called on RMT to bolster its industrial muscle with an immediate campaign aimed at informing the public of the dangers inherent in NR's risky scheme.

"Once they realise their railway is unsafe they will be on our side," he predicted.

"Let's not wait - let's act."

Waterloo delegate Greg

Tucker said that his employers coveted local infrastructure operations because they would scoop "super-profits", warning that if this was allowed to happen "the fight for renationalisation would have come to nothing."

Manchester Victoria delegate

Alex Holden rejected NR's claim that "no detailed plans exist" for the transfer, arguing that this response was typical of the company's tactics of "prevarication, delay and distraction."

He urged RMT to stand up for the people of Merseyside, recalling that, when the Rail Against Privatisation marchers came to Liverpool, they received "a clear message from the people that they do not want their services privatised." ■

Labour MP Bob Wareing, a member of the RMT parliamentary group, has tabled Parliamentary Early Day Motion 352 urging the government not to proceed with the transfer. It has so far been signed by 20 other MPs.

DEFEND NORTHERN RAIL

The "madness" of new Labour's planned death by cuts for Northern Rail provoked a unanimous call for industrial action in defence of jobs and services.

Delegates were united in their condemnation of a government-inspired "consultation" ahead of a new Northern Rail franchise - an exercise which plans to recommend sweeping service cuts, massive fare increases and the "bustitution" of routes with cheaper buses.

RMT has been raising awareness of the threat since before the May election, but conference warned yesterday that the campaign needs to be stepped up - underpinned by the threat of strikes.

Alex Holden, who works in the Northern Rail franchise area, noted that rail privatisation was originally justified with claims that it would improve and extend services.

"It has taken ten years, but now it is clear that this promise was a lie," he said.

Alex said that the soaring costs of subsidising the privateers had even alarmed the Blair government.

Its solution, however, was not to renationalise but to look at ways of paring the service to the bone, he said, warning that "the harsh wind of capitalism is blowing through the north."

Carlisle delegate Craig Johnston called the scheme "madness", noting that the government was refusing public ownership while handing over part of the franchise to Dutch state rail.

"So we are state-owned - its just the wrong state," he said.

Liverpool No5 delegate Mick Dooley said: "We need to send a strong message to these people; that any attempt to cut Northern Rail services will be met by industrial action - it's the only language they understand."

RMT assistant general secretary Pat Sikorski agreed that the union must be prepared to fight such an appalling prospect and welcomed the fact that 20 MPs had now signed the RMT Early Day Motion on Northern Rail.

He predicted that "when we take industrial action, and it is not about pay or hours but saving the railways, we will get a groundswell of support from the public."

End lone working

AGM unanimously condemned the increasing practice of lone working by TOCs, warning that it put staff at risk.

South East Essex delegate Derrick Marr said that some people were beginning to think that being threatened or abused was "just part of the job", rather than a practice to be "eradicated from the workplace."

NO TO 'BUSTITUTION'

Delegates condemned the government's plans to scrap rail branch lines and replace them with bus services.

Midlands bus delegate Graham Geliher said that bus workers wanted to show solidarity with threatened rail workers, and pointed out that the government only favoured it because it is easier to subsidise bus services than rail.

"Bustitution doesn't benefit us - we already have to work every other Saturday and Sunday," he said.

"It only benefits the likes of Brian Souter."

Mick Cash agreed that the practice made it easier to close down rail lines, and said that it was the government's "inappropriate" response to the massive costs incurred by privatisation. He called for a properly "balanced" transport policy.



Mick Cash

He warned that some companies now wanted single inspectors to try to fine unruly passengers, although often they were not safe even in threes - three of his local members were still off sick after being attacked.

"Despite this the company is still trying to cut costs through lone working," he said.

North Thames delegate Mary Dwyer said that her company even sacked people if they were attacked more than twice because "it was assumed that they have done something to bring the assault on themselves.

"People are afraid to report assaults now because they may lose their jobs - it has to stop."

South Devon Bus delegate Danny Ferguson said that the biggest priority for union reps was not pay or conditions, but health and safety, "the life and limb of our members".

East Kent delegate Ken Slade warned that catering grades were frequently left alone on trains with cash - resulting in being mugged, threatened and assaulted.

"Nobody on the railways should be working alone," he said.

Mick Cash agreed the employers needed to take the issue seriously and said that RMT was putting pressure on the companies to ensure they honoured their legal responsibility for the safety of their employees. ■

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE GUARD

Delegates warned that the role of guards on trains was being eroded still further, since Rule Book changes were forced through by Railway Safety, with TOC's using various tactics, such as timetable changes and the introduction of new stock, to chip away at the position.

South West Trains delegate Greg Tucker warned that companies want to see guards as merely "flexible ticket collectors" rather than "trained safety operatives" - he said that he was completely opposed to any attempt to pile more duties on train drivers, especially as a driver himself.

Although disputes were ongoing at two companies - most notably Midland Mainline - but Greg said the issue needed to be raised nationally, especially with Railway Safety.

However, he noted that Railway Safety was acting more and more like "a wing of the TOC's than an independent safety body", insisting that only a national strike plan would offer a genuine resolution.

Alex Holden complained that

the industry seemed unable to change the rules to protect guards, who saw the rules amended in 1999, yet country property owners had been able to get the rules concerning the use of train horns "on a whim."

Pat Sikorski backed the calls, saying that RMT was currently building the campaign amongst train guards. He warned that the RSSB was now regarded as "totally under the control of the TOCs", insisting that "we must be prepared to instigate not only legal action but also judicial review." ■



Pat Sikorski



AGM 2005

ZERO TOLERANCE OF STAFF ASSAULTS

Delegates heard that rail and bus workers were continually subjected to verbal and physical attacks, and that the employers were doing little to protect them.

AGM also heard that in some cases, staff were targeted for disciplinary action or even the sack after falling victim to thuggery on the transport network.

It unanimously backed proposals for the RMT to demand a "zero tolerance" policy on staff assaults, with ballots for industrial action if employers fail to back their workforce.

Delegates also called for legislation making assaulting a public-service worker comparable with assaulting a police officer.

Carlisle Northern Rail delegate Craig Johnston warned that "attacks on public service workers are increasing - not only in frequency, but in intensity and ferocity as well".

He blamed society's downgrading of the public sector alongside the dominance of the market, noting that nowadays "the customer is king and we are just serfs".

Alex Holden rejected industry claims that the increase was down to "better reporting", revealing that "virtually a third of all transport workers now expect to be assaulted in some way."

North Thames delegate **Mary Dwyer** condemned an uncaring management, complaining that "they would rather prosecute somebody for having their feet

up on a seat than for assaulting a member of staff."

Alex said that it was a "disgrace" for British Transport Police and the train companies to claim that it is all the fault of staff.

"We must make it clear that we are not prepared to stand by and watch our members get battered," he insisted.

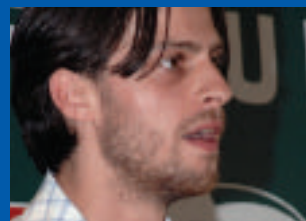
Assistant general secretary Pat Sikorski agreed and said that the executive would be pressing for clear zero tolerance policies.

But he stressed that "you cannot just rely on a piece of paper to defend yourself", pledging that members who were force physically to protect themselves and colleagues would be fully supported - with industrial action if necessary. ■

YOUNG MEMBERS' AWARD

General secretary Bob Crow presented **Leeds City branch member Stephen Finn** with the John Cogger Young members Award, noting that without active young members, "there is no future for the union."

Steve thanked the union as a whole and his branch in particular, adding: "I never thought I would be a trade unionist, but I'm liking it, and liking it a lot."



Stephen Finn

TICKET OFFICE STAFF FACE VIOLENCE

Delegates warned that the increasing prevalence of low-security, "open plan" ticket offices was placing staff at unnecessary risk of robbery and violence.

Derrick Marr said that one worker in Brentwood was reluctant even to press the alarm button when necessary, because she had been told that the subcontracted security firm charged for callouts.

Derrick warned that companies were increasingly expecting staff to cash up large sums at the end of the day alone, placing them at further risk. He demanded better guidelines, more staff and guards "when necessary."

North Thames delegate Mary Dwyer said that even where ticket offices had protective screens, these could often be easily smashed.

Pat promised that the executive would shortly be publishing guidelines on booking office security and also called on employers to undertake proper risk assessments. ■

STAMP OUT BULLYING IN THE WORKPLACE

Delegates demanded action by RMT reps and employers alike to stamp out bullying and harassment in the workplace.

AGM called for such abuses to be tackled through strong union procedures and legal challenges under legislation concerning discrimination and health and safety.

Bristol delegate Robin White said: "It is a fact that every year one in ten workers suffers bullying and harassment - that means 7,000 RMT members. This is unacceptable and we have to do something about it."

