

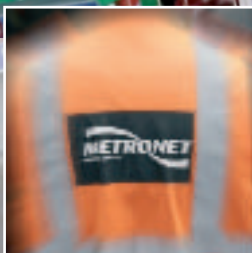
RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker

DEFENDING FIRE-SAFETY RULES

King's Cross

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THIS
ISSUE...



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MEETINGS & CONFERENCES 2006



FEBRUARY

RMT National Health & Safety Conference	Thurs February 23	Blackpool
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MARCH

BTUC Women's Conference	Wed to Fri March 8-10	Eastbourne
Supervisory Grades Conference	Sat & Sun March 11/12	Lille
RMT Young Members' Conference	Sat & Sun March 18/19	Glasgow

APRIL

Catering Grades Conference	Fri March 31 to Sun April 2	Great Yarmouth
BTUC Young Members' Forum	Fri March 31 to Sun April 2	Eastbourne
Traincrew & Shunters Grades Conference	Tues to Thurs April 4/6	York
Busworkers' Conference	Fri to Sat April 7/8	Plymouth
BTUC Black Workers' Conference	Fri to Sun April 7-9	to be confirmed
Scottish TUC	Mon to Wed April 10-12	Perth
Station Staff & Associated Grades	Fri & Sat April 21/22	London
Road Freight Grades Conference	Sat April 22	Gloucester
Engineering Grades Conference	Thurs to Fri April 27/28	Fort William

MAY

RMT Biennial Docks & Shipping Grades	Weds to Fri May 10-12	Hull
Wales TUC	Wed to Fri May 24-26	Llandudno

JUNE

RMT National Conference of Branch & Regional Council Secretaries	Sun June 4	Gloucester
BTUC Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Conference	Thurs to Fri June 29/30	London

JULY

RMT Annual General Meeting	Sun to Fri July 2-7	Dublin
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SEPTEMBER

BTUC	Mon to Thurs September 11-14	Brighton
Signalling Grades Conference	Sat & Sun September 16/17 (to be confirmed)	Stirling

EQUALITY CONFERENCES

The dates have now been set for next year's Equality Conferences. If you want to be nominated, contact your branch secretary now.

Some members are slightly nervous about putting themselves forward if they have not participated in Union events before. All three equality conferences provide the opportunity for ordinary members to share their experiences either in relation to work or in the union. All are welcoming – no one is left isolated.

Remember, childcare facilities are provided. Go on – take the plunge The details are as follows:-

RMT Women's Conference	February 24/25	Gloucester
RMT Black & Ethnic Minority Members' Conference	March 22	Skipton
RMT Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual Members' Conference	June 23	London

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RMT CHRISTMAS QUIZ

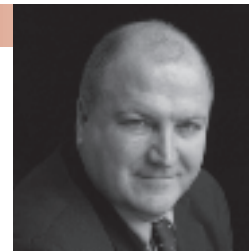
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BUMPER CHRISTMAS CROSSWORD

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EDITORIAL

MISSED OPPORTUNITIES



By putting South Eastern Trains back into the private sector, the government will be missing a golden opportunity to implement Labour Party policy and begin to create a publicly-owned railway.

Instead, they have handed SET over to Govia, which also runs Southern trains, effectively creating a private sector monopoly south of the river Thames.

This new Integrated Kent Franchise will receive well over half a billion pounds of public money in subsidies and be allowed to raise fares by three per cent above inflation for five years in the name of profit.

This is not what the travelling public expects after enjoying better services for less subsidy over the last two years while SET has been in the public sector. Instead, we see plans for ticket office staff cuts in order to pave the way for re-privatisation, but SET workers have shown that they are prepared to take action to defend jobs.

It is increasingly clear that bringing all train operations back in-house would not only result in a more coherent railway, but would also put a stop to the leakage of £1 billion of public money out of the industry every year.

Network Rail has launched a direct attack on the union by reorganising signalling managers into bands for which this union is not currently recognised for collective bargaining purposes. Under the proposals, existing PT&R arrangements would not apply and individuals are expected to apply for the new positions. RMT has made clear that the union will be in dispute with the company if the proposals are not withdrawn immediately.

Behind government spin about improving security, the reality is one of threats to axe fire-safety regulations, cuts in front-line safety-critical staff and resistance by private employers to discuss security.

Tube staff were quite rightly praised for their professionalism in dealing with the July bombings, yet across the rail network we are facing constant cost-led attempts to remove safety-trained staff from stations and guards from trains.

On London Underground, we are still facing plans to reduce numbers of station staff and remove safety-trained uniformed staff from gatelines. This has

led to a frustrating breakdown in talks over the introduction of the 35-hour week for station staff. Therefore, RMT will be balloting for action to defend the interests of our members.

I recently gave evidence to the Greater London Authority's transport committee, expressing alarm that, despite the debacle over the failure of Northern Line Tube trains' emergency braking system, Metronet intends to sub-contract train maintenance to Bombardier.

Metronet RMT members know this will mean job losses, wage cuts, fragmentation and compromised safety. Therefore, they have voted eight to one for strike action to ensure it does not happen. Tube drivers should also remember that they have the right to refuse to move trains if they believe that their safety and that of the public is at risk.

The "bully-boy" tactics employed by Irish Ferries against the crew of two of its ships docked in Pembroke and Holyhead shows just how far some are prepared to go in the pursuit of profit.

In order to replace Irish seafarers with low-paid foreign labour, the company has used 'security guards' to raid its own vessels – in breach of international security rules – and denied outside access to the crews who barricaded themselves in when the thugs turned up.

Irish Ferries' tactics are highly dangerous and the company's reckless actions should be investigated. In the meantime, RMT will do everything it can to assist SIPTU and its members in this crucial dispute.

This year we have had some successes but we clearly have some major battles ahead if we are to defend and extend the interests of you, the members. Therefore, this Christmas should be a time to take stock and, if possible, put your feet up and take a well-earned rest.

Best wishes

Bob Crow

YOUNG MEMBERS AND THE UNION

Young members' liaison committee member Brian Bancroft looks at the role youth can play in the union

The structures for young RMT members, including the annual conference and the liaison committee, are very young themselves and have only been up and running a few years.

Some may think that a young members' group is a waste of time and money. However, thankfully, most people have been very supportive towards us as a group.

We have held two conferences, one in Plymouth and more recently in Nottingham.

Various issues have been raised including a review of the union's funding and a recognition that the group was for all grades within the transport industry.

We have a very active core of young members who have been pushing for recognition and support. I'm happy to say our numbers are growing and within a few years we will have a strong voice in the union.

This is to ensure that young members are retained, developed and educated in the ways of trade unionism.

Aside from the obvious point that young members are the future of the union, young people make up an increasing proportion of the membership.



YOUTH COURSE: Young RMT members with general secretary Bob Crow at this year's youth course which is run alongside the union's AGM every year.

Years ago, when unions were stronger, young members would quite rightly be told to watch and learn from older members. However, anti-trade union laws brought in by Margaret Thatcher in the 1980's have changed that process and many young people have never even heard about trade unions let alone joined one.

Increasingly, management tactics include blackmail and threatening behaviour, using strong-arm tactics such as sackings and pay cuts. They often target young members due to the fact they may not know their rights or where they stand under the law.

To cite a recent shocking example, a train crew member was assaulted on a train and was sacked "for his own protection". Luckily, he contacted his local rep and was re-instated thanks to some hard work by our union.

This is the nature of our world today and our concepts of fair employment and safety at work are under attack by employers.

The purpose of the young members' group is to inform and educate young and new members about what a union stands for and of their rights work and we need your help.

You need to tell members in your area that we exist and can help them to understand the complexities of the union. If we all want a more secure industry and a brighter future we need to nurture the next generation of activists from the silent thousands who are unaware we exist.

If you would like more information about the activities of young RMT members please contact Ray Spry-Shute at head office or ring me on 07915372886. ■

RMT DIVER WINS TAXING CASE

An RMT diver has won an Inland Revenue Tax tribunal case, with the help of the union, over the employment of his wife.

Divers and diving supervisors work on a freelance basis with UK companies with no contract of employment, but their rate of pay is set by the Offshore Diving Industry Agreement with RMT, which has been in place since 1984.

Divers and Diving Supervisors have, since 1978, been allowed by statute to be classed as employees for National Insurance purposes but are allowed to be taxed as self-employed for tax purposes.

This allows personnel to offset a number of legitimate expenses before they are taxed on their remaining income. The Inland Revenue challenged the expense of the diver employing his wife to perform a number of administrative and clerical duties and provide the employee the benefit in kind of child-care facilities.

The Inland Revenue claimed that the expense was not applicable under section 74 of the Taxes Act.

The case went to tribunal and the diver concerned was represented by RMT member Derek Moore who has built up a considerable knowledge of tax and revenue regulations.

The union argued that the expense was legal in that the relationship was that of an employer and an employee, not husband and wife. After listening to all the arguments, the tribunal found in favour of the diver and allowed the expenses in full.

Derek Moore said that it was a great victory for the rights of divers and diving supervisors to employ a person to assist in their work.

"It clearly shows that, with RMT support, members have access to services beyond the usual claims for pay awards," he said.



Members Helpline

Freephone 0800 376 3706

Open six days a week

Mon to Fri - 8am until 6pm, Sat - 9.30am to 4pm

e-mail: info@rmt.org.uk

Legal helpline: 0800 587 7516

Seven days a week



REPS READY TO ORGANISE

RMT representatives from three train operating companies, First Great Western, First Great Western Link and Wessex, turned out in force in Bristol recently to hear assistant general secretary Pat Sikorski explain RMT's strategy, which included an explanation of TUPE transfer procedures.

RMT reps applauded the efforts of their union to win employment guarantees and were keen to take this important message back into their workplaces.

Alan Pottage of the union's organising unit then stressed the need for all reps to start organising their workmates. "Don't wait on someone else to do it for you. As a rep - it's not an option but a responsibility to recruit workers into RMT," he said.

Four Company Council reps from each company have now volunteered themselves to form an organising committee who will sit down and fine tune an active strategy designed to involve everybody.



Regional organiser Brian Curtis also explained how officers can assist and are available to roll their sleeves up and get stuck in with everyone else. There were many questions and positive contributions from the floor.

The meeting ended with everyone getting a sneak preview of the new seven minute DVD for use in induction classes.

Over eighty RMT rucksacks full of recruitment materials were then handed out to reps.

"We need to be fully-organised with everyone in RMT if we are to deliver the best pay and conditions for our members," said Brian. ■

NEW 40-YEAR MEDALS PRESENTED

Eight members of RMT's Doncaster branch were presented with the new 40-year medals recently at the town's Trades Club.

General secretary Bob Crow congratulated the long-serving members for reaching "a fantastic milestone". He said that the new honour was

introduced to compliment the 25-year badge in recognition of those that had spent much of their lives looking after the interests of their fellow workers of all grades.

The presentation was followed by a social event and buffet for members and their partners and a good evening was had by all.



(From left to right) Medal winners Albert Garraghty, EC member Dave Collinson, Alan Johnson, Patrick Bryan, Bob Crow, Len Murden, Fred Harrison, Michael Davey, Malcolm Smith, Eddie Lacey.



UNION DEMANDS ACTION AGAINST RACIST ABUSE



ABUSE: RMT rep Jon Abdullah with Trina and regional organiser Bobby Law

Young black London Underground customer service assistant Trina John-Charles expected support if she suffered any form of abuse at work.

However, Trina was left shocked and appalled after being severely racially abused and threatened by two known undesirables, yet a manager intervened only to allow the pair onto the network without tickets.

The two clearly intoxicated individuals, a man and a woman, had demanded that Trina let them through the barriers. When Trina asked to see tickets the woman launched into a tirade of vile racist abuse in front of other staff including the station supervisor, who said he was calling the police.

At this point the general line manager intervened and, ignoring the advice of the supervisor, opened the manual gate and escorted the pair onto the platform and the network without tickets.

When confronted about his behaviour, the manager advised Trina if she wanted to talk to him to make an appointment with his secretary. He also made clear to other staff that he would do the same thing if such an incident occurred again.

London regional organiser Bobby Law pointed out that, aside from the unacceptable

racist abuse inflicted upon Trina, travelling on the Tube network without a ticket is illegal and conditions of carriage also made clear that you must be fit to travel, i.e. not intoxicated.

"It appears that senior staff can assist abusive and drunken passengers in such illegal activity but other staff face being disciplined if they take similar action," he said.

He also said that that other unsuspecting staff may suffer the same treatment somewhere else as a result of letting abusive passengers on the network.

Trina's RMT rep Jon Abdullah said that management had a duty of care to provide a safe working environment for staff.

"LUL management claim zero tolerance towards racist and threatening behaviour but here we are defending members against exposure to these very things," he said.

After receiving an unsatisfactory letter from LUL managing director Tim O' Toole, Trina has written to demand a meeting with him, accompanied by her union reps, to discuss the matter further.

"Lack of action against racist abuse against staff can only lead to a climate of fear and low morale, so we are demanding that it is taken seriously," said Bobby Law. ■

Victoria Tube train door fails to shut

RMT demanded safety assurances after a London Tube Victoria Line train travelled with open doors between stations following modifications carried out by sub-contractors.

The union also restated that it would support all drivers exercising their right to refuse to move trains on safety grounds.

Private Tube maintenance consortium Metronet sub-contracted another company to increase air pressure to speed up door-closing operations on Victoria Line trains – modifications that led to a door remaining open near Oxford Circus on October 20 at around 19.00 hours.

The increased air pressure has damaged door guides and led to one train door staying open by around 15 inches, yet all the train drivers' safety lights indicated that all doors were shut on the moving train.

