

RMT news



Essential reading for today's transport worker

Issue No 7, Volume 5

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September 2004

Vote YES for a political voice

Your political fund allows RMT to campaign on the issues that affect you at the workplace

- Pay and conditions
- Pensions
- Jobs
- Rights at Work
- Safety



Remember Tebay? – it's still happening ● Recognition at McGinley's ● World Maritime Day ● Catering ● For a publicly owned railway ● Wilts & Dorset victory ● Privateers off the Tube! ● European Social Forum ● No to the EU constitution ● Prize crossword

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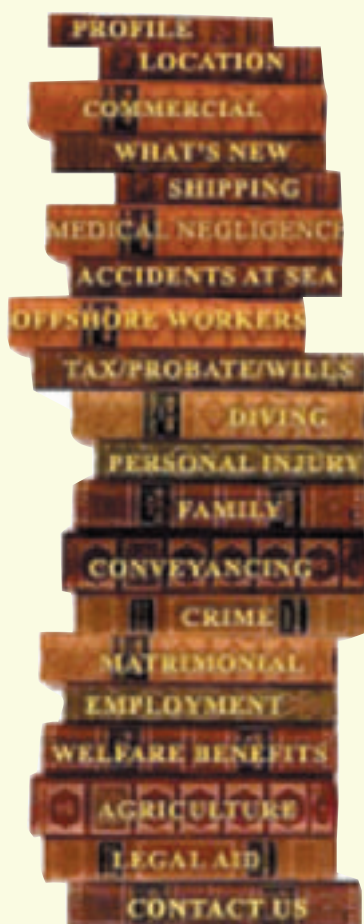
The law says workers have a right to safe conditions – and RMT is here to defend that right. That's why our Personal Injury Service is free – and even covers non-work related accidents for family members. So if you, or a member of your family, have suffered an illness or injury due to someone else's fault, call us now.

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CONTENTS

Page 4 Catering / McGinley deal

Page 5 Franchise threat/ Eurostar strike

Page 6 Compensation / Youth on the move / Assaults on staff



Page 7 Bus workers' victory

Page 8 World Maritime Day

Page 9 Parliamentary report

Page 10 Your union - your vote

Page 12 Road Transport

Page 13 European Social Forum

Page 14 & 15 Turning a blind eye to safety

Page 16 & 17 The Rail Review - a recipe for cuts?

Page 18 & 19 No EU Constitution

Page 21 Joining RMT



Page 22 & 23 RMT launches new merchandise and webshop



Page 25 RMT President

Page 26 Financial Report

Page 27 Ann Henderson

Page 28 Letters / Review

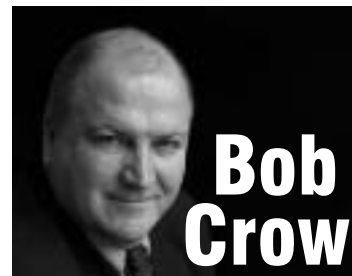
Page 29 Prize crossword

Page 30 Credit Union

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Vote yes for a political fund



EVERY day your union is working for you. This involves anything from seeking better wages, improving terms and conditions, defending jobs or representing members at legal, medical and disciplinary hearings.

Decisions and laws made by politicians affect your interests at work. For example, pensions, employment rights, jobs and safety are all affected by political decisions. Recently the union has been campaigning on the tonnage tax, to prevent further disasters like the one at Tebay, against bus deregulation, against the Public Private Partnership on the Tube, defending public services such as Calmac, for a publicly-owned railway as well as limiting the damage done by exposure to asbestos and other crucial safety matters.

So RMT must be able to campaign on these issues. The law states that to do this we are required to have a political fund. Furthermore, all unions are required by law to ballot their members every ten years to retain the fund. It is interesting to note that the bosses do not require such a fund by law and can spend millions lobbying against your interests. In 1994, RMT members understood this and voted by 83 per cent to keep the political fund and your union is again strongly urging you to VOTE YES, to allow us to continue to represent your interests.

The union also has environmental concerns given the increasingly bizarre weather patterns we are witnessing. This is another reason to encourage less use of the car and short haul flights in favour of a fully integrated transport network. This, of course, requires political will, planning and investment rather than letting 'competition' let rip regardless of the consequences. What could be more important than protecting and improving the environment for our children to inherit?

Cuts in transport funding and lack of investment has also led to less staff on our buses and trains and an increase in anti-social behaviour and violence. This is unacceptable and must be addressed by politicians and employers alike. What is required to tackle such a widespread problem is an adequate presence of uniformed staff, backed up by a zero-tolerance policy from employers and a responsive and properly resourced police force.

RMT will be campaigning at this year's TUC Congress for a publicly owned rail network in order to address the chaos caused by privatisation. This disastrous fragmentation was not addressed in the government's recent White Paper on the subject 'The future of rail'. Competing interests soaking up billions of pounds of public money will still be plaguing the network. The government is running out of options and should start listening to those that have the interests of the travelling public at heart and not those seeking to profit from what is supposed to be a public service.

RMT will also be calling for a full debate on the proposed European Union constitution and demanding the repeal of anti-union laws. This government's insistence on clinging to out-dated draconian Tory anti-trade union laws means that millions of people are deprived of rights enshrined in international law. Despite these restrictions we are fully behind our members at Eurostar which are presently engaged in a struggle against low and unfair pay levels.

ON recruitment, this union is continuing to grow with recognition rights won at a number of infrastructure contractors and Network Rail has agreed to our request for four full time union co-ordinators to serve our members. Elections for our district organisers are under way as well as for our two new relief organisers to strengthen the work of union.

Finally, I would like to draw your attention to the European Social Forum taking place in London next month. People from across Europe will be gathering to not only protest against endless war and privatisation but to demonstrate that another world is possible. With the backing of the Greater London Assembly and the TUC, there will be forums and seminars for working people to share their experiences. The union will be raising its voice and building alliances to defend and extend members interests. See how you can get involved inside on page 13. Good luck and we may see you there.

Bob Crow

Rail contractor McGinley recognises RMT

MCGINLEY Recruitment has signed a representation agreement with RMT which recognises the union and formalises procedures for consultation.

The agreement will see the creation of a company council of both employee and management representatives.

The deal will provide collective trade union representation to thousands of infrastructure workers working for the company, which carries out rail maintenance and renewals.

The company council will address issues such as health safety, performance plans and employee conditions.

Meetings will take place quarterly, although additional meetings may be called as and when it is necessary.

In addition, the council will seek to create one or two represen-

tatives for each region as well as establish safety representatives. Further details of the new company council will be sent to each worker in due course.

Barry West, the RMT activist who was instrumental in achieving the breakthrough deal, said that agreement would increase the voice of the union within the industry and could lead to other contractors recognising RMT to represent the workforce.

"Recognising the need to work with the union to improve communications with the workforce will benefit everyone concerned," he said.

Alan Pottage of the union's organising unit said that it was now important to ensure that RMT recruits members and trains new reps to give full-blooded protection.

McGinley employees should contact the RMT helpline on 0800



IT'S A DEAL: From left to right: RMT health and safety rep Barry West, McGinley safety manager Graham Ellis, RMT regional organiser Brian Curtis and McGinley's financial director, Eugene Meehan

376 3706 if they can suggest new reps for their location or gang.

"We now have recognition rights for Renown, who also employ infrastructure workers, and RMT is making progress with sub-contractors and agencies. It is vital we properly organise these workers," he said.

● McGinley operates a

confidential helpline for anyone who is concerned about safety standards on the job they are working on and has pledged to support workers who raise concerns about safety and investigate any problems.

The McGinley confidential safety reporting line is 07976 935728.

Notification of RMT Political Fund Review Ballot

MEMBERS should note that in accordance with the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (as amended), RMT is required to hold a review ballot at least every ten years, in order that the union can retain its political fund.

The ballot will give members the opportunity to vote on whether the union should be able to spend money for political purposes. The law says that the union must have a political fund to do this.

RMT will therefore be balloting members on whether or not to maintain the union's political fund. The ballot will take place between 15th October and 26th November. The ballot will be a postal ballot and voting papers will be sent directly to members' homes or to another address which the member has requested the union in writing to treat as their postal address.

Electoral Reform Services will be acting as the Independent Scrutineer and will oversee the conduct of the ballot. Their address is the Election Centre, 33 Clarendon Road, London, N8 0NW.

Any member who has changed their home address or wishes their ballot paper to be sent to a different address and has not yet notified the union, should contact the RMT Helpline on 0800 376 3706, or email info@rmt.org.uk

**MEMBERS
FREEPHONE
HELPLINE**

Open six days a week 8am
until 6pm

0800 376 3706

e-mail: info@rmt.org.uk

Legal helpline: 0800 587 7516



Catering for success

RECENT RMT organising weeks carried out across the regions have led to an increase in catering members working for Select Service Partners (SSP).

SSP is a subsidiary of Compass Group and holds the franchise for most of the outlets at major rail stations. Burger King, Whistle Stop, Upper Crust, Marks and Spencer and the pubs on platforms are all part of the SSP outfit. RMT has negotiating rights for all the staff employed in these workplaces.

As a result of the recruitment drive there is an increase in membership, members volunteering to go on reps' training courses and a recognition that RMT is there to protect workers in the workplace. Even more importantly, staff understand that there is now a way to raise any issues of concern.

Alan Pottage of the organising unit said that it would take time to build up organisation in many areas.

"However, it is imperative that we raise our profile in SSP workplaces, whether by speaking to staff about the union, dropping in leaflets, posters and application packs to outlets or arranging to spend a day in the mess room to provide staff with an opportunity to find out more about the union," he said.

Organisers found that there were many pressing issues, ranging from advice on specific work-related matters to general representation.

"The main issue is the need for every SSP worker to receive a decent living wage. With the majority of staff being paid on or around the minimum wage, it is a matter of urgency for SSP workers that we take this matter up," Alan said.

The high turnover of staff has proved a barrier to organising. However, Alan said that over the past year SSP staff had expressed that they want change – they want to join the union, to become reps and to stand up and fight for better pay and conditions. SSP staff interested in joining RMT should phone the helpline – see number on left.

RMT to ballot more Eurostar staff for industrial action

RMT is balloting 375 members at Eurostar following the failure of management to deal with outstanding items from the 2003 pay claim including: Terminals pay (rate for the job), lack of travel facilities for non-protected staff, office staff hours of work, office staff pay structure.

Around 160 RMT Eurostar members in the company's customer-service department at Waterloo and Ashford have already taken strike action last month over another "utterly inadequate and simply unacceptable" regrading offer and failure to agree a 'rate for the job', despite the company conceding the principle.

Since 1993 Eurostar has operated a salary banding system in the terminals. This means that these workers did not have an

agreed, defined or negotiated rate of pay and receive different salaries for the same job, on the same shifts, with the same responsibilities. It also meant that customer service staff were paid differences of up to £3,000 for the same duties.

Remaining staff to be balloted over similar grievances include the 300 engineering, maintenance and office staff at North Pole International, north London.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said it was disappointing that management had either stopped negotiating or failed to make any progress on outstanding issues.

"We have made it clear that the union is prepared to talk, but so far we have still heard absolutely nothing from Eurostar, and they have let it be known that they are



SOLID: Eurostar staff on the picket line at Waterloo with Bob Crow

not prepared to negotiate, either directly or through the Acas conciliation service," Bob said.

The action on August 28 was well supported at both Ashford and Waterloo. In the afternoon, members marched through the Waterloo Terminal with flags flying

and whistles blowing (above).

"Management were only able to keep the service going by flouting their own rule book and group standards by using unqualified management staff in Safety Critical roles," Bob Crow said.

Keep Cross Country franchise intact

RMT has called for the Cross Country rail franchise to be kept intact after the Strategic Rail Authority halted negotiations with the Virgin Rail Group and threatened to terminate the contract.

Since July 2002 the franchise has been operated by Virgin on a cost-plus basis and the company had hoped to run the franchise until it was due to end in 2012.

Since Virgin took over the franchise in January 1997 it has

received £985 million in net public subsidy.

