

RMT *news*

Essential reading
for today's
transport worker

DON'T MOURN



ORGANISE!

NATIONAL UNION OF RAIL, MARITIME & TRANSPORT WORKERS

Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD



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contents

Page 4

**MERSEYRAIL CLEANING AND
MAINTENANCE STAFF STRIKE AGAIN**

Page 5

NO TO EU RAIL PRIVATISATION

Page 6

BUS SERVICES FACE CRIPPLING CUTS

Page 7

**NO TO SOCIAL DUMPING ON CONDOR
FERRIES**

Page 8

TUBE TICKET OFFICES THE TRUTH

Page 9

PARLIAMENTARY COLUMN

Page 10

**NO TO AGENCY CONTRACTS AT
TRANSPORT FOR LONDON**

Page 11

**RMT WARNS SCOTTISH MPS OVER ZERO
HOUR CONTRACTS**

Page 12

SIGNALLING SUCCESS

Page 14

VOTE NO2EU

Page 16

LEGAL VICTORIES

BOB CROW SPECIAL PULL-OUT centre pages

Page 18

ZERO HOURS, ZERO SAFETY

Page 20

THE SIGNALLERS' DISPUTE 20 YEARS ON

Page 23

BRING CATERING IN-HOUSE

Page 24

**FLOODS AND STORMS PROTECTING
YOUR HOME**

Page 25

CAL MAC APPRENTICESHIP SUCCESS

Page 26

YOUNG MEMBERS DISCUSS POLITICS

Page 27

**NEW NORTH SEA HELICOPTER SAFETY
MEASURES ADOPTED**

Page 28

FASCIST PUTSCH IN UKRAINE

Page 29

PRESIDENTS COLUMN

Page 30

CROSSWORD/LETTERS

EDITORIAL



DON'T MOURN, ORGANISE

This is one editorial I never wanted to write. It is still hard to believe that Bob Crow will not be stepping into Unity House with his usual friendly humour hot-foot from the gym.

Bob's boundless bonhomie was infectious and if he was at the bar it wasn't long before laughter could be heard and tales, memories and jokes would be shared. He inspired whoever he met and never forgot a name or a football match for that matter.

Our union, the labour movement and the working class has lost the greatest trade union leader of his generation and I have lost a good friend. We were both presented with National Union of Railwaymen Youth Awards in our younger days, sat on the executive together and both became officers of the RMT.

Now Bob has gone and I believe he will be irreplaceable. However if he was around he would have been quick to quote Joe Hill's famous last message written from his prison cell, Don't Mourn, Organise.

Bob's legacy is the vision he had for the union which he turned into reality. Whether it was the state-of-the-art education centre in Doncaster, which he brought into being to turn union members into activists equipped to defend transport workers, or reinvigorating union structures he always threw himself into the task at hand with enormous energy and enthusiasm.

Nowhere was he more at home than in the fight to defend his members and we will all have memories of him winning the media war during the recent Tube strike to stop the wholesale destruction of ticket offices.

As senior assistant general

secretary I will be working alongside our president Peter Pinkney and the national executive to ensure that Bob's work is continued with the same vigour.

We have many battles ahead, from defending ticket offices to resisting cuts, exposing injustice and fighting for safe workplaces for our members.

Working with our Parliamentary group of MPs we will continue to fight for changes in the law for the benefit of our members. All grades conferences will go ahead and members can still discuss issues and pass motions that the union leadership can act on and implement. Branch meetings will still be taking place to give a voice for every member of the union and a forum to discuss problems in the workplace.

Regional councils will still meet to co-ordinate union activity around the country and allow branches to pass on requests and information up through the structures of the union to the executive committee.

The coming months will be difficult for all of us but we must remain united in the way that Bob would have wanted. The only people to gain from disunity are the bosses that feared Bob Crow so much and we must continue for the sake of our members that clearly loved him so much.

A light has gone out in the labour and trade union movement but Bob Crow will be remembered by millions of workers around the world many years after his enemies and detractors are long, long forgotten. Farewell Bob, Rest in Peace.

Assistant General Secretary

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When you have finished with this magazine give it to a workmate who is not in your union. Even better, ask them to join RMT by filling in the application form opposite

MERSEYRAIL CLEANING AND MAINTENANCE STAFF STRIKE AGAIN



RMT members working for Merseyrail contractors' Lorne Stewart took a second round of strike action early this month after the company refused to engage in serious talks to resolve the dispute.

At talks Lorne Stewart had refused to negotiate insisting they were under strict instructions not to improve the offer.

Lorne Stewart workers carry out the essential station cleaning and maintenance that

helps keep Merseyrail moving.

After nearly nine months of trying to negotiate, low paid Lorne Stewart workers have stood firm and rejected the profitable company's derisory below-inflation pay 'offer' and are making a stand for a just pay settlement without strings.

No matter how Lorne Stewart have tried to dress the offer up it still represents a cut in the standard of living and the institutionalisation of poverty pay.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that despite the best efforts of RMT negotiators Lorne Stewart refuse to address the issue of poverty pay on Merseyrail.

"Lorne Stewart workers have suffered low pay for too long and it's time for the company to share the fruits of its success with its staff.

"The company claims that it can't afford to pay more and hides behind its contract with Merseyrail, yet its latest profit

figure is £15 million – that's £5,000 for every one of its workers and it can afford to hire in a scab army in a desperate attempt to break our members action.

This company have got the money and it's about time they started talking seriously about a fair deal and pay justice for the workers who generate the profits doing some of the dirtiest jobs on Britain's transport network," he said.

SOLID 48-HOUR STRIKE AT NORTHERN RAIL DEPOTS

Rock solid 48-hour strike action involving RMT Northern Rail maintenance driver members at Heaton (Newcastle) and Neville Hill (Leeds) Traincare Depots took place last month in a dispute over re-grading.

The re-grading exercise has failed to recognise the complex and demanding role of this key group of staff and which has ignored the skills and hard work that they bring to the company.

Picket lines were out in force at both depots and the workers won support from across the trade union and labour movement in both areas.