Conference stressed that company policies against bullying and harassment needed to be worth the paper they were written on and backed with a clear set of union procedures for reps to

follow in the case of a complaint being made.

"It is crucial that the union takes steps to ensure that when workers have the courage to stand up for themselves the union stands with them," insisted **Southall, Ealing and Slough delegate Kent Knight**.



Robin White

Mary Dwyer agreed that better training for union officials was essential.

"It is not always easy for reps to see the sleight of hand

in management's treatment of employees," she warned.

"Many workers don't report bullying out of fear of what will happen to them in the future."

South West Trains delegate Greg Tucker said that it was often "private company policy" to target union activists and other individuals for harassment - in such circumstances, employing that company's official grievance procedure would be a waste of time.

"We must oppose any attempts to divide and rule," he said.

Senior assistant general secretary Mick Cash backed the resolution, stressing that "it is about providing support for our reps so they can spot harassment - prevention is better than a cure."

Kent Knight

AGM 2005

DEFENDING PENSIONS

AGM called for a strong union campaign to defend company pensions

London Underground delegate **Bill O'Dowd** said that it was "depressing" how often the pensions issue raised its head, with pension rights eroded further each time.

"We don't just have a two-tier pensions system any more, we have a three or four-tier system," he said, pointing out that final-salary schemes were not only closed to new members now, but the state pension system was being eroded alongside company pensions.

Bill also pointed out that on London Underground, workers for the privatised "infracos" were no longer allowed to join the TfL/LUL pension scheme. And workers were not allowed to have their pensionable age start at 18.

"Whether you are male or female, black or white, whoever you are a decent pension is all you really have to look forward to," he said, calling on the government to make up the

shortfall in the LU funds which were caused by management taking "pensions holidays."

Bob Crow said that the difficulties with the LUL scheme were an "anomaly", but pointed out that it was one that managers didn't seem to be afflicted with.

"If its good enough for managers to get a pension from 18 then its good enough for other workers as well," he insisted.

EPS delegate Mick Lynch said that workers' pensions should be reckoned the same way as MPs'. Most workers' final-salary schemes offer 1/60 of wages for each year of service - whereas MP schemes were based on 1/40 of their salary.

Mick called for the scheme to be extended to all public service workers, arguing that "to retire with dignity should be our right. He said: "If it's good enough for MPs it is good enough for our

members."

Retired members secretary Ted Richardson also welcomed the adoption of the Pensioners' Manifesto by the National Pensioners Convention, urging RMT - and all other unions - to adopt it for themselves and to campaign for a decent state pension for all, linked to average earnings.

"Pensions are one of those things that always seem to be coming tomorrow, but for all of us that day finally comes," he said.

Ted also said that there was an urgent need to give women parity within the state pension system, noting that they were originally excluded from the system altogether.

He noted that pensions were originally pegged at 25 old pence - based on the cost of keeping a person in the workhouse for a week.

"To be honest that principle has never been overturned," he said. "It was inadequate to live on then and today's pension is inadequate to live on now."

Ted also called for massive support for the pensioners' lobby of parliament on October 12.

"Pensions need to be supported by everyone," he said.

Piccadilly & District West delegate Ollie New said that the creeping privatisation of pensions system was "one of the worst scandals in Britain" - he argued that "pensioners should be the same for everyone as a right."

Bob Crow rejected government claims that everyone will have to work for longer before retiring, insisting that "if people are living longer than they should have more time to enjoy themselves.

"The government should raise pensions and if that means raising taxes, so be it - you raise taxes, you buy civilisation," he said.

Bob argued that direct action would be necessary - such as mass go-slows on motorways - and warned that "the only action this government understands is direct action." ■

RMT Parliamentary group success

RMt Parliamentary Group chairman **John McDonnell** told the AGM that the time had come "not just to hold back the tide of new Labour but to reverse it."

Introducing the group's report,



John McDonnell

John said that New Labour's arrogance and big business agenda had nearly cost Labour the last election, resulting instead in a greatly reduced majority and the lowest Labour vote "for decades."

He recalled: "People didn't just vote against new Labour, they stayed at home in their hundreds of thousands - and possibly millions."

In contrast to the slim majorities of many MPs, the RMT Group had all been returned with increased support, noted John, due to their championing of "real Labour policies" based on peace and social justice.

He argued that such policies were increasingly popular with the public, and that it was time to bring the labour movement together through a revitalised

TUC and the Labour Representation Committee to formulate and demand "a progressive programme for a real Labour government."

But he warned that the Blairites were still in power, dedicated to a legislative programme enshrining assaults on civil liberties, attacks on refugees, pensioner poverty and ever-increasing privatisation.

Backing the RMT campaign against Network Rail's plans to hand over infrastructure responsibilities to private Merseyrail, the MP won applause when he pledged that if it came to a national strike, the parliamentary group would "be out on the picket lines with you." The Hayes and Harlington MP also thanked RMT members for helping the election campaign in

his own constituency.

"Some of my constituents are still recovering from being canvassed by Bob Crow - but we're offering them counselling," he joked.

John also hailed the union's Rail Against Privatisation march for "injecting some much-needed politics into the otherwise sterile election campaign" and highlighting the official Labour Party policy of rail renationalisation.

Bob Crow thanked the group for their hard work, wryly noting that the group was 40 per cent bigger than when RMT was affiliated to Labour. He said that the team had provided the union with more help and information in the three years of its existence than the previous group had in decades.

NO TO THE EU CONSTITUTION

Delegates warned that the EU constitution was not yet dead, despite the no votes in referendums in France and the Netherlands, and backed the ongoing No campaign against the creation of an undemocratic, militarised superstate in Europe.

RMT is one of the founding members of Trade Unionists Against the EU Constitution, and the AGM said that the union should remain at the forefront of the campaign.

Greg Tucker congratulated the union for producing a pamphlet which clearly set out the contents of the proposed Constitution.

"I was proud that this union forcefully put the progressive case against this privateer's charter," he said.

He warned that, following its overwhelming rejection by the French and

Dutch people, eurofanatics in Brussels were desperately searching for ways to introduce its provisions by the back door.

Stratford No 1 delegate Bill O'Dowd noted that, despite the No votes, measures such as the controversial services directive were being forced through, with the aim of enforcing the privatisation of public services across Europe.

"Trade unionists must realise that this one is not going away and Brussels will ignore democratic decisions, as they have done in the past, and try to impose this discredited document," he said.

Bob Crow pointed out that today the vast majority of trade unions in the UK now opposed the Constitution as they became aware that the proposals constituted the creation of an undemocratic superstate.



He rejected arguments that the creation of a single European state was needed to protect workers' rights, stressing that "what we really need is workers joining together across the world - not just in Europe." ■

STOP THE WAR IN IRAQ

The AGM condemned the ongoing occupation of Iraq and the terrorist attacks against workers, trade unionists and civilians in equal measure. However delegates made clear that the spiralling violence was a direct result of the illegal US-led war.

They called for RMT and Britain's wider labour movement to support for the emergence of independent, democratic unions in Iraq and to call for a genuinely democratic country.

The AGM agreed that such an outcome could not be achieved as long as the occupation continued.

Delegate Robin White said that only recently 50 workers had been killed in one attack in Baghdad.

"We have to look at ways we can build solidarity with Iraqi trade unions, help them get rid of the occupation forces and build a decent, workers-led society," he insisted.

Robin also attacked the "plunder" of Iraq by the US and its companies. He said that "we must support fellow trade unionists in Iraq and support the process for a decent political solution."

Bob Crow said that it was right for RMT to support the wishes of the Iraqi unions and help them to build a democratic society in the way they wanted - not in the image of the occupiers or even British unions.

NO TO ID CARDS

Delegates affirmed the union's fierce opposition to the introduction of compulsory identity cards after the government scraped its ID Cards Bill through the Commons with a mere 31 vote majority.

AGM agreed unanimously that the scheme was "a further serious and sinister erosion of the rights of the citizen" which was unjustifiable, despite government claims that it was 'necessary' to combat terrorism and fraud.

Glasgow shipping delegate Jim McCauley noted that, as a seafarer, he had carried an ID card all his life, but that New Labour's plans were of an entirely different order.

Citizens would have no input as to what information would be retained on the electronic cards, he warned, which could inform the authorities "whether you've ever been in jail or ever been on a picket line".

South Devon Bus delegate Danny Ferguson said that trade unionists should be leading the campaign of opposition to the cards, with civil disobedience if necessary.

"Britain is being turned into a police state and it is a Labour government that is doing it," he warned.

"We need to make it clear to Labour MPs - whose party the unions founded - that these proposals are unacceptable."

NO MORE NUKES

The AGM unanimously backed calls to affiliate with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, with the executive registering its surprise that this was not already the case.