The SRA informed Virgin that it reserves the right to terminate the franchise and is expected to make clear its intentions soon. Therefore, the future of Cross Country is uncertain – a matter of considerable concern for RMT and staff.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the union would campaign to keep Cross Country as a single entity and fight to

ensure that members' job security is protected along with their pensions, travel facilities and other terms and conditions.

"Any decision taken on the future of Cross Country that breaks the existing operation into two or more pieces to be handed to existing or new private franchise holders would only further compound the already fragmented nature of passenger services," he said.

Such actions would also be out

of step with the government's aim, outlined in the Future of Rail White Paper, to provide a coherent and effective management structure for the industry.

The union said that if the SRA decides to terminate Virgin control it should not re-franchise Cross Country services but operate them directly in the public sector using the success of South Eastern Trains as a template.



Assaults on transport staff rise

RMT called for the return of train guards, more station staff and bus conductors last month to stem the rising tide of attacks on staff.

Recent British Transport Police figures show a 14 per cent increase in violent crime across the rail network. On London's Tube, the situation is even worse, with a 22 per cent increase in violent crime and a staggering 29 per cent rise in assaults on staff.

Attacks on Tube workers now account for a third of all reported assaults.

In one particularly nasty case a station assistant is in danger of losing his spleen. There are countless cases of staff being spat at and assaults which may leave no physical marks but leave victims psychologically scarred.

"We need adequate staff on every station all the time they are open and a guard on every train, including on the Tube," general secretary Bob Crow said.

"Our members bear the brunt of aggressive, drunken behaviour, particularly at night and when working alone, or receive abuse and threats from commuters frustrated by late-running trains.

"For too long rail employers have cut staff simply to save money, and the price has been an increase in assaults against our members," he said.

The union said that CCTV cameras could help, but there was no substitute for an adequate presence of uniformed staff, backed up by a zero-tolerance policy from rail employers and a properly resourced and responsive transport police force.

The trend to cut jobs has been encouraged by a succession of ministers that set subsidy levels too low to maintain adequate staffing levels and allowed the de-staffing of stations and driver-only operations.

Youth award winner Yvonne McMurtrie reflects on her experiences at the union's annual youth course

AFTER speaking to everyone about the course and its contents, the general consensus was that it was fantastic. Comments included highly informative, empowering, should be more widely available and, most of all, fun. During the week-long course, which was run alongside the union's annual general meeting in Portsmouth, we had a few things set out for us by education officer Ray Spry-Shute. Sessions involved looking through the rule book, and looking up certain things, for example, the role of the Council of Executives.

The best part of the week was Thursday, when we had our own "mini AGM" where for home work on Wednesday, we were asked to split into pairs and come up with two resolutions to put forward, argue against, and vote for. We learned how best to put these resolutions across as

Youth on the move



ON COURSE: Yvonne (centre) with youth delegates and president Tony Donaghey and education officer Ray Spry-Shute

Ray, who took on the role of chair, had been taking notes about our public speaking and how we had written the resolutions out. He made suggestions that some may have put down too much information, or hadn't replied properly to the people who were against the issue. He also pointed out that maybe some didn't take it too seriously, particularly as one of the teams (Kath Dulsion and Dave Giles) had asked for a resolution for Jelly and Ice cream to be provided to the young members of the RMT at the AGM!

So, that's pretty much all I can

say about that, but I have been asked by the rest of the group to state delegates felt that our age was brought up a little too often by AGM delegates, in the sense that we were constantly referred to as "the kids" This lowered the mood of the YRMT group. I've also been asked to state that the average age of the YRMT group was 28, so not exactly kids, and most of us have been in the transport industry and members of the union for more than five years, so therefore old enough to be delegate at the AGM without being part of the young members' section.

Disabled rail worker wins £1 million damages

RAIL worker Michael Smith, from Allerton in Liverpool, who was run down by a freight train and badly injured, has been awarded £1,025,000 compensation to pay for his long-term care.

Mr Smith, who was a very active union rep, was knocked down by a car transporter train in September 1997 when he was working on railway sidings at Speke.

At a previous hearing his employers, English, Welsh & Scottish Railways, were found liable for the accident and will pay the compensation ordered by the High Court in London.

Mr Smith suffered serious life-threatening injuries which have left him permanently disabled, physically and

mentally. He now needs 24-hour care and his wife, Geraldine, spends much of her time caring for her husband.

He explained that compensation award means he will be able to pay for the equipment and care he needs.

"This is a lot of money but every penny is spoken for. The Court worked out how much money we have lost due to me not working any more, and then looked at the full-time care, the medical treatment and the equipment I will need to help me make life a bit better.

"So all this money will be made to work hard to ensure that Geraldine can have help with looking after me.

"It's awful to be dependent

on others, but the accident has devastated me both physically and mentally," he said.

Mr Smith suffered permanent brain injury, a serious spinal injury, shoulder injury and fully depends upon his wife for many daily needs and he will never work again.

The compensation means that he can live a better life by receiving the right level of care and be able to buy the equipment he needs.

It was argued that EWS should meet all the costs that the Smiths now face due to the accident. This covers everything from medicine and treatment to a specially adapted vehicle and home help.

Wilts & Dorset members in the driving seat

RMT bus drivers at Wilts and Dorset have won a major victory after threatening to strike over management undertaking driving duties.

A strike ballot was suspended after the company agreed a solution designed to see managers drive buses only as a last resort. For several months RMT members had been denied opportunities for overtime and rest-day working, while managers and supervisors were boosting their own earnings by taking out

buses on both stage-carriage and private-hire work.

Management assurances that the practice would be confined to situations of last resort were consistently broken, angering members. The issue came to a head when the company said it would continue to tender for large-scale private-hire work and to use non-driving staff to cover the work, at overtime rates of pay.

This triggered a strike ballot amongst incensed members at Salisbury and its outstations.

"This is a great victory for our bus members and shows yet again what can be achieved by sticking together and fighting against a management attempting to undermine members' conditions," general secretary Bob Crow said.

The deal involves an increase in the number of spare duties and a revised system of rest-day allocation, based on the system operating successfully at other depots.

Volunteer sheets will be posted around two weeks in

advance, inviting volunteers for rest-day working and for volunteers for call-outs, call-backs and split-duty overtime.

The work will be allocated in the week before the relevant operations, with priority given to drivers who have worked the fewest rest days. Last-minute cover for sickness or traffic delays may be undertaken by non-regular drivers only if a regular driver cannot be found, but in such circumstances no fares collection would take place.

Just the ticket for GNER members

RMT recently achieved a significant victory for five ticket examiner members employed by GNER at Durham.

The five were originally employed as Station Customer Service Assistants to sell and check tickets at barriers. In September 2003 it was agreed at GNER Company Council that they would have the same terms and conditions as on-train ticket examiners, which would entitle them to be paid commission whilst being on a lower basic salary. However, after they were given new contracts that changed their grade from

Station CSA to Ticket Examiner, management said they would not be paid commission pending a full review of the ticket commission structure that had been requested by Company council representatives.

Company Council reps made it clear to the company that this was completely unacceptable. GNER had given our members new contracts on a lower basic salary and then withdrawn payment of commission without agreement. The union demanded that members be paid all outstanding

commission.

Management's response was to initially delay and then to decline the claim. However, as a result of the persistence of the reps and the Regional Organiser, management finally recognised the justice of the claim and agreed to pay the outstanding commission as contracted, which amounted to several thousand pounds between the five members over a six-month period.

Once again the importance of being a member of the RMT has been well and truly demonstrated.

Hatfield criminal charges dropped

CHARGES brought against three Railtrack executives in the wake of the Hatfield crash have been quashed. Old Bailey judge Justice Mackay allowed applications from the three – including former Railtrack chief executive Gerald Corbett, now chairman of Woolworths – that the charges should be dropped. Rail maintenance firm Balfour Beatty and several of its executives at the time of the rail crash in which four people died on October 17, 2000, still face various charges of manslaughter due to gross negligence and offences under the Health and Safety at Work Act. Existing corporate manslaughter laws are problematic because it requires prosecutors to prove the existence of a culpable "controlling mind" before any organization can be found guilty.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that this latest legal debacle underlined the urgent need for a specific corporate manslaughter law.

"We still need a change in the law to ensure that executives who cause unnecessary and avoidable deaths are held to account," he said.

Attempted manslaughter prosecutions over the Herald of Free Enterprise ferry disaster in 1989 that killed 193 and against Great Western Trains over the 1997 Southall rail crash that killed seven both failed.

Metronet contract should be suspended

RMT called for the PPP contract of Tube privateer Metronet to be suspended and its maintenance work taken back in-house after the company was found to have been the principal cause of the White City derailment last May.

Metronet was found to have failed to comply fully with safety measures laid down by London Underground following last October's Camden Town accident.

"A company that fails to comply with explicit safety instructions put in place after one derailment and as a result causes another should not be

allowed to continue operating on the network," RMT general secretary Bob Crow said.

He said that serious questions must also be asked of London Underground itself – such as where is the new safety regime we were promised under the auspices of Transport Commissioner Bob Kiley?

"After Camden Town and White City we called for speed restrictions to be put in place over all 42 sets of points identified as potentially dangerous, and now we expect LUL to take that call seriously.

"We have always said that the PPP would lead to

dangerous fragmentation and communications breakdown, and that is exactly what is happening," Bob said.

The union pointed out that Tube users expected their safety to be taken seriously, yet the private firms involved in the PPP were in it primarily to make money – the one thing that they had proved themselves to be good at.

"We were lucky that there were no serious injuries at White City – now we need to see some action so that further preventable accidents do not take place," the general secretary said.

Dear.....MP

Facilitating shore leave for seafarers and improved maritime security

I wish to highlight a particular problem confronting the global shipping industry and the 1.25 million seafarers that service international trade.



Due to the special nature of seafarers' employment the provision of shore leave in the foreign ports that seafarers visit is vital to ensure their wellbeing and welfare. However, one of the unresolved problems created by post 9/11 security concerns is the tighter restrictions being placed on the movement of seafarers by the US government.

Apart from concerns about welfare, the entry into force of the International Maritime Organisation, International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code has conferred a major new security role on seafarers. Maritime employers and seafarers' trade unions believe that unreasonable restrictions on shore leave are counter productive, simply generating ill feeling amongst those who have such an important part to play in ensuring the security of ships and port facilities.

The most acute problems have been experienced in the US, where in addition to the frequent denial of shore leave, some companies have even been required to pay for armed guards to prevent foreign seafarers from leaving their ships.

To address concerns about security in a manner compatible with providing seafarers with shore leave, the International Labour Organisation has adopted a new Convention on the Security of Seafarers' Identity Documents (ILO 185).

The new Convention requires seafarers' identity documents to include a bar-coded fingerprint, and sets out the detailed procedures for their issue. It maintains the principle that port states must afford special treatment to seafarers to facilitate shore leave or crew transits, and that seafarers holding the new ID should not be required to apply for a visa in advance.

The global shipping industry and seafarers' trade unions are especially disappointed by the US decision to abolish "crew list visas" and insist that seafarers appear in person at US consulates to obtain visas. Apart from the huge practical difficulties this policy creates, it also gives a very negative signal to other governments that are considering whether to ratify the new ILO Convention.

On World Maritime Day, I urge the UK government to use all diplomatic means to secure from the US government an agreement that facilitates the movement of seafarers and the provision of shore leave.



Vote YES for a political voice

WHATEVER we may think of politicians, or whatever our different views are of political parties, the political process effects us on a daily basis. It could be the state of our local schools or hospitals, transport or crime.

The pensions, working hours, rights at work and health and safety of transport workers are all affected by political decisions. And of course the privatisation of the railways, the Tube PPP, the break up of the bus industry and the decline in seafarers' jobs all have their origins in political decisions.

It is for these reasons that the forthcoming RMT Political Fund ballot is so important. As well as allowing RMT to run political campaigns the Political Fund gives members a political voice in parliament on the issues that specifically affects transport workers.

And RMT has a tremendous record of working with sympathetic MPs in parliament to secure victories for RMT members. These include the protection of pensions and travel facilities for rail and tube, and bus workers and seafarers, and the right for workers to receive compensation for injuries at work.

