

RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker

Challenging anti-union laws

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Send the enclosed postcard.



NATIONAL UNION OF RAIL, MARITIME & TRANSPORT WORKERS

Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD



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CREDIT UNION

EDITORIAL

TAKING ON ANTI-UNION LAWS



RMT is launching an unprecedented challenge to British anti-trade union laws in the European Court of Human Rights – not to be confused with the European Court of Justice which is an EU institution.

RMT is challenging recent UK court rulings where the fundamental human right to withdraw labour has been systematically undermined.

The shackles of anti-trade union laws undermining industrial action in defence of jobs and working conditions have clearly got tighter and tighter in the past year. The latest disgraceful court judgment to outlaw industrial action at Network Rail is a case in point.

Coincidentally, John McDonnell MP has been drawn first in the Private Members' Bill Ballot and has opted for a Bill to also tackle abuse of trade union ballots by employers.

Turning to budget day, despite all the hype about sharing the pain, the Con/Dem government has without a doubt produced one for the rich.

Instead of sharing the pain, it's the poorest who take the hit while the greedy elite who drove our economy over a cliff fly off to the tax havens to bank the bail-out cash that could be used to protect jobs, schools and hospitals.

The increase in VAT will immediately hike up the real cost of living and drain money out of the economy choking off recovery and undermining standards of living. The attacks on pensions and benefits and the pay freeze in the public sector will all hit the poorest the hardest.

Once people realise the full scale of the impact of the government's cuts plans for public services and the true cost for jobs and standards of living we can expect widespread resistance.

Key transport projects, including rural bus services, Crossrail and the Tube upgrades, are all at risk of being scrapped, scaled back or kicked into the long grass by the new government, hacking back the

national transport budget by as much as 27 per cent.

Under this fire sale budget, High Speed One, the UK's only high-speed rail line linking St Pancras and the Channel Tunnel, is to be sold after the previous government bought out the consortium that built it and took on its £4 billion debt.

This union will resist the sell-off of the last remaining publicly-owned fragment of our railway network to profit-driven vultures in the private sector.

The inquest into the Potter's Bar crash over eight years ago is a vivid reminder of what happens when the privateers take over services, safety and efficiency are sacrificed in favour of short-term profit and corner cutting.

In the light of the recent derailment in Scotland, RMT is fighting to convince the Scottish government and Scotrail not to shed guards and introduce driver only operations. Members in Scotland should join the campaign and send off the postcard in this journal.

I recently met the new shipping minister Mike Penning to discuss a recent review into the impact of the Equality Act 2010 which recommended that the practice of nationality-based pay differentials for seafarers' to be outlawed altogether.

While the review was commissioned by the previous government, we pointed out that it was an independent consultation and it should be implemented as soon as possible. We will be watching the government closely on this crucial development.

I attended the shipping and docks conference in Belfast and heard first hand about the growing problems of social dumping in this sector and the offshore energy industry due to the current legal loophole the needs plugging.

Bob Crow

DOCKLANDS LIGHT RAILWAY MAKE NEW OFFER

Strike action at Docklands Light Railway was suspended at the 11th hour after the company made a new offer to for the increased workload and responsibility following the introduction of a third carriage to DLR trains.

RMT members had voted by almost nine to one in favour over the failure of the company to make adequate payments.

Management at Serco Docklands had previously refused all RMT's proposals for settling the dispute and as a consequence that union had no option to ballot Passenger Service Agent (PSA) members and Panel Control Team Leaders for strike action and action short of a strike.

RMT members were due to strike on Wednesday June 23 and Saturday June 26, nor to work overtime on Monday June 28.

However the company made a last minute offer of a one-off



payment of £400 which will now be put out to a referendum.

RMT General Secretary Bob Crow said that members on the Docklands Light Railway had shown that they would not be bullied by management in to taking on more work and more

responsibility without being properly compensated.

"Well done to all those members that have stood firm and they will be voting on this offer of compensation in due course," he said.



RMT SLAMS TORY PLAN TO AXE TUBE DRIVERS

RMT has condemned "lethal and unworkable" plans leaked to the BBC from within the GLA Tory Group to axe all train drivers and operators on London Underground and move to driverless operation.

The leaked report recommends sacking all of the 3,525 train drivers and operators estimating that it could result in savings of £141 million per annum.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that he was tempted to dismiss the report as a joke, cooked up by anti-union fantasists, but in the current climate of cuts and attacks on public services the union was taking it very seriously.

"The people behind this Tory Party report not only want to get rid of the drivers but they want no staff on the tube trains at all.

"That just proves that they have no understanding of the tube system and a complete and utter disregard for passenger safety.

"It may well be that some junior politician is simply flying a kite but RMT will not sit back and allow this lethal and unworkable idea to gain any traction whatsoever," he said.

TUBE LINES MEMBERS VOTE BY MORE THAN 90% FOR STRIKE ACTION

RMT members employed by Tube Lines have voted by a massive majority for strike action over the continuing threat to jobs and safe working conditions and in support of a decent pay increase this year.

The union has warned that the threat to tube maintenance jobs will have serious safety consequences with the union already compiling evidence that repairs and renewals schedules are being hacked to pieces in the dash to slash budgets.

Members will not book on for any shift starting between 19:00

Wednesday June 23 and 18:59 on Friday June 25 and between 19:00 on Wednesday July 14 and 18:59 on Friday July 16.

RMT has warned that the strike would have severe consequences across the whole tube network as the Emergency Response Unit, dealing with urgent repairs that keep the whole system running, is run by Tube Lines.

Transport for London, chaired by London Mayor Boris Johnson, will shortly take over the Tube Lines operation as a subsidiary company following a

£310 million buyout with Londoner's money after a catalogue of failures and profit-taking by the PPP outfit.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that RMT members had shown their determination to defend jobs, pay and working conditions.

"We have made it clear to TfL that we do not expect our members to take the hit for the final collapse of the disastrous tube privatisation experiment.

"We have sought concrete assurances that staff will not be expected to pay off the Tube

Line's exit costs in job losses, attacks on safe working conditions and pay," he said.

The union issued a renewed call for London Mayor Boris Johnson to "get out of the bunker and start talking" as the clock ticks down towards two 48-hour strikes.

With the transfer of Tube Lines, RMT expects TfL to take responsibility for maintaining the pay, jobs and conditions of the workforce that it will need in place if it is going to get the upgrade programme back on track in time for the Olympics. ■

GOVERNMENT REPORT SLAMS PAY DISCRIMINATION FOR SEAFARERS

RMT calls on government to outlaw pay rates of less than £2 an hour within the UK shipping industry

RMT has called on the government to halt wage discrimination in the shipping industry following the publication of a review into the practice of allowing shipping companies to pay lower wages to seafarers recruited from overseas.

The government-instigated review into the impact of the Equality Act 2010 concluded that “on the basis of the evidence submitted, I recommend outlawing the practice of nationality-based pay differentials for seafarers’ altogether”.

The other option was to continue allowing differential rates of pay to seafarers “but only where such differentiation would not operate to the disadvantage of nationals from an EU state and the difference

in rates would correspond to a difference in the cost of living in the places where the seafarers respectively habitually reside”.

The current set-up, allowed under 1976 Race Relations Act, has led to widespread ‘social dumping’, the process by which employers bring in exploited foreign labour to displace local workers.

RMT has campaigned to end this discrimination which can mean that Filipino and Indian workers employed on ferry routes between two UK ports earn substantially less than the crew they work alongside.

The review found that it was not clear why the Race Relations Act allowed wage differentiation on grounds of nationality in the shipping industry.

Due to lobbying by ship

owners, section nine of the Act permits wage discrimination on the grounds of nationality against a seafarer recruited abroad.

The Equality Act 2010 also gives the shipping industry special treatment through the regulation-making power in section 81, which claims that governments should take account of the global practices of the shipping industry.

The study concludes that salary equalisation would affect over 15,000 foreign seafarers on UK-registered ships, and would cost employers £259 million a year.

The recommendations, written by former civil servant Susan Carter, and known as the Carter review were instantly attacked by the Chamber of Shipping, who blasted them for

alleged “breathtaking ignorance”.

RMT national secretary for shipping Steve Todd welcomed the report commissioned by the previous government.

“We are pleased that it recognizes that the benefits of equality in the long term outweigh additional costs to the ship owners and that there is no reason why the shipping industry should be made a special case,” he said.

“We now urge the new government to do the right thing and implement the equality regulations on the basis of the conclusion of this review.

“RMT will be seeking an urgent meeting with the government and we trust that the regulations will be implemented at the very earliest opportunity,” he said. ■



FIGHTING FOR HOLIDAY RIGHTS FOR OFFSHORE WORKERS



RMT is back in the courts, writes **Jake Molloy**, in the fight to try and secure holiday rights for offshore workers under the Working Time Regulations.

The union is in the highest court in Scotland for the latest round, the Court of Session, and has engaged the services of Mr Aidan O'Neill QC to make the argument on behalf of oil workers. The case is being heard by three Judges, Lords Emslie and Eassie, along with Lady Paton.

The arguments haven't changed since the outset – the union maintains that your four weeks paid leave entitlement should be taken during a period when you would otherwise be working. The employers on the other hand want to re-designate part of your current field break entitlement and call it 'holidays'.

For an industry which claims "Safety is our number one priority", the position the employers have adopted on working time is appalling.

The regulations are derived from a

European Health and Safety Directive specifically aimed at reducing long hours of work. No other high hazard industry works longer hours than those employed offshore. Counting only the very basic contractual hours, a worker will annually complete the equivalent of 52 weeks of 42-hour per week shifts.

This doesn't include training time, travel time, overtime, delays, or any other aspect of working time. And as we all know, all training is done during off-shift periods, all travel to and from offshore can add another half-day to work every trip, and lets not even mention delays.

The union has spent a lot of time and money providing legal representation in this argument which goes back to 2003.

Moreover, there is potentially another two stages to pass through, the Supreme Court and the European Courts, before we secure a hard and fast ruling on the issue.

It will be several months before we get the ruling from the current proceedings

which ended this month. Some of the more fortunate workers have suggested there's no need to do this, because they already get leave through working different enhanced shift patterns like 2x3.

However, what these workers currently enjoy is gifted by the oil company you're fortunate enough to be working for. It can literally be taken away from you at the drop of a hat.

Only by securing an enforceable ruling in law will the union be able to protect your rights to additional time off for holiday.

We are determined to do this and we hope we can count on your continued support to make it happen. We would also like to think we could count on the support of those unfortunates who currently don't get 'gifted' leave, and especially the drillers.

And when the guy sitting next to you in the coffee shop uses that well worn line – 'what's the union ever done for me?' point out that over £100,000 have been spent on their behalf on this important issue. ■

ARRIVA TRAINS WALES CLEANERS RECOGNISED

RMT has won recognition for cleaners working for Lightbridge Support Services on the Arriva Trains Wales contract.

LSS have been involved with ATW for six years and in that time RMT membership at the company has steadily grown.

Regional organiser Brendan Kelly said that RMT now has 70 per cent of the workforce in membership.

"With this recognition agreement we are in a good position to improve upon this.

"I would like to congratulate all of the members of this union employed by LSS, RMT officials and the members of the South Wales and West Regional Council for their hard work in securing this agreement.

"This agreement gives our members at LSS added protection and security in a section of the union which is renowned for its poor pay, conditions and general treatment of employees," he said. ■



DEFEND GUARDS ON LONDON OVERGROUND

London Overground is set to become the latest battleground in RMT's campaign to defend the safety role of the guard.