First Great Western delegate Robin White condemned the government's determination to develop a new generation of nuclear weapons to replace the ageing Trident system, pointing out the hypocrisy of such a move, given the government's stance towards Iran's nuclear programme and its position as a signatory of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Robin called on RMT to support the non-violent Block the Builders campaign to prevent the development of new facilities at the atomic weapons factory in Aldermaston.

"We went to Iraq to destroy non-existent weapons of mass destruction yet we continue to build them," he said.

Greg Tucker pointed out that the British government had even threatened to use its nuclear arsenal at the beginning of the Iraq war.

Plymouth delegate John Thompson argued that nuclear weapons were "necessary" because of their "deterrent value."

However Bob Crow insisted that "you cannot have guns and butter - we should spend our resources on construction not destruction."

AGM 2005

VENEZUELAN TRADE UNIONIST ELECTRIFIES CONFERENCE

Venezuelan United Transport Federation vice-president Ruben Dario Linares Silva won a rare standing ovation after telling AGM that there was nothing "inevitable" about the neo-liberal "globalisation" of the world.

Ruben – also an executive member of his country's newly re-founded trade union federation UNT – described how Venezuela has been defying the stranglehold of US companies and its own millionaire elite.

In 1998, and again in 2002, a radical reformist government, based in working communities and among the poor, who make up 80 per cent of the population, was democratically elected under the presidency of Hugo Chavez.

The government's programme of nationalisation, redistribution of the country's oil wealth and for trade with countries other than the big US firms has led to overt and covert attempts to unseat the Chavez government, with tactics

including a failed coup and a phoney "general strike" led by business leaders and the oil elite.

However, those attacks had only led to a new mood of confidence and empowerment amongst Venezuelan workers, who were invested with a new sense of self-reliance and destiny.

Speaking through an interpreter, Ruben told RMT delegates that the Venezuelan revolution was armed, "not with guns but with our constitution, which is a guiding light to winning new benefits and rights."

Ruben brandished the "little blue book" of his country's 1999 constitution, which guaranteed the right to form and join – or not to join – whatever trade unions "they may deem appropriate", the right to voluntary collective bargaining and the right to strike.

"Since the new constitution, not one company has been privatised.



CONSTITUTION: Venezuelan delegate Ruben Linares holds his country's new pro-worker constitution aloft

"We are also moving forward and demanding workers' involvement in managing state companies so they have a say in how the wealth is divided among the people," he said.

Groups of Venezuelan workers were also occupying and re-opening shut down factories and making any state aid to business conditional on workers' involvement in management.

RMT delegates were stunned to hear how advanced the Venezuelan constitution was. Living in Britain, used to harsh anti-union laws, and with an unwritten constitution and a set of laws enshrining the unlimited rights of business, it was like a broadcast from a different planet.

Ruben was not just talking of the need for change, he was describing how it was going on right now.

"We also remember Thatcher and the part that RMT played in fighting her policies.

"Thatcher's policies affected Venezuela as well, creating great poverty – we are fighting back against liberalisation now and know that the road forward is socialism; in Latin America and elsewhere, capitalism brings only negative things for people," he said.

Stressing the unique nature of his country's Bolivarian Revolution, Ruben said that "we are discussing socialism in Venezuela, but on our own terms and on the basis of our own needs".

He mentioned Chavez only once – warmly – towards the end of his address as a useful ally in his people's struggle.

"Chavez has given help and inspiration, especially on workers' rights," he acknowledged. ■

Zambian-style solidarity comes to conference

Zambian Rail Workers' Union assistant general secretary James Kapanga lived up the AGM when he led it in a chant of "Solidarity!"

RMT delegates took their cue and responded with "Solidarity For Ever!", James quipped "yes, I know" before making the serious point that "solidarity makes us strong."

He said: "We have to find a common solution and we can find it by working together. Solidarity begins at the grass-roots, at membership level, regional level, branch level."

The Zambian union leader recalled that when he arrived in Britain recently he saw a newspaper headline reading "Transport sector in disarray" which led him to think "we have the same problems."

James said that Zambia too is under threat from greedy transnational corporations determined to break up and privatise the country's transport networks, undermining the unions and driving down pay and conditions.

He revealed that as a result of such attacks, membership of his union had plummeted in recent years from 8,600 to just 850.

But James remained upbeat, insisting that union solidarity would overcome the privateers.

He urged delegates to ignore all talk of "social partnership", noting that this merely turned trade unionists into "sleeping management."



James Kapanga

EXTRACT FROM THE VENEZUELAN CONSTITUTION

Article 88: The State guarantees the equality and equitable treatment of men and women in the exercise of the right to work. The State recognizes work at home as an economic activity that creates added value and produces social welfare and wealth. Housewives are entitled to Social Security in accordance with the law.

Article 89: Work is a social fact and shall enjoy the protection of the State. The law shall make the necessary provisions for improving the material, moral and intellectual conditions of workers.

1) No law shall establish provisions that affect the intactness and progressive nature of labour rights and benefits.

2) Labour rights are unrenounceable; any action, agreement or convention involving a waiver or encroachment on these rights is null and void.

3) When there are doubts concerning application or conflicts among several rules, or in the interpretation of a particular rule, that most favourable to the worker shall be applied. This rule must be applied in its entirety.

NOTE: MORE REPORTS FROM AGM WILL APPEAR IN NEXT MONTH'S RMT NEWS

ORGANISING FOR THE FUTURE

Professor Gregor Gall argues that the success of RMT can serve as a model for the rest of the trade union movement



Former T&G general secretary Bill Morris predicted a few years ago that, as a result of union rationalisation in the next decade, there would only be two unions left - one for the private sector, one for the public sector - and the plucky, little NUJ. Obviously, he forgot the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers.

The RMT is the story of a small union that is punching well above its weight and looks set to continue to do so. Consequently, it will be known for many years to come as the RMT. Maybe the initials will become known as standing for "robust and militant trade unionism."



RMT organises all sectors where people or goods are transported, including rail, road and sea, and covers all those involved in the provision of these services.

Dating from the 1870s, it is not a general union, but a specialist transport union. This is an important element in its ongoing renewal.

The nature of the employment that it organises has changed markedly in recent years, with privatisation, contracting out and casualisation coming to be the new hallmarks.

The union had long-standing organising and recruitment policies, but these were never whole-heartedly implemented.

Consequently, RMT membership experienced stagnation and decline and workers which RMT had responsibility for went unorganised.

From 2002, the situation has changed markedly, with net and substantial gains of 3,000-4,000 per year. Representing around a six per cent growth per annum, this is a considerable achievement that may other unions would give their eye teeth for.

ORGANISING UNIT

Upon being elected general secretary in early 2002, Bob Crow set up the organising unit, with Alan Pottage as national co-ordinator and three organisers. This has now grown to five.

The organising unit does not just prioritise recruitment and retention. It also prioritises creating an organised RMT presence in every workplace where the union has members - this has meant creating and developing workplace reps so that they become the foundation of the union in the workplace.

Activists are not just given the tools for the job such as multilingual, issue-based leaflets and merchandise proudly emblazoned with key RMT messages - they are also supported in a way that stimulates enthusiasm and

confidence. Organisers concentrate on visiting workplaces and members' meetings.

Moreover, in each of the union's 11 regions, the RMT has a lay lead recruiter and these meet with each other every quarter to discuss progress.

The main growth in recruitment has been "in-fill," where the union has existing members and recognition. But, since 2002, it has also secured 10 new recognition agreements covering just over 1,000 workers.

Too often, union strength is seen as just a numbers game, whether number of members, reps or recognition agreements with employers.

RMT does not prize these in themselves. It seeks to make sure that they are used to deliver increasing standards of employment to its members, whether this be pay, conditions or job security.

INDEPENDENT TRADE UNIONISM

The starting point for its industrial strategy has been to reject any form of partnership, social or otherwise, with employers as the best way to represent members' interests.

Rather, its strategy has been to rely on the mobilisation of its members as an independent and collective force with which to leverage concessions out of capricious employers.

Indeed, some of the most obvious recent successes, including forcing Network Rail to reopen its final-salary pension scheme to new staff, gaining significant amounts of new holiday leave for station and signalling staff on London Underground and putting Viacom Outdoor bill poster workers at the top of their respective pay league, were achieved without industrial action.

However, once employers have been given an opportunity to settle without industrial action, the union has put its shoulder to the wheel to ensure a successful outcome.

This has included facing

down more court injunctions and threats of court injunctions than just about any other union. A union that wins battles is a union that is attractive to existing and potential members.

Despite winning statutory union recognition at International Currency Exchange, the company attempted to ignore this by engaging in a charade of agreeing on a procedure for collective bargaining.

RMT brought the company to heel by gaining a Yes vote among its members in a ballot for strike action and achieved a method for collective bargaining that met its concerns. The union is now proceeding to advance its members' interests there.