Grievances include the fact that re-grading has ignored the fact that the staff involved were actually handling a wider and



more diverse range of vehicles as a result of changes in the industry which should have been a major factor in any serious evaluation of their work.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the action by this group of key Northern Rail staff showed that they were united and determined to win justice over this botched and mismanaged re-grading exercise.

"RMT firmly believes that the

company has been disingenuous in their approach to this re-grading by failing to recognise the multiple skills and the hard work that this group of maintenance depot drivers bring to the Northern Rail operation.

"The union is clear that the job is complex and demanding, and that now is the time for the company to acknowledge that Maintenance Depot Drivers should be re-graded accordingly

in recognition of their role and responsibilities.

"With this strike, which will be followed by an overtime ban, at both depots Northern Rail management must engage in serious talks aimed at rectifying this gross injustice," he said.

RMT is the only recognised union within the machinery of Northern Rail able to represent Depot Drivers.

NO TO EU RAIL PRIVATISATION

Unions say EU rail privatisation model no future for public transport

'No to the privatisation of rail services across Europe' was the message taken to the European parliament in Strasbourg last month by rail unions.

The EU's Fourth Railway Package imposes the tendering of rail passenger services and the separation of train operation from infrastructure management in every member state.

The TUC Action for Rail campaign warned that the EU plan would permanently expand the control that overseas rail companies have over the UK's rail services.

It warned that the package also makes it impossible for any UK government to adopt an alternative to privatisation, ruling out successful publicly-owned and run services such as the East Coast Mainline.

The rail package imposes the

EU model for rail of privatisation and fragmentation across Europe which was first imposed in Britain under EU directive 91/440 20 years ago, creating huge inefficiency and costs.

While the Tory/Lib Dem government has ruled out public ownership of the railways, Action for Rail is concerned that foreign state-owned rail companies are using this as an opportunity to make a profit.

Of existing UK rail companies, Arriva is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the German national rail company Deutsche Bahn, Keolis is majority owned by the French national rail operator SNCF, and Abellio is owned by the Dutch state operator Nederlandse Spoorwegen.

According to a recent study

by the Centre for Research on Socio-Economic Change for Arriva Trains Wales, subsidy exceeds private revenue from fares, with the state contributing 60p in every £1 of revenue.

The report finds that privatisation is not value for money for taxpayers as Virgin West Coast Trains would not make a profit from the West Coast Mainline without state support, and Arriva Trains Wales would not run at all.

Since the start of the franchise in 2003, Arriva and Deutsche Bahn (Deutsche Bahn AG acquired Arriva in 2010) have extracted £75 million in dividends.

Government plans to privatise East Coast Mainline could see the company taken over by Keolis and Eurostar through their joint bid. Action

for Rail argues that it would be far more efficient for rail services to be directly run and operated by the public sector.

Action for Rail chair TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady said that imposing the rail privatisation system that was so clearly failing across Europe would be a disaster for passengers and taxpayers alike.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that as a result of the disastrous EU model Britain now had the highest rail fares in Europe, a culture of cuts and profiteering and the growing use of contract labour and zero-hour contracts.

"That is no future for public transport here or anywhere else in Europe, we need publicly-owned and accountable transport services that serve people before profit," he said. ■



BUS SERVICES FACE CRIPPLING CUTS

Campaign warns of huge bus cuts despite transport bosses handing millions back to government

The Campaign for Better Transport has warned that vital bus services face a wave of crippling cuts while millions of pounds earmarked for transport schemes is handed back to the Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne.

Transport officials are returning more than £100 m in savings to the Chancellor as part of the government's "fiscal consolidation" programme despite the looming cutbacks.

Campaigners believe the much-needed cash should be spent on maintaining under-threat bus services, mending

pothole-filled roads and other transport projects.

The move comes as cash strapped councils are forced to trim their transport budgets to cope with falling subsidies, threatening hundreds of bus services..

Town hall budgets for buses have already been slashed by £17.5m over the past year, with another £48 million of cuts announced for future years, said the CBT.

CBT public transport campaigner Martin Abrams said that the huge underspend by the Department for Transport should

be immediately set aside for repairing our storm damaged roads and funding vital local bus services.

"This year looks set to be a terrible 12 months for buses as cuts to local authority budgets really start to bite.

"There is real public anger about the large number of bus services under threat, leaving many thousands without vital transport links.

"We need immediate action from the government and this money could provide a timely reprieve for many bus services while also repairing many of the

potholes caused by the recent storms," he said.

More than 1,000 East Dorset residents in protest at cuts to key bus services has been handed to the county council.

A number of bus services in the Wimborne and Colehill area will change or be lost altogether from April 1 as the council aims to save over £850,000 from the £2.8 million it spends on its bus subsidy.

Furious residents have vowed to fight the plans, and 1,300 added their names to the petition.



RAIL GOURMET BALLOT OVER BULLYING

Staff working for Rail Gourmet at Euston, servicing the Virgin West Coast trains, are being balloted for both strike action and action short of a strike in a dispute over a culture of bullying and aggression within the company.

RMT has identified a number of issues which must be resolved including abuse of the disciplinary and grievance procedures, bullying and management not honouring staff annual leave entitlements.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that despite the

efforts of RMT representatives to tackle a growing catalogue of abuse, bullying and harassment these issues remained unresolved.

"The company has shown no signs whatsoever that they are prepared to make progress on these serious issues and as a

result we have now informed Rail Gourmet that a dispute situation exists between our two organisations and that we will remain in dispute until all these matters are resolved to our satisfaction," he said.

The ballot will close on April 1 2014. ■

ROLLING STOCK SCANDAL

Desperately-needed trains are being moved from the north to the south of England in a manoeuvre that exposes the critical shortage of rail rolling stock due to years of underinvestment.

It has emerged that nine trains currently used by Trans Pennine Express will be moved to Chiltern Railways due to the crisis.

The trains, currently used

between Manchester and Hull, will move from April 2015 in a lease agreement despite the fact that the stock is desperately needed on the northern routes.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the move was nothing short of a scandal which ignored the fact that First Trans Pennine Express is already the most overcrowded train service in Britain.