On LOROL's current 378 and 172 stock the guard has full control of the closing of power-operated doors.

However, the company wants to pass control of closing doors to drivers when it takes delivery of 165s that are to be used as stop-gap stock thanks to the late arrival of additional 172s.

LOROL insists that guards will signal the closure of the doors with a ten-bell code, but RMT has rejected the plan as the thin end of the wedge that would result in all the 172 stock being configured in the same way.

"LOROL's plan is the first step towards eroding the safety role of guard out of existence, and RMT has not agreed to allow control over closing of doors to be passed to drivers," the union's general secretary,

Bob Crow, said.

"This is further evidence that the essential safety role of guards is under attack across the industry, and it is crucial to resist wherever and whenever it is threatened.

"We have made it clear to TOCs across the network that we expect them to make clear that they will maintain the full safety role of the guard and that if they do not RMT will defend it," he said.

EAST COAST MAINLINE GUARDS WIN IMPROVED OFFER

RMT guards on the East Coast Mainline voted overwhelmingly for an improved package to compensate guards for the loss of commission income arising from the introduction of automated ticket barriers.

The improved offer came after a threat to ballot for strike action following the automation which meant that the commission from the collection of on-board fares has dropped right off leaving guards seriously out of pocket and driving down their income levels.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that members had made it clear that the union was not prepared to see key staff reduced to become amongst the lowest paid guards in the country. The agreement is:

- To consolidate £1,000 of commission earnings into the current Guards' basic salary effective from May 30 2010 and the £1,000 will be increased in line with the agreed 2010 pay review from that date.
- Commission on individual Guard's ticket sales will be calculated weekly and will be payable at three per cent on sales up to £400. All sales above this figure will be paid at a commission rate of four per cent.

In the event that there has been a further reduction in the total of commission payments made to Guards' after reflecting the £1,000 partial consolidation payable in May 2010, then a further £300 will be consolidated into the Guards' basic salary from May 2011. ■



PROTEST: RMT held a protest when the extended East London Line formally re-open, as part of private company London Overground (LOROL), calling for the line to be taken back into the public sector.

RMT is extremely concerned that LOROL's first priority is to shareholders and not to passengers or communities, repeating the mistakes of rail privatisation and the disastrous PPP on the tube.

RMT General Secretary Bob Crow said that £1 billion had been spent on the upgrade and every single penny of taxpayer subsidy and fare revenue should be invested to improve services and not be removed from the industry in shareholder dividends. An Early Day Motion was also tabled on that day by the RMT's Parliamentary Group of MPs.

RMT SLAMS GOVERNMENT PLANS TO AXE THOUSANDS OF TRANSPORT JOBS

RMT warns that the new government plans to take an axe to transport budgets, putting thousands of jobs on rail and the buses at risk

RMT has warned that key transport projects, including rural bus services, Crossrail, High Speed rail, electrification and the Tube upgrades, are all at risk of being scrapped, scaled back or kicked into the long grass by the new Tory/Lib Dem coalition government.

The union warned that the national transport budget could be hacked back by up to 27 per cent.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the government had sent out the clearest possible signal that transport was going to be right in the front line as the cuts assault on our services is unleashed.

"During the election there were predictions that the transport budget could be slashed by 27 per cent - that now looks like an underestimate.

"Thousands of jobs on the trains, buses, rail infrastructure and operations and the Tube are at risk while the waste, profits and subsidies of privatisation and the private train operators are ring fenced with even

longer, gold-plated franchises," he said.

RMT also slammed plans to extend the on-going disaster of rail privatisation by offering private companies longer contracts, describing it as "a reward for failure and for ripping off the taxpayer to the tune of hundreds of millions of pounds for an inferior service".

Buses in danger

The Campaign for Better Transport also predicted 33 per cent fare increases over this parliament, fewer buses and a shortage of train capacity - all of which will push more people back into their cars and make a mockery of government claims to support a green transport policy.

CBT also warned that "buses will become extinct outside the centres of cities and towns" under this Con/Dem government.

Cutting the government's bus service operator grant would result in seven per cent fewer services, a 6.5 per cent fares increase and 94 million fewer miles of supported services.

CROSSRAIL

Transport minister Theresa Villiers has refused to give a clear commitment to the Crossrail project in its entirety.

Bob Crow warned that the continued threat to Crossrail was the thin end of a very thick wedge.

"Any attack on rail would expose the hypocrisy of the new government on their green agenda as it would send more people onto the roads and into the skies.

"The UK has been left in the slow lane on High Speed and electrification as the rest of Europe motors ahead and thousands of the workers that we need to maintain and upgrade rail infrastructure remain under threat.

"Today is just the opening shots in a cuts and austerity war that could ram a gaping hole in the UK's public services and jack up mass unemployment to Thatcherite levels and beyond.

"It will require the maximum unity and resistance from the trade union movement to force back this attack on jobs, services and standards of living," he said.

NETWORK RAIL

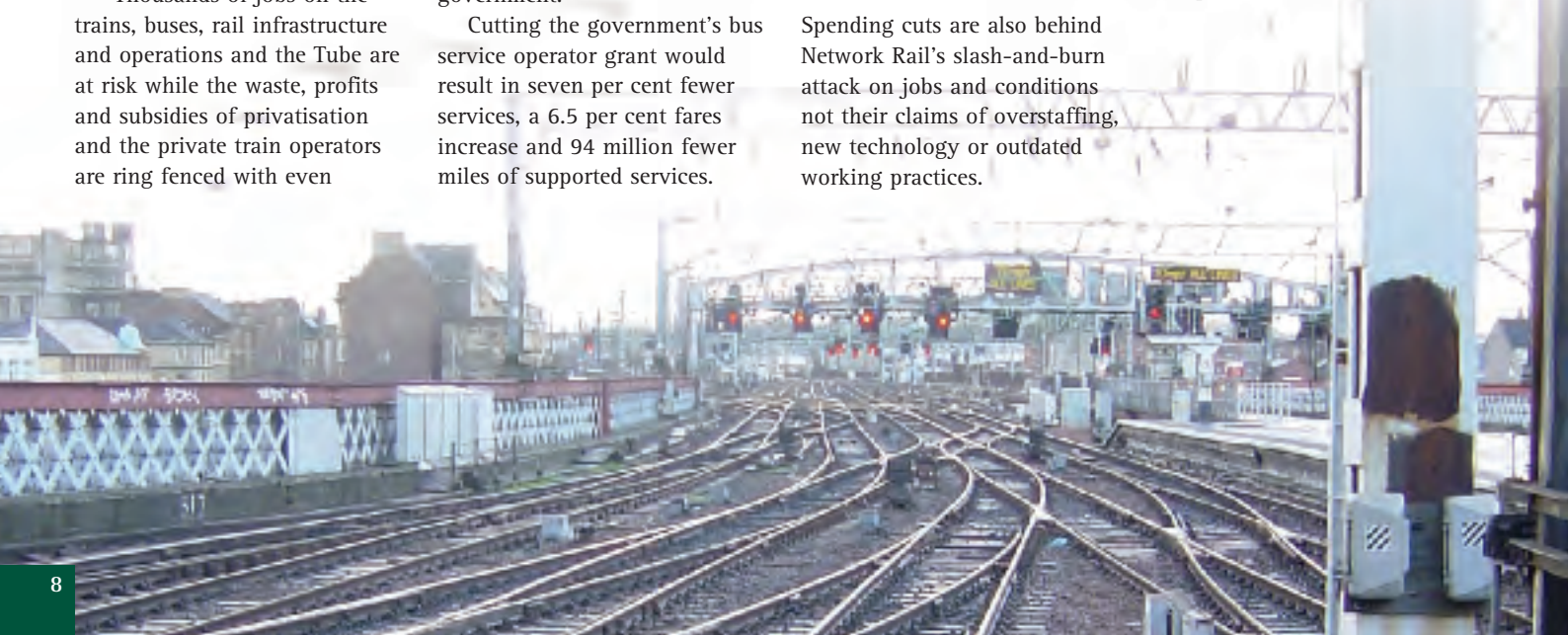
Spending cuts are also behind Network Rail's slash-and-burn attack on jobs and conditions not their claims of overstaffing, new technology or outdated working practices.

Bob Crow said that NR was trying to con the public into believing that a cost-led jobs cull was safe inspections and maintenance frequencies are already overstretched and that most safety recommendations made after the Grayrigg crash have not been implemented in full or in part.

"NR knows as well as our skilled members that signalling systems need more maintenance, not less, that there is no widespread introduction of new technology, and that the conditions it wants to rip up have been negotiated in recent years.

"The fact is that NR is under pressure to slash 21 per cent from its budget, wants to axe 1,500 front-line posts, lump maintenance functions onto over-worked signallers, and impose changes that will undermine rail safety and make another disaster inevitable," he said.

New Transport Secretary Philip Hammond has also said that a cost review of NR would centre on why Britain's fully privatised railways are more expensive than others in Europe, sparking fears of cuts of up to 50 per cent.



Parliamentary column

JUSTICE FOR SEAFARERS

It is an absolute privilege to have been elected as the Member of Parliament for Hull East. East Hull is an area that I grew up in and have lived all of my life.

We have a proud tradition in Hull in that we have a tendency to elect Labour Members of Parliament that understand the need for decent public services. This for me is crucial given the development of the new CON/DEM government.

I can see the faces on the members of this coalition government and I can tell readers that many of them whether Lib Dem or Tory are positively wetting themselves at the prospect of making savage cuts in the public sector.

That is why I relish the opportunity of working closely with RMT and other trade unions to protect jobs, to ensure safety at work and to protect trade union rights across the board.

It is now clear to me that whilst I am very proud of the achievements of the 13 years of our Labour government we should have perhaps gone further to entrench trade union rights and overturn anti-Trade Union legislation from the previous Tory government.

The weeks, months and years ahead will be testing as a newly elected MP on the opposition benches. I fear that there will be many examples of workers suffering the pain for the gain of the greedy city bankers' reckless mistakes in the last few years.

I am particularly honoured to be associated with the trade union movement, especially given my father's commitments to the Labour Party and the labour movement as a full time union officer for the National Union of Seaman in Hull and then RMT after those unions merged as a direct result of the last Tory government's savage attack on workers and trade unions up

and down the country.

And, together with my other colleagues in the RMT Parliamentary group, I hope to be taking an active part in pressing the case for seafarer's employment rights.

This has taken on a new urgency with the publication of an independent review by the new government which proposes to do away with the disgraceful legislation which allows seafarers on UK flagged ships to be paid different rates of pay on the basis of their nationality.

The review recommends "outlawing the practice of nationality based pay differentials for seafarer's altogether" and correctly states that in respect of continued discrimination there is "no reason to make a special case for the shipping industry." If the reviews findings are accepted by the new Government this will represent a massive victory for RMT.

What is important to note, however, is that the review was commissioned by the previous Labour government following a long and tenacious campaign by the union and its Parliamentary group.

Instead of simply adopting the reviews recommendations, the new government has given interested parties two weeks to comment on the reviews findings and we can be absolutely certain that shipping employers will be banging on ministers doors and telling them to ditch the review altogether or at the very least adopt significantly weaker measures.

I urge members to lobby their MPs to make sure new government adopts the reviews recommendations in full.

With best wishes,

Karl Turner

Karl Turner is the Labour MP for Kingston upon Hull East



FIGHTING BACK FOR SHIPPING

Shipping members meet in Belfast

RMT's biennial Docks and Shipping Grades met recently in Belfast in mid-May and was the first trade union conference to gather under the new ConDem coalition government.