What explains why RMT has been able to mobilise so effectively? As an industrial union, the RMT has a clear identity.

Marketing people would call this "a highly valuable brand." Consequently, there is not only a high level of union density but also a high degree of attachment and loyalty to the union.

This makes it easier for a culture of vibrant, robust collectivism to pervade the union. This, in turn, is reflected in but also reinforced by the emphasis on workplace unionism and lay structures.

But, on their own, these foundations are necessary without being sufficient to explain the effectiveness. The missing pieces of the jigsaw are union leadership and the nature of the services that RMT members provide.

The emphasis on a members-led union has provided the basis for a far more assertive and robust style of leadership to take root throughout RMT. For example, RMT has adapted well to the arrival of company-level bargaining among train operating companies.

Employers and governments take a strong opponent seriously. This knowledge gave the RMT the confidence to conduct a national mobile demonstration under the slogan

RMT MEMBERSHIP

2000	57,896
2001	59,277
2002	63,084
2003	67,476
2004	71,544

Rail Against Privatisation.

There are key challenges ahead for the union. One task is to increase membership to 100,000 over the next decade.

With an enlarged membership, every RMT member will benefit from a strengthened, better-resourced union.

This task includes rebuilding its presence among train driver grades. Renationalisation of public transport remains a crucial goal and can only be won with widespread mobilisation on the scale of the poll tax and anti-war agitations. The same is true for the repeal of the Conservatives' anti-union laws and the enforcement of ILO labour standards.

So, what wider lessons are there for the wider union movement? Unions need to ensure in practice that recruiting and organising are only a means to an end.

Indeed, if this is achieved, then improvements for members can become the best recruiting sergeant for others.

In this, taking action can be a virtue as a tool to build unions and as a demonstration of the potential of organised workers' power.

The case of the PCS supports this - its membership has grown substantially in recent years. Even though it is early days, RMT has also shown there can be political life outside Labour.

Finally, "small can be beautiful," where small is synonymous with vibrant campaigning and action on issues which resonant with members and wider citizens. ■

Gregor Gall is a professor of industrial relations at the University of Hertfordshire.

This article appeared in the Morning Star.

SHIPPING

P&O FERRIES ABANDON PORTSMOUTH

RMT held a protest in Portsmouth recently against P&O Ferries massive cutbacks to services on the Western Channel. From the end of September the company is withdrawing services that currently from Portsmouth to Le-Havre, Cherbourg and Caen.

The scale of the cutbacks has surprised industry analysts and leaves Brittany Ferries in a

potential monopoly position on the Western Channel routes, with no UK operator sailing to Le-Havre, Cherbourg and Caen.

The withdrawal of services on the Western Channel follows the P&O exit from other shipping sectors in which they had previously played a major role. The company cruise ship operations, which is the most profitable sector for shipping, is

now owned by the US company Carnival, whilst P&O have also sold off their remaining interests in the deep sea sector.

P&O DIRECTORS REWARDED

The scale of the cutbacks has not stopped P&O Directors accumulating substantial pay awards.

Not only have they realised huge six-figure salaries they have received significant salary increases.

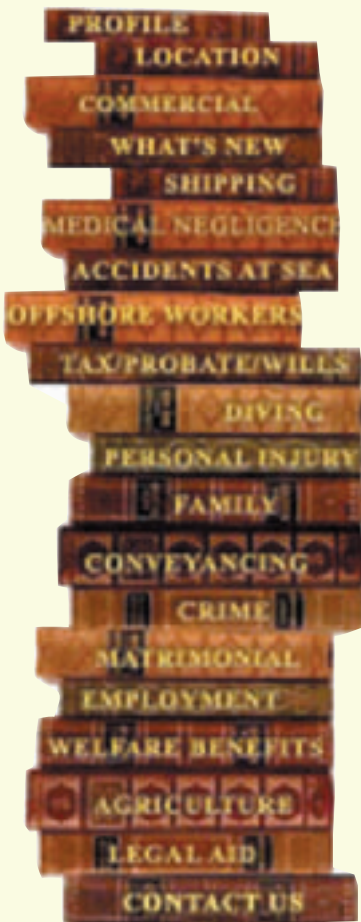
This comes despite the significant hardship afflicting many families as a result of the forced dismissals of P&O Ferries employees.

Lord Sterling recently retired as chairman of the P&O Group and received a pension worth a staggering £11.2 million. ■

SPRINGBOK RECEIVES DONATION FROM RMT

Paula Mason and Brian Armstrong of RMT's Southampton shipping branch present a £1,100 cheque to Trevor Goacher, general secretary of the Springbok retirement home in Surrey (below). Also present are trustee's Ken Tirner, Harry Bygate, Frank Welsh and Terry Simco.

The money comes from Maclachlan's solicitors, who donated £50 per compromise agreement they signed from the redundancies at Portsmouth announced by P&O. ■



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SHIPPING

UNIONS TELL SCOTTISH MINISTER TO RESIST EU ORDERS TO PRIVATISE CALMAC

RMT has told the Scottish Executive to fight European Commission orders to put Caledonian MacBrayne ferry services out to tender

The Scottish TUC joined the call to abide by the democratic decision of the Scottish parliament and reject the privatisation of lifeline ferry services.

The call came after transport commissioner Jacques Barrot made it clear that Brussels expects the Scottish Executive to break up the publicly-run company or risk breaching European Union law.

That decision represents a major setback for the Executive. They are now caught in a battle between the Scottish Parliament, which does not want the routes put out to tender, and the EU, which is demanding the privatisation of all routes.

Brussels has given ministers the concession that they can tender the Hebridean routes as one block, to prevent companies cherry-picking the profitable

routes and abandoning the loss-making ones.

But the EU has threatened to withdraw this concession and tender the routes individually - which would signal the start of disastrous problems for the islands.

CONSULTATIONS

It is understood that no decision on the tendering will be made until consultations with the parliament and, because of the summer recess, this will not happen until September.

CalMac runs ferries to 22 islands and four peninsulas with a fleet of 31 vessels on 26 routes and carries about five million passengers a year.

It became the subject of only the second defeat for the Executive last December, when 14 Labour MSPs rebelled and

defeated an Executive motion to put the islands routes out to tender.

RMT shipping secretary Steve Todd said that it was time to defend public services like CalMac against Brussels rules which seek to hand everything over to the private sector.

"We can roll over and be the poodles Brussels wants us to be or we can represent the will of millions of Scots and keep CalMac public," he said.

Assistant STUC general secretary Stephen Boyd also pointed out that privatising Calmac would not give value for money and warned that the bill would fall to the taxpayer.

"Value for the Scottish Executive's money can only be achieved through maintaining CalMac as a unified, properly financed, publicly owned, publicly run and publicly accountable service.

"We must remember the lessons of the privatisation of other transport services, including the national rail network where subsidy has

increased dramatically with no improvement to services," he said.

PAY DEAL AT CALMAC

RMT members at CalMac recently voted by 226 to 14 in favour of a three and a half year pay deal.

The deal consists of a 4.8 per cent pay rise for the first one and a half years, paid up front from the 2005 anniversary date, plus 3 per cent for years two and three paid on the October anniversary dates of 2006 and 2007 respectively. This gives an overall consolidated pay award over three and a half years of 10.8 per cent.

Regional organiser Ian Macintyre said that members had spoken in the light of uncertainty regarding the tendering process.

"I would hope that MSPs gives the same commitment as our members when they are asked what they think of European Commission orders to continue with this unwanted tendering process," he said. ■

Minister hints at tonnage tax employment link

RMT has welcomed statements from Shipping Minister Stephen Ladyman urging UK shipowners to be 'creative' regarding domestic seafaring employment after years of benefiting from the tonnage tax.

Mr Ladyman has stated that he would rather have a voluntary commitment to improve employment agreed by all sides of the industry. However, he said that he expects the Chamber of Shipping to be creative on

employment and deliver an increased number of trainees.

RMT is pleased that the government has now indicated that the Chamber of Shipping cannot always expect to receive the tonnage tax concessions without delivering employment and social benefits in return.

Previously, the Chamber of Shipping has made a voluntary commitment to increase the number of UK seafaring trainees by 25 per cent year on year for a period of four years, thereby doubling numbers after four

years. More than four years down the line, and despite the introduction of the tonnage tax, UK ratings trainees are less than half the original figure.

Therefore any agreement formulated by industry should be underwritten by Government to ensure delivery. The Chamber of Shipping has stated that they have not been able to deliver increased training and employment due to a failure by government to implement other maritime support measures. RMT do not accept this but it

underlines the importance of close Government involvement on this issue. Currently a special working group on employment is considering measures to increase UK seafarers employment. ■

So far around 60 MPs have signed an Early Day Motion 200 put down by John McDonnell MP calling for a tonnage tax training and employment link for UK seafaring ratings and officers.