The union is currently working very closely with those MPs on all those vital issues for transport workers. The tonnage tax campaign for seafarers, for public ownership of the railways, an increase in freight of rail, an end to the London Underground PPP, for minimum fire safety standards on rail and Tube, for regulation of the bus industry and a reduction in hours with no loss of pay of road transport workers to name but a few.

Perhaps it is also worth reminding ourselves why we have the Political Fund in the first place. This dates back to the beginning of 20th century when employers used the courts to prevent the founding fathers of the unions from campaigning and speaking out on behalf of their members. The outcry that followed forced the government of the time to bring in legislation that allowed the unions to have a separate political fund.

The right of unions to engage in political campaigning on behalf of its members was again challenged in the early 80s when the conservative government introduced the legislation that compelled unions to ballot their members every ten years if they wished to retain their fund. The thinking behind this attack on trade union rights was that members would vote against the maintenance of their Political Funds, leaving unions without the ability to campaign politically. Those who wished to weaken the unions in this way could not have been more wrong. Not only did union members turn out to vote in record numbers, the Yes voters were in an overwhelming majority: 83 per cent of members voted YES.

So it is clear that the unions' political voice has been hard fought for and the RMT continues to gain a strong reputation for its political campaigning and its parliamentary work. By voting YES in the forthcoming ballot we and fellow MPs will be able to continue that work on your behalf. Let's keep the political voice.

JOHN McDONNELL MP



Vote **YES** to keep the political fund

**Your union,
your voice
Vote **YES**
for a voice**



Whether you work in the rail, underground, maritime, bus or road freight industries, RMT General Secretary Bob Crow explains why it is vital that all RMT members Vote YES in the forthcoming ballot

Q What is the political fund?

A. Decisions and laws made by politicians affect your interests at work. For example transport policy, pensions, employment rights, jobs health and safety and working hours are all affected by political decisions. RMT must be able to campaign on these issues to improve your rights and bring improvements to the Transport Industry. To do this the law says that we must have a political fund and ballot members every ten years to retain the fund. The political fund is raised by members paying the political levy as part of your membership subs. The political levy is just £3.12 a year or 26p a month.

Q. How has the political fund benefited RMT members?

It is important to remember that the political fund and the political fund ballot is not about affiliation to political parties – nor is it about what we do with the political fund – we are just voting on the basic right to keep it. The law says that unions must have a separate political fund to spend on political campaigning. This could include a newspaper advertising campaign in support of public services, lobbying for better legal rights for workers, calling better pensions or holding a rally to protect jobs.

The RMT political fund has been used to win a number of rights for RMT members, including:

- ✓ Protection of pension and travel facilities
- ✓ Protection of the right to receive compensation for injuries at work

- ✓ Trade union rights and recognition
- ✓ Health and Safety legislation
- ✓ Protection against discrimination and harassment
- ✓ More rights for parents at work
- ✓ The Trade Union learning scheme

Q. How will the political fund benefit RMT members in the future?

As well as allowing the RMT to help defend rights we have already won, winning a Yes vote is vital to allow us to continue to campaign for new rights and improvements. Using the political fund and working with other unions we are currently campaigning for

- For re-nationalisation of the railways
- An end to the London Underground PPP
- Travel facilities for all rail and tube workers
- Increased employment opportunities for seafarers
- Regulation and public ownership of the bus industry
- Shorter working hours with no loss of pay
- Improved employment laws
- Increased protection for pensions
- improved health and safety legislation

Q. What happens if we lose the political fund?

If we lose the political fund then, quite simply, we will not be able to campaign on any of the above issues. Big business interest and organisations that are against advancing our member's rights will have a huge advantage over the union. They are not required to have a political fund and can spend millions of pounds lobbying against the interest of our members. Without our political fund we will be seriously weakened. We will be fighting with one hand tied behind our back.

In the last political fund ballot RMT members voted by 83 per cent to retain the political fund. The ballot opens on October 15 and we again need a YES vote so we can continue to campaign on your behalf. It's your union. It's your voice.

Vote Yes for the political fund. Vote Yes for a voice.



Recruit a friend on October 11 - international road transport workers day

EACH year the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) holds an action day for road transport workers to highlight the need to be in a union, campaign for better conditions at work and highlight the need for safety at work.



RMT is asking road transport members to take part in the action day, taking place on October 11-12, by asking a work colleague to join the union. Members will find different ways to join the union on page 21.

RMT organisers have also been targeting road transport companies such as Excel and Initial City Link this year and increased union membership in many areas.

The RMT group of MPs have also been busy campaigning on protecting health and safety rights for road transport workers. If all road transport members recruited a friend then the important work the union carries out would be much more effective.



Remember – fatigue kills

There are many warning signs for fatigue. A combination of any of the following signs shows that the driver is becoming fatigued:

- yawning
- eyes feeling sore and heavy
- vision starting to blur
- daydreaming and not concentrating
- becoming impatient
- feeling hungry or thirsty
- reactions seem slow
- feeling stiff or cramped
- driving speed creeps up or down
- starting to make poor gear changes
- wandering over the road

When you notice these warning signs, take a break. The efforts of individuals are limited. A trade union can negotiate better conditions collectively with your employer. Do you have trade union representation at your workplace?



Edwards Duthie
Solicitors

In partnership
with the



Edwards Duthie Solicitors has a special affinity with trade unions, their members and officials. We have advised union members and their families for some 22 years, to the point where we now serve some 40,000 members across 230 branches nationwide. We have a dedicated team which serves RMT members, their families and friends. Unlike our competitors, we offer a full range of legal services, many of which are free or heavily discounted for union members :

- PERSONAL INJURY CLAIMS
- SPECIALIST CLINICAL NEGLIGENCE TEAM
- EXPERT ADVICE ON ALL ASPECTS OF EMPLOYMENT LAW
- 24 HOUR CRIMINAL ADVICE AND REPRESENTATION
- FREE WILLS SERVICE FOR MEMBERS
- 10% DISCOUNT ON RESIDENTIAL CONVEYANCING
- LAW SOCIETY SPECIALISTS IN FAMILY AND MATRIMONIAL ADVICE
- FREE HALF HOUR INTERVIEW IN ALL AREAS OF LAW

Our approach is both proactive and hands on. Our lawyers go to see members and officials at the workplace, at home, at union premises or wherever discussion can best be accommodated nationwide. We are here to provide a service and, unlike our competitors, we do not consider that we can do that from a remote standpoint.

RING NOW FOR ADVICE & ASSISTANCE ON 0208 514 9000

email: allinfo@edwardsduthie.com

Another world is possible



**TUC general secretary
Brendan Barber
explains why you
should come to
London this October
for the European
Social Forum**

THE 2004 European Social Forum (ESF) will be held in Alexandra Palace and Park in North London from Thursday, October 14 to Sunday, October 17. You should be there.

Thirty thousand mostly young Europeans will be coming. They are idealists who believe that "another world is possible". So we want to put trade-union issues at the heart of the weekend. The TUC wants union members to take part in the debates and spread the message about our values.

The ESF will bring together thousands of people from across Europe for debates and discussion, and for music, films and exhibitions. It will

start with a mass rally on the Thursday evening and end with a demonstration in Trafalgar Square on the Sunday. And if you can't find what you're looking for at the main event in north London, there will be fringe events across the capital.

The event will emphasise that globalisation is not an uncontrollable force, but the result of conscious policy choices made by the people who run the world. If different choices were made, we could have a different kind of globalisation, with greater wealth, better health and better lives. But that will only happen if people take control - creating what might be called "social" globalisation.

Checklist: what can you do?

- ✓ 1. Register to attend the ESF at www.fse-esf.org.uk - it costs just £30 (people who register early will get a complimentary Travelcard worth £15), and there are reductions for people without jobs. The ESF office may also be able to advise on budget accommodation. You could get your branch to sponsor you to attend.
- ✓ 2. Tell the TUC if you are coming and able to help with trade-union activity. Send us an email at esf@tuc.org.uk, or send us a note at Trade Unions at the ESF, Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS.
- ✓ 3. See what's happening during the event. The full programme will be available soon at www.fse-esf.org.uk and the trade-union programme will be on www.tuc.org.uk/international/
- ✓ 4. Check whether your branch/region has affiliated or made a donation to the ESF - donations will help Eastern Europeans attend, including trade unionists (or send a cheque to 'TUC Aid', address as for TUC, and let us know it's for the ESF, if you only want to assist trade union participants).
- ✓ 5. If you live within easy travelling distance of Alexandra Palace and can offer accommodation, contact the ESF office at the TGWU, Woodberry, 218 Green Lanes, London N4 2HB (020 8809 5347) or ukesoffice@gn.apc.org

At the moment, transnational companies can move money and more and more jobs around the world. The latest example of this is offshoring, where work in Europe and the US is moved to a country where wages and other costs are lower.

In the world we want to see, there would be rights for workers too - to keep their jobs or migrate to where the jobs are and wages are highest. And globalisation would be a tool to raise the quality of working life across the world instead of a lever to make work worse.

RMT is playing an active part in the European Social forum and is organising seminars on issues that will be of interests to Transport Workers, these include discussions on European rail privatisation, trade union rights and pensions.

The ESF has happened twice before, in Florence and Paris. It was inspired by the

World Social Forums (WSF) that began in the poor town of Porto Alegre in Brazil. The WSF mirrors the World Economic Forum of world leaders and business owners, which meets each January in the Swiss ski resort of Davos.

Trade unions have worked with the event organising committee and the Mayor of London to ensure that the ESF is a success. As a result, there will be trade-union speakers at the main plenaries and seminars. Many of the topics for debate were suggested and planned by trade unions.

There will be a trade-union welcoming event on the first day, and a trade union 'base' at the TUC national education centre in Crouch End, very close to Alexandra Palace and Park. And we will be doing more than just debate. For example, we plan to use the opportunity to go out and recruit trade-union members across London.

It's a great opportunity.

**STOP THE WAR
NO TO RACISM
END PRIVATISATION
FOR GLOBAL JUSTICE**

The third European Social Forum will take place from 14-17 October in London.

The ESF emerged from the World Social Forum meeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil in 2001. Its first two massive gatherings in Florence (2002) and Paris (2003) brought together tens of thousands of activists from the whole of Europe and beyond.

The ESF is unique in offering a space for social movements, trade unions, NGOs, refugees, peace and anti-imperialist groups, anti-racist movements, environmental movements, networks of the excluded and community campaigns from Europe and the world to come together to discuss how to achieve social justice globally and make 'another world possible'.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

For information go to: www.fse-esf.org * Affiliate to the UK ESF Organising Committee email: ukesfcommittee@gn.apc.org * Propose seminars and workshops at the ESF email: ukesfproposals@gn.apc.org * Offer your language skills as an interpreter at the ESF go to: www.babels.org.uk * Tickets for the ESF will be available online from July

another
world is
possible

european social forum

14-17 October 2004, London * www.fse-esf.org

Remember Tebay? – it's still happening



LAST February four RMT members were killed when a runaway trailer from a poorly maintained road-rail vehicle, owned by a private contractor, ploughed into a gang of infrastructure workers at Tebay in Cumbria.

Despite numerous safety recommendations, two road-rail vehicles (RRVs) were involved in potentially lethal runaway incidents at the same Stockport site in the space of two weeks last month. The site is part of the West Coast Mainline renewal project, involving a number of contractors and sub-contractors. There was also a similar runaway at Sheidmuir near Motherwell in May.

As a result, RMT has urged Network Rail to bring track renewals back in-house for safety's sake. The company recently triumphantly released figures showing that delays have delays in some areas fell by as much as 50 per cent in Wessex and the East Midlands where maintenance was first taken in-house.

NR Deputy Chief Executive Iain Coucher said: "Network Rail delays fell by almost 30 per cent in July, making it ten straight months of sustained improvement. It's the passenger and freight users who benefit from this improvement but there is still much more to be done".

RMT general secretary Bob Crow agreed and said that it was shocking to learn so soon after the deaths of four RMT members at Tebay that there had been two more runaway incidents this month under renewal contracts which are still being handled by private contractors.