In fact, so new was the stitched-together deal between Clegg and Cameron that they hadn't even appointed a minister with responsibility for shipping by the time conference kicked off.

Scott Agnew was elected Chair and Scott cut straight to the chase, warning delegates of the scale of the challenge that was facing us in the shifting political landscape and with the rousing call that "the fight back starts here."

National secretary Steve Todd picked up that theme as he introduced his report, explaining

that part of the reason why the Labour government had lost power was because they had let working people down, not least in the docks and shipping industry where much more could have been done to protect jobs and improve pay and working conditions if the outgoing government had had the will.

To illustrate the point Steve highlighted the campaign that RMT has been running for reform of the legislation that allows foreign national seafarers to be discriminated against in respect of their pay and conditions on UK flagged ships. Members of RMT's parliamentary group fought tooth and nail for necessary amendments to the Single Equality Bill but foot-dragging



by ministers meant that the required regulations were not passed before Parliament was dissolved for the election.

A massive missed opportunity by Labour to address a key issue that undermines wages in our industry and one that leaves us with an on-going fight with the new Government. A similar failure by the outgoing Government to include proper coverage of the National Minimum Wage for seafarers of all nationalities employed on vessels in UK territorial waters as an amendment to the Employment Bill sent out another negative message to our members – natural core voters let down by 13 wasted years of New Labour.

RFA

Steve also spoke about RMT's ongoing campaign to defend the position of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

The RFA has repeatedly shown itself to be excellent value for money and an essential, professional support organisation to the naval fleet. RMT officers had met with ministers and senior officials seeking assurances that the RFA would not be sold off to a private company. With the change of government, and a new era of cuts and austerity, we will need to monitor the defence department review very closely and be prepared to wage a massive campaign to keep the RFA out of the clutches of private companies who would see it as just another opportunity to extract a profit for their shareholders.

CALMAC

A similar threat continues to hang over Caledonian MacBrayne ferry's in Scotland where a review by the Scottish government could be used to open the door to privatisation with a massive threat to our members jobs and conditions left hanging over them. The conference showed its full support for Steve Todd and RMT's campaign to keep Scottish Ferry's out of the

grasping hands of the private sector. Steve's report was endorsed unanimously.

A motion thanking RMT's parliamentary group for all its assistance in the campaigns that Steve had flagged up was also passed unanimously with John McDonnell, Katy Clarke and Gwyn Prosser, who unfortunately lost his Dover seat, singled out for particular praise and the conference sent its best wishes to John in his efforts to get himself on the ballot paper in the Labour leadership election.

Peter Hall, assistant national secretary, gave the conference an overview of the progress with the Maritime Labour Convention, setting minimum standards for the industry, which it is hoped and expected will come into force next year.

Peter also updated us on the situation with the Merchant Navy Ratings Pension Fund following the threat by P&O to cease making voluntary contributions leaving others to cover the deficit. Stenna Line and others are considering the legal position. RMT will keep members and branches advised.

In the general secretary's address, Bob Crow talked about the High Court judgement that had blocked RMT rail signallers from taking industrial action in support of their working conditions and in defence of rail safety.

Bob warned that the bosses attack on the basic human right to withdraw labour, backed by the courts, meant that the noose of the anti-trade union laws was tightening even harder around the necks of the workers and would be wheeled out as the weapon of choice as employers, and the government seek to stop union members from fighting back against the cuts and austerity measures that we know are coming down the track.

Bob told the conference that the Tory government, with the backing of their LibDem supporters, would engineer mass unemployment on a Thatcherite scale to create a pool of unused labour that would be used as a weapon to keep those in jobs



Bob Crow

under the cosh. Added to the continued use of "social dumping" of overseas workers in the shipping industry it means that our members will come under attack from all directions and it will take a massive and united effort by the entire trade union movement to fight it off.

ANTI-UNION LAWS

A motion from Aberdeen shipping attacking the growing use of the anti-union laws to suppress workers was carried unanimously with delegates slamming the "union busting agenda supported by the judiciary" that had been laid bare in the Network Rail judgment. A motion pointing the finger at the company's involved in social dumping in the North Sea in a concerted bid to screw down terms and conditions was also given full support as the movers outlined plans for an RMT "Week of Action" in Aberdeen later this year.

Conference ended as it had started – united in its determination to build and strengthen RMT's organisation for the battles that we are fighting now on jobs, pay, conditions and pensions and ready for the new challenges that we know will be thrown at us by the new government.

PULL OUT

Conference took a full report from RMT member Norrie McVicar who is the ITF co-ordinator of the Offshore Task Force Campaign (OTFG).

Norrie explained to delegates that the main focus of OTFG has been the Gulf of Mexico. As the conference met the full extent

of the damage caused by the BP oil spill was becoming clear and Norrie pointed out that it was "a disaster waiting to happen" as corners have been cut on safety and staffing by companies looking to extract the maximum profit.

In a stark warning of the risks that some people run in exposing dangerous and criminal practice the author of an ITF human rights report on the corruption in the Mexican oil industry – Ana Lilia Perez – had been forced into hiding, with her colleagues arrested and her offices raided, for daring to blow the whistle.

Norrie's report highlighted the joint RMT/SIPTU/ITF campaign to expose the exploitation of Filipino seafarers in the Scottish and Irish fishing industry which had succeeded in securing agreement that Filipino fishers will be treated the same way as any other EU workers in terms of minimum wage and employment rights. However, inevitably, unscrupulous employers were now recruiting Sri Lankan and Ghanaian seafarers to get round the agreement.

Norrie thanked Steve Todd and Bob Crow for their support in a campaign that had managed to stop P&O Ferries from using seafarers to carry out cargo handling work after the mobilising of a pan-European trade union group to challenge the company.

Following this success, the ITF affiliated Dockers and Seafarers group met in April to discuss a campaign strategy to deal with social dumping and seafarers employed to do dockers' work in the North European Ferry sector. ■

CHALLENGING ANTI-UNION LAWS



RMT takes legal action
against UK anti-trade
union laws in European
Court of Human Rights

RMT is launching an unprecedented challenge to the UK's anti-trade union laws in the European Court of Human Rights.

Papers on behalf of RMT will be lodged by union solicitors with the European Court – not to be confused with the European Court of Justice which is a European Union institution.

RMT will argue on behalf of its members that its ability to organise industrial action to protect its members is restricted by UK law in a breach of Article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights

and Fundamental Freedoms. The union will be represented in the Court by RMT's standing counsel John Hendy QC and Marcus Pilgerstorfer, instructed by Thompsons Solicitors.

The cases that RMT are challenging at European level are the EDF Energy court challenge and the Hydrex dispute, two groups of RMT members who were balloted for industrial action last autumn.

RMT is putting forward arguments about two restrictions imposed by UK legislation in respect of the EDF and Hydrex cases which are as follows:

1. the statutory requirement for the union to serve on an employer a notice which must fulfill onerous conditions such as providing the identification of the specific job descriptions of the intended voters; and

2. the absolute prohibition on unions organising solidarity industrial action even where the secondary employer is closely associated with the primary employer in dispute.

RMT General Secretary Bob Crow said that the shackles that the anti-trade union laws have thrown around workers in this country seeking to take industrial action in defence of jobs and working conditions have got tighter and tighter in the past year and the EDF and Hydrex cases last autumn were pivotal with ramifications for the entire trade union movement.

"RMT is in no doubt that the fundamental human right to withdraw labour has been systematically undermined.

"This is clearly shown by the EDF and Hydrex cases and we have no option but to take these

matters to the European Court in a bid to protect the rights of our members and of working people in Britain," he said.

DODGY DECISIONS

EDF Energy Powerlink Limited was granted an injunction by the High Court in October 2009 against the RMT restraining members from taking industrial action. The grounds for this decision were that the notice of ballot had not sufficiently particularised the job descriptions of the members who were to be balloted. The consequence of this decision was that the union was denied the right to take strike action.

In August 2007 approximately 20 RMT members were transferred from Jarvis PLC to a company called Hydrex Equipment (UK) Limited. In September 2009 Hydrex sought to impose new terms and

conditions on these members which were less favourable than those they had enjoyed when they worked for Jarvis PLC.

The members organised industrial action and the union wanted to call out its members at Jarvis PLC who had continued to work closely with the Hydrex members following the transfer. However UK law absolutely prohibits a trade union calling industrial action by members other than those employed by the employer directly in dispute.

As a result the members at Jarvis PLC were denied the right to take strike action in solidarity, the members at Hydrex were denied the support of their colleagues and the union was denied the chance to take what would have been the most effective strike action for the purposes of protecting its members' interests. ■

AFFILIATE TO THE UNITED CAMPAIGN TO REPEAL THE ANTI-TRADE UNION LAWS

RMT is strongly encouraging every RMT branch to affiliate to the United Campaign to Repeal the Anti-Trade Union Laws.

The campaign believes the anti-trade union laws introduced by the Conservatives between 1979 and 1995 must be challenged and replaced with a framework of positive rights. RMT is affiliated at a national level and 30 RMT branches are also affiliated.

RMT activists have first-hand knowledge of how the laws have been used to frustrate us at every turn. In a new era of Conservative/Lib Dem government with its commitments to swingeing cuts, we need the campaign to be as strong as possible and that is why your branch should

consider joining too.

The United Campaign to Repeal the Anti-Trade Union Laws was founded in March 1998 at a Conference of 700 trade unionists, from General Secretaries to shop stewards. It was established to be a united non-sectarian trade union based campaign. Currently 25 national unions are affiliated.

For union branches with 500 members or less it costs just £35 to affiliate and individuals can join for £15. The campaign organises local and national rallies throughout the year. Visit www.unitedcampaign.org.uk or call 0151 702 6927 for further information. If you would like a campaign speaker at your next branch meeting please email info@unitedcampaign.org.uk with the details. ■

MCDONNELL TO CHALLENGE ANTI-UNION LAWS

John McDonnell MP has been drawn first in the Private Members' Bill Ballot and has opted for a Bill to tackle abuse of trade union ballots by employers.

The chair of RMT's parliamentary group will be proposing a bill to stop employers getting strikes banned on technicalities.

John McDonnell said: "It's a funny old world, as one door closes another one opens. "Coming top in this poll will enable me to tackle an abuse of the current employment laws by employers that I have tried to reform for the last four years," he said.

"As we have seen in RMT's dispute with Network Rail and many other recent disputes, employers have been able to exploit a loophole in the existing law by using minor technical errors in a trade union ballot for industrial action to frustrate the democratic decisions of trade unionists who wish to take action.

"This resort to the courts by some ruthless employers is bringing current employment law into disrepute and undermining industrial relations in this country.

"The courts are being dragged into disputes and used as weapons in the hands of bullying employers.

"Even where there have been overwhelming majorities in ballots in favour of strike action, minor technicalities which would have no material effect on the outcome of the ballot, are being exploited to negate the democratic decision of the trade unionists involved.

"This cannot be right and in the interests of good industrial relations needs to be addressed," he said.

Over the past four years John has made several attempts to tackle this issue by introducing amendments to the then government's employment legislation and promoting in Parliament the RMT-backed Trade Union Freedom Bill. ■

GUARD OUR HEROES

STOP DRIVER ONLY OPERATION

RMT demands that Scotrail and the Scottish government scrap plans to axe Guards following another train derailment—with the same Guard ensuring passenger safety!

RMT has demanded that First Scotrail abandon plans to extend Driver Only Operation following a second train derailment due to a landslip on the Oban-Glasgow line at Falls of Cruachan.