"As a result of this move, which is supported by the Government and the Transport Department, the route will now lose 13 per cent of its train units which our members have made clear will lead to absolute chaos and dangerous overcrowding.

"Once again the failure to invest in new rolling stock and capacity, combined with the fragmentation and profiteering

of privatisation, leaves a trail of wreckage in its wake.

"Not only that but the North loses again and rail passengers and staff have nothing to look forward to other than continuing overcrowding and chaos.

"The only solution is public ownership and an end to the expensive nonsense of privatisation," he said.





NO TO SOCIAL DUMPING ON CONDOR FERRIES

RMT steps up campaign against social dumping in maritime sector

Trade unionists and ITF inspectors held protests in Portsmouth last month against the employment practices of ferry operator Condor Ferries.

Condor Ferries, which runs vessels between the UK, Channel Islands and France, pays as little as £2.35 per hour to Ukrainian crews that it brought on-board to replace British crews – well below the United Kingdom's minimum wage.

Using the excuse that they are non-domiciled in the European Union, these seafarers are also made to work longer hours of duty, while receiving shorter leave.

The union has a long running campaign against social

dumping in the UK shipping industry which has exposed the scandal on Condor Ferries that make a complete mockery of both UK and EU employment rights.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the exploitation of foreign nationals in the British shipping industry was a massive scandal that the political elite wanted to keep quiet.

"That's no surprise as it's their wealthy mates running the shipping companies who benefit from this scam that dodges normal employment regulations while the European Union refuses to lift a finger.

"Social dumping allows the

most rotten employers in the book to batter down wages and conditions," he said.

RMT national secretary Steve Todd said that the fight to stop the scandal of social dumping remained a priority for RMT.

"We will continue to turn the spotlight on the shameful practices that this ConDem government legitimises in the British shipping industry with the collusion of the EU," he said.

International Transport Workers' Federation coordinator Ken Fleming said that he had travelled these routes and spoken with these crews.

"There's no doubt they're being paid a pittance," he said ■

TUBE TICKET OFFICES

THE TRUTH

Due to the resolve of RMT members working on London Underground the company has withdrawn plans to unilaterally close ticket offices across the combine.

Solid 48-hour strike action last month combined with the threat of another brought LUL back to the table to discuss their destructive plans for the Tube network.

Commentators of all political persuasions admitted that the union, with Bob Crow at the forefront, had won the media war despite the onslaught from the right wing press which had to rely on distortions and outright lies.

Prime Minister David Cameron told MPs: "The fact is that only three per cent of transactions now involve ticket offices, so it makes sense to have fewer people in those offices".

But research by fullfact.org shows that the Prime Minister missed the important distinction between transactions and journeys, making the level of ticket office use seem lower than it is.

Transport for London (TfL), who provided the research behind Cameron's claim, show that around three per cent of journeys begin with a purchase at a ticket office.

To get to this figure, TfL

statisticians looked at the average number of tickets sold at ticket office windows in a four-week period in May, September and October last year, and compared it to the number of trips recorded over the same time span.

Clearly many transactions pay for more than one journey, including sales of weekly, monthly or annual travelcards. Similarly, top-ups of London's Oyster electronic ticket system, whose pre-paid fares are cheaper than cash, can pay for more than one trip. More than seven million Oyster cards are in regular use.

TfL itself has been careful in how it has used the figure, saying for example, that "due to Oyster and other innovations, just three per cent of Tube journeys involve a visit to a ticket office".

According to the figures provided by TfL on the total number of tickets sold at both ticket offices and ticket machines, around one in five ticket purchases took place at a ticket office, much higher than the three per cent figure advanced by the Prime Minister.

In addition to the TfL figures, an independent survey of 1000 Tube users –carried out by the respected polling organisation Survation – found that almost two thirds felt that lawful

industrial action as a last resort was justified, with only 29 per cent not sharing that view.

Nearly 70 per cent were concerned at the Mayor's closure plans. London's elected body, the Greater London Assembly, recently voted for a halt to the ticket office closures, allowing a full public consultation.

INCREASED USE

New figures obtained by the Labour group on the GLA also show a net increase in total

transactions at tube ticket offices from 7.418 million in 2012 to 7.577 million in 2013 – making a nonsense of claims that the booking offices are in decline.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that as the detailed discussions on ticket offices and staffing station-by-station were underway more facts that expose the truth about ticket office usage were emerging which will fuel RMT's case against the closures and against the job losses. ■

THE LIE

- Tory leader David Cameron told Parliament that "only three per cent of transactions now involve ticket offices, so it makes sense to have fewer people in those offices".

THE FACTS

- One in five journeys originate at a ticket office
- 52 per cent of Tube users have been unable to buy tickets from a machine because it was broken
- 56 per cent of passengers said they would not vote for Mayor Boris Johnson again for breaking election promise that he would keep ticket offices open
- 66 per cent opposed to ticket office closures
- The GLA has voted for a halt to the proposals, allowing a full public consultation

STOP THE SEWAGE

RMT has stepped up demands for urgent government action to end the shocking practice of train companies dumping human sewage on the railway tracks.

A new BBC investigation has once more exposed the fact that the issue continues to kick up a stench across rail services out of London main line stations.

Last year transport minister Baroness Kramer was forced to admit in the House of Lords that the practice was 'utterly disgusting' although her government refuses to do anything about it.

RMT has demanded that the government disclose what tonnage of human excrement is currently being dumped on Britain's railways by the train companies every year to reveal the true scale of the scandal.

Track workers have repeatedly pointed out that some sections of the rail infrastructure are like an open sewer and that the human waste doesn't simply hit the track bed, it sprays out when trains are travelling at speed posing a serious and disgusting health risk to staff.

Rail works have been delayed because staff have been confronted with pools of raw sewage.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that it was a shocking indictment on the state of the railways 20 years after privatisation, with hundreds of millions of pounds a year being creamed off in private profits, that raw sewage is still being dumped and sprayed across the tracks.

"This rotten practice should be stopped once and for all and the train companies should be the forced by the government to pay the price for upgrading the trains and employing staff to empty the tanks," he said.