"What is even more disturbing is that the incidents, two weeks apart, appear to have happened in similar circumstances on the same site and could so easily have claimed more lives.

"After the Tebay tragedy we called for an inquiry into safety standards in the fragmented, privatised rail industry. So far we have had no inquiry, but the runaway incidents have kept on happening. It seems that safety is still taking second place to profit," he said.

Bring track renewals back in-house

RMT has written to Network Rail expressing deep concern and asking why the first of the two Stockport incidents was not even mentioned at a recent meeting of the Safety Council.

The exact causes of these two incidents will be established by a formal inquiry into them, but it is clear that Network Rail needs to take urgent action to control the risk of runaways by improving site management and ensuring the competency of machine operators.

"The most efficient way for Network Rail to gain proper control over the assets and skills needed for the renewal of the infrastructure is to follow its own lead and bring track renewals back in-house, as it has already done with maintenance," Bob Crow said.

A CONTRACTOR was seriously injured earlier this year when he was forced to jump from a moving road rail vehicle (RRV) trailer during weekend engineering works near Hayle Station in Cornwall.

A Rail Safety and Standards Board inquiry revealed long hours of work, a failure to disseminate the lessons from a previous accident, poor aftercare and a widespread habit by the industry of turning a blind eye to the dangerous practice of riding on vehicles not equipped for that purpose.

The underlying cause of the accident began when the plant access point was moved some four miles from the work site without making provision for transporting staff between the two locations. Two road rail vehicles with flat bed trailers attached were used to take equipment back to the plant compound adjoining the access point. While each vehicle had a machine operator and a machine controller in accord with the rules, neither RRV had a second seat.

On arrival at the access point the equipment was offloaded into the compound. A ballast brush was then loaded onto one trailer still attached to the remaining RRV, as it was known that this piece of equipment was going to be required later in the work plan. It was loaded unsecured across the width of the trailer, which meant that the spindles protruding from the sides overhung the trailer.

All three staff then positioned themselves on the

'Management turned a blind eye to a practice they knew was prevalent in order for the workload to be achieved'

remaining trailer alongside the ballast brush for the journey back to the worksite. It was estimated that the RRV, which was now pushing the trailer, covered most of the journey at a speed of between 10 and 15 mph, even though the trailer is restricted to a maximum speed of 5 mph. However, as there is no speedometer on these RRVs, the operator has to rely on his own judgement.

On entering Hayle station the overhanging ballast brush struck the platform ramp and began to lift and slew. The three men riding on the trailer leapt onto the track, but as the machine controller from the second RRV was about to jump, he stumbled and fell. He was hit by the front road wheels and run over by the rear road wheels as the RRV passed over him. It was immediately clear that he was seriously injured and was taken to hospital by air ambulance.

Long hours

The inquiry discovered that the RRV machine operator involved in the accident had left his home near Portsmouth at 23:00 hours on Saturday night and drove to Hayle overnight. He arrived at about 03:00 hours and then slept in his van before reporting to the signing on point at 05:45 hours. Following the accident, he was required to remain on the site in order to ultimately remove the RRV as he was at the time the only machine operator available. He finally left the site at around 19:00 hours, and while he was offered a lift, he chose to drive himself home, arriving at about midnight.

The other machine operator, who was one of those standing on the trailer, was rostered to work from 06:00 hours until 18:00 hours on the Saturday, but in the event worked until 22:30 hours to complete the work. He was then called out next morning to work from 06:15 as only one machine operator had reported for duty. After the accident, he chose to drive himself to hospital to have ten stitches in a cut hand which he sustained when he leapt

Turning a blind eye - a case in point



'A Rail Safety and Standards Board inquiry revealed long hours of work and a failure to disseminate the lessons from a previous accident'

A BLIND EYE: Staff inspect the point where an unsecured ballot brush, being transported by the Road Rail Vehicle, hit the platform at Hayle station and caused serious injuries

from the trailer. He was at the hospital for some three hours, after which he drove himself home, arriving at about 21:30 hours.

He told the inquiry that his employer had assessed him for working the extra shift on Sunday, but it was common for excess hours to be worked, especially by machine operators.

A blind eye

However, the Inquiry seemed satisfied that the employer had appropriate policies and procedures to control excessive hours. They seemed unconcerned that these policies and procedures permitted him to work over 16 hours on the Saturday followed by a short rest period of less than eight hours before resuming another 12-hour duty. Neither did they make any comment about the fact that having been involved in a serious accident, he was then allowed to drive himself to hospital with an injured hand, and from there to his home over 200 miles away, where he arrived some 15 hours after commencing work.

The inquiry identified the unauthorised riding on RRVs and trailers. It is well known amongst staff that it was not permitted but, as one of the machine operators stated, it is common practice especially when there are long distances

involved as no other mode of transport was available. Management also often turned a blind eye to a practice they knew was prevalent but should not be condoned in order for the workload to be achieved.

The inquiry recommended that during the possession planning process, every effort should be made to minimise the length of work sites, and in particular define plant access points that are as close as practical to the actual work site. Where long distances exist between the two points, arrangements should include provision for the safe conveyance of staff.

An examination of the signing on/off sheets for the work also revealed a poor level of compliance. The inquiry felt it was difficult to see how some individuals could have received any site access or safety briefings from the site access controller. Also, even where the staff did sign on, very few signed off. This meant that it would have been difficult to ascertain who was accounted for if there had been a more widespread incident.



The rail review – recipe for cuts?

The government review of the rail industry contained in the White Paper 'The Future of Rail' is a curate's egg which may threaten vital services

ALTHOUGH the union welcomes abolition of the Strategic Rail Authority, devolution and the transfer of some operational responsibilities to Network Rail, the review does not end the disastrous fragmentation of the industry caused by the Tory privatisation.

The rail network will still have ten or more train operating companies, Network Rail, the franchising body, the rail regulator, six track renewal companies, 200 contractors and

three rolling stock companies.

"We will continue to have a patchwork of competing interests, with private profits soaking up billions of taxpayers money," RMT general secretary Bob Crow says.

Although an enhanced government role is promised, together with some steps to re-integrate the fragmented structure of the industry, the White Paper explicitly rules out a return to public ownership. Instead the private

partnership approach is enshrined with the railways being described as "a public service, specified by government and delivered by the private sector".

RMT also fundamentally disagrees with the proposal to transfer responsibility for passenger safety to the regulator and away from the Health and Safety Executive because of the financial conflicts of interest involved. Responsibility for safety will be further fragmented since HSE will still be responsible for rail workers safety.

No to boustitution

RMT opposes proposals to make it easier for Passenger Transport Executives to introduce contracts for

buses as part of a includes reduction

Under current ar specify and manag services in their ar services they spec subsidy they receiv subsidies are incre national rather than However, the gover transfer financial re local transport dec PTEs, meaning tha the full cost of red increasing services simply transfer the potential reduction from a national to will make the defer services and route and rural areas cer campaign for the r of the industry.

Catalyst report blasts rail privatisation

A recent Catalyst think-tank report called for a publicly owned and accountable railway as the "appropriate model" for ensuring a proper return for the public money being invested in the industry.

It points out that although considerable amounts of taxpayers' money have been spent, large amounts of the privatised and marketised rail network inherited from the Tory government is not up to the task. It says that the government's recent rail review has shown it is not willing to tackle the root cause of the problems.

New Labour made some modifications to the inherited privatised system, mainly by attempting subject it to greater regulation. However, the private rail industry is now receiving three times the public subsidy that British rail received. The fragmentation of the industry has meant that infrastructure costs continue to escalate, estimated to be running at between three and five times the levels prior to privatisation. The result is that performance is way below levels achieved in the late 1990s. The report says that achieving a public service railway requires action now including:

- Direct public ownership to provide clear accountability
- Bring track renewal in-house so as to provide greater efficiency and cost-effectiveness and end the fragmentation of the network
- Ending the franchising of train operations to private operators
- Rolling stock companies to be regulated to scrutinise operations
- Encourage a rail freight renaissance as part of creating an economically and environmentally sustainable integrated transport policy
- Maintain independent safety regulation
- Devolve planning and control to meet particular social and economic needs

Catalyst will be holding fringe meetings in conjunction with RMT, ASLEF and TSSA at the TUC and Labour Party conference this month.

● The Catalyst report, *A Future for Rail*, is available from Catalyst at 150 The Broadway, London SW19 1RX,



Network Rail

The role of not-for-company Network expanded following well as their current operation, mainten Network Rail will a bility for route utilis and timetabling. E integrated control of the core UK rail opened to encoura operational integra Network Rail and t

The first three ar private sector cont removed and main house by Network significant perform improvements. Des cent fall in delays i government intend renewals in the pri RMT fundamentally the government po continue the camp removal of the priv

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LOBBY: RMT members lobbying parliament earlier this year

contract regime on infrastructure renewals.

Train Operating Companies

There will be a reduction in the number of franchises to more closely align Network Rail's regional structure and responsibility for issuing franchises will pass to the Department for Transport. RMT will be seeking clarification from the department on how the transfer impacts on the current franchising round and will fight to ensure that any reduction in franchise numbers does not lead to job losses and service cuts.

No mention is made in the White Paper of South Eastern Trains (SET) which has been operating successfully in the public sector with improved performance since November 2003. However, the RMT-led campaign to retain SET in public hands has already resulted in a delay in the re-tendering process.

Safety

In the RMT submission to the rail review it made clear that rail safety should remain free from political and economic pressure and protected from commercial considerations which could compromise safety. RMT said that safety should remain, as recommended by Lord Cullen, with the Health and Safety Executive.

Unfortunately, the White Paper has decided to pass the regulation of rail safety for both national rail and

metro systems, including London Underground, from the HSE to the Office of Rail Regulation. This transfer of responsibility has been largely motivated by a desire to



placate private sector interests, which believe that safety regulation is currently "gold-plated" and too expensive.

All these systemic problems underline the fact that only the re-nationalisation of the entire railway network, democratically run by those who use and work an integrated transport network, will be able to deliver a decent 21st century transport system.

● A full version of the RMT response to the rail review is available on the RMT website.

The Strategic Rail Authority annual report published on 21 July indicates that net franchise payments to the Train Operating Companies stood at just over £2 billion in 2003-04.

Train Operating Company	Net subsidy
Anglia Railways	4.4m
Arriva Trains Merseyside	20.4m
Arriva Trains Northern	241.3m
Arriva Trains Wales	45.5m
C2C	20.1m
Central Trains	147m
Chiltern Railways	24.4m
Connex South Eastern	84.9m
First Great Eastern	(31.9)m
First Great Western	31.9m
First North Western	191.7m
Gatwick Express	(12.9)m
GNER	(22.4)m
Island Line	3.1m
Midland Main Line	(3.4)m
ScotRail	268.3m
Silverlink	52m
South Central	90.8m
South Eastern Trains	49.1m
South West Trains	116.2m
Thames Trains	(5.1)m
Thameslink	(41)m
Transpennine Express	30.3m
Virgin Cross Country	246.1m
Virgin West Coast	331.9m
WAGN	10.5m
Wales & Borders	78.1m
Wessex Trains	78m
Total	£2.04 billion

() = payment made to SRA

An undemocratic privateers' charter

RMT recently decided at its AGM to campaign against the proposed EU Constitution which hands the power to privatise and other policies from elected governments to unelected eurocrats in Brussels

THE proposed constitution for the European Union threatens to fundamentally alter the way we are governed and how laws are made. Therefore, it should be of interest to all trade unionists.

Put simply, the constitution turns the EU on its head. At the moment, legitimacy remains with the member states. Under the constitution, the EU itself becomes the source of legitimacy and its laws will have primacy over member states. Power is irreversibly transferred from elected governments to the un-elected European Commission in Brussels. In other words, the EU constitution is almost entirely about amassing power for a superstate. It confirms the sole right of the Commission to initiate new laws and removes the power of veto from member states in over 30 new policy areas. This means that the lobbying of MPs and parliament for progressive

change would be rendered almost meaningless overnight. It would be far harder to influence policies decided by the remote, unaccountable and unelected commission in Brussels. Raising issues with MEPs would also not produce much in the way of results as they have no rights to table legislation.