Union wins equal pay victory

RMT recently won a significant equal-pay battle after employers agreed to settle the case in the middle of an Employment Tribunal.

When a female RMT member agreed to a move from Compliance Assistant to Technical Engineer with a rail infrastructure company she was promised that her salary would be reviewed after six months.

However, a review did not take place until much later. Moreover, despite the review confirming that she had reached the required standard, her salary was not reinstated to the level it was. Her employment was then transferred to Network Rail after infrastructure work was brought back in-house.

Strong representations were made by union representatives to Network Rail, who continued to refuse to increase the member's wages to the correct level and pay back pay to her.

Further investigations revealed that men working at her depot had been reviewed and received pay rises.

With the help of union's solicitors, Drummond Miller, the member was able to pursue a claim for discrimination on the grounds of her sex and unlawful deduction of wages in the Employment Tribunal.

Before the hearing commenced its second day an offer of £4,000 was made to her in settlement of her claims. The member, who had subsequently been promoted, accepted the offer.

"The union was brilliant throughout this ordeal and I would not be where I am now without the RMT," she said.

"I am happy to now get back to normal and do my job to the best of my abilities".

RMT rep Bill Rawcliffe, who represented her, said it was a clear-cut case of discrimination and justice had been done.

"Once again RMT has shown that it protects the rights of its members," he said.

David Scott of Drummond Miller, who represented the member throughout the hearing said: "It was only because of the persistence of the member, her union representatives and the strength of her union that settlement was able to be reached".

SACKED FOR REWARDING STAFF

Rail operations supervisor Mark Stilwell was sacked by Freightliner last year, after eight years service, because of a gift to his staff

Mark Stilwell had been employed by Freightliner since March 1997 at their Cleveland depot when he was dismissed on June 26 2004. Towards the end of his time with Freightliner Mark was employed as a Rail Operations Supervisor.

In early May 2004 Mark identified four employees who worked under his responsibility who made "extraordinary efforts" which should be recognised by management and payment made for higher-grade duties. Mark made a request to the Terminal Manager, for additional payment to be made to them, but the request was declined.

Mark was concerned about the failure to recognise and reward employees' hard work so he wrote to them:

"I have made several attempts to obtain some form of recognition from the current management team at Cleveland, for your extraordinary efforts over the last two weeks, especially during Monday's and Tuesday's Crane failures, unfortunately the most I have been able to achieve is a letter of recommendation which I submitted to the Manager and will now be attached to your personnel file along with a copy of the manager's response.

"A response which I find highly unsatisfactory, therefore, I would like to thank you for all your recent efforts, and especially for your efforts on

Monday and Tuesday this week without the level of commitment shown on those days things could have very easily gone pear shaped with great costs being incurred to the company.

"I hope you will accept this small token of my appreciation (a case of beer!) and my thanks. Well done!"

The terminal manager became aware of this and was unhappy as he felt that it undermined his authority. This was followed by another incident between our member and the terminal manager when Mark was accused of being late.

Ignoring all procedures Mark was given a written warning, which he refused to accept as it was outside of the

disciplinary procedure. This led to a Form 1 being issued against him that resulted in his dismissal for insubordination and failing to comply with a manager's request.

With the help of the union's solicitors, Drummond Miller, a claim was made in the Tribunal for unfair dismissal.

After a two day hearing the Tribunal found that Mark had been unfairly dismissed.

The Tribunal made scathing remarks regarding Freightliner's failure to follow procedures.

"The Employment Tribunal found that Freightliner denied Mark his basic rights to be represented by his union and to follow agreed disciplinary procedures" said David Scott of Drummond Miller Solicitors, who represented Mark.

Speaking after the hearing Mark said, "This was really about clearing my name". ■



RMT HEALTH AND SAFETY REP WINS RE-INSTATEMENT

An RMT member recently won re-instatement after an Employment Tribunal found that that he had been victimised because of his trade union activities.

The member was employed as a cleaner by First Keolis Transpennine as a service team member. He is an active RMT member and a nominated Health and Safety representative.

The member had made various complaints to the station manager regarding health and safety matters. However, manager refused to deal with the issues raised and the member was suspended from duty. Following representations by RMT he was reinstated only to be suspended once again two days later.

After a protracted disciplinary process the member was advised that no disciplinary action would be taken in relation to the events taking place before he was sacked.

However, the member was told he would remain suspended because of a further alleged incident that occurred after he was suspended. By this stage the member had been suspended for over 27 weeks.

With the help of RMT, the member lodged a number of grievances with First Keolis Transpennine and launched Employment Tribunal proceedings. The claim before the Employment Tribunal alleged that the real reason for his suspension and any subsequent disciplinary action was because of his health and safety representative duties and that he had been victimised because of his trade union activities.

Shortly before the claim was due to proceed to a hearing an offer in settlement was made and James was allowed to return to work as the completion of his holiday period, in March 2005.

"This was a very traumatic time for the member and his family" said David Scott of Drummond Miller who represented the member on behalf of the union.

"It is only because of the strength and support that he received from the union that he was able to bring this claim and be reinstated into his former position," he added.

Newcastle Rail and Catering branch secretary Mickey Thompson said it was a significant victory that showed that the union was determined to ensure that proper procedures were adhered to and that staff were protected from victimisation. ■

President's column



FIGHTING PRIVATISATION

I have often been told "don't believe everything you read in the papers". Good advice, as recently I came across a magazine singing the praises of the privatised, vertically-integrated railways in Japan.

The Japan National Railway (JNR) was broken up in the sale of the century in 1987 into six companies. However, thousands of rail workers who belonged to two unions, Kokuro, Zendora and DoroChiba were not re-employed by the new private companies that emerged under the new name of Japanese Railways (JR).

In gross violation of the right to organise, one in three drivers lost their jobs. These anti-union sackings also broke Article 28 of the Japanese Constitution and International Labour Organisation conventions 87 and 98.

The refusal of the Japanese government to defend the constitutional rights of its citizens meant that thousands of rail workers lost their jobs. Some were also transferred to "human resources usage centres" miles away from their families and work colleagues and ordered to weed the p/way or paint railway buildings. After all these years these rail workers are still fighting and protesting for their jobs back and their rights to be protected.

The government's transport department has also allowed safety measures to be deregulated and hours of work have increased, leading to train drivers being forced to use plastic urine bags in their cabs. Rural lines have been closed and freight has been transferred from rail to road, causing environmental damage and congestion in country short of oil.

As a result of these familiar experiences, one wonders if there is a connection here with the recent tragic train crash in Amagasaki, western Japan. Over 100 people died and around 500 injured after a speeding train derailed and crashed into a block of flats.

That is the reality that a lot of the media fail to report.

Of course, rail workers in Japan are still fighting for their jobs and conditions and for rail safety. They need our support and solidarity. I have been asked to go to Japan to discuss the fightback after Japanese unions heard about our Rail Against Privatisation campaign. They have made clear that they want to emulate the RAP campaign in order to raise awareness about the dangers of a privatised rail network and articulate popular demands for a safe, renationalised rail network.

Closer to home, I have been following the Railtrack shareholders' court action. If it wasn't so serious it would be funny. These former Railtrack shareholders lost their bet after the government could not stomach continuing to pour billions into a failing private-sector fiasco. This company sucked money out of the network into a privatised black hole while making a complete hash of running the infrastructure of our rail network.

Yet now these shareholders have the cheek to go to court to complain that their win-win gamble has finally come to an end.

Far from giving them any money, the government should be demanding the return of the billions of taxpayers' money that provided all those dividends during the heyday of Railtrack making a fortune from selling off land that once belonged to British Rail and the British people.

You can't expect to gamble your cake and eat it.

Finally, this union has just finished its 2005 annual general meeting and I had the pleasure to preside over the proceedings.

The week of deliberations in Exeter revealed that a lot of work needs to be done but also that RMT members are united behind the policies of the union.

Tony Donaghey

Bill and Joe's big Cuban adventure



RMT members Bill Rawcliffe and Joe Sheridan recently completed a gruelling bike ride in aid of a Cuban school for blind and disabled children and survived. They told *RMT News* their moving story



Thanks to the tremendous generosity of friends, family, workmates and many RMT branches and regional councils, the minimum funding required to participate in the Cuba Cycle Challenge 2005 and purchase vital education equipment for disabled Cuban school children was reached and then surpassed.

Now for the hard bit; our challenge to cycle 220 miles across Cuba from Trinidad on the Caribbean coast over the Escambray Mountains and to Havana, on the Atlantic coast.

Whilst for some the distances were not particularly challenging, the heat, which was in excess of 33° C some days, coupled with some steep and lengthy hill climbs ensured that everyone had to work hard.