Parliamentary column

IF WE FIGHT WE WIN

It was a pleasure to give the RMT Parliamentary group report to your executive recently because we could discuss progress and victories on a number of fronts.

Our campaigning with your union has helped ensure the government dropped proposals that would have seen the scrapping of legislation protecting workers' pensions at the time of rail and Tube privatisation.

This may also have the benefit of protecting all pensions in the industry as rail and Tube employers may be reluctant to try and operate too many different schemes. The union and the Parliamentary group are meeting the pension minister shortly to hold further discussions

Another tremendous victory was the government decision to award the Crossrail rolling stock contract to Bombardier based in Derby so securing, for now at least, rail jobs and the future of British train manufacturing. RMT group member and Derby MP Chris Williamson had been particularly active in the campaign for the union tabling a series of questions and motions.

On the Tube members of the group backed the RMT's campaign against the closure of ticket offices across the network this included questions, motions and a rally and debate at Parliament. All of this demonstrated the strong political support for the Tube workers' magnificent fight back and put pressure on London Underground.

I and a number of MPs outside London emphasised that what happened on London Underground was vital because we are battling to save rail ticket offices around the country.

On public ownership I was able to report to your executive that 60 MPs have now signed my motion criticising the current structure of the railways, staff cuts and fare rises and calling for public ownership. This represents strong parliamentary support and the RMT Parliamentary group will be following this up to make the case for public ownership being in Labour's manifesto.

My colleague Grahame Morris MP has also used Parliament to secure a meeting with the rail minister over the future of East Coast. In the bus industry, RMT Group member Chris Williamson MP has forced the government to admit that as a result of government cuts, there has been a 17 per cent reduction in the



number of supported bus services. I am sure this will inform campaigning in the forthcoming local elections.

In the maritime sector progress has also been made. Following a meeting convened by the group with the Chamber of Shipping, the government is now looking seriously at a link between the Tonnage Tax and the additional employment of ratings.

This work has been reinforced by a special parliamentary debate secured by group member Katy Clark MP, while fellow group member Karl Turner MP used parliamentary questions to get the government minister Vince Cable to agree to investigate abuses of the minimum wage on UK ships and the RMT Parliamentary group is also due to meet the minister on this issue.

And in the offshore sector group member Ian Davidson MP - who also chairs the Scottish Affairs Select Committee - has ensured his committee has started an effective inquiry into zero-hours contracts. The union is due to give evidence on zero hours in the offshore industry when the committee holds its next hearing in Dundee, which followed the union giving evidence to the parliamentary transport committee on helicopter safety.

This is just a snapshot of the work of the your Parliamentary group and I am looking forward to addressing the RMT Wessex Region anti - McNulty cuts rally on March 26 and hope to see some of you there.

Finally as a former miner and NUM president, I would like to place on record my appreciation your union's support for my campaign for a public inquiry into government involvement in the miners' strike 30 years ago which saw the persecution and framing of mineworkers and their supporters. There was solidarity then between our unions and there is solidarity now.

Ian Lavery is the Labour MP for Wansbeck. He is a member of the RMT Parliamentary Group and chair of the Trade Union Group of Labour MPs.

NO TO AGENCY CONTRACTS AT TRANSPORT FOR LONDON

RMT London regional organiser John Leach reveals how Transport for London is attacking jobs, conditions and the union

Last month RMT members in Transport for London No1 Branch struck over intolerable attacks against pay and pensions.

Brothers and sisters at TfL's Pier Walk contact centre, the lost property office, several travel information centres, as well as other offices in London, took two days of strike action against the company's attempts at a pay freeze that would have hit hard against final salary pensions. This is still an on-going battle.

However it is not the only threat these workers are facing. TfL bosses have increasingly been hiring agency staff on insecure contracts, undermining union membership and working conditions.

The contact centre helplines are now staffed by a majority of agency workers on zero-hour contracts in a total workforce of around 200. Travel information centres now employ nearly one in four agency staff.

NO PROTECTION

TfL hires from at least six separate agencies. These staff are not on zero hour contracts, however, they can be sacked (know euphemistically as being 'released') at short notice and without recourse to the normal warnings and procedures.

This means that most are afraid to ask for basic legal rights and fear retribution if they dare to join a trade union. Not only this, but TfL plays fast and loose with the

2010 Agency Worker Regulations. The AWR states that agency workers have the right to equal treatment regarding working time entitlements, including duration of working time.

Despite this TfL bosses have demanded that agency workers work an additional mandatory five hours a week above the hours of permanent staff.

These extra hours are often cancelled or reinstated at a few hours notice with no regard to family or childcare considerations. TfL bosses continue to deny any responsibility for this, insisting that agency workers are "not our staff", despite having set the working hours. It is ironic that labour laws passed by the government are not complied

with by a government-run company.

Equal pay for equal work?

Trade unions have long upheld the slogan 'Equal pay for equal work'.

These days we also need to say "equal contracts". Equal rights on paper count for nothing if you can't ask for them without getting sacked.

A two tier work force is not acceptable in any modern workplace, especially when many agency workers have been doing the same jobs as permanent colleagues for sometimes four or five years. Casualisation also allows worse agency conditions to creep into the permanent jobs in terms of increased targets and poorer working conditions. The union says: 'Sack the agencies, not the workers'. TfL must offer permanent contracts to all long-term agency workers.

AGENCY WORKERS JOIN RMT!

Agency workers need to join



forces with permanent employees in the RMT to fight for decent, well-paid, permanent jobs, with pensions for all. We are currently campaigning to bring as many agency workers as possible under our protection. An entire generation of young

people has grown up knowing only insecure, part-time or agency jobs, with none of the benefits that their parents had known. This is wrong. RMT is committed to changing this and we have union reps in place to represent you at work. ■

AN AGENCY WORKER SPEAKS OUT:

"I've been a temp with TfL for over two and a half years. I started on a three month contract which has been constantly renewed on a three or six month contract from then.

"I know that there are at least four vacancies in our department which have been opened since I joined, and so it is frustrating knowing that I'm doing the same job as permanent team members but just won't be hired.