The union has written to the Scottish government and Scotrail demanding a halt to plans to introduce DOO on the new Airdrie-Bathgate route – pointing out the safety-critical role that the guard plays in an emergency situation, working with the driver.

RMT has also written to Network Rail over concerns that key recommendations following previous derailments may not have been carried out.

The previous derailment at the Falls of Cruachan occurred on April 5 1997, just yards from the latest incident.

Incredibly, the same Guard, Angus MacColl, was on board both trains and was praised back in 1997 for his professional and calm response as he implemented emergency procedures.

RMT representatives have confirmed that the likely cause of the latest derailment was boulders on the track. A “failsafe” trigger wire system, which is supposed to activate red signals when boulders hit the wire, is thought to have failed on a section of track prone to landslips.

As a consequence, the first car derailed and was left suspended with only the coupling of the second car preventing it from falling down the hillside in what would have been a major disaster.

While the driver put out a fire in the carriage, the guard activated emergency procedures and the evacuation of the passengers and it was the quick thinking and team working of the two crew that led around 60 people on board to safety.

Due to a fault with the radio that night it was the Guard, Mr MacColl, who left the train and walked back to the nearest phone

to contact the emergency services – ensuring the safe evacuation of passengers and securing the area.

RMT General Secretary Bob Crow said that in the light of the incident it would be a scandal if First Scotrail and the Scottish government pressed on with their cash-driven plans to axe the Guards on the new Airdrie-Bathgate route.

“In incident after incident on our railways, going back many years, the safety-critical role of the Guard in an emergency situation has been both recognised and praised by the investigating authorities.

“The lesson is simple. In an emergency you need both the driver and the Guard, working as a team, to secure the incident and to implement safe, evacuation procedures.

“Scotrail cannot be allowed to get away with praising Angus MacColl on one hand and then axing his colleagues from their other services on the other.

“The political leaders at the Scottish government cannot stand idly by while they try to do just that. We are demanding an immediate halt to the Scotrail plans for Driver Only Operation,” he said.

LESSONS NOT LEARNED

RMT is deeply concerned that there is growing evidence that lessons of derailments prior to the latest incident at the Falls of Cruachan may not have been learned and that key recommendations may not have been acted upon.

Against the background of savage cuts to budgets at Network Rail, and the prospect of more to come from the new government, the union is seeking assurances that all recommendations have been actioned and that corners have not been cut.

RMT has written to the senior official of Network Rail in Scotland demanding urgent

answers over exactly what action has been taken to address recommendations following a catalogue of derailments in Scotland.

In a letter to Network Rail Route Maintenance Director Scotland Paul Taylor, RMT identifies previous recommendations and four other derailments involving landslides in the last five years:

- Railtrack report into derailment at Falls of Cruachan – April 5 1997
- RAIB (Rail Accident Investigation Bureau) report into derailment in November 2005 when a three-car Class 175 travelling at 92 mph ran into a landslip at Oubeck North
- RAIB report into derailment in November 2005 when a three-car Class 170 travelling at 56 mph derailed after hitting a landslip in a cutting north of Moy in Inverness-shire
- RAIB report into derailment in January 2007 when a two-car Class 158 travelling at 51 mph struck debris following a landslip in the cutting south of Kemble tunnel
- RAIB class report into Management of Existing Earthworks, December 2008
- A three-car Class 159 travelling also derailed after striking a landslip at the London end of Gillingham tunnel, between Gillingham and Templecombe

In the letter to Mr Taylor, Bob Crow says:

“While it is possible to track progress with RAIB recommendations it has not been possible to ascertain what progress was made in actioning the recommendations from the Railtrack report from 1997. I have enclosed a copy of the recommendations from the 1997 report, can you please provide me, as a matter of urgency, details of work done by Railtrack to close out recommendations 1 – 4 and 6.

An examination of publicly available data on the ORR website shows that while some of the RAIB recommendations aimed at Network Rail are closed both the recommendations into Kemble remain “in progress” and recommendations 1 and 6 of the class investigation also remain “in progress”. Can you also provide me with details of what progress has been made with these recommendations.

I am also extremely concerned that all through the Railtrack report into the 1997 incident makes reference to the high level of false alarms with the stone signals and there is reference to designing a new system of alarms no recommendation on this was made by the panel. It was also concluded that the embankment should be stabilised by the construction of gabions I also believe this was not actioned”.

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT HEARS SCOTRAIL MOTION

Labour MSP Bill Butler has tabled the following motion in the Scottish Parliament urging the Scottish government to intervene ensure first First ScotRail honour the existing agreement with RMT and to state it will not reimburse ScotRail for any losses incurred during the dispute.

Motion number S3M-06444 Glasgow Anniesland Bill Butler MSP: RMT Industrial Dispute

That the Parliament notes the continuing dispute between First ScotRail and the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers that has resulted in six days of industrial action being taken since February 2010; believes that the issue at the heart of the dispute is what it considers to be First ScotRail's refusal to abide by the agreement that the company would not, during the current franchise, remove conductors from any of the services on which they are now present; is concerned at First ScotRail's refusal to negotiate on this issue; is further concerned that published correspondence between the Scottish Government's transport agency, Transport Scotland, and First ScotRail reveals that the company decided to proceed with plans to remove conductors only at the behest of Transport Scotland and following firm indications that Transport Scotland would exercise a provision in the franchise agreement to reimburse any losses incurred by First ScotRail that arise from industrial action; urges the Scottish Government to intervene to ensure that Transport Scotland and First ScotRail honour the existing agreement with the RMT, and calls on the Scottish Government to state that it will not reimburse First ScotRail for any losses or costs incurred arising from the current dispute with RMT.

YORKSHIRE & LINCOLNSHIRE REGIONAL COUNCIL



BUILDING THE UNION IN THE ROAD FREIGHT SECTOR

RMT road freight conference calls for recognition throughout Freightliner

RMT's road freight conference in Leeds called for an urgent meeting to be held with Freightliner to negotiate recognition rights within its subsidiary companies.

Maurice Hamilton, Leeds Goods and Cartage, said that restructuring at Freightliner was undermining both wages and the union.

"Each time Freightliner set up a company within a company they bring people in on lower wages for the same job and deny the union recognition," he said.

Peter Daniels, Leeds Goods and Cartage, said that Freightliner was only one example and that the wider road freight industry had been hit very hard over recent times.

"Since we met last year our sector has been hit by more and more setbacks. We have problems at Freightliner, where we used to have good recognition," he said.

Senior assistant general secretary, Mick Cash, told conference that road freight had been the sector in the transport industry to face the greatest blows in the wake of the recession. This is in spite of the fact that Britain doesn't have a large manufacturing

base any longer and therefore imports and needs to distribute a huge quantity of goods by road. Cut throat competition has also led to companies fighting between each other, more than ever before, for business.

"Companies like City Link have seen things change and have introduced strategies to reduce costs. Increasingly, they use agency staff. This is why it is so difficult to organise in this sector. They restructure and open and close depots. Part-time staff are brought in and union members are moved from one site to another. As a result, we have trade union members in some places without trade union organisation.

"Fragmentation of the industry and cutthroat competition makes it difficult, but we intend to build in those locations and spread out. Road freight is fragmented but there are medium to large companies that offer opportunities for recruitment. We need more representatives to build the road freight sector," he said.

Building the union
Conference unanimously agreed that the

hard-hit sector needed to ensure that all road freight activists were encouraged to make every effort to attend the annual conference.

Andrew Hill, Leeds Goods and Cartage, said that it was the duty of every representative and activist to be present.

"The union should coordinate an exercise with the aim of producing an information pack to be sent to all representatives and activists covered by this conference. The pack should include recruitment material, the decisions of the previous year's conference and explanation of the function of the conference," he said.

Peter Daniels told conference that he believed that there was an important job to be done in educating non union members about the nature of RMT being a specialist transport union.

"RMT is more than a train union, we are a transport union and we need to get this over to everybody," he said.

Next year's road freight conference will be held on Sat 16 April in Leeds.

WHAT HAPPENED AT POTTER'S BAR?



Just over eight years after a train derailed at Potter's Bar after traveling over faulty points, an inquest into the deadly crash has finally opened

Seven people died and seventy-six people were injured when the rear of a West Anglia Great Northern train from London to King's Lynn derailed at 1245 hours on May 10 2002, slammed into a bridge and came to a halt across platforms at Potters Bar station.

RMT immediately called for a full public inquiry into crash which should include the organisation of rail maintenance as part of its remit, after six years of rail privatisation had fragmented the industry.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said at the time: "We need a public inquiry, not solely into the causes of the Potters Bar tragedy, but also into the shambolic way in which infrastructure maintenance is organised".

The Health and Safety Executive's report into the crash a year later also blamed flawed maintenance and ineffective safety checks.

The private contractor tasked with maintaining the points at Potter's Bar, Jarvis, had tried to claim that the crash was caused by sabotage. But the HSE said that it had found no evidence to support such speculation.

Yet, while British Transport Police launched police raids on RMT members as part of the investigation, no Jarvis company directors were ever held legally responsible for deaths that occurred due to gross negligence.

A three-year investigation by the Rail Safety and Standards Board later said shoddy maintenance was the likely cause. But calls by RMT and the bereaved for a full public inquiry into the accident – and that at Hatfield in October 2000 – have still proved unsuccessful.

Eight years after the crash, Railtrack, the private company charged with maintaining the track has been replaced with the government-backed company Network Rail and Jarvis has gone bust.

Judge Michael Findlay Baker QC, who is conducting the inquest, said that the delay of eight years between accident and inquest had been "extreme" and would have "protracted to an exceptional degree the distress of those who have been bereaved."

"In their interest and in the more general public interest, there must be no more delay," he said.

As the inquest began, Bob Crow pointed out that there had been major budget cuts on Network Rail's safety-critical maintenance and renewals work with further attacks on funding to be announced by the government.

"Those cuts will drag rail safety back to the dark days of Rail Track and make a repeat of the Potters Bar disaster an inevitability," he warned.

RMT senior assistant general secretary Mick Cash, who has many years experience of track working, made a statement to the inquest on behalf of the union.

He explained the union's view that significant contributory causes of the crash were a lack of coordination and mismanagement built into infrastructure maintenance contracts under privatisation.

"This has resulted in inadequate maintenance and inspection training and a reduction in the number of maintenance workers and the increased use of sub-contractors all operating within a fragmented rail system," he said.

The inquest in Letchworth, Hertfordshire is expected to last three months. ■



LEGAL NEWS

RAIL WORKER COMPENSATED FOR REPEAT ACCIDENT

A Lancashire based member was injured while working at a station.

He was opening a roller shutter to allow passengers to leave the station, when due to the shutter being poorly maintained and defective, it jammed, causing a jarring injury to the member's back. He was unable to return to his pre-accident duties following this injury.

The accident was avoidable as six months earlier the member had suffered exactly the same accident with the same roller shutter, although he suffered a less severe injury on that occasion. Following that incident the member had received £2,000 compensation.

RMT lawyers obtained medical evidence showing that the latest accident had caused an increase in symptoms of a pre-existing back condition and that the member was unfit for his pre-accident duties. The medical opinion was that after 12 months he would be fit to return to a more sedentary role. Despite this the employer terminated his employment on grounds of ill health.

The company accepted liability for the accident and offered a settlement of less than £4000, which was rejected by the member.