However, the rewards were tremendous. It is a unique way to see a country and meet people, some of the scenery was dramatic and to cycle through tiny villages and see how people live away from big cities and tourist resorts was totally refreshing.

GENEROUS TO A FAULT

But the highlight for us were the ordinary Cuban people, always smiling, always happy, curious as to what we were doing and why, and despite having very little in terms of western consumerism, generous to a fault. Having just cycled through Siteco City we passed an elderly gentleman on a rusty old Chinese cycle complete with a cardboard box tied on the back.

He shouted a greeting and waved. Not having much knowledge of the Spanish language, we waved shouting "Inglese non Espanol". Several kilometres further, we stopped on a large bridge overlooking a river to watch some turkey vultures soaring below for once, instead of over my head.

The elderly man eventually reappeared and stopped, he opened the box on the back of his cycle and said fruit, motioning me towards him, we responded "no pesos", he shook his head and said "you

fruit!"(probably got that right) and gave me two mangoes.

We attempted to protest and he continued to insist saying "quarto, take! take!". He only had eight in the box and insisted I took half, then shaking my hand got on his cycle and left.

Another aspect that greatly impressed us was the sheer number of schools. They were everywhere we went, the children always shouting and waving, which brings me to why we were actually there. Having completed the cycling (which was no mean achievement), we attended the May Day Rally in Havana's Revolution Square, together with some 1.3 million Cubans singing the Internationale - it was something to behold.

SOLIDARITY

The next day we travelled to Havana's Abel Santa Maria School for blind, partially sighted and disabled children. Having made our introductions and presented the school with initial gifts, which included speaking calculators and a speaking watch for each of the 150 children at the school, we were invited to tour every corner of the school.

The experience left almost everyone moved and more than one of the men reduced to tears. Not because of the wretched state of the children but totally the opposite, it was a marvel to see what can be achieved with so little.

Blind children learning their two times tables with wooden blocks, a small blind boy sawing a piece of MDF with such vigour and enthusiasm though the saw was so blunt he was almost burning through the wood.

The art and craft classes where the children were making the most beautiful models and pictures, despite a crippling shortage of basic equipment, such as glue!

We visited a small computer room where a blind boy, having learnt the keyboard by heart, could be left to use a computer

alone by listening to taped instructions/ requests. Partially sighted children were learning to type on archaic machines.

MOVING

Yes, the experience was indeed moving. These children are among those branded by the United States as terrorists and a threat to their very survival! So they deprive them of Braille equipment.

Yes, Washington holds the patent and they will not allow anyone to sell the equipment to Cuba. The blockade causes shortages in the most basic materials as well as glue, paint, paper, all are in great demand.

Why was it so moving? It is hard to pin down. It's a mixture of rage at the blockade, a mixture of embarrassment at our own government's craven support for the US and even self-pity that, despite our own massive wealth and resources, children here in Britain are not as well looked after.

The school has over 60 teachers, doctors, nurses, and support staff for 150 children, but overall it was an overwhelming sense of hope for the future that these children represented. We would like to share more of our experiences with you but time and space are not in my favour, so why not experience it yourselves, join the Cuba Solidarity Campaign and register for next year's event. Maybe if enough members are interested, we could organise an RMT challenge tailored to suit?

This just leaves me to thank everyone who has sponsored Joe and myself, there are too many of you to thank individually and I cannot say in words what this support means to the people of Cuba, it is not just the money, it is that people really do care.

THANK YOU ALL

A bit thanks to everyone who helped achieve around £8,000 for the children of Abel Santa Maria School and a few more pledges are still to come in, so the total will rise slightly above that. ■



For more information about the Cuba Solidarity Campaign contact:
The Red Rose Club
129 Seven Sisters Road
LONDON
N7 7QG
Tel: 020 7263 6452
Fax: 0 20 7561 0191
E-mail: office@cuba-solidarity.org.uk
Web: www.cuba-solidarity.org

A NIGHT OF SOLIDARITY FOR CUBA

Hundreds gathered in the gardens of Maritime House in south London last month for a night of solidarity with Cuba which included speeches, music and great food



Cuban representative Luis Marron congratulates Bill Rawcliffe and Joe Sheridan

RMT general secretary Bob Crow welcomed guests to the third annual garden party held in conjunction with the Cuba Solidarity Campaign to raise funds for Medical Aid for Cuba.

"Cuba needs our support more than ever as the United States makes increasingly hostile and threatening statements against this small socialist island," he said.

Bob pointed out that peoples' movements across Latin America were taking inspiration from Cuba and the ideas of Ernesto Che Guevara and taking action to improve their lives.

Labour movement figures including CWU general secretary Billy Hayes and John MacDonnell MP echoed these sentiments and pledged to continue the fight to defend Cuba against US aggression.

Nicaraguan public service

union leader Domingo Perez said that Cuba was a beacon for Latin America that showed there were very real alternatives to endless privatisation and poverty that existed under failed neoliberal policies that has been imposed across the continent.

"In Nicaragua we are defending our public services from this onslaught," he said.

Veteran left campaigner Tony Benn told the crowd that he was optimistic about the future as people across the world were rejecting endless war and profiteering.

"From Bolivia to Venezuela, From France to The Netherlands, people are saying enough is enough," he said.

Guests went on to enjoy RMT hospitality, dancing the night away to Cuban music and eating Cuban-style food, all in a good cause. ■



INTERNATIONAL FOCUS

Belgian bus workers take to the streets

Workers at Belgian's public transport network TEC took to the streets in Namur, southern Belgium recently following two weeks of strike action to demand better working conditions.

Continued intransigence in wage negotiations by the Walloon Regional Transport Company (SRWT), the company which is the cornerstone of TEC, has paralysed the TEC bus network since April. "We have done as much as we could have

done. If the Walloon government and the SWRT want peace, they will have to make a gesture. We have already revised our list of claims twice" said General Confederation of Public Services (CGSP/ACOD) representative Yves Depas.

At present, the company employs 4,795 people, including approximately 3,200 drivers. The TEC has 1,634 vehicles at its disposal, as well as 552 vehicles which belong to private sub-contractors. ■



CHINESE LOSE TRACK

Construction workers in east China's Zhejiang province rushed to repair a railway line following heavy subsidence due to over-extraction of earth by a local brick plant. The line runs between Xiaoshan District of Hangzhou - the provincial capital, and coastal city of Ningbo. Luckily, a tragedy was averted and no-one was killed. Trains were cancelled and passengers were offered other transport means.



DUTCH WORKERS TAKE ACTION

Dutch transport workers joined firefighters, civil servants, emergency services and office workers to demonstrate in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, last month. Thousands of Dutch civil servants went on strike to protest against attacks on social benefits and low wages, halting public transport in two major cities and rubbish collection in towns across the country. The banner in the centre reads: "We can't be treated like trash."



ITALIAN TRANSPORT STRIKE

Italian transport workers launched a 24-hour walkout on May 31 against government attempts to undermine sick leave provisions. Buses, subways and trams came to a halt in major cities across Italy. A sign on the bus reads "Out of Service" (Fuori Servizio) in central Rome.



BERLIN BUS WORKERS DEMAND PAY RISE

Bus drivers stand outside a Berlin bus depot during strike action against low pay. The Verdi union called for a 7-hour-strike of public transport in the German capital to support their demand for a pay rise for public service employees.



POWER CUT HITS MOSCOW

Crowds of commuters were stranded at Moscow metro stations recently following huge power cuts. The outage, caused by a fire in a substation, shut the stock exchange and crippled transport and mobile phone links in the sweltering Russian capital.



PHILIPINES TRANSPORT STRIKE

Filipino protesters stage a die-in along a busy street to block vehicles during recent a transport strike demanding a fares hike amid rising oil prices in Manila.

Transport around Manila and other Philippine cities came to a halt due to the protesters against the rise in oil prices and to demand the scrapping of the oil deregulation law. The banner reads "Junk oil deregulation law."



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OFFER 5

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No visitor to Prague should miss a visit to the Castle, Charles Bridge and the cobbled streets of the Old Town, which includes Stare Mesto and the Josefov areas. However, the streets of Mala Strana below the castle offer great traditional small shops and bars to discover. And don't forget to explore the streets that lead away from Wenceslas Square for newer trendier shops, bars and restaurants which are also a symbol of this great city.

This offer is based on 2 people sharing a twin room at the Hotel Marketa on a bed & breakfast basis.

Departing from London Gatwick on the 4th October 2005. Other dates available at a supplement. Offer is subject to availability.



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ANOTHER WORLD IS NECESSARY

'No one likes us we don't care'.

RMT General Secretary Bob Crow is fond of his belligerent Millwall chant, using it when employers or tabloid press attack the union for defending members interests.