"At first, there were certain roles that temps weren't supposed to do within the department but I've been there so long now I can do them.

"When I first joined I was told there was the possibility of being hired but with all the changes TfL have implemented it's been made clear that this will probably never happen."

Name withheld



RMT WARNS SCOTTISH MPS OVER ZERO HOUR CONTRACTS

Zero hours contracts in the rail industry in Scotland is a threat to safety and employment rights RMT senior assistant general secretary Mick Cash told a cross-party committee of MPs.

RMT regional organiser Jake Molloy will also be giving evidence later this month to the same committee on the use of zero hours in the offshore oil and gas industry.

In his evidence to the Scottish Affairs Select Committee inquiry, Mick Cash left MPs in no doubt as to the threat to workers' safety, pay rates and employment rights posed by zero hours, especially in safety critical industries like rail.

"Zero hours only help the employer to cut costs – they offer no real benefits to workers, especially in safety critical industries in the transport sector," he said.

RMT is calling for zero hours to be banned and Mick unequivocally stated the union's position. Information provided by the union's Scottish regional organiser Gordon Martin helped to highlight Network Rail's reliance on a number of labour only suppliers in Scotland who employ infrastructure workers, including RMT members. This was crucial in illustrating to MPs the need for a ban on zero hours and other twilight practices such as bogus self-employment.

The fact that the Office for Rail Regulation (ORR), the safety regulator, share RMT's concerns over the negative impact of zero hours on safety in the industry strengthened RMT's argument and provided MPs with a clear reason for supporting reforms of employment law that stamp out zero hours contracts.

ORR safety director, Ian

Prosser has stated in a letter responding to RMT's concerns over zero hours that these hyper-exploitative contracts 'are not conducive to the development of a safe railway'.

As a result, Network Rail recently took action, after consultation with RMT to discourage companies from supplying workers who are on zero hours contracts. MPs were also updated on Network Rail's revised contracts with labour-only suppliers in Scotland like SW Global Resourcing, McGingley's and Coyle.

Although RMT welcomed that the number of company sponsors of an individual track worker has been capped at three by Network Rail, which ends the farcical position of rail workers being sponsored by multiple companies), the union remain committed to ending the use of zero hours and for all Network

Rail contracts to be brought in-house.

MPs on the committee questioned whether these multiple sponsors were actually beneficial to workers but RMT rejected this – workers derive no benefit from being sponsored by as many agencies as possible and such arrangements make the tracking of workers through the Sentinel system of safety certification more complicated which is a clear threat to safety.

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills is also currently consulting on zero hours, although the government is openly seeking minor changes rather than a ban, claiming that the 'flexibility' offered by zero hours must be retained. The union will be submitting its views as part of this consultation and a copy of the response will be placed on the RMT website. ■



SIGNALLING SUCCESS

Signalling and operations grades vow to defend members at the workplace

Delegates to RMT's annual signalling and operations grades meeting in Buxton pledged to fight to ensure that new technology will mean better pay and conditions for staff and not just profit and redundancies.

The issue has come sharply into focus due to ongoing plans for signalling to be carried out from twelve Route Operating Centres (ROCS) across the country.

Opening conference, president Tim Breed told delegates that the fact that conference was growing in size year-on-year showed that progress in organising the grade was being made.

"We need to make the conference into a tool where we develop policies, Network Rail is dictating their terms and we need to come up with ours.

They are looking to make £250 million savings annually," he said.

Ending a five-year term as conference president, Tim

thanked delegates for their support over the years, saying that his term of office had been enjoyable in spite of the hard work involved.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow began his address by unfurling a banner commemorating the 20th anniversary of the signallers' strike.

Bob told delegates that the union was not opposed to new technology but believed that it should be used to gain better pay and conditions and not just for the company to increase profits.

"We say we want better pay and conditions but not at the expense of other grades.

"We call for above inflation pay increases because we want to see improvements in living standards. I want to see new technology make a shorter working week, lead to more annual leave and voluntary retirement at an early age," he said.

On a withering attack on the European Union's Fourth Railway Package, Bob explained that it sets out the privatisation of every national railway.

At the same time the EU is insisting that by law a minimum rail service must run in the event of a strike.

"In Croatia it already means that 90 per cent of the rail service must run in the event of a strike.

"This anti-trade union strike-breaking agenda is what will be rolled out if we don't stop it.

"The EU is a device to privatise and smash up the welfare state and emasculate workers so they can't fight back.

"That is why we are supporting No2EU on a slogan of Yes to Workers' Rights in the May European elections," Bob added.

RMT president Peter Pinkney, also a signaller, was warmly welcomed to the platform by delegates as an old friend.

Peter recalled attending the 1993 Signallers' Conference that voted in favour of calling for the strike the following year.

He went on to say that he believed that the grade is facing the biggest attack that it has ever faced.

Arguing that workers in the grade should be paid properly – without having to do overtime –

Peter said: "If Sundays become part of the working week then they go on pensionable pay, whereas overtime doesn't.

"No trade union advocates overtime, especially with so many young people out of work and it isn't just about you and the package you get.

"If you allow the grade to be swallowed up and die then that is four to 5,000 jobs gone for a future generation," he said.

Phil Boorman, Ashford No 1 and national lay council rep, outlined the many areas that had been worked on since the last conference by the national operations council.

One key area of concern had been 'HR Direct' where there have been misunderstandings as to its role. Phil emphasised that only a manager on the ground can ever fully be cognisant of the facts in a workplace.

Dave Gott, Bassetlaw, sought to quash the rumour mill with regard to Promotion, Transfer & Redundancy (PT & R).

"While there are discussions with regard to PT & R they are tentative and in the meantime the current rules still apply," he said.

He told conference that any tangible agreement was a long way off and there was a lot to go through before the PT & R which has been in force since

the 1980s is replaced.

Doug Hill, Dundee gave an update on the situation with regard to Stirling rostering rights and agreements.

He said that a three month trial, which the union felt was too short, had now become a 12 month trial, which ends in April.