With court proceedings imminent, and just one week away from the trial, further negotiations saw the defendant increase their offer. The member received a final payment of £30,778.45

MEMBER RECEIVES £100,000 AFTER CONTRACTING LUNG DISEASE

A member from Hampshire contracted the lung disease extrinsic allergic alveolitis after being exposed to welding materials and contracted.

The company's insurers initially refused to negotiate a settlement and it was necessary for the union's lawyers to commence court proceedings. As a result satisfactory settlement terms were agreed and the member was awarded £100,000

SHIPPER COMPENSATED FOR ACCIDENT

A member was injured when he was loading stores on his ship and a steel caddy tipped over onto him. As a result he suffered injuries to his right thumb and finger, above his left eye and to his right shoulder.

Following negotiations with his company's representatives RMT lawyers negotiated a settlement of £2,297.

SIGNALLER RECEIVES £30,000 FOR ANKLE INJURY

A Humberside signaller was walking to his signal box when he lost his footing as ballast slipped away from under him. As a result he sustained bruising and swelling and a rupture of the achilles on his right ankle.

RMT lawyers commenced court proceedings against the member's employer after they initially refused to negotiate a settlement. As a result the settlement terms were agreed and the member received compensation of £30,000

TRACK WORKER FRACTURES FOOT

A track worker from Essex was injured while carrying out renewals on a railway track. The team he was working with were lifting rails from the cess in stages, to the shoulder, the running rail, and then on to a trolley on the track.

The rail that was being lifted at the time of the accident was 30 foot long. As the team was moving the rail it came across too quickly and the worker's foot became trapped between the rail they were moving and the running rail. As a result he suffered a fracture of the metatarsal bone in his left foot.

The union's lawyers negotiated a final settlement of £8,956 for the member.

CONDUCTOR INJURED IN TRAIN COLLISION

A conductor was injured while working on a train that collided with a stationary vehicle on the line. She suffered a whiplash injury.

The company refused to negotiate a settlement so RMT lawyers commenced court proceedings. As a result a satisfactory settlement of £3,500 was made.

RAIL WORKER COMPENSATED FOR BACK INJURY

A rail worker injured his back while working at a Merseyside station. He was carrying out general maintenance on the remote electrical building.

As he was trying to locate the building he went with a colleague through a gate and down some steep steps. While he was walking down the steps the wooden plinth at the end of one of the concrete steps collapsed causing the member to fall and injure his back.

Following correspondence and negotiations with the company's representatives a settlement was made of £3,334.



MEMBER COMPENSATED FOR STAIRS FALL

A Gloucester based member was injured when he fell from some makeshift stairs attached to a portacabin. A handrail that had been previously requested was not added until after the incident. The member sustained a knee injury from the accident.

Initially the other sides insurers refused to negotiate a settlement and it was necessary for the union's lawyers to commence court action. As a result the member received a payout of £3,100.

MEMBERS SUE FOR HAND/ARM VIBRATION SYNDROME

A member from Kent received compensation of £15,000 after RMT lawyers took legal action on his behalf when he contracted hand/arm vibration syndrome.

The member had worked for his employer since 1969, and during the relevant period of employment worked in a motor bay where he was required to use an airgun and needle gun throughout the day.

A few years ago he started to experience symptoms of pins and needles on a constant basis in his hands and fingers. His fingertips also became numb and white. Initially he thought that the machine he was using was too powerful and that it was this that was causing the symptoms. However, when the symptoms did not improve he went to his doctor who diagnosed him as suffering from hand/arm vibration syndrome.

After the union's lawyers commenced court proceedings the company agreed to make a financial settlement.

Another member from Merseyside also contracted hand/arm vibration syndrome as a result of his exposure to vibrating tools. The index and middle fingers on both his hands are affected.

Again, it was necessary for RMT lawyers to commence court proceedings before a satisfactory settlement could be made. The member in this case was awarded £12,500

SHIPPING MEMBER RECEIVES £20,000 FOR BACK INJURY

A ship worker received an injury to his lower back while carrying out a manual handling task as part of his daily duties.

RMT lawyers commenced court proceedings against the member's employer after they initially refused to negotiate a settlement. As a result satisfactory settlement terms were negotiated and the member was awarded £20,000.

MEMBER RECEIVES BURNS

A service manager suffered burns when he was injured while making tea for passengers on a Glasgow to Euston train.

As the train was approaching a stop the member was making tea for First Class passengers. He had filled up the tea pot and was about leave the kitchen area when the train lurched and the tea pot hit the boiler causing the lid to come off and the hot water to spill onto him.

The tea pot was one of a number that do not have safety catches on and as a result he suffered burns to the side of his back, his hip and groin area.

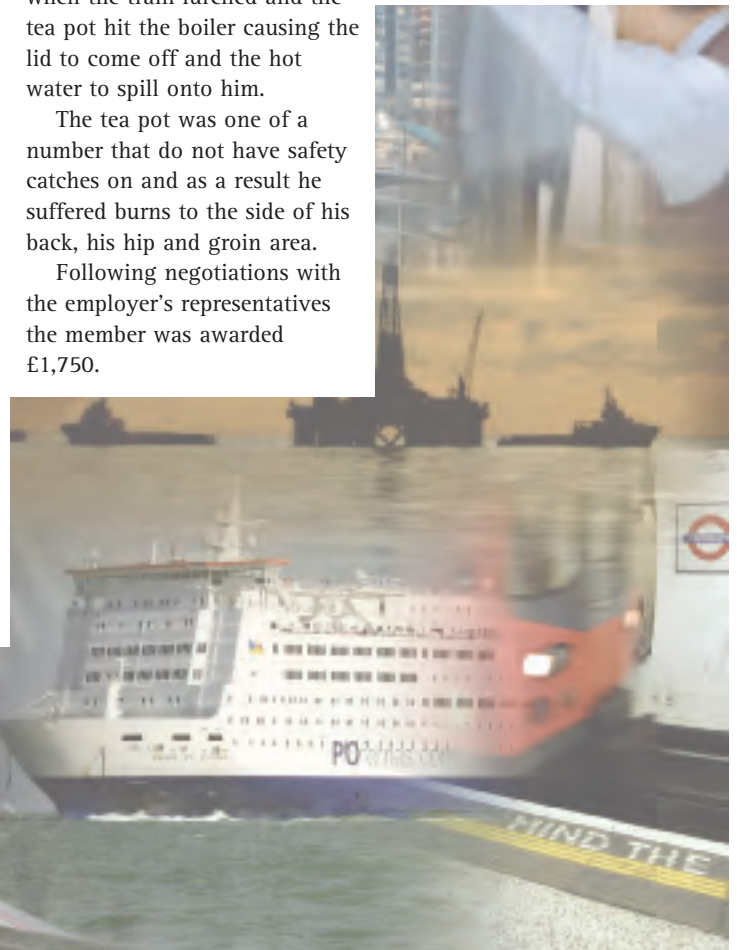
Following negotiations with the employer's representatives the member was awarded £1,750.

DELIVERY DRIVER INJURED UNLOADING PALLETS BY HAND

A delivery driver was injured while unloading the contents of eight pallets by hand, as the company did not have a fork lift truck to assist with unloading.

During the unloading process the member had to manually handle loads in excess of guideline weights. The process involved reaching above shoulder height, frequent repeated lifting, and twisting. When lifting a heavy case from the final pallet the claimant felt a pain in his lower back and discovered that he had injured himself.

RMT lawyers commenced court proceedings after the other sides insurers refused to negotiate a settlement. As a result the member received compensation of £7,000. ■



BRINGING VULN WORKERS OUT O



Next month RMT News will contain a simple questionnaire as part of a project to bring the needs of low-paid vulnerable workers to centre-stage, watch out for it, take part and make a difference

ERABLE F THE MARGINS

An RMT project to help give a boost to vulnerable workers in the transport industry has been launched after the union put in a successful bid under the Union Modernisation Fund.

Privatisation and fragmentation of the transport sector has seen a rise in the number of vulnerable, low-paid workers, particularly among catering and cleaning grades, and many of them migrants and women.

RMT's project aims to help promote greater involvement of vulnerable workers in their union and to help end abuses.

Vulnerable workers are, according to the TUC, people working in an environment where the risk of being denied employment rights is high and who do not have the capacity or means to protect themselves from abuse.

RMT's project will start with a comprehensive survey, aimed at identifying the scale of the problem, and to pinpoint specific needs.

The results will help inform the development of a website dedicated to vulnerable RMT members, as well as the content of a specific training course for full-time RMT officials, key members of staff and over 200 branch secretaries.

The union will then work with the TUC to deliver the training to, help bring the concerns of vulnerable members into the mainstream of organising and bargaining.

The results of the survey will help determine the content of the course.

WHY WE NEED THIS PROJECT

RMT has a good record of encouraging direct participation of all its members, but those efforts are not always successful.

Over the last decade, the union has become increasingly aware of the specific problems and needs of

workers employed in a number of sectors, principally contract-cleaning and catering, on London Underground, in the maritime industry and on the national rail network.

RMT has documented abuses suffered by vulnerable workers employed by cleaning contractors on the London Underground.

One cleaning sub-contractor operates an unofficial zero-hours policy at some depots, with the result that vulnerable workers are effectively forced to race each other to work for fear of being sent home without pay.

The policy has led to cleaners, who work for rates of pay barely above the minimum wage, arriving at work up to 90 minutes before their shift is due to start.

The union has also found instances where, despite the nature of their work, no mess rooms are provided for cleaners working on the Tube network, meaning that they have no access to hot and cold running water, nowhere to sit and eat, or even to wash their hands before they eat.

In the few locations where facilities are provided they are primitive: men and women have to change together, in one instance 20 cleaners sharing a 3m x 4m space with an 18-inch doorway.

The culture of bullying and harassment led to a cleaner being sacked for sleeping during a recognised rest-break period.

There are also numerous examples of members being sacked when the client company decides it does not want an individual on its premises.

This is particularly invidious as the vulnerable worker may never find out why he or she was removed, and has no recourse to a proper disciplinary or grievance procedure.

THE SURVEY

The project aims to identify the best strategy for dealing with these problems.

Evidence from the survey will also help the union to modernise its functioning by taking steps to remove any barriers identified that stand in the way of vulnerable workers participating fully in the RMT's democratic decision-making processes.

The survey is being tested, and will be launched in the next edition of RMT News, and its initial findings will be followed up with in-depth face to face interviews.

RMT VULNERABLE WORKERS' WEBSITE

Once the survey's findings have been analysed, the website will be developed, dedicated to meeting the needs of vulnerable workers in RMT – and it is the contribution of those members that will be key.

The website will offer a 'one-stop-shop', providing information about...

- employment rights and enforcement mechanisms,
- immigration rights,
- advice on bullying and harassment,
- information about tax-credits available to those in work,
- learning and educational opportunities

...together with information on relevant RMT initiatives such as the cleaners' charter and the living-wage campaign.

Organisation, as ever, remains the key to delivering long-term improvements in jobs, pay and conditions – and this project will help deliver justice to some of the transport workers who have suffered most from privatisation.

SHARP



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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

COURT FORCES EVEN MORE REDUNDANCIES AT SEAFRANCE

The Paris Commercial court has compelled SeaFrance unions to accept the Calais-Dover operator's new restructuring plans that are even harsher than the present arrangements.

The court said if this were not accepted it would wind the company up. CFDT, the majority ratings union at SeaFrance, said it has had to back the new plan that it understands involves no straight dismissals.

SeaFrance, a 100 per cent subsidiary of the French state-owned rail operator SNCF, was placed under court protection at its own request, freezing the operator's present arrangements that were reluctantly signed by the unions after months of tough negotiations and industrial action resulting in 482 job losses in the 1,600 workforce. The new court-approved restructuring plan involves a further 243 job cuts, for a total of 725 redundancies.