This incident followed a similar debacle on the Northern

Line in October when the failure of the emergency braking system led to the shutdown of the line.

Another private Tube maintenance consortium Tube Lines, created under the PPP privatisation of Tube infrastructure, sub-contracted maintenance work on Northern Line trains to Alstom under a PFI contract.

"Shoddy modifications carried out by sub-contractors has led to another safety crisis on the Tube network," London regional organiser Bobby Law said.

Since the incident fully-licensed Metronet staff, formerly employed directly by London Underground, have found numerous other door faults and trains modified by sub-contractors are still in service.

"If these private companies cannot find and rectify faults properly, the work should simply be brought back in-house," Bobby said. ■

FIGHTING FOR A FUTURE AT LYNX EXPRESS

Since the logistics company Lynx Express was sold to UPS in September, RMT have held meetings with management to protect members' jobs, pensions, pay and conditions, tackled UPS about their future plans and improved RMT organisation across the new Lynx/UPS parcels division.

RMT has had some success and UPS has confirmed that members' terms and conditions will remain the same.

The union has also tabled a pay claim for 2006 which points out that as UPS is a global parcels leader, RMT expects it to be a leader in the pay market.

The union wants to build on the above-inflation pay award negotiated last year.

As a result of RMT reps and

activists visiting Lynx branches across the country there has been a 10 per cent increase in membership, with many former members rejoining.

Assistant general secretary Mick Cash said that members know that they can only defend employees' jobs, pensions pay and conditions if everyone is in RMT.

"We have still not received a clear indication from UPS about their future plans other than that the Tamworth site project has been put on hold, but we continue to seek assurances about jobs, branch closures and pensions.

"We have made good start to our campaign to defend Lynx/UPS workers but there is more to do," he said. ■

METRONET STAFF BACK STRIKE ACTION

RMT members at Metronet have voted overwhelmingly to take strike action against the company's plans to subcontract Tube train maintenance to Bombardier.

The union has also called upon the government to give London Mayor Ken Livingstone the power to prevent Metronet from farming out the work following the debacle over the failure of Northern Line trains' emergency braking system earlier this year.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the blame culture that was exposed between Tubelines and Alstom over Northern Line trains would have been enough to show that fragmentation of Tube maintenance was "dangerous, and potentially disastrous".

The union warned that the privatisation of track maintenance under PPP would lead to further cuts and job losses, including the complete outsourcing of all frontline staff.

"It is simply staggering that Metronet, which controls two-thirds of London Underground's infrastructure, is planning even more fragmentation, by farming out train maintenance to

Bombardier.

"That means the same crazy set-up on the Northern Line would be imposed on the Bakerloo, Central, Victoria, District, Circle and Hammersmith and City Lines, with one company running trains, another responsible for overall maintenance and yet another maintaining the trains," he said.

SAFE TRACKS?

RMT Tube train operators also backed action short of strike action.

If Metronet workers take strike action the union will be asking drivers to carry out their right not to drive trains over any track that has not been inspected by fully-qualified track maintenance workers or drive trains that have not gone through the normal preparation process.

Drivers have the right to raise safety concerns in order to protect the safety of themselves and the travelling public.

"A determined show of solidarity will ensure your own safety and that of the public is maintained," said London regional organiser Bobby Law.

EDM 794

Parliamentary early day motion 794, has been tabled by London Labour MPs calling for LU maintenance to be brought back in-house, ask your MP to sign.

Early Day Motion 794

LONDON UNDERGROUND PPP AND TRAIN MAINTENANCE

That this house expresses its concern at the severe delays on London Underground Northern Lines services caused by faulty train design; congratulates London Underground drivers for protecting the travelling public by refusing to work for safety reasons; believes that identifying and fixing the fault has been made more difficult by the fragmentation of train maintenance resulting from the ill conceived part privatisation of the tube; is therefore alarmed that the largest PPP Infracore, Metronet, is pressing ahead with proposals to out source its train maintenance from 2007; calls on the government to ensure that the necessary powers are made available to allow all London Underground maintenance be bought back in-house.

Stop press.....

TUBE STATION STAFF BALLOT OVER 35-HOUR WEEK

London Underground station staff and revenue control staff are to be balloted for strike action and action short of strike action following the breakdown of long-running negotiations over the implementation of the 35-hour week.

The union has recommended a yes vote in the forthcoming ballot.

DOCKLANDS LIGHT RAILWAY BALLOT

Docklands Light Railway staff are to be balloted for strike action after the union submitted a claim for a substantial pay increase to reflect the duties carried out by staff.

However, the company's response was to reduce a 3.4 per cent pay offer to just 3.25 per cent offer. The union has recommended a yes vote in the forthcoming ballot.

KEEP SOUTH EASTERN TRAINS PUBLIC!

Exactly two years after South Eastern Trains was rescued from the private sector on November 9 2003, RMT renewed its call to keep the franchise in public hands.

RMT members were out in force across the region, demonstrating that re-privatisation amounts to daylight robbery and urged commuters to join the campaign to stop the franchise being re-privatised.

"Since Connex was booted off South Eastern Trains, services have been getting steadily better and there are 500 more staff around, yet the operation is costing taxpayers £1 million a month less," RMT general secretary Bob Crow said.

"Whatever way you look at it, South Eastern Trains is a public-sector success story and it would be nothing short of a betrayal to throw it back to the

privateers to bleed dry again.

"Commuters have made clear their overwhelming opposition to plans to slash ticket-office opening hours, and RMT members for action to defend the 100 ticket-office jobs already under threat in the run-up to re-privatisation," he said.

The union has consistently argued that the sell-off has been opposed by the public, the unions and Labour Party MPs

and members, and a massive veil of secrecy has been drawn over the bidding process, which has led to Govia winning the contract.

"South Eastern Trains has proved that rail services can be run more efficiently by the public sector, and we are asking commuters who rely on its services to join our campaign to get the sell-off dropped," Bob Crow said. ■



SAVE THE NIGHT RIVIERA SLEEPER TRAIN

Over 30 MPs have signed early day motion 297 (below) expressing dismay at the news that the Strategic Rail Authority is considering scrapping sleeper services to Cornwall.

RMT members have been involved in a letter-writing campaign to Secretary of State for Transport Alistair Darling against government plans to cut the vital 'Night Riviera' sleeper train service from London to Penzance. The union has also produced stickers demanding an end to the proposals.

This train is a vital link to South West England for business and leisure travellers and the loss of the service would be felt keenly across the region.

For instance, it is still the only way to get from Cornwall to London before 0900 hours without staying overnight in the capital and the government's own figures suggest that it is well-used.

You can also register your opposition against the closure of the by signing the on-line petition at the website <http://www.petitiononline.com/sleeper/petition-sign.html> ■

EDM 297

RAIL SERVICES TO CORNWALL

Julia Goldsworthy MP

That this House is dismayed by news that the Strategic Rail Authority is considering scrapping sleeper services to Cornwall; is deeply concerned that other changes under consideration include reduced branch line services within Cornwall; is further dismayed by reports in the Times on June 9 2005 that Cornish services are being targeted first because they are seen as less politically sensitive; and calls upon the government to recognise the value of such services for businesses and visitors by ensuring that any future franchise guarantees the retention of existing services to safeguard vital access to and from Cornwall.

South Eastern Trains members plan strike action

RMT members at South Eastern Trains plan to take one-day strike action in early December over plans to cut 100 ticket-office jobs.

The dispute centres on the company's plans to replace ticketing equipment in booking offices with automated machines, and follows SET's announcement of plans to reduce ticket-office opening hours and remove 100 station staff.

RMT members voted by a margin of eight to one to strike over the plans, which have also been opposed by thousands of SET passengers. The plans, imposed without proper consultation or agreement, is a massive attack on jobs and services which would leave stations severely understaffed or not staffed at all for long periods.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said the company had fair warning that RMT members would not accept its plans to cut ticket-office opening hours and remove station staff.

"The company is threatening to throw away the massive progress made in the two years since Connex was thrown off the franchise and it was returned to the public sector.

"The company can avoid industrial action by heeding the overwhelming message that its passengers and workforce want to see more staff on stations, not fewer, and shelving these unnecessary cuts for good," Bob Crow said.

Parliamentary column

TURNING THE TIDE



The recent defeat in parliament of the 90-day detention clause in the terrorism Bill may well be seen as the day the tide finally turned towards a more progressive politics returning to the mainstream of the labour movement.

The important vote for a trade union freedom bill at the TUC and the victories on trade union rights, council housing, public services pensions and manufacturing at Labour Party conference has also created a sense that our movement is moving in a progressive direction. Indeed, it is no coincidence that some government ministers are now proposing to attack trade union representation at party conference because the trade unions are now winning the argument and the votes.

Examples of these stirrings are also appearing in the press. For instance, even The Evening Standard, not known for supporting trade unions, printed an editorial echoing tube drivers concerns on safety. I was happy to throw my weight being the recent parliamentary motion laid by Labour MPs congratulating tube drivers for refusing to work faulty Northern Line trains on safety grounds. This situation was created by infrastructure consortia Tube Lines sub-contracting critical safety work to Alstom.

It is even more alarming that, despite the debacle over the failure of Northern Line trains' emergency braking system, Metronet intends to sub-contract train maintenance to Bombardier.

Anyone would have thought that the blame culture created between Tube Lines and Alstom over Northern Line trains would have been enough to show that fragmentation of Tube maintenance is dangerous, and potentially disastrous.

The RMT ballot against sub-contracting and to protect conditions is important to RMT members but is also vital for the safety of the Tube.

The Evening Standard has been forced to reflect the overwhelming views of commuters and the public that PPP is a ludicrously expensive cock-up. Therefore, I and other Labour colleagues shall be continuing to press the government for an early review of the PPP to ensure maintenance is bought back in-house.

Nowhere are the benefits of bringing services back in-house clearer than the success story that is South Eastern Trains. Two years in the public sector and SET services have massively improved, this is a clear indication what can be achieved.

The other issue where the union has got it spot on – and will have the full backing of the public over safety – is its campaign to defend the sub-surface railway fire regulations that were introduced after the Kings Cross Fire.

It is extraordinary, especially in light of recent terrorist attacks, that this is even being proposed. It is bizarre that transport workers and emergency services are praised after attacks but when they voice concerns over fire safety, the support is not so forthcoming. RMT had already run a successful campaign on this crucial issue and I am sure that it will be successful again.

We also understand that proposals to break up Network Rail and hand over maintenance and signalling operations to Mersey rail have hit the buffers. This is good news for everyone, fragmentation and so-called 'vertical integration' in the private sector will not produce a better service. However, it will create more confusion in the name of trying to create a market where one does not exist.

Of course, we have many challenges ahead, not least the fight over pensions and proposals that people have to work till drop. That is not what our forefathers envisaged when the labour movement was being built. But it is important that we are positive about our achievements and what we can achieve. If we stay confident and united perhaps we can turn the tide. Finally, I would like to wish all RMT members a very happy Christmas and prosperous new year.

John Austin

MP for Erith and Thamesmead

RAIL FRANCHISE

Your questions answered

The Department of Transport has announced a new structure for rail franchises. This is all part of a relentless drive to cut subsidies to the industry and that in turn will mean cuts in services, routes, jobs and terms and conditions. Pension contributions are set to go through the ceiling.

Around 8,500 RMT members need a strengthened contract to protect jobs, basic rights and pensions. They work in South Eastern Trains, Great Western, Great Western Link, Wessex, Thameslink, WAGN, South West Trains, Island Line, Centrax 1 Trains, Midland Mainline, Silverlink and Virgin Cross Country.

The new structure is due to be brought in between now and 2007 for most train operators-but could take place any time for South Eastern Trains.

What is RMT asking for and why?

The current train operators will see the Department of Transport's announcement as an opportunity to carry out their own restructuring exercises in advance of the new franchise structure. This will mean attacks on terms and conditions (including pensions) and changes to staffing levels.

RMT is therefore making five demands of the operating companies now to protect members' jobs and terms and conditions in the run-up to the

new franchise structure. These are:

- No compulsory redundancies
- Full pre-1997 PT&R entitlements
- No worsening of pension entitlements
- No changes to terms and conditions unless agreed by RMT
- No changes to staffing levels or numbers unless agreed by RMT

RMT is demanding that your current employer puts these

FRANCHISE REPLACEMENT TIMETABLE

Current Franchise	Operator	New Franchise	Shortlisted Bidders	Successful Bidder announced	New Franchise Begins
South Eastern Trains	South Eastern Trains/DfT	Integrated Kent Franchise	1.DSB/Stagecoach 2. GNER/MTR 3. First Group 4. Govia	November 2005 Govia	April 2006
Great Western	First Group	Greater Western	1. National Express 2. First Group 3. Stagecoach	December 2005	April 2006
Great Western Link	First Group	Greater Western	As Great Western	December 2005	April 2006
Wessex Trains	National Express	Greater Western	As Great Western	December 2005	April 2006
Thameslink	Govia	Thameslink Greater Northern	1. National Express 2. First Group 3. Stagecoach 4. MTR/John Laing 5. DSB/EWS	December 2005	April 2006
WAGN	National Express	As Thameslink	As Thameslink	December 2005	April 2006
South West Trains (inc Island Line)	Stagecoach	South Western	No bids shortlisted to date	Autumn 2006	February 2007
Central Trains	National Express	Franchise to be broken up between East Midlands, West Midlands X Country, Chiltern & TPE franchises			Autumn 2007
Midland Mainline	National Express	East Midlands			April 2008
Silverlink	National Express	West Midlands			Autumn 2007
Cross Country	Virgin	Cross Country			Autumn 2007

RESTRUCTURING

points into everyone's contracts.