AJ Yates, South London Rail and safety project coordinator outlined the various working groups that the union is involved in and track worker safety and health initiatives.

He explained that management had a legal duty to look after its workers, and that included ensuring that there was decent lighting and atmosphere.

He said that the biggest challenge was regarding rest rate policy. In the future there will only be 12 ROCs and the biggest challenge was to push to create a unified rest rate policy across them all.

Marian Spittlehouse, Stockport and District led a major debate on the 32-hour week. She called for a referendum ballot of the membership in the grade on the inclusion of Sundays as part of the working week.

"In order to follow union policy of a 32-hour week this should include Sundays in order for the 32 hour week to be genuine.

"In negotiating this policy we call for a compensatory increase in basic rates of pay and the retention of enhanced rate for Sundays worked.

"With the massive reduction in the numbers of staff in our grade, this would keep more members in employment with the modernisation-ROC plans and also give our members a better work- life balance.

"It is time to safeguard jobs and move away from the 35 hour week plus one or two rostered Sundays each month.

"We also call for the company to genuinely create new positions should the membership vote to accept this policy," Marian said.

Mark Bellenie, North Staffs successfully moved a motion expressing concern at the massive increase in infrastructure failures following the announcement by the Office of Rail Regulator of the under-spending of maintenance budgets and cutting of signalling staff positions.

"This has placed increasing pressure on current staffing levels, with the ever increasing safety risks associated with degraded working," he said.

The motion called for an urgent meeting with Network Rail to discuss the issue. ■



VOTE No2EU



Bob Crow says vote No2EU on May 22 to support workers' rights, defend the NHS and oppose mass privatisation

The European Union is clearly not working. Across Europe unemployment is exploding while the EU intensifies its attacks on workers' and trade union rights and the public services they rely on.

Public services including postal, transport, energy, education and health services are being privatised as part of the EU austerity agenda being imposed on member states by unaccountable EU institutions.

Yet the UK Independence Party, which claims to oppose the EU, supports EU rail privatisation, opposes real

workers' rights in favour of big business – just like the EU – and supports Tory and EU austerity policies everywhere.

The voices of working people that are clearly not happy with the direction the EU is taking is not being heard. The failure of the major parties to represent this feeling has led to a political vacuum which is being filled by Tory outriders like UKIP or, worse, groups like the British National Party.

WORKERS' RIGHTS

Workers have been told to put up with the EU's mass

privatisation drive because of alleged benefits from EU legislation such as the working time directive and the agency workers' directive.

However these very limited and fast-disappearing 'rights' represent little more than a sugar-coating for the EU liberalisation and privatisation agenda.

Moreover none of these 'rights' deal effectively with issues arising from mass unemployment, the introduction of zero hours contracts and low-paid workers being forced to work in multiple jobs.

Workers on zero hours contracts have no guaranteed earnings. They are often called to attend work at short notice, a cycle that places a particular strain on families and those who have to arrange care for dependents.

So why hasn't the much-lauded EU Agency Work Regulations (AWR) defended these vulnerable workers? Firstly, the regulations only kicks in after 12 weeks on the same temporary assignment.

Then the so-called 'Swedish derogation' in the regulations assists employers to avoid any

obligation for workers to receive basic pay and conditions comparable to a permanent worker.

This means that not only do agency workers not benefit from the new regulations but the overwhelming effect has been to actually normalise casualised labour.

The EU is also stripping workers of their rights through harsh anti-trade union EU court rulings and strict bail-out conditions on many states.

For instance in Romania the EU has demanded an end to collective bargaining. In a country where 98 per cent of workers were covered by agreements, that figure has been reduced to little over 20 per cent.

ENDLESS AUSTERITY

The EU is imposing endless austerity on millions of people living in the EU through a series of treaties, directives and bail-outs at the behest of the banks that caused the current financial crisis.

This is driving millions into poverty across Europe particularly in countries like Ireland, Greece, Portugal and Cyprus among others. The pro-EU Tory/Lib Dem coalition is happily following suit.

Up to 25 million more people are at risk of poverty by 2025 if governments continue with these policies, aid agency Oxfam has said.

Oxfam said that there are

lessons to be learnt from deep cuts made to social spending in Latin America, South East Asia and Africa in the 1980s and 90s, where it took 20 years to recover.

"These policies were a failure: a medicine that sought to cure the disease by killing the patient," Oxfam said.

DEFEND YOUR NHS

The EU and the US are currently negotiating a treaty designed to open all sectors including health to so-called 'competition'.

The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) now under negotiation, poses a severe threat to the very existence of our National Health Service.

TTIP opens all public services to competition and healthcare is treated the same as education, construction, transport, waste disposal as another opportunity for profit.

The focus of this secretive treaty is on investors' rights not on public service standards. Unlike ordinary investment, which carries risk, TTIP places return on investment above all other considerations.

Under TTIP, lawsuits can be brought against national governments rather than against individual companies or local authorities. A panel of international lawyers will award damages based solely on commercial considerations.

This is being imposed without democratic discussion,

negotiated by the EU and requiring no approval of national parliaments.

This EU business model of liberalisation, privatisation and fragmentation is already doing a lot of damage in the name of corporate profits to our transport and postal services here and, increasingly, across Europe.

The EU's fourth rail package demands the introduction of compulsory competitive

tendering for all rail services and the liberalisation of all other domestic rail passenger services.

No2EU wants to see a different Europe made up of democratic states that value public services and does not offer them to profiteers, states that do not put the interests of big business above that of ordinary people. We believe that EU structures and rules make this impossible. ■

VOTE NO2EU ON MAY 22 TO SAY

- Yes to workers' rights
- Exit the EU on the basis of socialist policies
- Keep Britain out of the Eurozone
- No to austerity whether from Brussels or Britain
- Reject EU treaties and directives that curtail democracy, encourage social dumping and demand privatisation
- No to EU trade agreements like the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) with the US which threaten our NHS
- Scrap EU rules preventing member states control over economic policies
- Develop sustainable manufacturing, agriculture and fishing industries in Britain
- Repeal anti-trade union EU court rulings
- No to racism and fascism and yes to international solidarity of working peoples
- No to EU militarisation and an EU army
- Restore democratic powers to EU member states

www.no2EU.com



LEGAL VICTORIES

DEALING WITH CRIMINAL CHARGES

Powell Spencer and Partners solicitors represent RMT members facing criminal allegations



Allegations of a criminal offence can happen regardless of whether the alleged offence occurred at work or not.