I found myself thinking of it the other day. Three of my Scottish Socialist Party colleagues in the Holyrood Parliament and I were suspended from the chamber after defending the democratic right to protest against the G8 leaders gathered at Gleneagles.

Not a single other member dissented when we faced our outrageous punishment.

Our short, peaceful protest resulted first in a two-day suspension which was then extended to a month, then the month without pay, then a month without pay for us and all our parliamentary staff and

finally a ban from the entire parliamentary complex and our constituency offices.

When I heard the extent of the final penalty, I quipped 'By four o'clock I thought they were going to invade Poland!'

The Westminster parliament has a maximum penalty of five days, suspension without loss of wages. Isn't it ironic that full blown parliaments around Europe have lighter penalties whereas our wee 'kiddie on parliament' with very few real powers can almost bring back hanging if it wants to?

But you know this Parliamentary skirmish was put into proportion within 48 hours.

On Saturday I was taking part in the biggest political demonstration Scotland has ever seen.

Edinburgh didn't know what had hit it. More than 250,000

people arrived on the Meadows determined to Make Poverty History. Patience with the G8 leaders on poverty in Africa and the third world has clearly run out.

And of course we are all entirely right to be sceptical. The G8's record in fighting poverty in the third world is damnable. Like most people I have given up hope that they will be part of the solution.

Charles Dickens began 'A Tale of Two Cities with the words

'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair...'

It still is.

On the one hand there is the pessimism which rational human beings looking at the G8 leader's record and their vested interests must hold. No-one expects the G8 leaders to do a damn thing about poverty in Africa and the third world. And they will not.

A clear and profound change of direction is needed.

Conversely, there is the boundless optimism in the movement for change.

It is a potentially powerful force. Yes it is naive, yes it is badly led, but its democratic spirit is unquenchable. It is the democratic spirit of the peoples of the world.

The billionaires have had their say, now it's the time for the billions to have theirs.

Colin Fox,
Scottish Socialist Party
Convener

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7.2% APR (TYPICAL)	£10,000	Monthly	£202.70	£151.16	£248.38	£198.23	£363.02	£308.96
		Total	£17,026.95	£12,696.86	£14,902.35	£11,893.56	£13,068.41	£11,122.56
7.2% APR (TYPICAL)	£5,000	Monthly	£101.35	£75.58	£124.19	£99.12	£181.51	£154.48
		Total	£8,513.47	£6,348.41	£7,451.15	£5,946.72	£6,534.21	£5,561.28
7.2% APR (TYPICAL)	£3,000	Monthly	£60.81	£45.35	£74.52	£59.47	£108.91	£92.69
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Making history against poverty

RMT members from across the country joined over 250,000 people who were on the streets of Edinburgh on Saturday July 2, supporting the Make Poverty History campaign

This was a very visible display of the opposition to international policies that bring sickness, starvation and death to thousands of people each day. The demands of the Make Poverty History campaign focus on Aid, Trade, and Justice, and Edinburgh was full of banners and placards conveying clear messages to the leaders of the G8 countries. Windows and lampposts were decked out with the message 'Make Poverty History', as was Edinburgh Castle.

The turnout in Edinburgh was double that predicted by the organisers, with coaches arriving from all over Britain, and as a result marchers were still taking to the streets six hours after the midday starting time. Organisers had asked that marchers wear white, forming a human white band that weaved its way through the city centre.

Whilst trade union and labour movement banners may not have been there in huge numbers, there is no doubt that many trade union members were in Edinburgh that day with their families. The RMT London Regional Council banner made the long trip, and members of a number of Scottish RMT branches participated in the march too.

ALTERNATIVE G8

The G8 Alternatives Summit took over a number of Edinburgh city centre venues the next day. Over 5,000 people registered to hear speakers on a wide range of topics, including on war and imperialism, civil liberties, Africa, Climate change and globalisation.

RMT General Secretary Bob Crow joined the platform to discuss asylum and immigration policies. The audience welcomed the RMT's condemnation of racism, and the General Secretary outlined the union's opposition to the BNP and its policies.

Bob Crow also made clear that the union fully supported the G8 Alternatives right to demonstrate at Gleneagles on July 6, outside the meeting of the G8 leaders.

Earlier in June the RMT Scottish Regional Council had called for support

for of both the Make Poverty History demonstration and the G8 Alternatives demonstration at Gleneagles, encouraging members to participate.

In Edinburgh in the evening of July 3, a 'Naming the Dead' march and ceremony took place. The Stop the War Coalition and CND were able to highlight the amount of money spent on militarism whilst a third of the world is starving. RMT members also joined this event.

NO TO NUKES

The RMT AGM decision to reaffirm a policy of total opposition to nuclear weapons is timely as decisions on the future of a Trident replacement programme are taken by the government, and the weekend in Edinburgh brought together thousands of people who share the union's view that the priorities for our world are all wrong.

On Wednesday July 6, over 7,000 people made their way from across Scotland to Gleneagles for the demonstration and, despite a small number of confrontations with the police, were able to make their voice heard by the G8 leaders. With other demonstrations taking place at the Faslane nuclear base, and at Dungavel Immigration and detention centre, Scotland in the first week in July was a focus for trade unionists and campaigners from all over the UK and Europe.

Whilst the G8 leaders will never deliver a world in which the interests of working people are put first, the campaigning on poverty that has taken place internationally will go from strength to strength. For many people in Britain this has been a first experience of collective political action, and it will not be the last. 'Fight Poverty, not War' is the message that came from Edinburgh loud and clear in July 2005.

Ann Henderson

RMT Scottish Parliamentary officer



PROTEST: Make Poverty History demonstration in Edinburgh, Scotland. © Jess Hurd/reportdigital.co.uk



PRESENCE: RMT on the march in Edinburgh

Trade unionists flock to Tolpuddle

Over ten thousand people flocked to Tolpuddle in Dorset in July to celebrate the birth of modern British trade unionism.

RMT members took their banners to march through the village where 170 years ago six farm labourers were arrested for taking part in a meeting to protest against their meagre pay of six shillings a week - equivalent to 30p today.

They were found guilty of trade union activities and sent to penal colonies in Australia but were granted pardons after a huge public outcry.

Their struggle helped to form and inspire the British labour movement, which campaigners insist, is as crucial as ever to the survival, safety and fair treatment of British workers.

Chairman Jon Gray of the South West TUC, which organises the event, said he was delighted with the record attendance.

"The rally has been growing bigger every year and it is wonderful to see so many people, especially youngsters, here today," he enthused. ■





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Dear Editor,

I am incensed by the letter featured in your
June edition from David Hardy.

First of all the proposed tram scheme is
intended to replace the existing train service,
not run alongside it. As explained by Alex
Holden, those championing this proposal are
already implementing underhanded tactics to
make the existing rail service look
unprofitable. Added to this is the track record
of these privatised, government (and therefore
taxpayer) funded profiteers like, for example,
Manchester Metrolink who fought so hard
against trade union recognition and against
providing decent pay and conditions for its
workers.

Does Mr Hardy not realise that existing
members are likely to lose their jobs if this

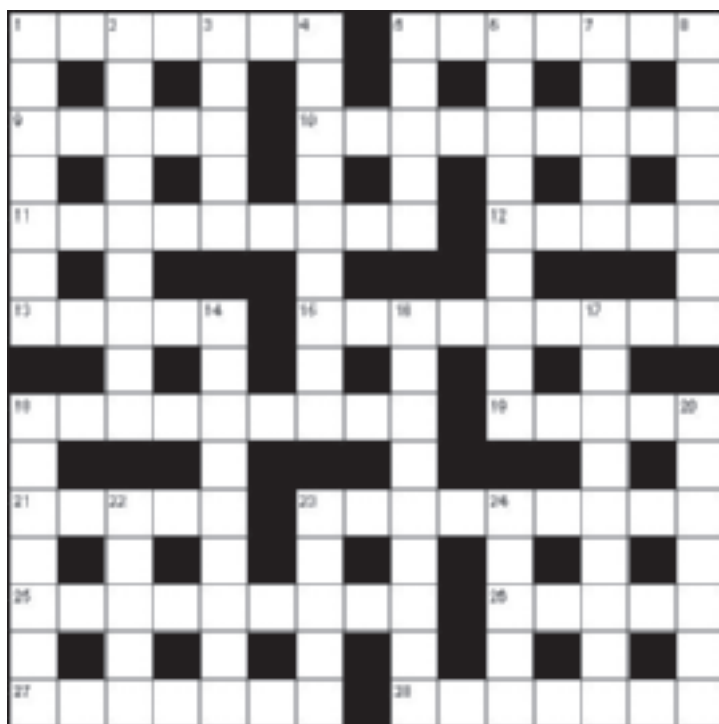
scheme goes ahead? I was under the
impression that the RMT is a trade union, not
some sort of pyramid scheme whose primary
objective is to grab as many members as
possible, whatever the cost to other workers.
Should we be applauding the loss of the Royal
Mail and other freight contracts from the rail
to the road, as the union can recruit more
lorry drivers? Should we stop campaigning to
save the role of the guard, as "on train
customer service hosts" pay the same
membership fee?