As RMT general secretary Bob Crow put it recently: "the bottom line is that 'any government that hands over power to a degree envisaged in the proposed constitution is effectively no longer a government'".

The right to strike?

Attempts have been made to sell the constitution based on its supposed support for workers' rights, claiming that the Charter of Fundamental Rights contained within it enshrines the right strike. Unfortunately, this is simply not the case. Article II 28 explains that the "limits for the exercise of collective action, including strike action, come under national laws and practices". In other words, the UK's draconian anti-union laws will remain enforceable until they are removed from the statute books. Article II-52 also states that such rights can be removed 'in the general interest of the Union'. Therefore, the EU Court of Justice, which exists to further the interests of the EU, would reign supreme over national constitutions on all human and civil rights matters. This represents a massive extension of EU powers and trade unions could end up with even fewer rights.

A charter for big business

If the right to withdraw labour isn't guaranteed, the right of capital to roam free is set in stone.

Article 3 establishes "an internal market within which competition is free and unhindered" without any distinction between private and public sector.

The Commission will also gain new powers to negotiate agreements in the name of the EU on the General

Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) that will submit education, health and social services to enforced "liberalisation", all under the watchful eye of the newly unelected EU trade commissioner Peter Mandelson.

Mandelson recently claimed that "Europe will continue to benefit from globalisation as long as trade and investment are further liberalised." He also declared that the failure to implement the EU's "Lisbon agenda" for so-called 'labour market reform' was to blame for the eurozone's dreadful economic performance. The constitution will give EU officials massive new powers to impose neoliberal policies regardless of what elected governments say. Furthermore, it states "The currency of the Union shall be the euro", indicating that countries outside the struggling eurozone, like Britain, shall be forced to adopt the currency.

Even right-wing free-traders have stated that this top down imposition of neo-liberal policies constitutes a Pinochet-style coup in slow motion which will only serve to increase hostility to policies of mass privatisation.

No to EU militarism

The constitution also includes the drive to militarise the EU. It envisages the creation of an EU army capable of acting globally. It expects member states to contribute to a huge increase in the development of military hardware. There will be a European foreign minister who will direct a single EU foreign and military policy that must be "loyally" supported by member states. This has been portrayed as war machine that could act as a counter-weight to aggressive US imperialism.

However, leaving aside inherent problems in binding 25 separate countries with very different outlooks and interests, it should not be assumed with EU enlargement that an anti-US majority exists in Brussels as many east European entrants backed the illegal war in Iraq. EU forces have already taken part in military

NO
to the EU
constitution



TAKING LIBERTIES: Riot police fire teargas and attack protesters at the EU summit in Thessaloniki, Greece and European trade unions protest against the EU's drive to privatise and its involvement in negotiations on the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). pictures Jess Hurd/reportdigital.co.uk



adventures in tandem with the US and has forces in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Kosovo and Congo. Moreover, how will a single foreign policy sit with 'neutral' nations such as Finland, Austria, Ireland and Sweden?

Taking liberties

The constitution proposes to harmonise legal systems, with standard sentences and Europe-wide rules for basic legal procedures which do not include the right to trial by jury. It also envisages an EU public prosecutor and an extension of Europol's structures and operations, covering the collection of information relating to European citizens and 'investigative and operational action'. Human rights organisations such as Statewatch have expressed concerns at the prospect of Europol, whose officers' are immune from prosecution, being granted greater powers. Brussels will be able 'limit' human rights if deemed to be in the 'general interest' of the EU.

On top of controversial EU policies concerning refugees, new Italian European Commissioner for Justice and internal affairs Rocco Buttiglione has backed a German plan to build 'processing centres' in North Africa to hold asylum seekers trying to reach Europe. A similar plan was blocked last year by Sweden, but under the EU constitution, individual member states can be outvoted on asylum issues.

Popular opposition

Honest Europhiles like the Belgian prime minister describe the 900 page long treatise as the "the capstone of a European federal state" since it centralises massive powers to Brussels and expatriates none to member states.

However, many of those in favour of the constitution deny many aspects of the proposals and dismiss any criticism as right-wing scaremongering.

The truth, of course, is that millions of trade unionists and Labour voters have

deep reservations over the ratification of such a far-reaching document. RMT has tabled a motion to the TUC Congress in Brighton to highlight these concerns and calls on the TUC to investigate the impact of the proposals and campaign to defend national democratic rights.

There is growing opposition within the Labour Party with many MPs pledging support for the Labour Against a Superstate group, set up by Labour MPs Ian Davidson and John Cryer. Left and democratic opposition to the constitution is also growing in other member states. As former Labour MP Tony Benn pointed out in RMT news last year, "this constitution will be a tool for the euro-imperialists to remove democracy at home and punch above their military weight abroad".

● RMT's full submission to the TUC is available on the RMT website in the research area under 'consultation exercises'.

EU constitution at a glance

■ Article 1-14 says that EU can impose 'broad guidelines' telling member states how to run their economies. This could have huge implications for spending on public services.

■ Article 1-15 states: "Member states shall actively and unreservedly support the Union's common foreign and security policy in a spirit of loyalty and mutual solidarity".

■ Article 1-25 confirms the sole right of the unelected European Commission to draw up new laws and removes national veto rights in over 30 new areas.

■ Article II 28 states the "limits for the exercise of collective action, including strike action, come under national laws and practices"

■ Article II -52 allows the EU to 'limit' basic human rights if deemed to be in the 'general interest' of the EU (www.statewatch.org)

■ Article III-32 (1) states: 'A European framework law shall establish the measures in order to achieve the liberalisation of a specific service,' giving the EU the power to impose privatisation in a particular area.

■ Article III -175 provides for the creation of an EU public prosecutor. Article III -177 gives the EU the right to extend the 'structure, operation, field of action and tasks' of its police force, whose agents, like other EU officials, enjoy immunity from criminal prosecution.

Southampton No 5 branch
**Has nominated and supports
Andy Lister**

**For relief regional organiser
(Southern)
And urges members to give
their support**

Plymouth No 5 branch
Has nominated

**Andy
Lister**
**For relief regional organiser
(South)**

Election of relief regional
organiser (South)

**Newport IOW No 2 branch
Nominates
Andy Lister**

**And asks members to
support him**

Poole & District Bus branch
has nominated

**Andy Lister
For Southern Relief
Regional Organiser**

**And asks members in the
south to support him**

Election of Relief Regional
Organiser (Southern)

**South Devon Bus branch
Nominates
Andy Lister
And would appreciate
support for this able
candidate**

Newport IOW No 3 branch
Nominates and supports

**Andy
Lister**
**For Relief Regional
Organiser (South)**

Election of Relief Regional
Organiser (South)

Bournemouth No 3 branch

Has nominated

**Andy
Lister**

Salisbury No 3
Nominates

Andy Lister

**For southern relief regional
organiser
And would appreciate
support for this able
candidate**

Eastleigh Workshops

Has nominated

**Andy
Lister**

**For Southern Relief
Regional Organiser**

Election of Relief Organiser
South

Basingstoke No 2

Nominates

**Andy
Lister**

Fareham No 2 branch

Has nominated

**Andy
Lister**

**Southern relief regional
organiser**

**Election of two organisers
regions 2 & 3 Manchester,
North Wales & North West
Central & North Mersey
branch**

**Nominates its secretary
John Tilley &
to re-elect**

Andy Warnock-Smith

Orpington branch
Nominates

Paul Burton

**for
South East Regional
Organiser
And seeks further support**

Manchester Victoria branch
Nominates

**Andy Warnock-Smith
& Bill Anderson**
**regions 2 & 3 Manchester,
North Wales & North West
organisers
To continue the excellent
work done**

Manchester Victoria branch
Nominates

John MacDonald

**For Northern relief
organiser
The man sure to do a good
job**

Warrington branch
Nominates

Andy Warnock-Smith

**For election of organiser for
regions 2 & 3 Manchester,
North Wales & North West
Re-elect this capable and
experienced candidate**

Miles Platting branch

Nominates

John MacDonald

**For Northern Relief organiser

Simply the best**

Miles Platting branch
Nominates

**Andy Warnock-Smith
& Bill Anderson**
**For region 2 & 3 Manchester,
North Wales & North West
organisers
And would appreciate
further support**

Manchester South branch

Nominates their secretary

John MacDonald

**For Northern Relief
organiser and would
appreciate further support**

Manchester South branch

Nominates

**Andy Warnock-Smith
& Bill Anderson**

**regions 2 & 3 Manchester,
North Wales & North West
organisers**

Bridgend & Llantrisant branch

Nominates its secretary

Peter Skelly
For southern relief organiser

**And the re-election of
Brian Curtis**

Doncaster branch
Nominates

Allen Heath
**For Yorks & Lincs
Regional organiser
A very important position
that requires Allen's
18 years experience**

Jubilee South and East London
Line Branch Nominates

**John Leach for London
Transport C of E seat
Bobby Law for London
Transport Regional Organiser
Peter Skelly for
Southern relief regional
organiser**

Kings Cross branch
Nominates

Jim Stevenson
**For South East Regional
Organiser
Brian Whitehead**
**For Relief Regional
Organiser (South)
And Seeks Further Support**

Joining RMT couldn't be easier



As part of RMT's aim to increase the membership, head office has endeavoured to make joining the union as easy as possible. With no forms and no fuss, new members who wish to pay by direct debit can join the union on line or by telephoning our freephone members helpline 0800 376 3706.

"As endorsed by the Annual General Meeting, our aim is to grow our membership base to 100,000 and I see this as an important aid to helping us achieve this goal. Help us to grow this great union of ours by encouraging new members to join" says Bob Crow.

On-line

In January, the union launched the on line service and so far over 500 new members have joined by this method. Anyone with access to the internet and paying by direct debit can simply enter the web site at www.rmt.org.uk and the click on Join RMT in the header or menu and follow the step-by-step process. No forms are required and a welcome pack and new membership card is normally sent the following working day.



Payment over the telephone

The union has also introduced the ability to join over the members' helpline. RMT can now take new membership details and set up direct debits with welcome packs and membership cards despatched the following working day.

The helpline now has the ability to transact credit and debit card payments. Any member wishing to make a single contribution instead of cash, or anyone who wishes to make up arrears can now just pick up the phone and dial the helpline on freephone 0800 376 3706.

Webshop

You can also purchase RMT regalia by phoning the helpline or log on to the RMT website and visit the web shop (see overleaf).