The best way to ensure that these demands are honoured in the future is for members to remain employed by their current employer, which is more likely to stick to the demands than a new private sector company. RMT also demand that current employers will not allow members to be transferred to new employers in the new franchise structure. Members' terms and conditions say who their employer is and RMT is resisting any change to give the best chance of the five demands being met in the future.

Why? I thought the TUPE regulations looked after all that sort of thing?

Unfortunately not. The TUPE regulations will only apply at the point of transfer and (with the possible exception of South Eastern Trains which might be earlier) that is going to be between March 2006 and 2007. That gives some of the train companies the best part of two years to worsen terms and conditions and reduce staffing levels unless we can achieve the 5 demands now.

It is already happening right now-to booking office and station staff on South Eastern Trains and to Hornsey Depot Staff on WAGN.

RMT can also tell you that the train companies see their opportunity to attack jobs and terms and conditions before the new structure is brought in. For example, in a letter dated 19 October to all staff, Chris Gibb, Managing Director, Virgin Cross Country said:

"At the end of any franchise all staff employed by it transfer directly to the new franchise operator, on their existing terms and conditions, including salary, should there be a change. In this case, some of the present Central Trains Staff associated with the services being brought into Cross Country will transfer into Cross Country too. Many details of the new Cross Country franchise remain unclear, and probably will not be so for some while. DtF has allowed an unusually long time-two years-before the start date for the new arrangements recognising the large amount of work which will need to be done by many people in the industry to make the changes to the franchise map."

The "existing" terms and conditions that will transfer are not those applicable now, but

those applicable in two years time at the time of any transfer to a new employer. A lot of changes can be made between now and 2007-which is part of the "large amount of work which will need to be undertaken by many people in the industry".

The union has been trying for over a year to obtain further assurances on the re-mapping process-first of Virgin Cross Country and then, following Alastair Darling's change of tack, of the re-organisation of Central Trains.

On September 29 Mike Mitchell, Director General of Rail at the Department for Transport, wrote that:

"I can confirm that the provisions of TUPE will apply to Central Trains employees transferring to other operators as a result of the franchise re-mapping proposals."

It's the same problem as with Virgin Cross Country. The terms and conditions that transfer under TUPE are the ones that apply at the point of transfer-there's a lot of time for changes to be made between now and 2007. In addition, when the announcement was made on 18 October, it became clear that the re-mapping proposals would also include Silverlink County staff and possibly staff from Chiltern Railways and Transpennine Express. No mention is made of their terms and conditions between now and 2007.

Anyway, it's important not to see TUPE as a guarantee of protection. Even where TUPE applies, employers can still try to reorganise for any economic, technical or organisational reason-which covers more or less any reason you can think of. But the starting point has to be protecting jobs and terms

and conditions between now and any transfer. If there are then transfers to new employers, RMT will have to use TUPE as best it can.

Why is it important for us to continue to be employed by our current employer?

RMT has to protect jobs and terms and conditions between now and the new franchise map being brought in. The most that RMT can do is to make demands of current employers for this period, which is what the union is doing.

Going forward, if we can get the five demands met, the best assurance that those five demands will continue to be met is for you to continue to be employed by the company that agrees to them in the first place, rather than a new private sector employer.

Under your terms and conditions of employment, you are employed by, for example, Central Trains or Virgin Cross Country. We are resisting any change of employer as the best way of ensuring that the five demands, once agreed to, are met in the future.

I can see the point if I had been rescued from Connex and was now being thrown back into the private sector but what if it's a restructuring from one privateer to another?

This isn't about whether your current employer is in the public or the private sector, neither is it anything to do with government policy. It's about getting protection for your jobs and terms and conditions now and pursuing the best way to ensure that that protection carries on in the future. That is by staying employed by your current employer. ■





*Tony Donaghey
RMT president*



Jeremy Corbyn MP



John MacDonnell MP



*Keith Norman
ASLEF general secretary*



*Matt Wrack
FBU general secretary*



*Bob Crow
RMT General Secretary*



**Don't
scrap**

**fire-safety
regs**

UNIONS RALLY TO DEFEND FIRE-SAFETY REGULATIONS

Hundreds of trade unionists and safety campaigners gathered at Kings Cross station in November to defend fire-safety regulations on the 18th anniversary of the devastating fire that claimed 31 lives

The national demonstration highlighted the threat to public safety posed by plans to abolish 'section 12' regulations that prescribe safety standards for sub-surface stations all over Britain, including in Glasgow, Tyne and Wear, Liverpool, Birmingham and the London Underground.

The government has proposed to repeal safety rules governing staffing levels, fire detection measures, warning procedures and means of escape introduced by Parliament in 1989.

Following recommendations from the fennel report into the 1987 Kings Cross, fire MPs added these regulations to the existing 1971 Fire Precautions Act.

However, the government claimed last year that the procedures were "too restrictive," and proposed their abolition and replacement with a new safety regime based on "risk assessment".

From next April, potential fire risks at sub-surface stations will be individually assessed and these inspections will guide those stations' new fire precautions procedures.

However, unions and a number of MPs are prepared to fight in defence of the existing system and launched a campaign to alert the public to the issue.

RALLY

At the London rally, Fire Brigade Union leader Matt Wrack recalled how, as a young London firefighter, he had attended the funeral of his colleague Colin Townsley, who was killed in the Kings Cross fire.

"It's something I'll never forget and there must be no compromise on safety," he said.

London MPs Frank Dobson, Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell vowed to use every means possible to prevent the new rules being introduced.

Mr Dobson said that he regretted that there had to be such demonstrations to defend crucial safety rules designed to save lives.

"Vague regulations" would not effectively control the ever-increasing number of contractors and sub-contractors operating on Britain's rail network, said Mr Dobson, insisting on the need for "formal and specific" safety rules.

CAMPAIGNING

Describing the plans as "insane," Mr McDonnell vowed: "We will be using every parliamentary device again to highlight the risk to the travelling public and workers in underground stations.

"After July 7 nobody in their right minds would be seeking to reduce safety measures on the



SAFETY: Local MP and former minister Frank Dobson backing the campaign

Tube. "We shall be demanding an early debate on the floor of the House to ensure that the government addresses these serious concerns," John McDonnell said.

Mr Corbyn told the rally that "we'll all do our best in Parliament. Please do your best by lobbying your MPs and urging them to get behind this campaign".

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister intends to run the new regulations "in tandem" with the existing procedures for a six-month trial period, hoping to, in the words of a spokeswoman, "prove that the new system will work better than the old".

However, RMT general secretary Bob Crow dismissed this as a tactic to keep the issue off the agenda during next May's local elections and he

called on Londoners to "ask your candidates where they stand on this when they ask for your votes".

"One reduction in safety" will spark the "biggest ballot for action you've ever seen," he added.

DEFENDING SAFETY

Effective campaigning has already prevented any watering down of safety rules. The government's first move to scrap the 1989 safety regulations was opposed by the House of Commons' Regulatory Reform Committee in October 2004, following an intervention by RMT parliamentary group convenor John McDonnell.

Parliamentary Early Day Motion 549, tabled by John MacDonnell after the July London bombings and signed to date by 45 MPs, is below. ■

EDM 549

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

WORKING TIME FOR ROAD TRANSPORT WORKERS

If you work in the bus and road transport sectors and are covered by new Road Transport (Working Time) Regulations the union needs your help to monitor how the rules are being implemented in practice

Recently RMT produced a simple pamphlet outlining new Road Transport (Working Time) Regulations which were implemented into UK law on April 4 2005. This is available from RMT head office.

Both the regulations and guidance are also available on the RMT website in the Research and Policy – Employment Law section at www.rmt.org.uk

The government plans to review the operation of the new regulations next April. Therefore, the TUC has agreed to conduct a study of the regulations starting in January 2006 in order to feed into the government review.

RMT will be carefully monitoring how the new Regulations are implemented, particularly in relation to Periods of Availability (PoA), and will play a full part in the TUC review.

The definition of what should constitute a Period of Availability is the area which

caused the most confusion and argument between trade unions and the Department of Transport during the course of the consultation period.

The TUC argued for the new regulations to be introduced without PoAs being included and that if the government did chose to include them many of the definitions set out in the draft guidance needed to be substantially re-written.

RMT also argued strongly that the definition of PoAs as set out in the government consultation documents and draft guidance 'gold-plate' the definitions set out in the original EC Directive. We were concerned that unnecessary disputes could occur over what should or should not constitute a PoA leading to poor industrial relations and the potential undermining of existing collective agreements.

Regrettably, the Department for Transport has not agreed to RMT representations and

requests.

For RMT to monitor effectively how PoAs are being implemented in practice, the union needs information from members who work in the bus and road transport sectors and who are affected by the Regulations.

WHAT ARE THE REGULATIONS FOR AND WHO IS AFFECTED?

The regulations implement EC Directive 2002/15/EC establishes minimum requirements for drivers, crew and other travelling staff working in vehicles subject to European Drivers' Hours Rules 3820/85/EEC or in some cases the AETR.

Typically, the European Drivers' Hours Rules affect all staff who work on vehicles fitted with a tachograph i.e. goods vehicles over 3.5 tonnes, coaches and bus services where the route exceeds 50km.

The regulations do not apply to occasional drivers or to stage-

carriage bus drivers. These workers are covered, where appropriate, either by the European Drivers' Hours Rules, the Domestic Drivers Hours Rules and the Working Time Regulations 1998 (as amended). The existing rights, under the Working Time Regulations, to a minimum four weeks paid annual leave and health checks for night workers continue to apply to mobile workers who will work under the provisions of the new Road Transport (Working Time) Regulations. Self employed drivers are exempted until 2009. However, most agency and own account drivers will be covered by the new regulations.

If you have information about how these regulations are being implemented in the workplace please do let your union know, via your branch secretary or by writing to head office. ■



A WORKING TIME WARNING!

On payment during annual leave covered by the Working Time Directive, make sure you're not being stitched up

Under the Working Time Directive it states that when employees are on annual leave the calculation of their weeks' annual leave pay is the normal amount they should be paid under their contract of employment. That means you should be paid as if you had worked your normal hours during that week.

If you are a regular night shift workers, this means that

your company should pay annual leave pay which includes night enhancement and shift pay.

There have been two instances recently where companies have underpaid RMT members so the union made it abundantly clear that it would commence legal proceedings against them.

The union is pleased to inform you that both employers

accepted that they had to pay members the enhanced night rate. They also accepted they would have to make back payments to any members that had been paid incorrectly for leave already taken.

RMT has arranged for this issue to be raised with all the companies where it has negotiating rights but you must be vigilant and ensure the correct payments are made to

you during annual leave periods.

If you experience any problems please let your Regional Organiser or Head Office know, give the helpline a call on 0800 376 3706 and RMT will do whatever necessary to ensure you are paid as you should be.

As you can see, RMT is willing to use every avenue to ensure members get the best deal. The union will use legislation or negotiation as long as you the member benefits. ■

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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 :

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SUCCESSFUL RMT LEGAL CASES

Here is just a cross-section of the legal victories which the union wins for member's all-year round

TUBE ASSAULT VICTIM WINS COMPENSATION

An RMT member employed by London Underground as a Revenue Control Inspector was assaulted at work by a passenger who was stopped and questioned at the ticket office.

The member received various injuries, including a two inch cut to head and numbness to left arm with extensive bruising, torn tendon at the cuff of left shoulder. The award accepted was £3,675. This was made up of £3,300 for a medically recognised condition and £375 for minor scarring to limbs.

FAULTY SEAT INJURES TRAIN OPERATOR

A London Underground member was carrying out his employment duties as a Train Operator. When he was pulling away from an Underground station and went to sit down on his seat, it collapsed, causing him to suffer injury to his back. The member's employers, London Underground Limited, accepted liability and the claim was settled for £1,500.

SIGNAL INJURY

An RMT signaller was injured while he was working the controls. He got up to reset them manually when he tripped on a bent floor plate, causing him to fall to the floor on his hands and knees and then on to his side. As a result of this accident he sustained a soft tissue injury to his back. A medical report was obtained which showed that the injury lasted a total of six weeks. The member took no time off work and damages were settled in the sum of £2250.

TWO CENTRAL TRAINS ASSAULT CASES

A member who was employed by South Central Trains was assaulted at work by a passenger, and received minor facial injuries and stress following the incident. The CICA awarded the member £1,000 which the member was happy to accept.

Another member employed by South Central Trains was also assaulted by a member of the public whilst carrying out her employment duties. She suffered psychological injuries as a direct result.

In the particular circumstances of the case, the employers accepted liability for the assault and her claim was settled for an agreed sum of £3,000.

BUS CLAIM

An RMT member hurt his back whilst helping a passenger in a wheelchair onto his bus. This aggravated a pre-existing back problem, which lasted for one month following the accident.

After admitting liability, the defendants initially valued the claim at £500-£750 and made an offer of £700. This was rejected and RMT solicitors Thompsons threatened to issue court proceedings.

The employers then increased their offer to £1000 which was accepted.

NETWORK RAIL INJURY CLAIM

Member employed by Network Rail was part of the maintenance team. With 19 other colleagues, he was moving a bullhead rail, which was approximately 60 foot in length, when his foot became trapped under the rail. He broke the



The right way: On-board train catering staff prepare food with adequate equipment © Duncan Phillips

metatarsal in his left foot. Employers failed to accept liability and court proceedings issued. Claim settled for £5,750.