According to SeaFrance, most cuts will come from its onboard catering and general divisions and the operator will maintain its fleet of three car ferries and one all-freight vessel with the current 16-19 return trips daily.

SeaFrance says more than 260 people had already applied for voluntary redundancy under the suspended plan while the CFDT puts the figure at 378.

The operator must achieve a balanced budget, new financial arrangements and "adequate social consensus". This could mean opening the company's capital to a shareholder, including part privatisation and later selling off another vessel.

ITALY PRIVATISES FERRIES

Fintecna, the mother company of Italy's national ferry group Tirrenia, one of the largest in Europe and that currently is being privatised, has released the name of 16 candidates

seeking to take over the group's ferry subsidiaries.

The would-be buyers include seven investment funds and six operators, most of them Italian, including rapidly expanding operator Moby Lines, Minoan Lines and Superfast Ferries. Big Corsica, France-based privately-owned Corsica Ferries, is also bidding for the contract. Three of Tirrenia's four regional subsidiaries are undergoing separate privatisation moves by Italian regions. Its remaining 25-vessel operation to Sardinia and Sicily is estimated to be worth some 855 million euros.

IMF THROWS ROMANIAN RAIL WORKERS ONTO SCRAPHEAP

Romania's latest and severest austerity plan reduces the number of rail workers by 10,300 agreed by the government in an agreement

with the International Monetary Fund and the European Union.

Almost 6,400 of the axed jobs are at publicly owned rail freight operator CFR Marfa.

The transport ministry has no plan to update or modernise the rail network while 90 per cent of its budget is going on the roads. The national rail company now employs only 65,000 people, down from 236,000 in 1990 as the result of a series of workforce reduction plans. Quality of service has tumbled with passenger trains running at an average speed of 48Km per hour and freight trains at 17.5 Km per hour. Meanwhile, 50,000 demonstrators at a rally in the capital, Bucharest slammed parliament's IMF-backed austerity measures for a 25% cut in public service salaries and a 15% reduction in

unemployment benefit and retirement pensions.

PORTUGAL'S RAIL WORKERS FIGHT AUSTERITY

Portuguese rail workers have been in the forefront of the huge public discontent with the Socialist Party government that has presided over spiralling unemployment, stagnating salaries, pensions and unemployment benefit, and European Union-inspired privatisation and cuts in public services.

The most recent union-led demonstration brought 300,000 people onto the streets of Lisbon, the capital. Cuts in the rail industry include suspension of investment on the projected Lisbon-Porto high-speed train line and its extension to Vigo, Spain.

GERMAN PASSENGER TRAIN COLLIDES WITH DERAILED FREIGHT TRAIN



COLLISION: A passenger train lies wrecked next to freight cars after a collision in P eine earlier this month. A regional passenger train collided with a derailed freight train between Hannover and Braunschweig. The driver of the passenger train was seriously injured while seven people needed hospital treatment.



SCOTTISH TUC MEETS IN DUNDEE

The Scottish Trade Union Congress met Dundee recently with 335 delegates in attendance representing 32 trade unions, 18 trade union councils including the black workers, young workers and disabled workers conferences.

RMT sent 22 accredited delegates including Phil McGarry who was attending his last STUC as a General Council member for the last 17 years and was president in 2007.

The first RMT motion was on the People's Charter, moved by Phil McGarry and seconded by the National Union of Journalists. Phil called on the STUC to rally behind the principles of the charter and called for the current failed economic and social model to be ditched.

He slammed the politicians and financiers who seemed mystified as to how the system had failed and reminded Congress that working class people should not pay for the failure.

He reminded Congress that the principles in The People's Charter and the STUC's Collective Prosperity agenda were the same and the motion was carried unanimously.

RMT seconded a motion on the Glasgow Airport Rail Link (GARL) moved by ASLEF. Mary-Jane Herbison of Glasgow 1&2 branch said that the route must have a conductor is on the train and the union would not accept Driver Only Operation. This was carried unanimously.

In a composite on Network Rail general secretary Bob Crow slated the company for the jobs cull being proposed and mentioned that the architects of the initiative were not just Network Rail but Lord Adonis the Labour Transport Minister at Westminster.

Dave King of Stirling branch highlighted the recent High Court judgement against the union by Network Rail as disgraceful. He emphasised his fundamental human right to take industrial action without interference.

A motion on the Scottish Government review of ferry services moved by Nautilus International was seconded by George Lonie of RMT Glasgow shipping branch.

He said that ferry services should be focused on providing a public service to the community and not fulfilling minimum contractual obligations.

"Any review of the services should seek to enhance publicly owned and publicly accountable services in the ferry network with an increased level of services wherever practicable," he said.

George emphasised that the retention of maritime skills in Scotland, for which Caledonian MacBrayne is currently a key player, and the employment opportunities by the company for the island communities' stands at approximately 40 per cent of CalMac employees working on the islands.

EC member Andy Gordon also expressed grave concern over the appalling pay and conditions affecting foreign seafarers working in the particular sectors. He highlighted examples of unsafe or sub-standard working and living conditions experienced by many seafarers and fishing vessel crew members in Scottish waters.

He called upon Congress in support of to ratify and enforcement of the International Maritime Labour Convention and called upon the Scottish Government to prevent discrimination of foreign seafarers working in Scottish waters.

RMT president Alex Gordon warned that cuts to public spending would take place and finance capital, which caused the current financial crisis, would make massive profits at the expense of the taxpayer through the privatisation of more public services, a tax on pensions, pay and safety at work.

In line with the Council of Executives decision on nuclear energy, regional organiser Jake Molloy spoke against any

nuclear strategy for the energy sector.

On the question of peace, Micky Craig of Aberdeen offshore branch dealt with the military occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan and the continued threat of military action against Iran. He urged the General Council to continue to lobby for the withdrawal of military forces from Afghanistan and Iraq, and a renewed commitment to peaceful dialogue with Iran.

Micky specifically mentioned that a sovereign Palestinian state peacefully co-existing alongside a sovereign Israel in a nuclear weapon free Middle-East is desirable and called on Congress to support a world summit on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and to work towards a nuclear weapons convention banning all such weapons.

Seconding a motion on women's safety in Scotland Janet Cassidy of North Clyde branch reminded Congress of the STUC Women's Conference policy that extending Driver Only Operation train services would mean that safety concerns of women passengers would not be addressed.

Janet called on Congress to support the RMT's campaign in defence of the Operational Safety Role of Guards and applauded the support of rail workers who are fighting to retain guards on rail services.

Janet, herself a conductor, mentioned the six days of strike action in response to attempts by the Scottish government and ScotRail to remove conductors from passenger services and highlighted the safety arguments accordingly.

RMT ALSO submitted three emergency motions one on Jarvis Rail, Anti-trade union rulings and the other on railway safety.

Finally, regional organiser Ian Macintyre was successfully elected to replace the retiring Phil McGarry on the General Council. ■

TUC BLACK WORKERS CONFERENCE



Peter Lewis of Waterloo branch reports on the TUC black workers conference in Liverpool

I have just been an RMT delegate to the TUC Black Workers Conference in April 2010 with approximately 300 delegates and visitors, which proved to be a smooth and professional event.

This was matched by the preparation done by our RMT delegation. This being new to me appeared to be very complicated, but then all the conference papers sent to me began to make sense and I started to understand the order of things like the voting, conference reports and the general the proceedings.

The delegation decided which motions can be supported in line with our union's policy, who we would vote for, who is going to speak on what and we looked at ways of networking with other unions to find out their views.

We found that the Race Relation Committee attendance register which came with the conference materials useful as it lists the attendance of all the officers so that delegates can see who attended committee meetings regularly and vote accordingly.

What is blatant is that reserve seats for the TUC General Council on the Race

Relation Committee of which there 10 are not being taken up by the delegates nominated and there is an appalling attendance; showing a 60 per cent non-attendance. This part is not working and needs to be looked at.

RMT's fringe meeting on Haiti coincided with an emergency motion from the FBU on Haiti. Our delegation formally questioned the bland tone of the conference report on the issue and its lack of historical significance on the plight of the people Haiti.

Our fringe meeting covered all the aspects that the RRC report on Haiti left out.

The RMT delegation made representations that the keynote speaker at our fringe, Bro Omowale, address conference in order to fill in some of the missing aspects of the report.

As a result of our fringe and input into the conference the motion was voted to go to the TUC Congress this year from the Black Workers Conference.

As I looked around the conference hall I saw a wealth of knowledge and experience that made me proud to be a part of it. I thank RMT for giving me the opportunity to attend this conference. ■

President's column

JUSTICE DENIED

The legal maxim that "Justice delayed is justice denied" was demonstrated this month by two events which illustrate the institutional rottenness and absence of justice at the core of rail privatisation.

On the night of Sunday 6 June Scotrail's Glasgow Queen St-Oban service derailed on the West Highland line. RMT member Angus MacColl, the Guard of the train, carried out protection as he had been trained to do by walking back to the nearest phone to contact emergency services, then returning to ensure the safety of his passengers and fellow workers. The train driver, Willie Dickson said: "My colleagues were brilliant - as were some passengers who helped others on board. It was a real team effort".

Scotrail Managing Director Steve Montgomery paid tribute to the train crew saying: "This incident could have been more serious but for their actions. They did a tremendous job in difficult circumstances and are a credit to the company".

Breathtaking hypocrisy from a man who drafted in a "scab army" to undermine Guards fighting the extension of Driver Only Operation on Scotrail's new Airdrie-Bathgate service.

A week earlier on June 1, Judge Michael Findlay Baker QC opened the official inquest into the Potter's Bar train crash, where eight (yes, eight) years earlier on 10 May, 2002 a Driver Only Operated train derailed killing seven people. Judge Baker said: "The delay in holding an inquest has been extreme and will have protracted to an exceptional degree the distress of those who have been bereaved".

James Clappison, the local Tory MP told the inquest: "I think the Department of Transport have used every excuse to delay an inquiry. I think there should have been a public inquiry. It is not satisfactory that relatives have had to wait eight years to hear the facts aired in public".

It is a shame Clappison did not support the calls made consistently by this union for a full public enquiry into Potter's Bar, reiterated as recently as

2007 by Ian Davidson, Glasgow South West MP following the derailment of the high-speed train at Grayrigg and for railway activity to come under the control of one organisation to ensure safety of the public and railway workers.

The Potter's Bar inquest will now consider the failings of Railtrack, Jarvis and train operator WAGN - private companies, which conveniently no longer exist. Companies may dissolve themselves to evade responsibility for eroding safety standards. Individuals cannot. That is why RMT calls for legal protection to prevent trade union health and safety representatives being victimised for whistleblowing while corporate criminals walk free.

Privatisation has been responsible for a tawdry series of avoidable accidents on Britain's railways at Southall, Ladbroke Grove, Hatfield, Potter's Bar, Grayrigg and elsewhere during the last 15 years. Rail safety and liberalised competition go together like drinking and driving.

Finally, a reminder to all RMT members to bring your branch banners out next month and attend one of the great summer events of the trade union calendar. The Durham Miners' Gala is on Saturday July 10 and Tolpuddle Martyrs Festival is on Friday July 16 to Sunday July 18.

When those Dorset farm workers gathered under a tree in 1834 and swore an oath not to accept wage cuts, did they imagine a labour movement would be fighting for justice for working people nearly 200 years later?