Keep your membership details up to date

Help us to help you to keep your membership details up to date. This is very important because if we have to write to you or carry out a ballot on important work-related issues it is essential that we have your job grade and location accurately described. This can be done in a variety of ways:

- View and change your own details on line by visiting our web site and logging on to the members area
- Advise your branch secretary who can also change them on line
- Telephone the members Helpline 0800 376 3706
- Telephone your Regional Office
- Complete and return the tear off slip in your diary



Aberdeen shipping branch

Nominates

Andy Gordon

For Northern Relief
Organiser

And seeks further support

Glasgow shipping branch
Nominates

Phil McGarry
for Regional organiser
(Scotland and N Ireland)

Andy Gordon
for Northern Relief Regional
Organiser

Glasgow No 5 branch

Phil McGarry
For
Regional Organiser
(Scotland & N Ireland)

And seeks supporting
nominations

South London Rail branch
Nominates

Jim Stevenson
For South East Regional
Organiser

Brian Whitehead
For Relief Regional
Organiser (South)
And Seeks Further Support

South West Midlands branch
Nominates

A Aitkenhead
For Northern Relief
Organiser

And would appreciate
further support

Stratford No1 branch
Nominates

Bobby Law
For London Transport
Regional Organiser

John Leach
For London Transport
Cof E seat

Bakerloo branch
Nominates our branch
Secretary

Brian Munro
For London Transport C of E
member

And seeks further support
An experienced organiser
with 100% commitment

Finsbury Park branch
Nominates

John Leach
For London Transport C of E
member

100% committed to further
the interests of all and tried
and trusted in the position

LUL Signal, Electrical and
Track branch

Nominates

Willie Devlin

For London Transport C of E
member

Willesden Rail branch
Nominates

Bob Rayner
For London Anglia Regional
Organiser
Brian Whitehead
for relief Southern
Organiser

Exeter No 2 branch
Nominates

Phil Bialyk
For South West regional
organiser

Andy Lister
for relief southern organiser

Winchester No 2 branch

Are pleased to support

**Andy
Lister**

For Southern
Relief Organiser

RMT LAUNCHES NEW RA

At the Annual General Meeting a new range of merchandise was launched which proved very popular amongst delegates. The new items are shown on these pages are all manufactured within ethical production standards. Compliance with these standards include non-discrimination, fair wages, no child labour, freedom of association and a safe and healthy working environment. The products are RMT badged and you can show your support and publicise your union by wearing and displaying these items. Buying couldn't be easier. You can:

- Visit our web shop and buy on line at www.rmt.org.uk. Payment can be made by credit or debit card using a secure link
- Telephone your order to our members' helpline on freephone 0800 376 3706 and pay by credit or debit card
- Complete the tear off slip below and send with your cheque



Women's Rain Jacket

RMT branded Rain Jacket made with an ethical policy. RMT logo on front and back. Available in three colours Black/Stone/Khaki
£27.99 plus £4.00 postage



Leather Notecase

Stylish Design with Union Card Pocket, Credit and Bank Card Pockets and Note Pockets. RMT Logo in Gold.
£7.99 plus £0.50 postage

Send form to Finance Dept RMT, Unity House, 39 Chalton St. London NW1 1JD



Unisex Lightweight Jacket

RMT branded Unisex lightweight jacket made with an ethical policy. RMT logo on chest and back. Available in three colours Black/Khaki/Gunmetal.
£29.99 plus £4.00 postage



Sweat Shirts

70% cotton 30% Polyester by Screen Stars. Available in Bottle Green, Red and Navy. Embroidered with RMT Logo Left Pocket position on front
£10.00 plus £2.50 postage



Unisex Football Shirt

Branded RMT Football Shirt with green flash and RMT logo on front. Small RMT logo with slogan "The past we inherit the future we build" on back.
£9.99 plus £0.75 postage

Name.....

Address.....

.....Postcode.....

Item/s.....

RANGE OF MERCHANDISE



Hip Flask & Tots
Silver Plated hip flask with RMT logo engraved. Two Edinburgh crystal tot glasses with RMT logo engraved. Boxed set. £49.99 plus £2.00 postage



Gentlemen's Watch
Gold and brushed nickel finish case. Date window. White face with gold numerals and hands. Black leather strap. RMT logo in green. Individually boxed. £19.98 plus £1.00 postage



Brief Case
Zipped black document brief case in leather look material. Retractable carrying handles. Gusseted pockets, ring binder mechanism. A4 Pad facility £14.99 plus £2.00 postage



Polo Shirt
Branded RMT Polo Shirt made with an ethical policy. Black with red band on collar and red flash on sleeve. RMT logo in red. Features discreet small seam zip pocket. £16.98 plus £0.75 postage



Georgian Design Tankard
1 pint tankard in Polished Pewter. Engraved opposite handle with RMT Logo £19.98 plus free postage



High Visibility Jackets
Stylish high visibility jackets in orange (NB Not for use on or near railway lines) £9.00 plus £0.75 postage



Parker Frontier Set
Barrels in translucent green with silver fittings. Set consists of a roller ball & ball pen. Both pens printed with the RMT logo in gold £16.98 plus free postage



Long Sleeved T-Shirt
Branded RMT long sleeved T-Shirt made with an ethical policy. White with black sleeves. Small RMT logos in green on front and back. Slogan "Workers of the World Unite" in green £9.99 plus £0.75 postage



Inherit T-Shirt
Branded RMT T-Shirt made with an ethical policy. RMT logo and collage with slogan "The past we inherit - the future we build". Featuring discreet small seam zip pocket. Available in three colours Black/White/China £11.99 plus £0.75 postage



Women's Blouse
RMT Branded Women's Blouse made with an ethical policy. Black long sleeved with green flash and RMT logo on front. Small logo on back. £16.98 plus £0.75 postage



RMT Mugs
RMT mugs in green with logo £3.00 plus £0.75 postage



World Print T-Shirt
Branded RMT Tee Shirt made with an ethical policy. RMT logo "Workers of the World Unite" slogan on front. RMT logo on right sleeve. Featuring discreet small seam zip pocket. Available in three colours White/Black/China £11.99 plus £0.75 postage

The corduroy trousered elitist

MEDIA historian Tristram Hunt caused a storm last month with his attacks on RMT and the author of the socialist classic *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* (below). Dr Paul Taylor of Leeds University responds



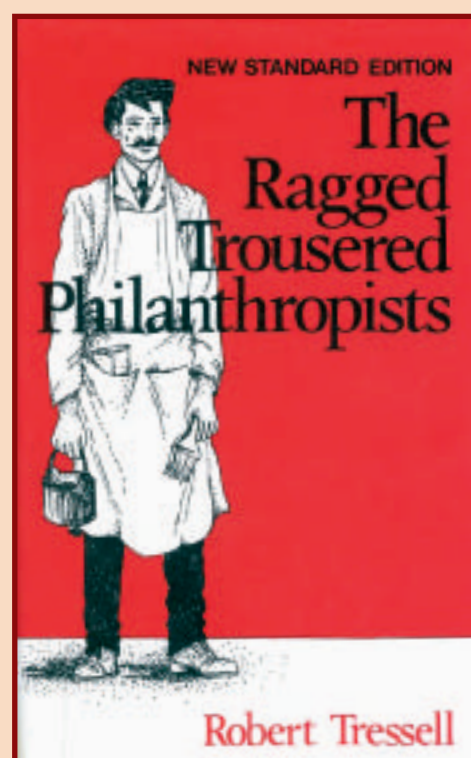
DROIT de seigneur is a French term from feudal times which literally means “right of the lord”. The “right” was to have intercourse with your subjects’ brides on their wedding nights. It might seem shocking to modern readers but recent experience of *The Guardian’s* attitude to working people suggests that the attitude, if not the practice itself, is alive and well.

In his *Guardian* article *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists: A ragged trousered elite who preach secular salvation* (07.08.04) TV historian Tristram Hunt charged author Robert Noonan with being a closet elitist for writing his seminal description of working class consciousness. The key accusation was that Noonan, an impoverished painter and decorator, was in fact part of an “implicitly middle class elite” (to contrast I assume with Hunt’s own rather more explicitly upper/middle-class elite background).

Furthermore, Hunt suggests that the inclusion of the work on an RMT reading list for members was simply not cricket. Hunt warned the RMT rank-and-file to be on their guard against the book’s real agenda, ending the article with the rhetorical question: was Noonan’s real purpose to “justify the leadership of a socialist elite?”

For anyone with even the slightest sympathy for the type of socialism Noonan advocated, it is galling to be lectured on working class culture and the power of elites from the London college of a Cambridge graduate academic called Tristram. If the Olympics had a pot-calling-the-kettle-black event, Tristram-beware-of-elitists would be going for gold.

Hunt’s broadside against Noonan is particularly annoying because it provides a good example of the media’s obsession with emphasizing personality rather than the important social issues addressed so directly in Noonan’s book. Hunt crudely confuses the biographical



similarities of Noonan’s own life with those of Owen, the lead character in *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*. Rather than adding to the complexity of the novel, Owen’s deeply felt frustrations at the limitations of working people to improve their situation are interpreted literally as the views of Noonan.

They are presented as weak evidence of a lack of real solidarity between the working class and socialist intellectuals. Any educated person who would like to see a working class with more self-consciousness than the Tristram Hunts of this world is apparently doomed to disappointment.

Hunt’s emphasis upon individuals rather than the social issues they are highlighting sidesteps real politics and is of a type with the personality-driven ‘infotainment’ approach to history he has so successfully practiced on TV.

A key characteristic of these programmes is their unabashed elitism

that cheerfully excludes consideration of the “common” people who merely serve as a convenient backdrop to the lives of the rich and famous.

Hunt’s pop-history status gives a self-interested tinge to his attempt to make hay from the fact that “like many a Marxist scholar” both Noonan and Owen disliked popular culture’s effects upon the working class. The book, he argues, is suffused with a “cold anger towards the working class refusing to appreciate its revolutionary duty”. To criticize such beliefs as part of an elitist form of socialism seems to ignore, or be ignorant of, such well-established socialist concepts as false consciousness and the lumpenproletariat. For Hunt, Noonan’s elitist sin was his belief that better education holds the key to improving working people’s lives. The worst sort of elitist is in fact the disingenuous educator who preaches to a class he knows nothing about.

Elitism is now a dirty word. Despite the media’s privileged potential position as a powerful counterweight, however, more often than not, it is part of the elitist problem not the solution. The result is that Tristram has a platform unavailable to Noonan (since his work remained unpublished in his life time) to reverse engineer the term elitist in order to denigrate the content of a trade union’s reading list.

Hunt’s article was followed, soon after, with one by Martin Kettle. This too was critical of Noonan’s book and Kettle told *Guardian* readers we should all be reading Henry David Thoreau’s work instead. Thoreau was a Harvard graduate who was famous for isolating himself in a remote log cabin by a pond and praising individualism – not an option really available to a sink estate single mum too busy smoking herself to death on the advice of Dr John Reid.

So to summarise, in opposition to Noonan we have a Tristram accusing him of elitism and a journalist promoting a back to the woods philosophy normally advocated by people like the Una-bomber, US neo-nazi militia groups, and most recently two on-the-run suspected murderers.

I’ll end with Noonan’s own words from the preface to *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropist*: “... not only are the majority of people opposed to Socialism, but a very brief conversation with an average anti-socialist is sufficient to show that he does not know what Socialism means ... but I believe [the book] will be acknowledged as true by most of those who are compelled to spend their lives amid the surroundings it describes.”



Learning from history, not from the media

READERS OF *The Guardian* may have noticed an article on August 7 by a gentleman by the name of Tristram Hunt about Robert Tressell’s classic socialist novel *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*. Mr Hunt sneeringly referred to our AGM decision to promote classic working-class literature to help encourage a better and wider understanding of the labour movement, its roots and its traditions.

After wading through Mr Hunt’s side-swipes at RMT and some guff about how Tressell was a middle-class elitist and hated workers as much as he hated capitalism, a little footnote at the end of his article informed me that Mr Hunt had written the introduction to the new Penguin Classic edition of the *Philanthropists*.

I felt moved to write to *The Guardian*, not least to correct the mistaken impression given by Mr Hunt that the idea of promoting labour-movement literature was an edict handed down by the RMT executive when, in fact, it was agreed unanimously by delegates at our union’s parliament – the AGM. It is also shocking that someone so hostile to Tressell can write the introduction of such a great work.

The history and literature of our movement are important for a whole range of reasons, not least because understanding and discussing our past helps us to fight the bread-and-butter battles of today and prepare for those of tomorrow.

One of today’s key battles is over our pension rights.

A secure and happy life in retirement should be a basic entitlement to working men and women after a lifetime’s toil. This fundamentally important right was not handed down to us by benevolent employers or any other ‘social partner’. It was won following centuries of bitter struggle, but now decent pension provision is under attack as never before.

Commentators often talk about how complex the pensions issue is, and how there is a pensions crisis or time-bomb. Let us be clear: there is no pension crisis, only lame excuses put forward by employers and government to attack working people’s living standards, even in retirement.

BRTAIN is the fourth richest country in the world, yet one quarter of the population owns three quarters of the wealth. There is no talk of a pensions crisis for the lucky few, such as those employers who, having enjoyed long contributions ‘holidays’ from their workforces’ pension schemes when the markets were buoyant, only to decide that they were too expensive to maintain when the markets took a dive.

Nor is there any crisis for MPs, who enjoy a splendid final-salary pension scheme – but who have failed to restore the link between the state pension and average earnings, or to take meaningful action to prevent occupational schemes going under.

Meanwhile, Britain has stumped up at least £10 billion on the illegal war in Iraq and twice that amount on the outdated Typhoon Euro ‘defence’ fighter aircraft that has yet to even get off the ground.