GNER VICTORY

An RMT member employed as a customer services assistant by GNER, largely working on moving trains, was toasting a sandwich and due to lack of space the grill did not open to a full 90 degree angle.

As she attempted to turn the sandwich the lid fell forward onto the back of her hand.

It was alleged the defendants had failed to provide work equipment which was maintained in an efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair. The member complained that the grill handle was loose and that the top grill was so clogged up with food debris it did not heat the sandwiches evenly. Suitable gloves were also not provided.

Liability was denied and court proceedings were issued and it was not until the defence was filed that her employers accepted liability and the case was settled for £1000.

GNER INJURY SETTLEMENT

A member working on a GNER train slipped on a step whilst disembarking the train. It transpired the step was covered in ice due to a defective pipe on the train which had been leaking water onto the step. The member suffered a laceration to her lower leg and a

loss of earnings. A claim was lodged and a full admission of liability was achieved and settlement negotiated in the sum of £4,946.48.

PERSONAL INJURY VICTORY

The pregnant wife of an RMT member tripped on a crumbling kerbstone in Newcastle and fractured her ankle. A compensation claim was made in August 2003. However, the council failed to respond in the allotted timescale.

Therefore, RMT solicitors Thompsons issued what is called a pre-action disclosure application for documentation. Thereafter the Council denied liability and produced inspection reports claiming that area had been reviewed prior to the accident and found to be adequate.

Thompsons issued court proceedings and obtained a witness statement saying area had been in state of disrepair prior to council's inspection and that someone else had fallen previously at the same location.

The matter was listed for trial but the Council's solicitors made an offer to settle before it came to court. The first offer of £4900 was rejected and the offer was increased to £5,300 after negotiation. A further £600 was awarded following injuries to the mother's three year-old daughter who also received cuts and grazes to face as a result of the incident. ■

Still battling for equal pay

Earlier this year, 12 Nexus Employees pursued equal pay claims at the Newcastle upon Tyne Employment Tribunal. The claimants, who are all female Metro Operators, sought to compare themselves to male Metro drivers. Despite the fact that the women do exactly the same work as their male comparators, they receive nearly £5,000 less per annum.

Nexus defended the claim on the basis they had agreed two collective agreements with the unions determining Metro operator and train driver salaries, and that the train drivers were red circled.

They also argued that the reason for the red circling was to reduce their subsidy, allowing them to extend the metro system to Sunderland.

The tribunal decided that six of the cases were well-founded and ordered that those claimants were entitled to back-pay, and that their contracts should be immediately modified so that they receive the same salary as their comparators.

The unsuccessful claimants lost their cases as the tribunal did not believe they were employed on like work at the time they presented their claims to the tribunal. However, the

tribunal failed to consider whether those claimants were employed on work of equal value at the time their applications were presented and those claimants are currently pursuing a review of the decision.

In relation to those claimants whose cases were successful, Nexus has submitted an appeal to the Employment Appeal Tribunal. Nexus believe the tribunal got it wrong by considering the wrong pool of comparison, by deciding there was evidence of indirect sex discrimination, and finally by requiring Nexus to objectively



justify the difference in pay. Further information is awaited from the appeal as to whether their application will proceed any further.

Finally, if the tribunal upholds the tribunal's decision this could have huge ramifications for Nexus as the rest of its workforce will seek to pursue their own equal pay claims on the back of the successful claimants. ■

RMT fight back:

Our personal injury lawyers won't let bad employers get away with it.

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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PROTECTING AND PROMOTING OUR MEMBERS' INTERESTS.



SHIPPING

THOUSANDS MARCH AGAINST OUTSOURCING OF IRISH CREWS



Over 10,000 people marched through Dublin in November after Irish Ferries announced plans to get rid of 543 seafarers and replace them with exploited labour from Eastern Europe.

However, Irish Ferries responded by sending 'security guards' onto two of their ships docked in the UK ports.

Crews of the Isle of Inishmore and Ulysses barricaded themselves in aboard their vessels, docked respectively in Pembroke and Holyhead, after Irish Ferries attempted to install low-paid, non-unionised replacement crews from Eastern Europe.

RMT called for action over the serious threat to safety by the company's use of 'security guards' to raid its own vessels – in breach of international security rules – while berthed in British ports, and the continued denial of access by International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) inspectors to the crews.

"The Marine and Coastguard Agency should investigate the company's reckless actions as a matter of urgency," said general secretary Bob Crow.

PROTEST

In an attempt to impose 'social dumping', Irish Ferries crews that refuse to take redundancy packages face huge pay cuts and being replaced by foreign agency workers at rates of just around £2 per hour. However, Irish union SIPTU is fighting for the adoption of employment protection legislation by the Irish Parliament

Addressing the Dublin rally, SIPTU president Jack O'Connor said this case was not an isolated one. Workers in a range of sectors including construction, contract cleaning and security had been replaced by "vulnerable workers from other countries".

Ireland, along with Britain and Sweden, are the only three EU states that have signed up to the "free movement of labour" as part of the drive towards a single market.

Current EU law about minimum wages for foreign workers – known as "posting of workers' directive" – does not apply to ferry transport. Furthermore, the planned EU directive on services will contain the 'country of origin'

principle, which will allow foreign workers to be paid low wages.

"The proposed EU services directive will undermine wages and conditions across Ireland and Europe," said Mr O'Connor.

Irish Congress of Trade Unions general secretary David Begg challenged Irish Ferries claims that its decision to outsource crewing arrangements was necessary due to competitive pressures.

He warned that such a "race to the bottom" in employment conditions will create social tensions and "a misjudged antipathy" towards foreign workers. ■



SHIPPING

RMT SEEKS EMPLOYMENT FOR UK SEAFARERS

Following a sustained campaign for a link between the tonnage tax and the training and employment of UK seafaring ratings, the government set up the working party that has just concluded its deliberations.

RMT and TGWU made a full submission to the Employment sub-group while NUMAST and the Chamber of Shipping have made separate submissions.

Not surprisingly, the Chamber of Shipping oppose a mandatory link to training and employment for UK seafarers and NUMAST stated that if no mandatory employment link can be agreed for officers then they would accept a voluntary commitment by 70 per cent of shipping companies that they employ officers at least until they obtain their second certificate.

RMT argued for a mandatory link for UK seafaring ratings of one in eight employed, greater than the existing training link for cadets of one in fifteen.

The shipping minister wanted agreed recommendations from the working group but this has not been possible with the tonnage tax. Therefore, the different positions of the various parties will be presented to government. However, there are a number of industry-wide support measures that have been agreed by all parties. The RMT/TGWU submission is available to members on the website www.rmt.org.uk, alternatively copies can be obtained from head office on request.

Industry support measures proposed include an expansion of the Crew Relief Costs Scheme, Seafarers Earnings Deduction (SED, formerly Foreign Earnings Deductions, FED) and greater support for the Maritime Training Scheme, (SMART).

An extension of the existing Seafarers Earnings Deductions is required so that income tax is repaid to seafarers employed in the short sea and coastal trades. All parties are also asking the government approval for 100 per cent reimbursement of the costs of UK seafarers training courses. Currently 50 per cent is refunded.

It is unlikely that all these measures will be forthcoming as the Department of Transport has ruled out significant increases in funding. However, the working group agreed that they would improve the overall cost climate for UK shipping companies and therefore provide a further incentive for UK seafaring training and employment.

There was disagreement amongst the parties over the importance of the Crew Relief Costs Scheme (CRCS) and the merit in expanding this to the short sea trades. NUMAST felt that the existing money spent on refunding travel for UK seafarers could be more wisely spent on increased support for training. RMT stated that this could only be supported if redirecting CRCS funds to SMART would benefit the employment of UK ratings.

RMT WINS PAYOUT FOR AGENCY WORKERS



RMT win extra redundancy payments for P&O agency staff recently after Paula Mason (above) of RMT Portsmouth port committee tackled P&O chairman Lord Sterling at the company's AGM.

P&O recently de-commissioned two ships Pride of Portsmouth, Pride of Havre and sold them off to Italian interests and made hundreds of seafarers unemployed through compulsory redundancy.

However, agency staff came out of it even worse as they were told they were not entitled to redundancy payments.

As Lord Sterling addressed his last AGM, Paula Mason pointed out that, after 12 years at the ferries as an agency worker, she had only just been directly employed by P&O one year.

Therefore, her redundancy payment only came to £1,000.

"I'd like to know what your retirement package will be," she asked.

He refused to answer the question but his pension pot is worth £11.2 million.

Following the AGM and a threat by the union to take the matter to tribunal, the company reversed their position and agreed to give agency workers with continuous employment – including those with no contracts – redundancy payments worth two weeks pay per year employed.

"RMT's port committee basically forced P&O into this u-turn and it is something the union can be proud of," said Paula.

Pressure from RMT's port committee, made up of chair Paul White, regional organiser Brian Curtis, Mark Carden, Simon Davis, Brian Street and Paula, also

won seven on-board services staff their jobs back following redundancy as the union pointed out that the work was being carried out by agency staff.

The seafarers' retirement home in Surrey, Springbok, also benefited from redundancy negotiations as RMT solicitors Bridge MacFarland agreed to make a donation for every compromise agreement, totalling a donation of over £4,000.

The only P&O ship still operating out of Portsmouth is Pride of Bilbao and the union is planning a recruitment drive in order to represent the interests of the crew. ■

DP TAKEOVER OF P&O

Following the acquisition of P&O by DP Ports, RMT has cautiously welcomed statements from DP that they have no intention to sell off the P&O ferry sector and wish to see a growth in the business.

In the last two years, P&O have dismissed nearly 1500 UK seafarers from ports in Dover, Portsmouth and Hull. It is still very early days but RMT hopes that a positive approach will be taken to the ferry business.

RMT will be seeking an early meeting with the company and also assurances that jobs, pay and conditions will remain intact.

French unions win concessions over ferry privatisation

The French government backed away from fully privatising the state-owned Marseilles-based SNCM ferry company last month following protests that blocked the country's main Mediterranean oil port of Marseille.

As a result, French seafarers, led by the biggest ratings' union the CGT, voted by 519 votes to 73 to resume work following a strongly-supported 24-day stoppage.

Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin said the state was prepared to keep a minority stake in the SNCM ferry company, shifting policy the day after ordering 50 military commandos to storm a ferry occupied by protesting seafarers.

Unions, political parties and the public were appalled when the government dispatched the commandos in Puma helicopters to seize the Pascal Paoli car ferry. A sympathy strike by shipworkers at the Fos-Lavera oil terminal near Marseille also lasted three days before the government made the offer.

The deal means that for the first time for over 150 years, SNCM's top management will come from the private sector and transport privateer Connex becomes one of the operator's owners.

The decision to end the strike also came a day before the Marseilles commercial court, backed by the government, was due to declare the operator bankrupt with the loss of 2,400 jobs.

Although the government

wanted a 100 per cent sell-off, union negotiators forced it to back-down and clinched a deal in which the state retains 25 per cent of the equity with the workforce awarded a further 9 per cent. The two together have minority rights and will be able to influence decisions.

The majority 66 per cent shareholding goes to two investment funds: Butler Capital Partners will take 38 per cent of SNCM and Connex (a subsidiary of Veolia) 28 per cent.

CGT Marseilles branch leader Jean-Paul Israel said that his members would "remain vigilant" with regard to the new owners and the future of SNCM.

"The struggle does not end here," he stressed.

About 400 jobs will go, but there will be no compulsory redundancies. SNCM will not be split up and will retain its 10 vessels, which undertake crossings to Corsica and North Africa. The privatisation process is expected to be completed at the end of January.

SNCM's problems began in 1996 when it lost the sole right to serve Corsica from the French mainland and were undercut by SNCM rival, Corsica Ferries France (CFF). This private company operates under an Italian flag and uses cheap labour. SNCM operates under the full French flag with 100 per cent French crews. The ferry privateer then won a challenge in the European Union courts against the right of SNCM to receive state aid from the French government to run the service. ■



French seafarers celebrate as they receive the news that fellow trade unionists were being released from a Marseille courthouse. Corsican Workers Union leader Alain Mosconi and Felix Da Gregorio led a group of striking seafarers that commandeered the ferry "Pascal Paoli" amid protests over plans to privatise the company. French police commandos swooped onto the deck of the ferry and took it back to mainland France.

DOCKERS PROTEST AGAINST EU DIRECTIVE

Thousands of dock workers from across the EU took to the streets in Brussels recently in a demonstration against the resuscitated port directive, rejected two years ago by the European Parliament.

The directive aims to 'liberalise' all phases of dock work, from crane operation to the running of dock canteens, and will give ship owners the opportunity to replace skilled dock workers with cheaper, unqualified labour and agency staff.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said: "At a time of heightened security and draconian 'anti-terror' laws, it seems incredible that Brussels is fighting to allow ship owners employ unscreened and poorly paid agency workers".

Following some minor alterations, the port directive, one of the most controversial and disputed EU proposals in recent years, has been put forward again. In July 2003, around 3,000 Belgian dock workers were met with waves of tear gas and a shower of anti-riot bullets as they demonstrated in Brussels.

RAILING AGAINST PRIVATISATION



Geoff Revell talks about this year's Rail Against Privatisation mobile demonstration and a new documentary telling the story of the campaign which will be sent out to members in the new year

During the 2005 general election campaign RMT conducted its own campaign to make privatisation of the railways an election issue. Central to that campaign was the Rail Against Privatisation (RAP) mobile demonstration.

Over a sixteen days twenty three rank and file members along with two RAP organisers marched and demonstrated with local activists in fifteen cities.