But a criminal record may not only affect the individuals' employment status but also their future job prospects.

Powell Spencer and Partners trade union department provides advice and representation to RMT members nationwide on criminal law matters.

Over the last few years, this department has helped hundreds of members on a wide range of matters, ranging from speeding offences to serious allegations of theft, fraud and assault.

Below are some examples of cases that we have handled recently for RMT members. Names have been changed to protect the identity of the individuals involved.

Martin, a train manager, was falsely accused of assault on a passenger, who had made the complaint maliciously after being refused entry onto the train with an invalid ticket. We persuaded the prosecution to drop the charges at trial.

Brendan is a railway worker who was charged with GBH and criminal damage following an altercation with a belligerent passenger. After a nine day trial at Snaresbrook Crown Court earlier this month Brendan was found not guilty of all charges.

Dave, a railway worker, was charged with theft of a mobile phone which he'd found when on his lunch break. We argued that he was questioned without the correct procedures being followed. At the outset of the trial last month the prosecution were persuaded to offer no evidence.

James, a railway worker, was alleged to have taken a photo of a passenger on his mobile phone and was charged with a

public order offence. It emerged that the charges were initially exaggerated by British Transport Police and we persuaded the prosecution to drop the charges at a hearing prior to trial.

Ross, a revenue collector, was charged with offences contrary to the environment act (ie littering), and also with failing to give a correct name and address, as he mistakenly gave his work pseudonym to the arresting officer. The prosecution were persuaded to drop the much more serious address of failing to give his correct name and address in exchange for a simple guilty plea to the littering offence.

Bill, a taxi driver, had 'totaled up' 12 points on his driving license, which normally entails a mandatory 6 month ban from driving. We made a successful 'exceptional hardship' argument at court on the grounds that he would be caused significant financial problems by disqualification from driving, which meant that the member did not lose his license.

Jim, a taxi driver, was charged with common assault after an alleged altercation with a cyclist, who turned out to be a prominent politician. Jim went to trial where he was found not guilty last month. Jim was not an RMT member at the time of his offence, and paid us privately for this case, but after seeing what Powell Spencer and Partners did for him, he is now a fully paid up member!

PSP also represented three men who stood trial together having been charged with theft of copper belonging to Network Rail. At the close of the prosecution case we made a successful submission of 'no case to answer', meaning that the case was discontinued and the men walked free from

court.

Furthermore we have had a string of successful attendances at the police station where the prosecution have offered no further action following our dedicated representation. The following are just a few examples of cases where no further action was taken:

- a member falsely accused of hitting his child;
- a member falsely accused by a co-worker (who had been bullying him) of assault;
- a member falsely accused by two member's of the public with suspected mental illness (who had caused him to fear for his safety) of a public order offence.

Therefore if you are contacted by the police, or suspect that you may be, regarding any criminal offence (or licensing hearing if you are a taxi driver), do not hesitate to get in contact with us on our helpline number: 020 7604 5651 during business hours and 0765 911 8181 out of hours. Remember, at the police station you have the right to free, independent legal advice from the solicitor of your choice.

Furthermore if your case is related to an alleged offence committed in the course of your employment and/or it will cost you your job then the RMT may make legal funding available.

- Powell Spencer and Partners Solicitors has a specialist department dealing only with trade union members. This department is based at our Ealing Office and is headed by solicitor Chris Humphreys and assisted by solicitor Liam Welch and experienced paralegal Liani Holland.

BOB CROW

1961-2014

Don't mourn, organise



FAREWELL BOB



Bob Crow's shocking death on March 11 at just 52 has robbed us of the most inspirational and effective leader of the trade union and labour movement

Bob Crow was not only a giant of the movement he was just as big-hearted, fearless and generous in his private life which I was privileged enough to be a small part of.

Whoever he met, regardless of their standing or wealth, he would always offer his hand with the same friendly trademark greeting 'How are yer?'

His humour, insight and passion were infectious and it inspired everyone who met him. For Bob the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT) was his family and he felt responsible for every member and worked tirelessly for their interests.

A perfect example of this was when my father Douglas died, I had no official position in the union at the time but still Bob Crow was on the phone within hours asking after my welfare and offering any assistance he could.

I am sure thousands of RMT members will recall similar memories of someone who was deeply concerned with the wellbeing of his fellow man and woman, and that's why they loved him as one of their own.

He often told audiences that fear was contagious 'but so is courage' and that was Bob Crow, he instilled bravery, determination and confidence into all those who heard him and worked with him. He also created the conditions for unity under the most difficult circumstances, bringing together those with differing views and developing a way forward without personal rancour or bitterness.

Myself and other officials and staff that travelled with regularly him –always on public transport, he never learned to drive – all have tales of Bob being greeted by strangers and members alike with the same fondness, thrilled to meet such a working class leader.

In death the right wing mouthpieces of the boss class claimed that he was 'hated by commuters' but this was clearly not true. Despite being demonised in the media he was never once confronted or abused on the public transport that he used every day of his life.

Whether fighting privatisation or defending ticket offices, people understood that he was fighting for something better and for public services not to be the plaything of billionaire carpetbaggers and shareholders whose only interest was to squeeze profits out of them.

He also won the admiration of his deadliest enemies with his easy charm, sharp wit and down-to-Earth intelligence. He was just as happy discussing the fortunes of his beloved Millwall football club or the lowest non-league team to the significance of world weather patterns.

He was never intimidated by those who had the advantage of higher education and had little time for pompous posturing. While he held armchair academics in contempt, he always sought expert advice that he trusted and was one of the greatest negotiators the union ever had. Bob Crow was known as a man who could get a deal and when he got one he kept his word.