If you need to recharge your batteries, or just get the kids out of the house and into the countryside, come and join us.

I hope to see you there!

Alex Gordon





70 FIGHTING YEARS

Alex McFadden talks to RMT News about his experiences during 70 years of active trade unionism

This year marks 70 years since Alex McFadden joined the union. During his long career he became a leading local and national figure, representing the union in negotiations with national government.

"My family on my mother's side were very political. I had an uncle that fought in Spain," recalls Alex McFadden as he reflects on his formative political experiences during the 1930s. Alex came from a Catholic family but rejected the Church, not least because of its support for the leader of the Spanish fascist Falange, General Franco. With fascism on the rise across Europe and high unemployment in the North East – where Alex grew up – it was not difficult to become politicised.

Alex was a member of the Communist Party but left the party in the 1950s. Alex joined the Labour Party, and was active there as well as in the Northern TUC, where he played a leading role for many years. He was to eventually resign his Labour Party membership many years later, disappointed that in government the party presided over public sector cutbacks that hit the working class very hard.

JOINING THE UNION

Alex joined the union – then the NUR – in May 1940, starting

out his career on the rails in Gateshead at the age of 17 as an engine cleaner, later to become a fireman, and then finally a driver. He remembers that his first union position was shed secretary. "It was my responsibility to make sure that the noticeboard was up to date," he says.

As an activist Alex initially did not want to hold key posts locally as he wanted to be free to speak from the floor at meetings. However, the fact that he was a committed and able activist meant that he soon found himself taking on more responsibilities and was elected as secretary of the Gateshead No 1 NUR branch.

It is hard to conceive today just how powerful the Gateshead branch was. Gateshead was an important junction for industry, being just a short distance from Newcastle and the coal industry. At its height the branch had around 1,000 members. The impact of the union on local politics was strong. Gateshead council had 15 NUR members elected as councillors, controlling some of the key budgets.

"The influence that the union had in the local community was staggering," remembers Alex's eldest son Alec, who is a well known trade unionist in his own right. "We had all sorts of

people coming and going and lots of local issues would be settled in discussions at our house," he recalls.

BEER AND SANDWICHES AT NO 10

As an accomplished local and regional activist it was only a matter of time before Alex made his name nationally in the union. He served two periods on NUR national executive: 1965–1967 and 1971–1973. After that he had a full time NUR job in Scotland before returning to the North East as a regional secretary, a position he held until he retired.

Alex's first period in national office was shortly after Harold Wilson's Labour government came to power in 1964, promising to halt the cuts on

the railways that had been planned in the notorious Beeching report.

However, the cuts continued and promises of wage rises failed to materialise. In 1966 the union found itself in dispute and as a member of the negotiating committee Alex met Wilson and other government officials at No 10 Downing Street over "Beer and Sandwiches" in an effort to bring about a resolution.

Alex remembers fondly that after settling a crucial deal on freight liner terminals in 1967 he was invited by left-wing government minister Barbara Castle to the Ministry of Transport to celebrate, along with others on the negotiating committee. "It wasn't beer and sandwiches that time, but the



hard stuff,” Alex says, remembering how they toasted the end of a successful dispute with whisky and gin.

Then during Alex’s second spell on the executive, as chair of the negotiating committee, he found himself involved in another national dispute. As industrial action looked inevitable, the Conservative Heath government decided to use new legislation by which they could force a union to hold a ballot on planned action. It was the first time legislation like this had ever been used, and to the surprise of the Tories the membership held strong and voted in favour. As a result they won a big pay award and it was a long time before the legislation was invoked again.

MINERS’ STRIKE

The Miner’s Strike of 1984-85 had a big impact on Alex. The pits and associated industries formed a vital part of the fabric of the North East and the planned closures were set to decimate working class communities locally.

As the Thatcher government brought the full might of the state machine against the NUM, solidarity groups formed all over Britain to support the besieged miners. As a regional official in one of the mining heartlands Alex played an important role in organising practical solidarity. “In addition to collections and other forms of solidarity the thing that sticks in my mind is that we brought them huge turkeys on Christmas day”, recalls Alec.

Dave Hopper, general secretary NUM North East Area, remembers the contribution that Alex and the NUR made.

“Alex was regional secretary of the NUR at the time of the strike and a very good supporter of the miners and the NUM. We had a good relationship and the NUR was very supportive.

“No members ever crossed a picket line and we had a lot of financial support from branches and individuals for which we will always be grateful,” he said.

“One of my proudest moments was when I was invited on to the main platform



Alex McFadden (centre) with his wife Joan and NUR general secretary Sid Greene and assistant general secretary Sid Weighell

at the Durham Miners Gala,” Alex says. The gala is the largest miner’s gathering in Britain and has seen the cream of the labour movement address its annual gathering in its near 130 year history.

Since his retirement in 1987 Alex has remained active and continues to represent retired members in the region.

Alex believes that the unions never recovered from the blow they received in the Thatcher years. He says that he is disappointed that class solidarity

doesn’t exist in the way that it once did. Nevertheless, he is proud of what the trade union movement has achieved in his lifetime and of the fact that he was able to make a contribution himself.

“Looking back you can see that improvements have been made in conditions in the workplace. “We made tremendous strides on pay, sick pay and holidays. Without the unions working conditions would be well below what they are now,” he says. ■

PULLING TOGETHER

A Popular History of RMT

New free union publication gives an insight into the struggles, defeats and victories of members over 150 years

Pulling Together gives members an engaging and colourfully illustrated window on the history of the union up to the present day.

It tells the story of how the union developed under very difficult circumstances against very powerful opponents and maintained itself as a democratic, fighting organisation that today

represents members in all sectors and grades of the transport industry.

Pulling Together is available free to members from Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD with a stamped, addressed envelope or by e-mailing bdenny@rmt.org.uk



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PROTECTING AND PROMOTING OUR MEMBERS' INTERESTS



LONDON MIDLAND RETIRED MEMBERS MEET

London Midland retired branch Sam Wallace writes that the discussion at a recent meeting in Unity House surrounded the expectations for pensioners with a Con-Dem Government.

"The feeling is that if we are going to realise implementation of the Pensioners Charter, we have a struggle on our hands, as our welfare is likely to be low down the priority chart, as it has previously been in this neo-liberal global race to the bottom," he said.

The Retired Members Advisory Conference also emphasised that RMT Pensioners must integrate

more with 'working members' in their fight for occupational pensions, but also to re-invigorate the campaign for a decent state pension, as over two million pensioners are living in poverty due to the abolition of the index link by Margaret Thatcher and not restored as promised by 13 years by Labour.

"We continue to play our part in the campaigns of NPC and Greater London Pensioners Association and will be represented at the Pensioners Parliament in June," he said. The next Meeting will be at Unity House on Wed July 21 at 11.00. ■



A very enjoyable Christmas meeting of the London Midland retired members. The party included retired and active members from Euston, St.Pancras, Watford and Rugby branches. Tony Donaghey said that they were very pleased to have general secretary Bob Crow, as well as assistant general secretaries Mick Cash and Pat Sikorski and Steve Todd, our shipping officer, in attendance.

PLYMOUTH HONOURS ITS OWN

RMT general secretary Bob Crow visited Plymouth branch recently to present retirement gifts from branch members to Ed Fontaine, Graham Hughes and Bill Moore.

Unfortunately they could not get a photo of Bob and Bill together. Bill joined the railway in 1964 and was a signaller at Plymouth signal box. Ed Fontaine joined the railway in 1991 and he retired as a First Great Western guard and rep.

Bob also addressed many Network Rail infrastructure and operations members about the latest in the dispute. He also told the branch that we need to stand up and fight against the upcoming public spending cuts. It was clear that Plymouth No.1 agreed with this.

Over 65 members attended the branch along with activists within the Plymouth Trades Council and Plymouth No.5 branch. A great send off to three loyal members. ■



WATERLOO SALUTES 40 YEARS

RMT Waterloo branch member Owen Ming, a loyal NUR and RMT member, retired from over 40 years working for British Rail and South West Trains last year. Branch secretary Rickey Goodman wrote to Owen to invite him to the branch so he could be presented with the 40 year membership award.

Branch Chairman Bill Read said it was an honour to present this special award to Owen, and thanked Owen for his loyalty to the union and wished Owen a happy and prosperous retirement, and hoped to see him as a honorary member at future branch meetings. ■



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Closing date for entries is 18th July and the winner will be notified by email by 21st July

Entries are limited to one per person

The editors decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.



The images shown depict wax figures created and owned by Madame Tussauds

letters

THANK YOU FROM IRELAND

Dear editor,

On behalf of the Jim Connell Society I would like to express our sincere gratitude to RMT for their continued support for the May weekend trade union festival in Kells, County Meath, Ireland to celebrate the life of the author of the song The Red Flag.

This year our speakers included Bob Crow, former NUM president Arthur Scargill and Dublin TUC president Phil McFadden. A special guest this year was RMT national secretary Steve Todd.

The parade was led by the RMT brass band and their banner was to the fore of the procession. The crowd exceeded 1,200 on the day and everyone enjoyed themselves. Well done to RMT, without your support it could not have been possible, here's looking for to next year.

Yours sincerely,
Tommy Grimes

Labour Party councillor

RMT WORTH EVERY PENNY

Dear editor,

I was involved in an incident at work in September 2009 which led to me being charged with misconduct.

Throughout this process I was represented by RMT rep Phil Rixon based in Leicester.

He was very thorough, efficiently gathering information and spending many hours preparing my case. He acted in a professional manner at all times and returned my calls without delay, nothing was too much trouble for him.

A month later I attended a disciplinary hearing with Mr Rixon and was given a final written warning and a three day suspension despite and unblemished record of 22 years.

Mr Rixon urged me to appeal and a hearing was finally held in May 2010. Mr Rixon was concise and to the point and it was clear to all that he had prepared an excellent case.

The outcome was 'no case to answer' and all charges were dropped.

I am indebted to Mr Rixon and the union as I believe the outcome would have been different without his presence, although I always believed myself innocent.

Mr Rixon is obviously very passionate when he sees an injustice. I feel that he is a credit to the union and I think he deserves to be awarded for his helpfulness and expertise.

I now realise that being an RMT member was one of the best decisions I ever made. The small amount I pay for my membership is worth every penny.

Regards
Vaughan Williamson

GREEK RAIL WORKERS SOLIDARITY CALL

Dear editor,

A new era of feudalism has been unleashed on Greek railways and those who work in the industry.

The Greek government has signed a memorandum of understanding with the International Monetary Fund and the European Central Bank for the 120-year-old industry to be dismantled. The government, being guided by a colonialist ideology, is consigning the railways to be broken up and its most profitable parts will be handed over to the private sector for private profits.

This will include the sacking of 50 per cent of rail workers, which is around 3,000 of the 6,000 left working on the railways after previous cuts.

All collective bargaining agreements, regulations and conventions covering working conditions are being torn up. The remaining staff are being asked to accept these drastic cuts and attacks on working conditions which will decimate the rail industry.

We are asking transport workers to express their support with Greek workers in struggle in any way they see fit. We are constantly protesting against the enactment of these attacks which threaten our way of living.

In solidarity

Pan Hellenic Federation of Rail Workers
Andreas Vasilopoulos, General secretary
Nikolaos Kioutsoukis, President

EXETER BUS PRESENTATION

Exeter number two branch honoured two retiring members Dennis Donson and Ray Hayward recently and executive committee member for the South West Dave Letcher presented them with RMT-engraved cut crystal glass tumblers.