Platform Films accompanied the mobile demo from start to finish.

They have now produced a documentary with commentary by Mark Thomas to be sent as a DVD to all members in the new year.

PUTTING THE CASE

The remit was to loudly put the case for rail public ownership to a wide public audience, expose the waste and inefficiency of privatisation and show the privateers for the parasites they are. The film shows this was achieved, with over one hundred thousand leaflets given out and an estimated 15 million people reached through the news media.

Rousing speeches from Bob Crow and Tommy Sheridan in St Enoch Square Glasgow set the

mood. Then with whistles blowing, flags flying and led by the RMT-sponsored twenty six piece Silkwood Colliery Band, the RAP marchers commenced their journey to London. They were joined by an ad-trailer depicting Ricky Thompson voicing his feelings on the matter, "Privatisation my arse".

Then on to Edinburgh, Newcastle, Durham, Darlington, York, Hull, Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool, Derby, Nottingham, Birmingham, Milton Keynes and London.

The demonstrations were high-profile in every way, with specially designed RAP insignia on hi-vi clothing and loudly coloured flags. There were whistles and horns, jazz bands and loud-hailers. The ad-trailer with its loud speakers blared out the explanation as to why RMT was in town to a largely receptive local people.

There are light moments on the film to enjoy. There are the two under-aged rail managers with enough time in their busy peak-hour schedule to round up police and security people to see off RAP demonstrators leafleting the station forecourt.

They come across like two Tory-boys who'd been on 'Jim'll fix it'. A Tory councillor also

rallies embarrassed coppers to "protect the people of Birmingham" from reading the word 'arse' on the ad-trailer. My particular favourite is the new-labour-speak policeman who describes what we used to call the shops as "an income generating area".

RALLY

The final march and rally in London is amongst the most colourful and loud union demos' ever seen and makes you proud to be an RMT member. As one of the rally speakers veteran campaigner Tony Benn points out, "we did it by ourselves".

If anyone doubts RMT is a campaigning union, watch this film.

INSPIRED

An inspired move by the union's Council of Executives was bringing proven campaigner and organiser Larry Cotton out of retirement to co-ordinate the mobile demo. Sadly, on September 3 Larry suffered a very severe stroke, one of our best foot soldiers is down. Before the credits role there is an on-screen dedication to Larry, and rightly so. ■



Notification of contribution rates for 2006

Like most things, the cost of providing you with the benefits of RMT membership increases every year. The increase in contributions for 2006 will allow for the expansion of union activities and provide a better service to members. Among these planned improvements will be the opening of a new education centre in Doncaster.

This will facilitate the training of members to improve the professionalism and support in the workplace. RMT will also be employing an additional member of the Council of Executives and appointing a new assistant national shipping officer to represent members. The union will be upgrading its popular website and employing a webmaster to keep it updated on a daily basis so that members can be kept fully informed at all times.

Members will also continue to enjoy other advantages of

membership including accident benefit, death benefit, retirement benefit, orphan fund and the possibility of Credit Union membership and legal cover.

From the January 1 2006 contributions will be increased by 17p per week, taking the full-time weekly rate to £3.00, for members aged 18 or over in an adult post. For members who are under 18 years or who, if not in an adult post, are under 20 years of age, the weekly contribution rate will be held at the current level that is £1.33, the latter rate also applying to those staff on part-time contracts of employment.

Direct debit payments will be increased accordingly as will contributions collected by employers under payroll arrangements. Members who pay contributions to Cash Collectors will receive a new contribution card from the collector. ■

The new rates applicable are as follows:

Period	Adult/Full Time	Junior/Part Time
Weekly	£3.00	£1.33
4 Weekly	£12.00	£5.30
Monthly	£13.00	£5.74

PROVIDENT BENEFITS

Accident Benefit will also increase arising from the higher contribution rate and for Adult/Full Time members will be weekly £30.00 with a maximum payable sum of £780.00

We maintain a tight control of our costs and continually re-examine them to ensure that we make best use of our resources to deliver improved services to you. Coupled with the representation, protection and benefits including our web site and this journal I am sure you will agree that RMT membership continues to provide excellent value for money.

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

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EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

What are your toilet facilities like?

There is nothing more basic than toilet facilities. However, toilet and sanitary facilities for the increasing number of women now employed in the transport sector has, in some cases, been neglected. For some women members, this is a real issue.

At the special women's conference last year, members heard stories of women bus drivers not having access to toilet facilities when on journeys lasting up to five and a half to 6 hours, of men's toilets

having to be used and of women's toilets being locked.

The issue was the subject of debate at this year's Annual General Meeting, where it was decided to ask employers to review provision of toilet facilities for women.

All companies have been written to and responses have been received. Some employers say there are no problems and others that they are willing to review provision.

What do you think? Our full time officers have been asked to

pursue the issue with the companies. If you believe there is a problem in the company you work for, whether because of poor facilities or indeed their absence, contact your Regional organiser.

If there is a problem, he needs to know, so that it can be addressed.

Not sure who your regional organiser is? Phone RMT's freephone Helpline on 0800 3756 3706 and they will tell you.



Ending gay discrimination

Good news for our lesbian, gay and bisexual members - no longer will hotels be able to refuse accommodation, no longer will doctors strike gay men from their lists, nor will holiday firms be able to refuse bookings.

The government had a

change of heart when it backed an amendment to the Equality Bill going through Parliament. The amendment will prohibit discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation in the provision of goods, facilities and services. Without this amendment, sexual orientation

would have been the only grounds in discrimination legislation that was confined to employment only.

The Equality Bill will also establish the new single Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR), create a duty on public authorities to

promote equality of opportunity between men and women and prohibit sex discrimination in the exercise of public functions. It will also extend the

Regulations on religion or belief to cover discrimination in regard to the provision of goods, services and facilities.

Civil Partnership Ceremonies

Regulations prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in the workplace back in 2003 excluded benefits available to married couples, the prime example being pension rights.

RMT challenged the government in the courts on this point but, unfortunately, was not successful. The government has part way rectified this injustice by the introduction of the Civil Partnership Act.

As from December 2005, lesbian and gay couples will be able to register their relationships by means of a civil ceremony. The new legal recognition will give same-sex couples the same legal benefits as heterosexual married couples and the first ceremonies will

take place on December 21.

A new legal status of 'civil partner' will be created and the government expects between 11,000 to 22,000 to have entered into civil partnerships by 2010.

Whilst the Act will apply throughout the United Kingdom, there may be slight differences in the way the legislation is applied because of the different legal systems. For our members in Scotland and Northern Ireland, the following websites can be accessed for further information:-

www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Justice/Civil/18313/12657 or www.oirni.gov.uk.

As in the case of marriage, notice must be given and details from the notice will be available in the register office for public inspection.

However, unlike marriage, the details will not include the address of either party. Sadly, this is a reflection of the unacceptable level of homophobia within society.

It will be possible after registering, to change surname. To do this, a civil partnership certificate will be accepted as evidence for changing names. This will also apply in respect of the Passport Agency and DVLA.

The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 has been amended so that civil partners and married employees will be treated in the same way. This means that any workplace benefits, terms or conditions of service that are dependant upon marital status, will from December be available to those who have entered into

civil partnerships.

For tax purposes, civil partners will be treated to the same as married couples, including inheritance tax. Civil partners will now be able to accrue survivor pensions in public service schemes and contracted-out pension schemes from 1988.

This means any payment into a contracted-out pension scheme made prior to 1988, will not be taken into account when calculating survivor pensions.

Provision is also made in the Act, for dissolution of civil partnerships.

The process of dissolution will be court-based and dependant upon demonstrating that the relationship has broken down irretrievably. ■

ORGANISED

Gregor Gall argues that trade unions could benefit from greater grass-roots involvement

Since the mid-1990s, "union organising" has become the mantra of progressive and innovative unions in Britain.

Union organising comprises a renewed focus on building workplace and inter-workplace trade unionism, based on recruitment, relating to workers' specific grievances in the workplace and mobilising their collective strength there. The aim is not just to create a union presence but strong and cohesive trade unionism.

"Union organising" pronounces that the members "are the union," that they "own the union" and should be "empowered" by it. By contrast, the "servicing approach" sees union members as consumers who have bought a service and the union represents them on their behalf.

The key signs of union organising in Britain are the TUC organising academy, which was launched in 1998, the increased spending on "organising" and the recent

setting up of individual national union organising academies at the T&G and USDAW.

As a result, hundreds of new union organisers have been appointed, several thousand new workplace reps identified and trained and tens of thousands of new members recruited.

Compared to the many previous initiatives like single-union deals, unions acting as consumer discount agencies and partnership agreements, "union organising" is the most credible attempt by unions to arrest and reverse their decline and stagnation in the last two decades.

But, still, decline and stagnation are present. And both look set to continue.

While some unions have grown, others have further contracted. Overall membership decline has bottomed out, not reversed, at 29 per cent union density and collective bargaining coverage currently stands at 35 per cent and is still falling.

The period of the 1970s is not a bad benchmark to use and to aspire to. Then, there was over 50 per cent union density and 70 per cent bargaining coverage for workers.

So, after nearly 10 years of the growing deployment of "union organising," two related questions need to be asked. "Is or was it enough?" And "is it enough any more?"

BENEFITS

Would union membership and organisation be worse off if "union organising" had never happened?

Yes is undoubtedly the answer, although how much worse it not so clear. More importantly, can we say that "union organising" has been necessary without being sufficient to renewing trade unions?

If it was necessary without being sufficient, this might mean that it is really a case of "union organising" needing to be practiced more widely and

for longer - more unions wholeheartedly signing up to it, spending more of their resources on it and doing so for years to come.

Being necessary but not sufficient might also mean that some other magic ingredient needs to be added to the pot, like significant employment and labour law reform so that union organising is carried out on more fertile ground.

Both more union organising and law reform would be truly significant developments if achieved. Yet neither can substitute themselves for the renewal of trade unionism as one of the great but now depleted social movements of modern times.

The central deficiency in union organising is that it attempts to rebuild a social movement from the top downwards by paid full-time union officers, when all social movements, trade unionism included, have essentially been built from the bottom upwards



ENOUGH?

by volunteers.

If we recall the periods of independently generated and explosive union growth of 1910-20, 1935-43 and 1968-75, these were produced predominantly by the actions of lay activists.

Part and parcel of this deficiency is that union organising is a bureaucratic and technocratic initiative, when social movements are built through mobilisation and conflict in a period of rising social struggle.

Union organising, by comparison, is an effete means to generate new lay activists and networks.

BUILDING SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

None of this is a call to throw the baby out with the bathwater. Rather, it is to understand that what unions are currently doing is a sensible and rational response to the situation that they find themselves in.

They look at what resources they have and how they can be best deployed.

Trade unions cannot conjure out of their hat a return to the 1970s even if some would wish that they could. Nevertheless, it is to understand the limitations of union organising.

So, where does this leave us? Is it a case of wringing our hands in despair and doing nothing or simply concentrating on union organising? Not quite.

While upturns in social struggle cannot be easily predicted, they do not emerge out of thin air either. Trade unionism can make their emergence more rather than less likely.

Trade unionism in Britain is characterised by a narrow economic tendency, with this either focused on the workplace or on political exchange with Labour. Despite some worthy community-based initiatives like

TELCO in east London, this remains the case.

Therefore, the idea of social movement unionism, as practiced by some unions currently in the US or, previously, by trade unionism in Brazil, Poland, South Africa and South Korea, should receive serious attention as a way by which to expand the activity and appeal of trade unionism.

Here, trade unionism is much more widely conceived of, with the "vested interest" of members' wages and conditions continuing but also with a "sword of justice" role within in the local and wider community.

Members' collective interests would thus be more widely defined in terms of being producers, consumers and citizens with equality, democracy, social justice and liberty comprising the prime objectives.

Pursuit and enforcement of these would necessarily require the construction and mobilisation of power resources at various workplace and extra-workplace - community, industry and territorial state - levels. In essence, this would involve the ideological rebirth of trade unionism as a social liberation movement.

If this perspective was to be contemplated, there would be a number of obvious challenges. Unions would have to challenge the views and assumptions of many of their members because much more would be required of them.

Trade unionism would also have to relate to the other existing social movements like the anti-war, imperialism and capitalism movements.

This is not to underestimate the challenges of enmeshing with the new social movements, given that many of them are a long way off from being close to trade unionism. Nor is it to

underestimate them enmeshing with trade unionism given that it is also a long way off being close to them.

But this kind of approach might help trade unionism break out of its corral, making the future of trade unionism less dependent upon the mainstay of union organising.

Indeed, the ground for the kind of union organising currently practiced might be

more fertile - union activists would be fighting to organise themselves not just on the basis of "another workplace is possible" but "another society is possible". ■

Gregor Gall is professor of industrial relations at the University of Hertfordshire's Centre for Research in Employment Studies. He is editor of Union Organising: Campaigning for Trade Union Recognition (Routledge, 2003) and Union Recognition: Organising and Bargaining Outcomes (Routledge, 2005).



PROTEST: Trade unionists take part in this year's Make Poverty History demonstration in Edinburgh, Scotland. ©Jess Hurd/reportdigital.co.uk

FRENCH RAIL WORKERS DEFEND THEIR INDUSTRY

Jeff Apter talks to French CGT rail workers' union general secretary Didier le Reste in Paris about the fight against government and EU policies of rail privatisation



Didier le Reste

French rail workers have been in the forefront of the fight to defend their industry and against continuing high unemployment across the country.

A nationwide day of action in October saw 1.3 million workers take to the streets in 150 demonstrations. These protests, which are set to grow, pinpoint the demands of the powerful rail unions against cuts in jobs and services and European Union demands to open passenger and freight rail to competition.