It's nice to know that Mr Hardy finds the
existing membership so infinitely disposable.
We can all look forward to our p45s, warm
and secure in the knowledge that our sacrifice
is for the greater good, can't we?

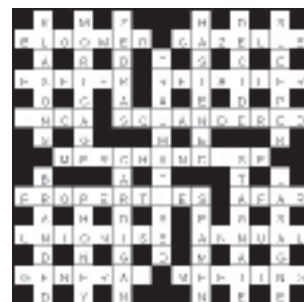
Sincerely, A Langton, Crewe

RMT £25 prize crossword

No. 17. Set by Elk



Last month's
solution...



Winner of prize crossword 16
is Mr P Lockwood from
Sheffield

Send entries to Prize Crossword,
RMT, Unity House, 39 Chalton
Street, London NW1 1JD by August
20 with your name and address.
Winner and solution in next issue
Congratulations to the many
readers who managed to complete
last month's puzzle despite the
best efforts of computer gremlins
to confuse the numbering of the
grid.

ACROSS

- 1 Staring, with mouth open (7)
- 5 Hoping to win the 13 against 15 (7)
- 9 Jottings, money or music (5)
- 10 Jet engine with turbine attached to
propeller (9)
- 11 US tram, named Desire? (9)
- 12 I will comply, in short, or US band (5)
- 13 Remains fought over by 5 across and 15
(5)
- 15 Hoping to win the 13 against 5 (9)
- 18 Man who guarantees child's spiritual
wellbeing at baptism (9)
- 19 People who work when they shouldn't (5)
- 21 Passage between rows of seats (5)
- 23 When it's hot, slap it on (9)
- 25 Not temporary (9)
- 26 Falls (5)
- 27 On the outermost fringes (7)
- 28 Australian trousers, or paces (7)

DOWN

- 1 Hard-edged urban rap (7)
- 2 Dividing line between phases - 9pm on TV (9)
- 3 Publish, put out (5)
- 4 Enter uninvited (9)
- 5 Mistake (5)
- 6 Beetles, or their larvae, with luminous organs (4-
5)
- 7 Showery month (5)
- 8 Document conferring honour or qualification (7)
- 14 Deadlock (9)
- 16 Positive characteristics (9)
- 17 Type of ownership, often of flat (9)
- 18 Struggle or wrestle with, mentally or physically
(7)
- 20 Painful when blocked (7)
- 22 Small fish - bait for mackerel? (5)
- 23 Root vegetable - from northern Europe? (5)
- 24 Fermented apple juice (5)

HOW TO JOIN THE CREDIT UNION

To join the RMT Credit Union you need to fill in an application form and supply us with proof of **your identity** and **address**. Being an existing RMT member, you may wonder why we need proof of who you are and where you live. It is because the Financial Services Authority, in an

attempt to combat Money Laundering, has imposed strict identification rules on anyone wishing to open a Bank or Building Society account. Unfortunately, it has applied the same rules and regulations to Credit Unions.

There are two methods of supplying us with the documentation:-

METHOD 1 Send or take your **original** documents, **1 from List A & 1 from List B**, direct to RMT Credit, Unity House, FREEPOST, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD. If sending valuable documents such as your passport or current full UK Driving Licence we strongly advise sending them by recorded delivery. We will photocopy the originals and return them to you.

METHOD 2 Take one original document from **list A** and one from **list B** to your Branch Secretary or any of the above approved persons listed below:-

- Delegated Officer of the Branch
- Divisional Organiser
- Executive Committee Member
- Credit Union Officer
- Post Master / Sub Post Master
- Authorised Financial Intermediary
- Councillor (local or county)
- Minister of Religion
- Commissioner for oaths
- Banker
- Doctor
- Police Officer
- Person with honours / peerage
- Full Time Trade Union Official
- Member of Parliament
- Justice of the Peace
- Lawyer
- Teacher
- Accountant
- Dentist

The Branch Secretary or other approved person will check the original documentation; will take a photocopy, sign, and Branch stamp. All proof of identity / address must bear your name, and not be solely in the name of partner etc; but can be in addition to their name.

Satisfactory proof of **identity** will include, but not be limited to the following:

- LIST (A)
- Current signed Passport.
 - Current Full UK old style Driving Licence (not old style Provisional Licence) [if not used as evidence of address].
 - Original Inland Revenue tax notification e.g. tax assessment, statement of account, notice of coding – valid for current year.
 - Pension Book or Benefits Book or original notification letter from the Benefits Agency confirming your right to benefits (if not used as evidence of address).
 - Shotgun or firearms certificate.
 - ID pass and safety cards for the following companies: Network Rail, Trans Pennine Express, Central Trains
 - Discharge Book (shippers only - current).

Satisfactory proof of **address** will include, but not be limited to the following:

- LIST (B)
- Original Local Authority Council Tax bill valid for the current year.
 - Current UK photo card Driving Licence.
 - Current Full UK old style Driving Licence (not old style Provisional Licence).
 - A Utility Bill e.g. Electricity, Gas, Water or Telephone bills. **These must be originals and less than 3 months old.** Mobile 'phone bills are NOT acceptable.
 - Bank, building society or credit union statement – within last 3 months.
 - Mortgage statement from a recognised lender – within last 12 months.
 - Pension Book or Benefits Book or original notification letter from the Benefits Agency confirming your right to benefits (if not used as evidence of address).
 - Original Inland Revenue tax notification, letter, notice of coding, P60 or P45.
 - Original housing association or letting agency tenancy agreement.
 - Local council rent card or tenancy agreement
 - Original Solicitor's letter confirming recent house purchase or Land Registry confirmation.
 - Household and motor Insurance certificates - current

Credit Union accounts may only be opened and transactions accepted when verification of identity and address has been completed and cross-referenced against RMT membership. We are using the method of Direct Debit only and money will be deducted from your bank account on the 28th of each month. Please return completed forms and ID documentation, as we need to make sure you comply with the money laundering regulations. Failing to complete all forms and ID documentation will delay us from setting up your savings account.

RMT CREDIT UNION LTD.

Finance Department, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD
RMT CREDIT UNION APPLICATION FORM – please complete your application along with the attached Direct Debit.



MEMBERSHIP NUMBER

Please use **BLOCK CAPITALS** and **black ink**.

1 PERSONAL DETAILS.

Surname Address
 Forename(s)
 Home phone
 Mobile phone Postcode
 Email address
 Date of Birth / / National Insurance Number

2 Your Employment.

Employer RMT Branch
 Job Description

3 Mr Mrs Ms Miss

4 Membership Status

RMT TU Member Retired RMT TU Member

5 How much do you wish to save £ This is the amount you wish to save in 'shareholdings' monthly by Direct Debit (you must complete form below)

6 Normally your payments are made once a month (28th) to RMT Credit Union Ltd.

7 Next of Kin

Address

8 I undertake to abide by the rules now in force or those that are adopted.

Your signature Date / /



Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit



Please fill in the whole form including official use box using a ball point pen and Send to: RMT Credit Union Ltd., 39 Charlton Street, London NW1 1JD

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To: The Manager Bank/Building Society
 Address
 Postcode

Name(s) of Account Holder(s)

Bank/Building Society account number

Branch Sort Code

Originator's Identification Number

9 7 4 2 8 1

Reference Number

FOR RMT CREDIT UNION LTD OFFICIAL USE ONLY
 This is not part of the the instruction to your Bank or Building Society.

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society.
 Please pay RMT Credit Union Ltd Direct Debits for the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with RMT Credit Union Ltd, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Signature(s)
 Date

Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit Instructions from some types of account

This guarantee should be detached and retained by the Payer.

The Direct Debit Guarantee

- This guarantee is offered by all Banks and Building Societies that take part in the Direct Debit Scheme. The efficiency and security of the scheme is monitored and protected by your own Bank or Building Society.
- If the amounts to be paid or the payment date changes, RMT Credit Union Ltd will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed
- If an error is made by RMT Credit Union Ltd or your Bank or Building Society, you are guaranteed a full and immediate refund from your branch of the amount paid
- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by writing to your Bank or Building Society. Please also send a copy of your letter to us.



Everyone deserves a break!

The RMT Credit Union could help you get away from it all



- ***You only pay back one per cent a month on a reducing balance***
- ***It's friendly and informal***
- ***It's non-profit-making***

You can apply for a loan based on three times your savings

Your Credit Union is run by RMT members for RMT members

For more information phone 020 7529 8835 or e-mail c.union@rmt.org.uk