Dennis served the union for 40 years in various branch positions including chair, treasurer and trustee. Ray was also a branch stalwart for over 30 years. ■



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PEOPLE'S PUBS - Words by Mike Pentelow, Pictures by Peter Arkell

THE CHARTIST

74 Commercial Road, Skelmanthorpe, West Yorkshire

The government reaction to the basic democratic demands of the Chartist movement in the 1830s and 1840s was to jail its leaders for sedition.

By today's standards the six demands were moderate: votes for all men, votes to be secret, lifting the condition that only men with property could stand for election, parliamentary districts to be of equal numbers of voters, payment of MPs, and annual general elections. In fact all but the last have since been granted.

Yet when these simple demands were submitted on a charter signed by 250,000 people to the House of Commons in 1839 it was rejected by 235 votes to 46. And it was rejected again after being signed by an incredible 3,317,752 people in 1842.

When Chartist mass street meetings and local general strikes took place in that year they were quelled by armed troops. They opened fire on crowds in Preston, including women and children, 56 people were transported, and, as mentioned, the leaders were jailed for sedition and other trumped up charges.

One of these was William Lovett (1800-1877), the chief drafter of the Charter, whose portrait appears on the sign of this pub in Skelmanthorpe.

His fisherman father was drowned before William was born in Penzance, Cornwall. At the age of 13 he became an apprentice ropemaker but, as ropes became replaced by chains, he trained to be a carpenter instead.

Then he became a cabinet maker in London at the age of 21, and after a five-year wait became eligible to join the

Society of Cabinet Makers (for which he had to buy a gallon of ale) and eventually became its president.

He met radicals while attending evening classes of the London Mechanics' Institute and was introduced to the co-operative ideas of Robert Owen. Lovett joined the London Co-operative Trading Association, and in 1828 was secretary of the British Association for the Promotion of Co-operative Knowledge.

In 1831 he was selected at random for compulsory service in the London militia, which he refused. His property was seized as punishment and he formed the Anti-Militia Association with the slogan "No Vote, No Musket". This campaign succeeded in ending compulsory service in the militia and he became a national political figure.

The following year he was arrested for attending a peaceful demonstration and locked up in a small, dark, smelly, filthy cell with little air.

His campaign for votes for all male adults continued through the National Union of the Working Classes, and Owen's Grand National Consolidated Trade Union, both of which he joined.

He founded the London Working Men's Association in 1836, and at one of its meetings in 1838 he drew up the People's Charter and became effective leader of the Chartists. The sedition charge was brought against him in 1839 for making a speech accusing the Metropolitan Police of being "a blood thirsty and unconstitutional force." Found guilty he was sentenced to a year in prison. The food was



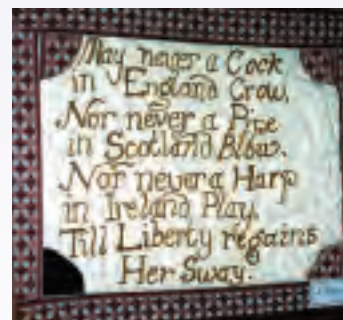
infested by beetles so he tried to live on bread and water alone which made him so weak he was taken to hospital. He was offered three months' remission for good behaviour but refused it as it would have meant admitting his guilt.

He retired from politics in 1842, after the rejection of the petition signed by over three million, and concentrated instead on working class education, forming the National Association for Promoting the Political and Social Improvement of the People. This was financed by workers' subscriptions and provided circulating libraries and lecturers. After opening a book shop in Tottenham Court Road, which failed to make any money, he died in poverty.

The Skelmanthorpe Flag of the Chartists is proudly

displayed in this pub which contains a poem written after the Peterloo Massacre in 1819 (when the militia slaughtered 15 people and wounded 600 others who were seeking the vote in Manchester). It pronounces:

*May Never A Cock in England Crow,
Nor never a Pipe in Scotland Blow,
Nor never a Harp in Ireland Play
Till Liberty regains Her Sway.*



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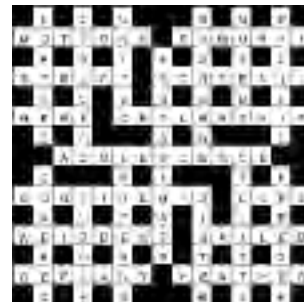
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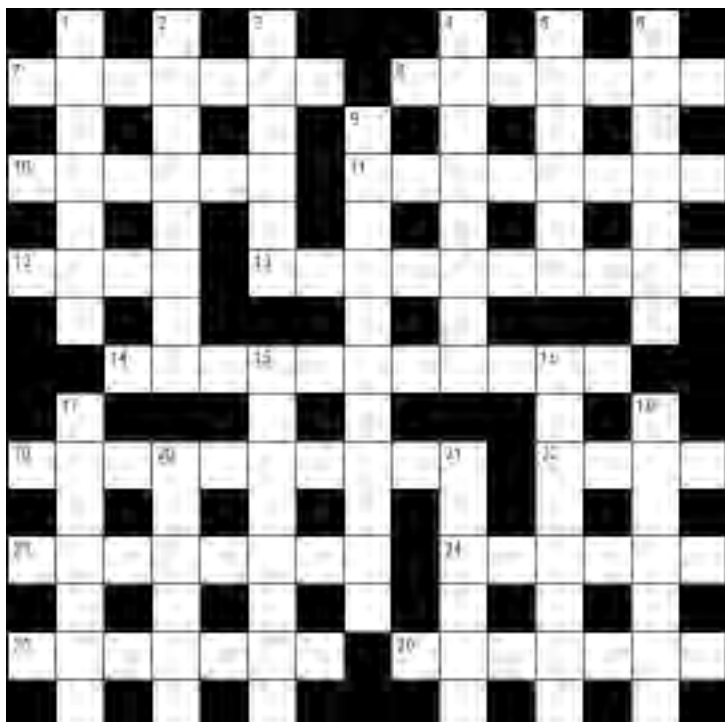
No. 60 solution...



The winner of prize crossword no. 60 is M A Harris, Denbighshire.

Send entries to Prize Crossword, RMT, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD by July 14 with your name and address.

Winner and solution in next issue.



ACROSS

- 7 Haven for vessels (7)
- 8 Non-religious (7)
- 10 Container, especially for beer (6)
- 11 They call it the sidewalk over there (8)
- 12 Cost of journey; food and drink on offer (4)
- 13 Stylised drawing or cartoon (10)
- 14 Without tables, chairs etc (11)
- 19 Revolutionary Russians (10)
- 22 Skin complaint (4)
- 23 Practise performance (8)
- 24 Ghost; potent drink etc (6)
- 25 Rotted (7)
- 26 Programmes you're likely to have seen before (7)

DOWN

- 1 Mad fruit! (7)
- 2 Host city for this year's RMT AGM (8)
- 3,4 Government wants to cut them - we need to defend them (6)
- 5 The top, or top-level meeting (6)
- 6 They are unfurled on demonstrations (7)
- 9 Trainees (11)
- 15 Such as income from shares etc (8)
- 16 Checked over for faults or ailments (8)
- 17 Reduced; let down; looked threatening (7)
- 18 Joins up (to army?) (7)
- 20 Children's play apparatus (6)
- 21 County in south of England (6)

LOAN RATE SLASHED WITH 22 PER CENT DISCOUNT!

New initiatives from RMT Credit Union bring cheaper loans to CU members and opportunity for younger family members to save

The RMT Credit Union has lowered the interest charged on loans which once again shows the tremendous value YOUR credit union can offer.

For a limited period the interest on our loans will be just 9.9 per cent APR which represents a 22 per cent discount on our usual loan charges. The tremendous value of this new rate is demonstrated in the comparison table below.

As you can see, whether it's against high-street banks or on-line providers, the RMT Credit Union gives terrific value to members.

And remember, unlike many providers we have NO hidden costs. There are NO early-redemption fees or compulsory insurances. Best of all, we don't rake off profits to shareholders.

Members benefit through dividends paid on savings and the low cost of our loans.

If you want to take advantage of the discounted rate of 9.9 per cent APR, contact the RMT Credit Union now by completing the form below or just give us a call on 020 7529 8835 and see how we can help you.

The RMT Credit Union is flexible about the amount you can borrow, on your repayments, which can be monthly or four-weekly, and on the term length of your loan.

Of course all loan applications are subject to the RMT Credit Union's usual rules, terms and conditions.

JUNIOR DEPOSIT ACCOUNTS

Many members have told us they would like to start savings accounts for their children via their RMT Credit Union.

We have decided to launch Junior Deposit Accounts (JDA) in response to demand.

This will enable adult members to sponsor JDAs for young savers under the age of 16.

This means that you can save regularly

on behalf of your children, and when they reach the age of 16 they can become full members of the Credit Union.

Full rules of the JDA will be available when you request to open an account. If you wish to open a JDA on behalf of a child, complete the enclosed application form and we will get you started.

If the RMT Credit Union can be of assistance to you on these or any other matters please do not hesitate to contact us at www.rmt.org.uk/credit-union or on 020 7529 8835

£3,000 Loan over 60 months

	% APR	Repayments	Total Cost Compared to RMTCU
RMT CU	9.9%	£63.59	£3815
Alliance & Leicester	15.7%	£70.27	£4216 (+ £401)
The AA	17.9%	£73.88	£4434 (+ £619)
Halifax	22.9%	£80.82	£4849 (+ £1034)

Source: Moneysupermarket.com 24 April 2010

YES, I'd like to know more about a discounted loan...

Please complete the details below and we will send you the full details and application forms.

I am interested in a loan at the discount rate. Please send me details and application forms.

Name

Address

Postcode

Loan Amount

Loan term

(months)

Please return to: RMT Credit Union Ltd, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street London NW1 1JD or call for a chat on 020 7529 8835



RMT CREDIT UNION LTD.

Finance Department, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD

MEMBERSHIP NUMBER

RMT CREDIT UNION APPLICATION FORM – please complete your application along with the attached Direct Debit.

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

1 PERSONAL DETAILS.

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

2 **Marital Status** married ☐ partner ☐ single ☐ divorced ☐ **Drivers Licence No.**

3 Your Employment.

Employer		RMT Branch	
Job Description			

4 **Mr** ☐ **Mrs** ☐ **Ms** ☐ **Miss** ☐

5 Membership Status

RMT TU Member ☐ Retired RMT TU Member ☐ RMT Family Member ☐

6 **How much do you wish to save £** This is the amount you wish to save by Direct Debit monthly on the 28th ☐ or date you next get paid weekly ☐ if 4 weekly (Fri) ☐ date here.....

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

8 **Next of Kin**

Address

.....

.....

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

Your signature

Date

We are checking new member identification electronically. To do this, we now carry out searches with credit reference agencies who supply us with relevant detail including information from the Electoral Register. The searches will not be used by other lenders to assess your ability to obtain credit.

I agree to my identity being checked electronically ☐

If we cannot verify your identity and address by this method, we will ask you to provide paper documentation instead. Full details of these can be supplied to you by calling 020 7529 8835.



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

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.



JOIN RMT BRITAIN'S SPECIALIST TRANSPORT UNION



Visit www.rmt.org.uk to join online
or call the helpline on freephone

0800 376 3706

Problems at work? Call the helpline
(Now with two operators)

Keep your RMT membership details up-to-date

In the light of draconian anti-trade union laws that have been used against the union, members should keep their personal data up to date. It is also important to note that in order to keep members informed your union requires your mobile telephone number and email address.

Members can do this via the RMT website, telephone the RMT helpline above, or writing to the membership department at RMT head office, Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD.