Public opinion polls showed almost that almost three-quarters of the public sympathised with the aims of the strikes.

Action to defend a decent public service and the jobs and conditions of rail workers is led by the rail union affiliated to the CGT union umbrella organisation. By far the biggest of France's eight railway unions, it represents half of all railway workers on the basis of elections for works council representatives, for which all rail employees vote.

Didier Le Reste, CGT rail union general secretary since 1999, was recently labelled by France's best-selling newspaper, *Ouest France*, as "rightly or wrongly the man who industrially can paralyse France" - quite an achievement for an orphan who set up his first union branch at 18 before becoming a railway worker in 1976.

FIGHTING PRIVATISATION

Mr Le Reste told RMT News that the biggest problem for his members is the threat to the SNCF as a public service. This, he emphasises, is because of inadequate investment levels, the effect of the French conservative government's austerity policies and European Union directives on opening rail services to competition.

"These three elements are destroying the railways as a public service and adversely affecting employment and salaries.

"But they are meeting resistance from rail unions and are the reasons behind this year's rail strikes," he says.

Football-loving railwayman Le Reste is the latest in a long line of militant rail union leaders. "October 4 was the fifth successful 24-hour stoppage for France's railway unions so far this year - and may not be the last.

"We came out to defend jobs and rail workers' purchasing power and fight cuts to the railways as a public service. This also means fighting the European Union's policy to open passenger traffic to competition," he says.

WINNING

And the successful stoppage was the first since union action compelled the conservative government to sign a dispute warning agreement, which defeated its attempt to impose minimum service requirements during disputes.

"This has resulted in commuters being less inconvenienced as the SNCF was able to inform the travelling public on the anticipated state of traffic through newspaper advertisements 48 hours before the strike," he points out. Opinion polls show that 74 per cent of the public supported or sympathised with the rail strike movement's aims.

He believes that unions are angry that the SNCF is making its employees pay for its bid to return to profit this year.

"We lost over 8,000 jobs between 2002 and 2004 and SNCF's 2005 budget included

slashing more than 3,000 jobs this year.

"Stoppages this year have successfully saved 800 jobs but the SNCF still wants to reduce the present workforce of 170,000," he says.

Meanwhile, rail unions have demanded an early meeting with management on jobs and pay. The SNCF announced recently an unexpectedly high 2004 operating profit of about £80 million after a £140 million loss in 2003.

RESISTING BRUSSELS

Didier Le Reste says that his union's actions against the EU directives demanding rail liberalisation and privatisation are a "continuation of our strong opposition to the discredited European Constitution" which was rejected by the French people in the May 29 referendum.

"The union fought for rejection because the constitution favoured big business and offered insufficient guarantees for workers' and union rights and the defence of public services," he said.

Union pressure made France the last country to cave in to EU directives to open its freight network to competition following the European Commission's total liberalisation of international rail freight by January 1 2006, and of national rail freight a year later.

In June, the first entirely privately run freight train since nationalisation in 1937 started



CGT members blocked the first privately-run freight train on the network since 1937 from operating for four hours until riot police attacked protesters in June.

operations in France. Rail unions symbolically prevented the Connex train from operating for four hours until police intervened.

"Opening freight to competition means economic and social austerity for the SNCF and network and, potentially, big job losses for railway workers", Le Reste said.

He says union action will continue against Brussels decision to open passenger rail transport to competition on international routes on January

1 2010, although ministers rejected the European Parliament's vote to bring the date forward to 2008 and open national passenger services to competition in 2012.

FIGHTING CLOSURES

According to Le Reste, the French conservative government's three year plan to re-organise rail freight is not boosting the industry but, on the contrary, is leading to the closure of marshalling yards and some lines.

"We have lost four million tonnes of freight. In 2000 the railways carried 19.6 per cent of all freight. This has fallen to 13 per cent now as the SNCF takes only the most profitable contracts.

"This means over 200,000 more lorries on the roads, contributing to more accidents, harm to the environment and wear and tear on the roads," he says.

He also points out that lorry operators do not contribute to the upkeep of the highways,

which is not good for the taxpayer.

He cited last June's road crash in the Fréjus road tunnel as the "latest example of the erroneous policy of shifting freight from rail to the roads".

Didier Le Reste says the CGT rail union's firm action has boosted membership and its votes in the elections for works council representatives.

It now has 51,000 members and the determination of Didier and the CGT means that this number will continue to rise. ■

STRIKING AGAINST "INSIDIOUS PRIVATISATION"

By Jeff Apter in Paris

France's four biggest rail unions ended strike action after 36 hours at the end of November following "satisfactory concessions" including on jobs and pay from the management of French Rail (SNCF).

However, concerns remain over the creeping privatisation of the industry through the implementation of EU rules. Management proposals were enough to resume work but many of the main issues remain and further industrial action in the near future cannot be ruled out.

The action was taken by the CGT, SUD-Rail, FO and FGAAC that together represent 72 per cent of the workforce and 95 per cent of drivers. Four smaller unions did not join the movement. The CFDT, which recently lost many activists and members to the CGT and Sud-Rail, publicly attacked the strike.

Called after several rounds of inconclusive talks with SNCF management, the strike - the sixth this year - started on Monday November 22 and was due to end on Wednesday with the understanding that rank-and-file trade unionists would decide every day whether or not to continue stoppages until management came up with new

proposals.

The SNCF resumed talks as soon as the action started and the severely disrupted traffic - only one in three high-speed trains and one in four regional trains operated - returned to normal by Thursday.

SNCF management agreed to double the £80 annual bonus based on the SNCF's performance, grant a 0.3 per cent wage rise on January 1 in anticipation of a further increase and to bring forward 2006 pay talks. Turnover for the publicly-owned rail network increased by more than 5 per cent in 2004 and a substantial profit is expected for 2005.

Separate talks will be held on low pay, night working and the reorganisation of SNCF's freight activity.

SNCF chairman Louis Gallois confirmed that 4,500 people would be taken on next year including 700 new jobs. ID TGV, a private company set up a year ago by SNCF to attract ticket purchases over the internet, is to be integrated into the main company.

Didier Le Reste, general secretary of the CGT rail union, which represents half of all SNCF employees, said progress had been made on the unions' demands.

However, there was still much concern about the effect of the French government and European Union transport policies on the public service. Worries remained on "rampant privatisation" of the SNCF though the creation of subsidiaries that could then be hived off, especially in freight and commercial activities. Mr Le Reste said the unions were not satisfied with high-level statements, including French

President Jacques Chirac, claiming that SNCF would not be privatised.

The CGT leader said the unions would be keeping a close watch on the "insidious privatisation" of parts of the SNCF and the possible injection of private capital into the group and remained concerned at the European Commission's plan to speed up the opening of international passenger traffic to 'competition' by 2010. ■



STANDING UP FOR TRADE UNIONISTS IN THE FIRING LINE

Justice for Colombia campaigns officer Josh Feldberg reports on a country where the lives of trade unionists are constantly under threat from state-backed right-wing terrorists

This morning I spoke by telephone to Hubert Ballesteros, the Deputy General Secretary of FENSUAGRO – the agricultural workers' union in Colombia – who was in the rural town of Caldonio in the south of Colombia. Yesterday, he was in the town of Popayan and in two days he will be moving on again. He never spends more than two days in one place and doesn't go out after dark for fear of his life.

"I have no choice. I have received numerous death threats and nearly 600 of our activists and members have been assassinated by the army and their allies in the paramilitaries.

"I know that if I don't live my life this way that I too will also be killed" explains Hubert.

His story is tragic, but what makes it all the more harrowing is that his situation is far from a rarity in Colombia. Indeed, since 1986 when the Colombian TUC was formed, nearly 4,000 trade unionists have been assassinated and many more have been disappeared, tortured or forced to flee their homes and jobs. Colombia is by far the most dangerous place in the world in which to be a trade unionist.

SOLIDARITY

In the face of this atrocious situation the British trade union movement set up Justice for Colombia (JFC); an organisation

dedicated to providing much needed solidarity to Colombian trade unionists. Since its creation three years ago, JFC has gained the support of nearly every union in the UK and has run various solidarity delegations, campaigns and projects to provide urgently needed support to trade unionists in Colombia.

One of the most direct ways in which British trade unionists have been able to support their Colombian counterparts, has been by going on delegations to witness first-hand the struggles of their Colombian colleagues.

Not only do these delegations provide moral support, they also put pressure on the Colombian government to stop persecuting the union movement. The Colombian regime is highly conscious of its image in the UK since the British government provides Colombia with vast quantities of military aid – despite the fact that the Colombian Army murder trade unionists.

JFC has assisted in the development of direct links between British unions and their Colombian counterparts and British unions have been able to implement grassroots projects which are providing much needed assistance.

One such project has been the provision of assistance to



Colombian TUC general secretary Carlos Rodriguez addressing TUC in September

the human rights department of FENSUAGRO, the agricultural workers' union – one of the unions that have suffered most in recent years at the hands of the Colombian Army.

The generosity of British trade unions has allowed FENSUAGRO to employ a human rights officer, equip them with an office and computer and create regional human rights committees made up of grass roots members.

This has allowed the union to document and denounce the attacks against their members and has enabled them to run courses informing people of their basic trade union and human rights. In addition, FENSUAGRO has been able to publish campaigning materials to help with recruitment and expand its membership.

Similar Justice for Colombia projects have also been established to support FECODE, the teachers' union, and ANTHOC, the Colombian health workers' union.

END MILITARY AID

British unions are also working with JFC on the ongoing campaign to end British military aid to Colombia until the Colombian military

stop murdering trade union members and start respecting human rights. The campaign is of crucial importance to the Colombian unions as the majority of assassinations carried out against trade unionists there can be attributed to the Colombian army and their paramilitary allies.

The British Government knows this yet continues to be the second largest provider of military assistance to Colombia in the world after the USA.

British unions have also taken on a prominent role in campaigning for the safety of heavily threatened individuals within the Colombian union movement. PCS young members, for example, are undertaking a letter writing campaign to the Colombian Government demanding that the Colombian Army end their repeated threats against Nelson Prieto Ramirez and William Higuera, two young members of the health workers union ANTHOC. And Brendan Barber of the TUC recently wrote to the Colombian president insisting that the rights of Colombian trade unionists are respected during a 24-hour general strike held on October 12.

Although the situation for

E G LINE



Colombian trade unionists remains perilous, the ongoing support that they are receiving from the British trade union movement is slowly but surely improving this horrendous situation. Carlos Rodriguez, General Secretary of the Colombian TUC, described the importance of this support when he addressed the TUC congress in Brighton in September.

"The number of trade unionists assassinated so far this year is less than last year.

"This is due to the international support we are receiving and in particular from the British trade unions, which have been very active in fighting for our cause," he told delegates

If you or your branch would like to assist the work of JFC please consider sending a donation to us at: JFC, 9 Arkwright Road, London NW3 6AB.

If you would like to participate in one of our delegations to Colombia or would like to invite a Colombian trade unionist to speak at your branch meeting, please contact the JFC office.

Tel: 020 7794 3644, Email: info@justiceforcolombia.org

For more information on JFC and the projects they support visit: www.justiceforcolombia.org



Stopping the race to the bottom

Transport privatisation promised much but has delivered very little. The latest "radical shake-up" of rail services in the Midlands will yet again cause uncertainty and insecurity to many railway workers who are no doubt asking what on Earth is going on? After the South Eastern Trains debacle, caused by privatisation when the franchise had to be removed from rail privateer Connex, the government intends to put the lot out to tender again to recreate the same mess. And now more "stop-go" changes to no less than eleven train companies up for refranchising over the next year. What does this do for the morale of the workforce? What affect will there be on their jobs, contracts of employment, pensions and conditions?

RMT's role is to protect members from this race for profit caused by privatisation. Those of us around in the lead-up to privatisation ten years ago will remember that our railway network was split up into palatable bits for sale. The passenger network was split for example into Intercity, Regional Railways, London and South East as was the freight side.

If one examines the new Midland franchises in particular where "mainline Intercity" will again be mixed with regional and rural lines – the question arises do they have a clue what they are doing? The answer must be they don't have a clue and the sooner that our railways become a national asset again the better.

I have in the past in this column mentioned the adverse affects of globalisation and "liberalisation" on working people and how important it is for them to be protected by their trade unions. I see examples of these damaging effects increasingly often.

Oksana Karamjana came from Latvia on a three months contract to work for Irish Ferries earlier this year for less than £2.50 an hour for twelve hours a day, seven days a week. She stayed on the boat for the duration of the contract with no days off. She complained that she felt like a robot



PROTEST: Irish seafarers defending jobs

and became physically and mentally exhausted and decided to leave.

She also alerted the International Transport Workers Federation, which represents transport workers of her plight, but Irish Ferries declined to even allow an Inspector on board. Irish Ferries plans to introduce 'social dumping'. Social dumping means sacking local labour and employing foreign nationals at massively lower rates in order to increase profits for shareholders and wages for company directors.

This exploitation of foreign nationals has rightly caused a major dispute in Ireland, where hundreds of Irish seafarers have been sacked and replaced by sweated east European labour. I and many other RMT members took part in a large march and demonstration in Dublin on November 9 calling on the government to put a stop to this exploitation.

Similar problems exist on UK shipping and RMT and other European trade unions are uniting to protect all transport workers from this "race to the bottom".

Finally, I'd like to wish all members a very happy Christmas.