Things do not have to be this way. RMT has shown what can be done by successfully defending decent pension provision at Network Rail recently. This victory was won despite a torrent of abuse from a vehemently hostile media – one industry magazine even described us as ‘lunatics’ for even thinking that the final salary scheme could be re-opened to new members. We have yet to hear their thoughts on us now that it has been re-opened following the threat of strike action – funny, that.

There can be no doubt that a national campaign is also required, involving young and old, to create the political will to defend and expand decent state pension provision. So, the next time you hear anyone attacking the RMT simply for defending pension rights or promoting a book that dares to criticise capitalist exploitation and argue for political change, just ask yourself ‘which side are they on?’

TONY DONAGHEY

Financial statement to members

SUMMARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION EXTRACTED FROM THE FULL ACCOUNTS		
Summary income and expenditure accounts for the year ended 31 December 2003:		
General Fund and Orphan Fund		
	2003	2002
	£'000	£'000
Subscription income	6,786	6,426
Operating expenditure	(7,734)	(7,595)
Operating deficit before investment ops	(948)	(1,169)
Income from investment operations	3,791	2,578
Operating surplus after investment operations	2,843	1,409
Other non-operating expenditure	(1,179)	(85)
Surplus for the year	1,664	1,324
Political Fund		
	2003	2002
	£'000	£'000
Subscription income	209	189
Other income	16	15
Total income	225	204
Total expenditure	(151)	(137)
Surplus for the year	74	67

SUMMARY OF SALARIES AND BENEFITS PROVIDED			
Name	Position	Details	Amount
B Crow	General Secretary	Salary and expenses	£63,287
		Pension contributions	£3,315
J Cogger	President	Attendance and lodging	£11,864
The members of the Council of Executives do not receive any benefits but do receive attendance and lodging allowances which are set out below. The General Secretary, the President and the members of the Council of Executives are reimbursed for any expenditure incurred by them in the performance of their duties on behalf of the Union.			
Summary of Attendance and Lodging Allowances paid to the Council of Executives			
General Grades			
Name	Amount	Name	Amount
A Gordon	£37,380	P Cox	£33,095
D Gott	£37,691	R Knight	£31,834
Joe Gray	£32,062	W Devlin	£32,031
K Sharpe	£36,650	A Grundy	£28,592
Jim Gray	£33,670		
Shipping Grades			
Name	Amount	Name	Amount
M Carden	£9,114	P Hall	£9,946
M Dunning	£12,384	S Hyslop	£9,514

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITORS

Set out below is the report of the independent auditors to the members as contained in the accounts of the Union for the year ended 31 December 2003:

This report is made solely to the members of the Union as a body. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the members of the Union those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to any-one other than the Union and the members of the Union as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinion we have formed.

Respective responsibilities of the Union's Council of Executives and auditors

As described on page 8, the Union's Council of Executives is responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards. Our responsibility is to audit the accounts in accordance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements and United Kingdom Auditing Standards. We report to you our opinion as to whether the accounts give a true and fair view. We also report to you if, in our opinion, the Union has not kept proper accounting records, or if we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

We read other information contained in the accounts and consider whether it is consistent with the audited accounts. This other information comprises only the Report of the General Secretary. We consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent mis-statements or material inconsistencies with the accounts. Our responsibilities do not extend to any other information.

Basis of audit opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Auditing Standards issued by the Auditing Practices Board. An audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the accounts. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgements made in the preparation of the accounts, and of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the Union's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

We planned and performed our audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which we considered necessary in order to provide us with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the accounts are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or other irregularity or error. In forming our opinion we also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the accounts.

Fundamental uncertainty

In forming our opinion, we have considered the adequacy of the disclosures made in note 18 to the accounts concerning the possible existence of assets held by Branches and Regional Councils, which have not been notified to the head office of the Union and have therefore not been included within the accounts of the Union. Our audit opinion is not qualified in this respect.

Opinion

In our opinion the accounts give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Union as at 31 December 2003 and of its transactions for the year then ended.

H W FISHER & COMPANY

Chartered Accountants, Registered Auditor, Acre House, 11-15 William Road, LONDON NW1 3ER

Dated :6 May 2004

We are required by the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (amended) to include the following declaration in this statement to all members. The wording is as prescribed by the Act.

"A member who is concerned that some irregularity may be occurring, or have occurred, in the conduct of the financial affairs of the union may take steps with a view to investigating further, obtaining clarification and, if necessary, securing regularisation of that conduct.

The member may raise any such concerns with such one or more of the following as it seems appropriate to raise it with: the officials of the union, the trustees of the property of the union, the auditor or auditors of the union, the Certification Officer (who is an independent officer appointed by the Secretary of State) and the police.

Where a member believes that the financial affairs of the union have been or are being conducted in breach of the law or in breach of rules of the union and contemplates bringing civil proceedings against the union or responsible officials or trustees, he should consider obtaining independent legal advice."

Meeting the challenge in Scotland

RMT's new Scottish policy adviser ANN HENDERSON outlines the work of the union north of the border

TRANSPORT policy is high up the agenda in the forthcoming session in the Scottish Parliament. When the Scottish Parliament was established in 1999, the Scotland Act provided for responsibility for railways to remain largely with the government at Westminster. This, however, is set to change. The Secretary of State for Transport, Alistair Darling MP, announced the outcome of the UK government's rail review in the summer, and as a consequence we will be seeing the first amendments to the Scotland Act since 1999, as significant powers are transferred to the government in Scotland, the Scottish Executive.

The refranchising process for ScotRail has been completed. This was a little different to other franchises, with the Scottish Executive drawing up the specifications for the franchise to give to the SRA, who then completed the process.

The franchise will be transferred from National Express to First Group in Scotland next month and company claims to be committed to reducing overcrowding, provide new services on the Larkhall to Milngavie line, and the new Stirling-Alloa-Kincardine

line when it opens, more late night and public holiday services in Glasgow and the SPT area. First Group will face tougher penalties for poor performance.

Concerns have been raised about competition legislation and bus routes currently managed by First Group, but the decision to award the franchise to First Group goes ahead.

In addition, the Scottish Executive's own White Paper on Transport, published in June, is being taken forward this session. It proposes the establishment of a Transport Agency for Scotland, and regional partnerships covering all local authority areas, including the abolition of the SPT.

There are some changes ahead in how Scotland's rail network is run. Significant funding will be required to allow for the maintenance of Scottish rail infrastructure.

Although ScotRail provides over 90 per cent of Scottish services, there are vital connections to be maintained on the West Coast and East Coast mainline, and there is already doubt over the future of some of the Cross Country services running into Scotland.

There are important rail freight services to be protected. The relationship between the Scottish Executive's new Transport Agency and these 'cross-border' services, is not yet clear.

RMT made submissions to discussions on the ScotRail franchise, and on the Transport Agency and will be following developments



Scottish Parliament building, Edinburgh

in transport policy, protecting existing jobs and services, and improving new rail services to which the Scottish Executive has given commitments.

Another issue in the new session will be the future of the Caledonian MacBrayne services on the Clyde and the Western Isles. There is no agreement amongst the wider trade union movement and other organisations that this is necessary under European competition legislation.

Despite the Altmarm ruling and the 'lifeline' nature of many of our ferry services, the Scottish Executive is still pressing ahead. This will raise questions around service levels, jobs and conditions and funding issues for maintaining harbour and port facilities.

The STUC will be raising questions in the Parliament and with the Scottish Executive, having given unanimous backing to RMT at the STUC Annual Congress in Glasgow earlier this year.

It's a
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From **6.9%**
APR
(typical)

No matter
how you
look at it

The loan rate **is small** but it could make a **huge difference**

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Fixed APR	Loan Value		7 years		5 years		3 years	
			With Protection	Without Protection	With Protection	Without Protection	With Protection	Without Protection
7.2% APR	£15,000	Monthly	£301.46	£226.22	£370.15	£296.86	£542.06	£463.03
		Total	£25,322.20	£19,001.66	£22,208.45	£17,811.18	£19,514.13	£16,668.97
6.9% APR	£10,000	Monthly	£199.14	£149.44	£245.11	£196.58	£359.87	£307.40
		Total	£16,727.60	£12,552.26	£14,706.27	£11,794.41	£12,955.07	£11,066.24
6.9% APR	£5,000	Monthly	£99.57	£74.72	£122.56	£98.29	£179.94	£153.70
		Total	£8,363.77	£6,276.12	£7,353.08	£5,897.21	£6,477.50	£5,533.11
9.9% APR	£3,000	Monthly	£65.30	£49.00	£78.53	£62.98	£112.49	£96.09
		Total	£5,484.57	£4,115.63	£4,711.50	£3,778.61	£4,049.41	£3,458.99

Typical example: If borrowing £5,000 over 3 years, the monthly repayment, payable by 36 monthly instalments, with Payment Protection, will be £179.94 at a typical rate of **6.9% APR**. Total repayment over the loan term: £6,477.50. If borrowing £5,000 over 3 years, the monthly repayment, payable by 36 monthly instalments, without Payment Protection, will be £153.70, at a typical rate of **6.9% APR**. Total repayment over the loan term: £5,533.11. Amounts shown may vary by a few pence.

*When processing your application, we will make an assessment of your personal circumstances based on the information available to us. This may affect the interest rate we offer you, which may be higher or lower than our advertised rates. The Co-operative Bank p.l.c. reserves the right to decline any loan application. Interest rates correct at 06/04. Written quotations are available on request. Credit facilities are provided by The Co-operative Bank p.l.c., P.O. Box 101, 1 Balloon Street, Manchester M60 4EP, are subject to status and not available to non UK residents or anyone under 21 or over 69 years of age. Calls may be monitored and/or recorded for security and/or training purposes.

The Co-operative Bank subscribes to the Banking Code and is a member of the Financial Ombudsman Service and the General Insurance Standards Council.

The Co-operative Bank is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority.

Registered Office: The Co-operative Bank p.l.c., 1 Balloon Street, Manchester, M60 4EP, England. Registered number: 990937. Website: www.co-operativebank.co.uk

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Sat 8am – 8pm and Sun 9am – 6pm.

No Sweat

By Andy Vine

Price £1+p&p

Andy's pen savages sweatshop profiteers

ANDY VINE'S incisive cartoons have for some time given witty bite to the pages of RMT News and a host of other trade union journals, as well as the labour movement's daily, *The Morning Star*.

There is also a growing following for his subversive tongue-in-cheek comic books, *Warning: This Is Propaganda* – the latest issue of which contains a superb cartoon version of *The Great Money Trick* from Robert Tressell's *The Ragged Trouserer Philanthropists*.

Now Andy's razor-sharp pen is being wielded in the global battle to end the super-exploitation of labour in some of the world's worst sweatshops.

Based on true events, the cartoon-strip *No Sweat* eloquently shows how transnational corporations use their economic muscle to make cynical use of countries' lax labour laws to squeeze huge profits from workers, often children, labouring for long hours in unsafe conditions for poverty wages.

It shows how big-name corporations try to duck responsibility by hiding behind outsourcing contracts with third parties, and turn a blind eye to the often brutal suppression of attempts by workers to organise into unions to defend themselves.

But it also shows how consumers, arm in arm with trade unions and campaigning organisations, can use their own power to expose the perpetrators and help sweatshop workers win a living

wage, safer working conditions and the right to organise unions.

The real Mexican workers behind the *No Sweat* cartoon eventually won the right to organise, and a massive worldwide campaign even forced Nike – yes, you guessed right! – not to end their contract with the factory.

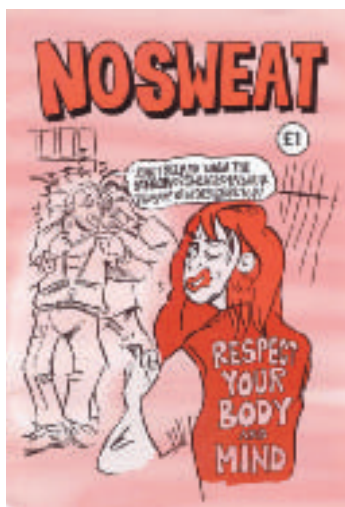
No Sweat is published by the campaigning organisation of the same name, whose aim is to build solidarity with sweatshop workers and their organisations, help unionise sweatshops here in Britain, and to help stamp out the sweatshop scourge.