Tony Donaghey

WATFORD MARKS 40-YEAR MILESTONE

RMT's Watford branch invited general secretary Bob Crow to a recent branch meeting to present John Clark with his 40-year union membership medallion and badge.

John Clark has recently retired but he joined the railway on the January 6 1958 at Somerstown,

St Pancras British Rail school of apprentices and ended his career in Watford S&T.

He joined the NUR in 1962 and in 1966 on his way to work was involved in a motorcycle accident, with the help of the union and his branch secretary received compensation for his injuries.

Reflecting on his career John said: "I have seen a lot of changes over the years but the one of the things I am proud of is the union's fight for a safer railway and the improvements made with the help of this union to improve safety across the industry".



LETTERS

Dear editor,

I am writing to object to the content of the model letter which RMT is requesting members send to their MPs (October issue).

As an HGV driver I always hope my union looks after my interests, however, in this case they are not. In fact, they are going to make my life considerably worse.

We are now under a maximum working week of 48 hours (plus PoA.'s), But we now find RMT supporting a maximum driving week of 48 hours. When do we clock on and off, check our vehicles (by law we must do this every time we take a truck out - this counts to the 48 hour working week), wash our vehicles etc?

I would also point out that at present the maximum driving is 90 hours a fortnight (that works out at 45 per week) - can you spot where this makes my life worse?

The letter also requests a minimum of eight hours daily rest. I was always told that I need eight hours sleep to stay healthy and alert so exactly what part of the eight hours daily rest is for sleep (remembering travelling, breakfast/dinners, time with the family etc).

I am up approx one hour in the morning before going to work, I travel 35 minutes to work and 35 minutes back from work, I enjoy a bath for about 20 minutes before having my dinner with my family.

I then like one to two hours relaxing before going to bed. This makes a total of approx 3.5 hours to 4.5 hours out of eight hours rest as supported by RMT. Do you honestly think that 4.5 hours is enough sleep? Do you remember that the person who fell asleep at the wheel and killed all those people on the train?

We have 11 hours daily rest now (which can be reduced - but to no less than 9 hours) - can you spot where you are making my life worse?

We should be fighting for a minimum 11hrs daily rest with no reduction. We should be fighting for a maximum 48 hours working week including PoA.'s (you are currently fighting for 37 hours weeks on the trains). We should be fighting for a minimum 45 hours rest per week with no reduction. We should be fighting to stop cheap labour.

Come on RMT, stop supporting things that make members lives worse and start to look after members interests, check everything out first.

Regards
Robin Murray

From the editor

RMT support for the ITF campaign is in respect of international transport standards and is aimed at workers who do not have the same standards as many British workers.

The union, as an affiliate of the ITF, supports the campaign to get countries to sign up to International Standards as stipulated on ILO Convention 153.

You are right to point out that in some areas, such as the 48 hours maximum working week and daily rest periods, the ILO conventions specify weaker protections than enjoyed by some UK road transport workers.

Despite these protections, many UK transport workers do not or are unable to conform to these minimum standards. ILO stipulations for a break after four hours continuous driving and maximum driving times of 9 hours are also superior to some of the existing arrangements.

Tellingly, most countries, including the UK have not signed up to the ILO convention because to do so would help prevent road haulage companies exploiting workers internationally and at home

Dear editor,

After just reading your article on assaults on the rise in RMT News, I would like to draw your attention to something that I can see happening in my place of work.

I am currently employed by South West Trains at Woking Station in the revenue department. We have barrier lines at this station. However, we have staff shortages and the company is not employing anymore staff due to the franchise renewal (trying to cash in before they lose it!).

We have times when we operate the barriers with no ticket selling machine. These barriers are on-line with no excess duty and we are told by management to send the customer without a ticket to the ticket office window to purchase their ticket.

Some go there and some just walk straight out and there is nothing we can do. In relation to the assaults, when we have excess on duty and the member of staff decides to penalty fare a ticketless person at Woking station the customer could get violent and say "well, before I went to the ticket office window to buy my ticket". I think running things this way is asking for trouble and all management are after is there gate line cover not the welfare of staff.

Regards
Scott Chown

Dear comrades,

I would like to thank the Harwich shipping branch secretary and the Harwich RMT members, active and retired, for organising my surprise retirement party at the White Horse public house.

A special thanks to general secretary Bob Crow for taking the time to attend this occasion, it was a great night.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all Harwich RMT shipping members for the loyal support they have given the former NUS and now the RMT and myself as a union representative over the past thirty seven years, of which I have many memories.

I wish the new chairman Dave Payne all the best in the future, and I know that Harwich shipping members will give Dave the same loyal support that they gave me.

Regards
Bob Stewart

WOMEN ON THE RAILWAY

Janet Cassidy looks at a new history of women on Britain's railways, *Railwaywomen*

When I joined the railway in 1986 there were very few women in the industry. It appeared harder for women to progress and be accepted into the higher grades. The reason I say 'appeared' is that after reading 'railwaywomen' by Helena Wojtezak, I now find that life was relatively easy.

The difference is between having a job where you were required to attend church on a Sunday, to today's culture, where you are expected to work a booked Sunday. Unions were opposed to female employee's and wages were 14 shillings a week, 70 pence to you youngsters.

Mind you, this was in the 1800's and we have come a long way since then. Large gender pay gaps were in existence everywhere and, unfortunately, still are for some industries.

In 1914 there were 178 railway companies. Imagine our unions of today negotiating with these?

Victorian women were barred from 'men's work' - a position which some men today would still support, given half a chance.

But we have moved on from the days when women were given specific jobs, to today when women occupy positions in all grades. From railwaymen receiving their wives' wages for any work they undertook, to women having the possibility of

earning more than the men, dependent on their grade.

The first report of a woman booking clerk was in 1858 in Edinburgh. It was reported that, although startling, it was commendable. It is also startling to read that London Underground reckoned they could save money by employing women in booking offices, and, after only two weeks, reconsidered this decision.

There is also a very interesting chapter on the introduction of trade unions, and how the NUR was formed in 1913, with startling revelations regarding inclusion or exclusion of women. There are also references to women in shipping, acting as booking clerks and stewardesses during the First World War.

This is a short review as it would take away from the whole content of the book. Helena has to be commended for the time she has taken, and the research she has done to make this a compelling read.

For those younger readers amongst us, it is worth remembering that one shilling is equivalent to five pence! I recommend this book to all, from the start I was unable to put it down, even though I am not an avid reader. A must read. ■

Janet Cassidy is an RMT member and the current chair of the Scottish TUC Women's Committee.



AUTHOR: Helena Wojtezak launching her new book at the RMT stall at TUC

JIM JETS OFF IN STYLE

Current and former head office staff, executive committee members and friends gathered in London recently to celebrate the retirement of Unity House legend Jim Hegarty. Jim also collected his 25-year RMT badge in recognition of his long service which began on February 4 1980 as an office assistant at NUR headquarters.

Prior to starting with the union, Jim was much travelled and worked for a number of years in Australia. During this time he was a member of the Australia Workers Union and the Painter's and Decorators Union, Perth and Tasmania.

As a result, Jim could always turn his hand to the many jobs that have come his way at a number of Unity House's and at Maritime House. He saved the union a fortune over the years when dealing with emergencies and did not rely too heavily on outside help.

Unity House union rep Craig Stewart paid tribute Jim and pointed out that he could have invented the term "work/life balance" as he was always active and off somewhere for an adventure.

Presenting the retirement gift of a skiing holiday, general secretary Bob Crow said that Jim was always willing and helpful and gave good advice whatever needed doing.

"Whilst most of us only have the energy to sit in front of the TV of an evening, Jim is out and about as a skiing teacher and his catch-phrase on the slopes is still 'break a leg!'," Bob said.



CONNOLLY HONOUR

Irish artist John Keenan presented general secretary Bob Crow with a bust of Irish trade union leader James Connolly recently. John, from Abbeydorney in Kerry, took up sculpting in his retirement and found he had a flair for the art.

Bob said that he was honoured to receive the bust of Connolly, who took part in the Easter Rising which led to Irish independence.

"Next year RMT will be holding our AGM in Dublin, where Connolly gave his life for the cause of Irish freedom, and in 2007 we will be in Connolly's birthplace of Edinburgh so it is a fitting gift to inspire our union," he said.



LOCKERBIE CONVICTION RE-EXAMINED

As the Scottish Socialist Party's Justice spokesperson, I have studied many aspects of Scotland's Criminal Justice system at close quarters.

I have come to recognise that much of it is progressive and that there are many people working hard to modernise and improve it so that it better serves the ends of justice for everyone.

But there is one case which may well be about to blow the reputation of the Scottish legal system to kingdom come and it concerns the conviction of our most high profile prisoner.

Abdel Baset Ali Mohamed Al Megrahi, otherwise known as the Lockerbie bomber, is serving 28 years in Greenock gaol. I have just finished reading John Pilger's latest book 'Tell Me No Lies' which I can thoroughly recommend.

It contains a chapter written by the late Paul Foot about the 1988 Lockerbie bombing. No sooner had I finished reading it than the Scottish press were full

of fresh stories regarding the case.

Firstly a Former Lord Advocate – Scotland's chief prosecutor – Lord Fraser, cast doubt over the reliability of one crown's key witnesses. Fraser now believes the credibility of the Maltese shopkeeper alleged to have sold Al Megrahi clothes subsequently found in the wreckage of the Pan Am flight, to be highly questionable. He describes him as 'not the full shilling' and a man who was easily led.

For a former Lord Advocate to raise such questions is highly unusual and has forced the current Lord Advocate to make a statement to Parliament just weeks before Megrahi's conviction is reconsidered by the Scottish Criminal Cases Review Commission.

Speculation is now also rife that a deal has been done between the UK and Libyan governments to have Al Megrahi serve the remainder of his 28 years sentence in a North African prison to be nearer his

family. Many see this transfer as a prelude to his imminent release and return to Libya and a hero's welcome.

Why a hero's welcome? The Libyan's never accepted the case against Al Megrahi. And they were not the only ones. The conviction took the many legal commentators who had sat through the months of evidence at Camp Zeist in the Netherlands completely by surprise. Many of them believed the real culprits were not in the dock, that Megrahi was a patsy, a pawn in a hideous game of international espionage and diplomacy.

This view, shared by Paul Foot, suggested the bombing of Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie in December 1988 was in fact carried out under instructions from the Iranian government as a reprisal for the shooting down of one of their civilian airliners by an American warship some months beforehand.

A group known as the People's Front for the Liberation

of Palestine – General Command [PFLP-GC] working for the Iranian and Syrian governments were the original chief suspects in the killing of some 270 people. But the international geopolitics of the 1991 Gulf War meant that the US AND UK governments needed to enlist the support of both Iran and Syria in the fight against Saddam Hussein and so they switched their line of attack towards an altogether more convenient target, Libya.

The next few months look certain to see some startling new developments and bring to the fore once again a case which casts an ominous dark shadow over the Scottish Criminal Justice system. And will pose once again some very serious political questions indeed about justice and the state.

Colin Fox,
Scottish Socialist Party
Convenor

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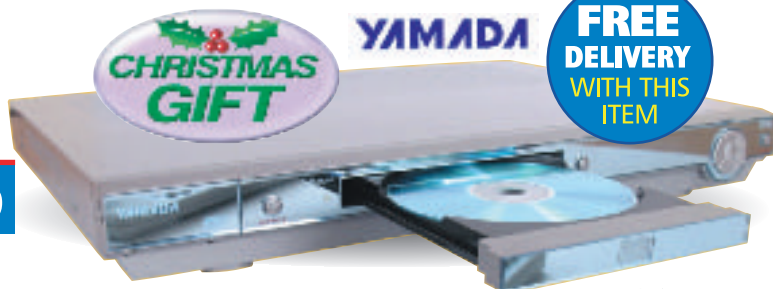
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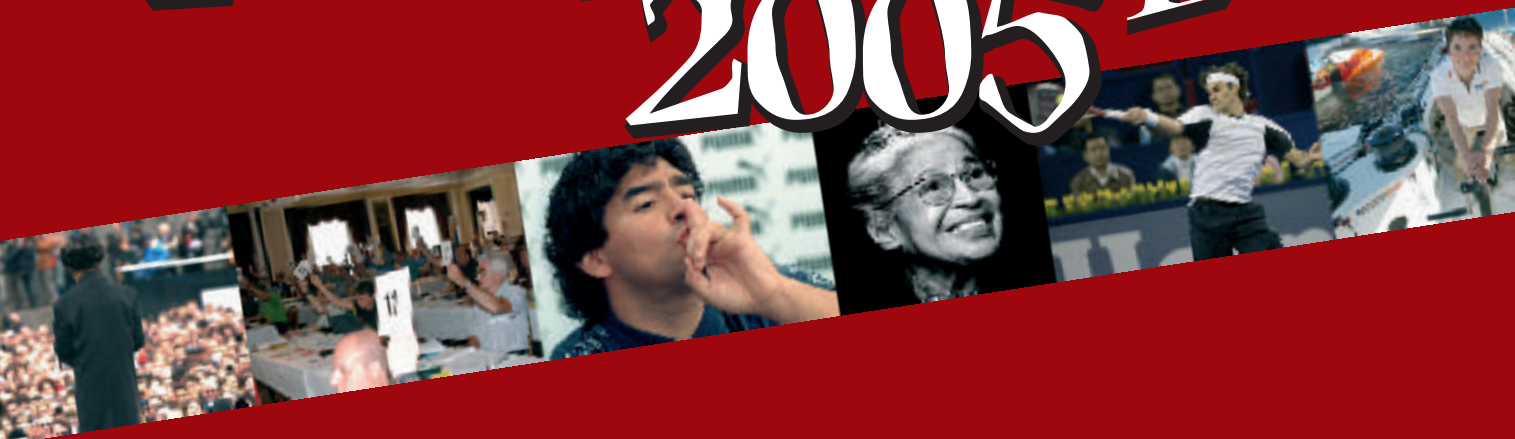
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the RMT Christmas quiz 2005