By ordering and circulating copies of *No Sweat*, you can become part of the movement for justice for sweatshop workers.

● *No Sweat* is available for just £1 per copy plus p&p from *No Sweat*, PO Box 346707, London SW9 8YA, telephone 07904 431 959, email admin@nosweat.org.uk. *No Sweat* can also supply speakers and other campaigning materials.

● More of Andy Vine's work can be viewed on his website, www.avine.co.uk, and *Warning: This is Propaganda* can be viewed at www.wtip.org.uk.

Derek Kotz



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Letters to the editor

John McDonnell's record speaks for itself

Dear editor,

I write as chair of governors of Barnhill Community School and as one of the local councillors for Barnhill Ward with reference to Roddy Keenan's letter in the June/July edition of RMT News. The school was not mentioned by name in his letter, but was, in fact, the school involved.

I welcome his comments regarding John McDonnell's opposition to privatisation in its many forms. Indeed, John has

impeccable credentials in this and other respects in his pursuit of socialist ideals. John's opposition to the privatisation of "everything that moves" is well known. Therefore, I find it galling when the writer chooses to take a niggardly snipe at John regarding his support for education provision for the children of the residents that he represent.

For the record, this school was provided under PFI provision by Jarvis – as the writer points out. What he is either unaware of, or chooses not to mention, was that John was for the project as I was, but was opposed to provision by PFI, as was I. The decision to

proceed under a PFI project was imposed by a now defunct quango, the Funding Agency for Schools, for the questionable reason that there was insufficient time by traditional means.

A school had existed on the current site since the 1940s. It was closed in 1992 by a Tory council administration. By winning a by-election in 1993 with John's considerable help, the colour of the council changed and the sale of the site was prevented.

John, though he was just a local activist at this time, set about with the council and local people lobbying for the reopening the site.

The school bears witness to his success. John had fought, as he does every day of his life, for better

resources for the people that he represents. Should he condemn the school because it is provided by means that he had no say over at the expense of desperately-needed school places? I think not.

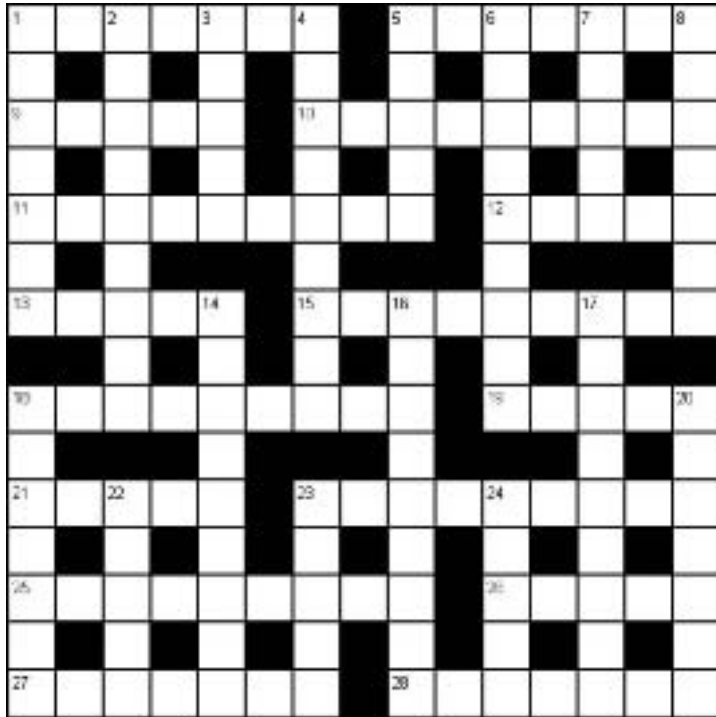
John McDonnell is unique as a community MP. He works ceaselessly in his pursuit of the needs of Hayes and Harlington without compromising his principles. He warrants every support from trade unionists everywhere. So come off it Roddy, reserve your criticisms for those that warrant it. That most certainly is not John MacDonnell.

Yours sincerely
Councillor John Major
Barnhill Ward

London borough of Hillingdon

£25 Prize Crossword No. 8

set by Elk



Send entries to Prize crossword, RMT, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD by September 28 with your name and address. Winner and solution in next issue.

ACROSS

- 1 One who advises on betting (7)
- 5 Creator of George Smiley (2,5)
- 9 Loss of control of muscles (5)
- 10 Rot (9)
- 11 Alert, sharp, or in possession (2,3,4)
- 12 Start (5)
- 13 Tie them to keep footwear on (5)
- 15 Creators of Dark Side of the Moon (4,5)
- 18 Man-made fibre, often mixed with cotton (9)
- 19 Teacher (5)
- 21 The Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (5)
- 23 Ship's look-out platform - or Bob's home? (5-4)
- 25 Big wheel erected by Thames (6,3)
- 26 Distinctive fragrance; smell (5)
- 27 Utensil serving as soldier's plate, cup and cooking dish (4-3)
- 28 Iranian capital (7)

DOWN

- 1 Rich, nourishing upper layer in which plants grow (3-4)
- 2, 22 Without them unions lack a campaigning voice (9, 5)
- 3 Herb (5)

- 4 Rolled out for VIPs (3,6)
- 5 Nearby (pub) (5)
- 6 You must be joking! (4,3,2)
- 7 Chess pieces (5)
- 8 Thrown out (7)
- 14 Vessel driven by vaporised water (9)
- 16 Least wide (9)
- 17 As the big hand reaches 12 (2,3,4)
- 18 Its awaits a solution (7)
- 20 Acquire a new skill (7)
- 22 See 2
- 23 Remove dirt (5)
- 24 Destroy, violently (5)

Winner of prize crossword No. 7 is Sandra Storch of south London

Last month's solution






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How do I join the Credit Union?



RMT members who wish to join the Credit Union need to produce two original forms of identification in order for the union to meet new money laundering regulations. These forms of identification need to be verified by various officials including RMT branch secretaries, a delegated officer of the branch, divisional organisers, executive committee members, or Credit Union officers. Documentation must be photocopied, signed and stamped with the branch stamp. You then complete the application opposite, which together with the ID photocopies are to be forwarded to head office as soon as possible.

Documentation verification procedure:

1. Take one original document from list A and one from list B to the branch secretary or any of the above approved persons.
2. Branch secretary or other approved person will check original documentation; will take a photocopy, sign, branch stamp and state on the photo copy of documents that he has seen the original documentation.
3. Branch secretary or approved person will return documentation, both the original and photo copies, to the member.
4. The member will send the completed application together with the signed identification photo copies (not the original) documents to the Credit Union at Head Office.

LIST A

- Full passport
- Full driving licence
- Notice of Tax Coding (current year)
- Child benefit book
- Pension book
- HM Forces ID card

LIST B

- Utility bill, e.g. gas, electricity, water or telephone bills
- Bank, building society or credit card statement
- Mortgage statement
- Council Tax demand
- Mail Order statement
- Voter's roll check
- Ship discharge card

These must be originals, and shall not be more than 3 months old.

Accounts may only be opened and transactions accepted on behalf of a member when verification of identification has been satisfactorily completed and cross referenced against RMT membership. Potential new members who are unable to provide documents to prove their identity may provide a letter from a person in a position of responsibility such as a teacher, social worker, priest, doctor, ship's captain, Justice of the peace as proof of identity. If you live or work in the London area, you can bring your original documentation in to head office to be verified.

Legal services helpline for Scottish & North East England members - freephone 0800 328 1014

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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 ☐

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

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Address
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.....

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

Your signature

Date



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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
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Postcode	

Name(s) of Account Holder(s)

Bank/Building Society account number

Branch Sort Code

Originator's Identification Number

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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

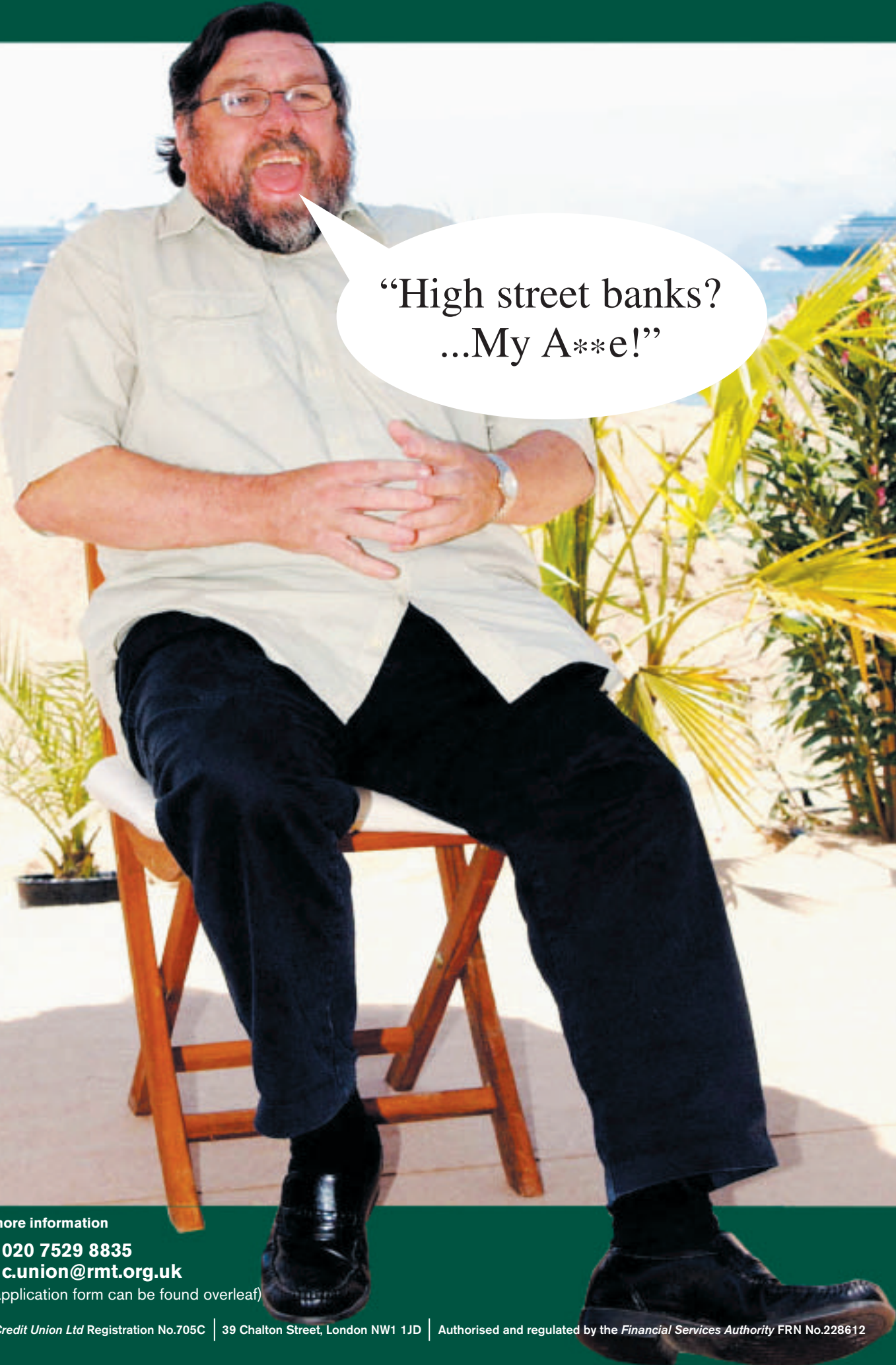
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A man with a beard and glasses, wearing a light-colored short-sleeved shirt and dark trousers, is sitting on a wooden chair outdoors. He is smiling and has his hands clasped in his lap. The background shows a sandy area with some greenery and a blue sky.

“High street banks?
...My A**e!”

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(An application form can be found overleaf)

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