THE YEAR IN REVIEW

1. What was the name of the hurricane which devastated New Orleans?
2. A blue plaque was unveiled at St Martins College of Art to mark the 30th anniversary of the first ever performance by which legendary rock band?
3. Wallace and Gromit starred in Curse of the...
 - a) Were-bunny?
 - b) Were-rabbit?
 - c) Were-carrot?
4. How many seats did Labour win at the last General Election?
5. Which South American sporting icon condemned US President George W Bush as a "war criminal" at the recent Summit of the Americas?
6. Which unlikely pairing duetted with a performance of Children of the Revolution at Live8?
7. To which punk anthem did Tony Blair strut the stage at Labour's annual conference?
8. Which crazed Eastender dug up the corpse of Dirty Den from beneath the Queen Vic?
9. Which British playwright and anti-war campaigner was awarded the 2005 Nobel Prize for Literature?
10. This year marked the bicentenary of which British naval victory over France and Spain?
11. Black American civil rights hero Rosa Parks died this year. What form did her 1955 protest take to bring her to worldwide prominence?
12. What is the name of the mail-order Thai bride played by Matt Lucas in the new series of Little Britain?
13. To what did Victoria "Posh Spice" Beckham recently admit?
 - a) She's never read a book
 - b) She's never changed a nappy
 - c) She's never walked and chewed gum at the same time
 - d) All of the above

14. Prince Harry sparked a royal rumpus by attending a party dressed as what?
15. Which socialist and trade union newspaper, formerly known as the Daily Worker, celebrated its 75th anniversary this year?
16. What was the name of the boat in which Ellen MacArthur made her record-breaking round-the-world voyage?
17. British Airways flights were disrupted after industrial action in protest at the sacking of workers from which notorious airline catering firm?
18. Which illicit substance did anti-war MP George Galloway claim to have indulged within the US Senate after testifying to an inquiry into Iraqi oil deals?
19. Which statesman joined Bob Geldof to launch the Make Poverty History campaign in Trafalgar Square?
20. Which British graffiti maestro visited Palestine to paint his guerrilla artwork on Israel's apartheid wall?

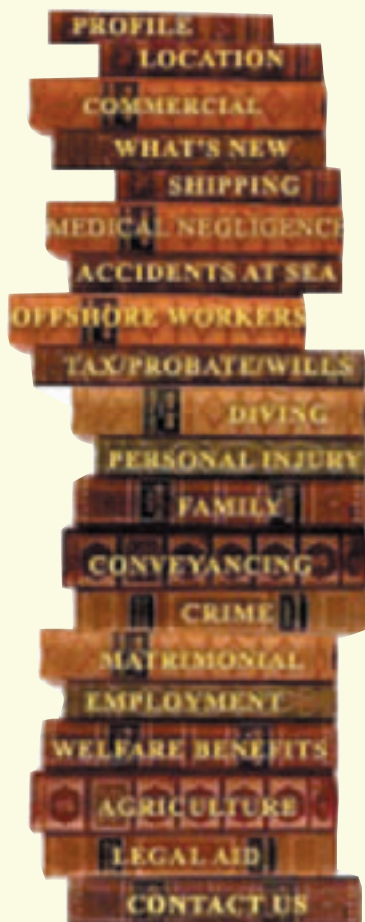
KNOW YOUR UNION

1. Under what slogan did RMT and our sister unions rally to mark the 18th anniversary of the Kings Cross fire?
2. What city did the Rail Against Privatisation mobile demonstration start from?
3. Who is the chair of the RMT parliamentary group?
4. In which city will the 2006 RMT Annual General Meeting be held?
5. Where was the 2005 RMT conference held?
6. The new RMT education centre, due to open in 2006, is situated in which town?
7. How long does an executive committee member serve on the RMT Council of Executives?
8. To the nearest thousand, what is the current membership of RMT?
9. What year did the National Union of Railwaymen merge with the National Union of Seamen to form RMT?
10. Who was the last general secretary of the NUR?

THE SPORTING YEAR

1. Paula Radcliffe struck gold in the marathon at the athletic world championships in which European city?
2. What was unique about the Arsenal squad which faced Crystal Palace on February 14?
3. Which England cricketer was declared Player of the Series in the Ashes victory over Australia?
4. Which triple Cheltenham Gold Cup winning racehorse dropped dead on the track after its comeback race this year?
5. Which city came second to London in its bid to host the 2012 Olympics?
6. Snooker ace Jimmy White changed his name by deed poll to match that of which legendary soul singer in a bizarre publicity stunt for HP Sauce?
7. Wales won rugby's grand slam for the first time since which year?
8. Who did Roger Federer beat to secure his third successive Wimbledon title?
9. Which team from the north of Ireland won the All-Ireland Gaelic football championship?
10. African nations Ghana, Ivory Coast, Togo and Tunisia were among the continent's five qualifiers for next year's football world cup in Germany. Which other African team qualified with them?

ANSWERS
Year in review
1. Katrina; 2. Sex Pistols; 3. Were-rabbit; 4.356; 5. Diego Maradona; 6. Elton John and Pete Doherty; 7. If the Kids are United by Sham 69; 8. Sam Mitchell; 9. Harold Pinter; 10. Battle of Trafalgar; 11. Refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white man; 12. Ting Tong Macadangdang; 13. Never read a book; 14. A Nazi; 15. Morning Star; 16. B&Q; 17. Gate Gourmet; 18. A Cuban cigar; 19. Nelson Mandela; 20. Banksy
Know Your Union!
1. Never Again!; 2. Glasgow; 3. John MacDonnell MP; 4. Dublin; 5. Exeter; 6. Doncaster; 7. Three years; 8. 70,000; 9. 1990; 10. Jimmy Knapp
The Sporting Year
1. Heisinki; 2. First time in English football history that an entire squad included no British players; 3. Andrew Flintoff; 4. Best Mate; 5. Paris; 6. James Brown; 7. 1978; 8. Andy Roddick; 9. Tyrone; 10. Angola



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ACROSS

- 12 Not light, but rapid transit nonetheless (5,4)
- 13 Made hay - or money - at others' expense (11)
- 14 Waters close to coast (7)
- 15 Article of faith -- whichever way you look at it! (5)
- 16 Revolts (7)
- 17 Agents for dental cleaning (11)
- 18 One who launches legal suit (9)
- 20 Racist system defeated in South Africa in 1994 (9)
- 21 Relation, by marriage (6-2-3)
- 22 DPM, ex-RMT (8)
- 24 Typographical error, in short (4)
- 25 Leave in the lurch (7)
- 28 German inventor of carburettor and first motorcycle (7)
- 30 Rearmost extremity of animal - or to follow (4)
- 32 Character of several Shakespeare plays (8)
- 35 Withdrawn, not outgoing (11)
- 37 Devon town famed for its carpets (9)
- 39 Shrubs, and their flowers, named after botanist Alex Garden (9)
- 40 Tactic of harrasing and toying with quarry before final kill (3-3-5)

- 41 Place, or money paid, for stowing things, especially at sea (7)
- 42 Commercial building with rooms to let (5)
- 43 Cutting tool with toothed steel belt (4-3)
- 44 Delighted - cliché in sporting world (4,3,4)
- 45 Mixture of lager and cider (9)

DOWN

- 1 Plum duff; seasonal dessert (9,7)
- 2 Moved by very strong feelings (10)
- 3 Of a proposition, assumed for the sake of argument (12)
- 4 Person with the same handle as another (8)
- 5 Empty, meaningless remark (9)
- 6 Blister beetle, or preparation made from them (7,3)
- 7 This satire is no more: it has ceased to be! (5,6)
- 8 Name shared by mountain ranges in California, Andalucia and Venezuela (6,6)
- 9 Finland's capital (8)
- 10 Guided by sense of what is right (10)
- 11 In Rome, 15th of March, May, July or October, or 13th of other months (4)



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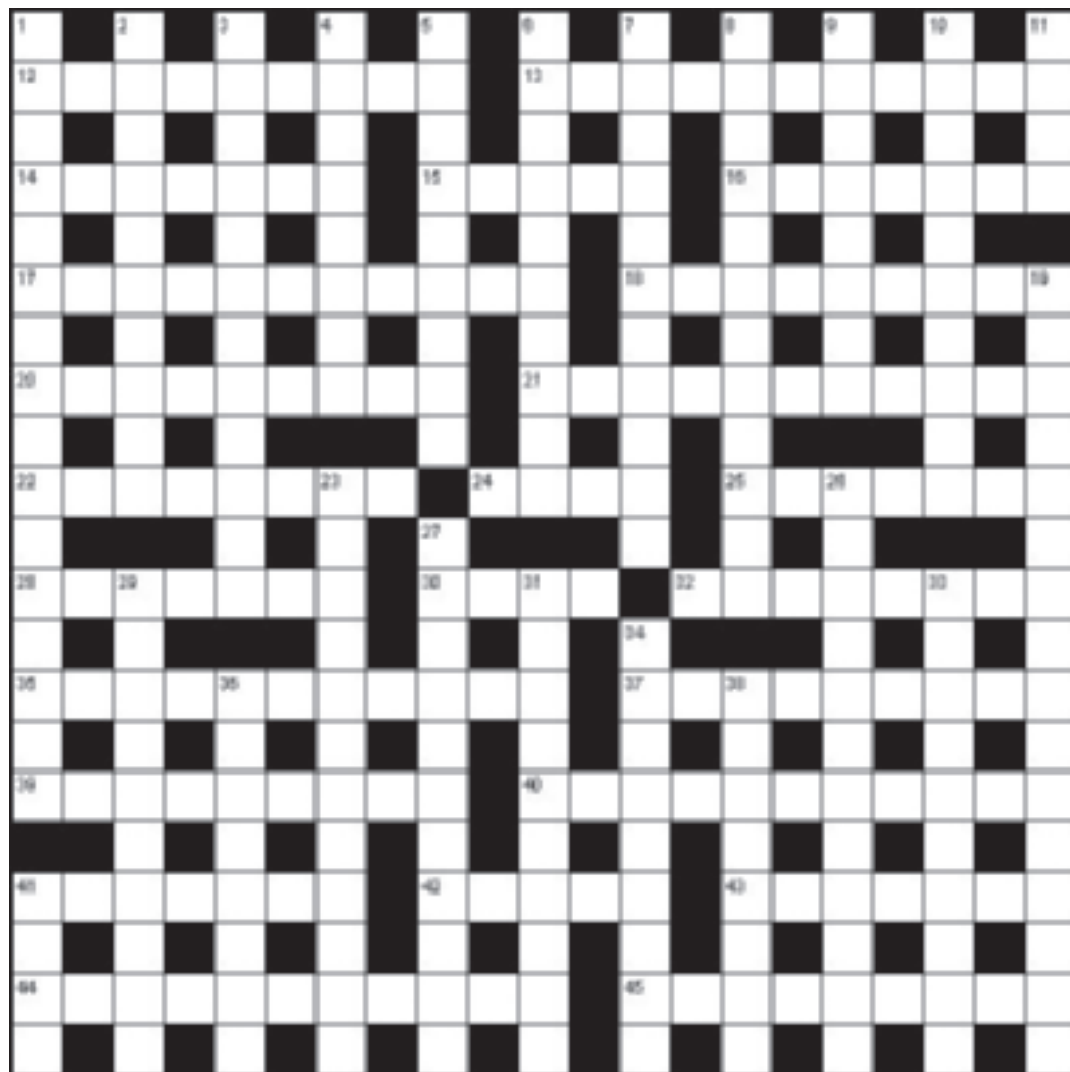






christmas crossword

- 19 Rare (3,3,3,7)
 23 Trio who, according to Christian tradition, brought gifts guided by star (5,4,3)
 26 Forgetful (6-6)
 27 Public-sector educational establishment (5,6)
 29 Intruder or meddler (10)
 31 Pointing towards (10)
 33 Living by principle of acting in the interests of others (10)
 34 1990s dance club act - or having no religious belief (9)
 36 What a ham does! (8)
 38 Leguminous Asian plant or its seed, eaten or grown for its shoots (4,4)
 41 Cold stuff, falls from the sky (4)



Last month's solution...

Winner of prize crossword 19 is Sandra Storch of south London.

Send entries to Prize Crossword, RMT, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD by January 5 with your name and address. Winner and solution in next issue.

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

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

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

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| ● Credit Union Officer | ■ Justice of the Peace |
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| ● Authorised Financial Intermediary | ■ Teacher |
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| ● Commissioner for oaths | |
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The Branch Secretary or other approved person will check the original documentation; will take a photocopy, sign, and Branch stamp. All proof of identity / address must bear your name, and not be solely in the name of partner etc; but can be in addition to their name.

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 - Current UK photo card Driving Licence.
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RMT TU Member ☐ Retired RMT TU Member ☐

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

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

7 Next of Kin

Address

.....

.....

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

Your signature

Date

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



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

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To: The Manager	Bank/Building Society
Address	
	Postcode

Name(s) of Account Holder(s)

Bank/Building Society account number

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Branch Sort Code

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Originator's Identification Number

9	7	4	2	8	1
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Reference Number

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

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

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society.

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

Signature(s)

Date

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

This guarantee should be detached and retained by the Payer.

The Direct Debit Guarantee

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