Bob was a political activist and a principled internationalist, tirelessly supporting campaigns against imperialist wars, for the right of the Cuban people to self-determination and against the persecution of the Palestinian people to name just a few.

He was a member of the Communist Party of Britain until he left to join the Socialist Labour Party and then was in no party at all. However he did help set up an electoral coalition, No2EU: Yes to Democracy, that stood in the Euro elections in 2009 on a platform of opposition to the privatisation of public services by EU diktat and against the centralisation of power to unaccountable EU institutions. He would have been the lead No2EU candidate for London in May's EU elections calling for EU withdrawal on the basis of socialist policies.

Robert Crow was born in Shadwell, London on June 13 1961. His family moved to Hainault when he was still a toddler and attended Hainault Forest High School. He left school at 16 to work on London Underground watering plants for the chairman and other duties.

One day the chairman gave Bob a huge bunch of flowers and said: "go and give these to Mum". So young Bob went home and presented his mother with the beautiful bouquet. Next day the furious chairman sought him out and asked why he had left work. Bob realised his mistake when he was told 'Mum' was, in fact, the nickname for the elderly cleaner. It was the kind of self-deprecating and ironic stories that Bob loved to retell with great comic timing and a big laugh while gripping your arm with a shake.

Bob became a track worker and joined the National Union of Railwaymen on May 6 1979. He went to a branch meeting to raise a problem he had at work and he never looked back, starting with an NUR scholarship to the Labour Party Summer School.

From 1982 to 1992 he was elected as the representative for Sectional Council 8, representing thousands of Tube infrastructure maintenance and renewal workers. He was chair from 1983 to 1985 and held the secretary's post from 1985 to 1992.

In 1984 he was awarded the National Union of Railwaymen's Youth Award by the late general secretary Jimmy Knapp.

He was Holborn branch chair from 1984 to 1986, Stratford No1 branch secretary from 1987 to 1993 and LUL Signal, Electrical and Track branch secretary from 1993 to 1994.

During this time he was a regular delegate to annual and special general meetings as well as TUC annual congresses and Trade Union CND.



Bob receiving his youth award in 1984

In 1992 he was thrilled to be elected to the national executive and in 1994 became the youngest ever assistant general secretary.

Following the death of Jimmy Knapp, he was elected general secretary on February 13 2002 and was re-elected unopposed in both 2007 and 2012. Under Bob's leadership, despite numerous attacks on the transport industry and our members' pay and conditions, RMT increased its membership by over 20,000 and has maintained its reputation as a militant, fighting, industrial trade union.

They say you don't know what you've got until it's gone but in this case that is not true. Everywhere I went people knew who Bob Crow was and, unlike in earlier times, he was often the only trade union leader they had ever heard of. We knew what we had in Bob and, like his great friend and comrade Tony Benn, he will be sorely missed.

Bob is survived by his partner Nicola Hoarau, a son and three daughters.

Bob Crow, born June 13 1961, died March 11 2014

RMT president Peter Pinkney



Bob Crow and Tony Benn in 2007 at the Tolpuddle festival



Condolences

Thousands of messages offering condolences have poured in from around the world here we re-print just a small fraction. You can leave condolences at www.rmt.org.uk/bob-crow

Frank Keoghan, TEEU general president and secretary People's Movement Ireland: We have all lost a great fighter and a man of principle, condolences to RMT members that have lost a general secretary who believed in them. Our best tribute would be to carry on the struggle he believed in with renewed vigour.

Labour MP John McDonnell: "In Bob Crow, we have lost one of the finest trade union leaders and socialists our movement has known. I am devastated by this tragic news."

PCS general secretary Mark Serwotka said Bob Crow represented the "very best of trade unionism".

WFTU Secretariat: The World Federation of Trade Unions wishes to express its full solidarity with his union, RMT, a WFTU affiliate, and its sincere condolences to his family, colleagues and friends. In honour of his memory, the WFTU promises to continue and strengthen our common struggles with RMT.

ITF president Paddy Crumlin: "Bob Crow was a worker and a leader of the working women and men in his union, in his country and in the world. His unassailable courage, moral persistence, generosity of spirit and inevitable humour inspired and encouraged trade unionists, civil rights advocates and politically progressive human beings in every field of endeavour to be more effective and try harder for a better and more equitable life for all, regardless of race, gender, age or material circumstance."

ASELF general secretary Mick Whelan: This is a sad day not just for RMT and the rail industry but for the trade union and labour movement. It's a tragedy that he was taken from us at such a young age. Bob always did his best for his members, and the transport industry."

Billy Bragg: Bob was a veteran anti-fascist, playing an important part in helping to defeat the BNP in Barking and Dagenham in 2010. Demonised by the right wing press for standing up for his members, the Labour movement has lost a real champion of working people. As Joe Hill said - 'Don't mourn - organise'

TWU Local 100 president John Samuelson: News of Bob's death hit us all here in New York like a sledgehammer and is a crushing blow to workers throughout Britain and throughout the world. I truly believe that Bob was without question the most important and profound voice for industrial unionism and the working class in the world.

GMB general secretary Paul Kenny: It is with the deepest sorrow and regret that we learned of Bob's death. The loss for members of the RMT is immeasurable. They have lost their champion. The loss to the trade union movement and to the cause of advancing the living standards of working people across the globe is devastating.

Peter Hooton, founding member of Liverpool band The Farm, and Hillsborough Justice campaigner: He was a true working class hero. His adversaries will now deliver sickening eulogies but his legacy will live on

New Zealand Rail and Maritime Transport Union general secretary Wayne Butson: Bob was a staunch and effective advocate for transport workers in his country and globally, and his loss will be widely felt across the international transport workers community. I was proud to call Bob a friend and his oratory never failed to inspire me to strive harder for our members. Our deepest condolences go to Bob's family, his workmates, and to RMT members.

Cuban Confederation of Workers (CTC): "It was with great regret that we received the news from the Cuba Solidarity Campaign informing us of the death of the renowned and tireless RMT union leader, and our dear friend, Bob Crow.

The CTC found in Bob a true and unwavering friend who devoted countless years and efforts to the cause of solidarity with the workers and the Cuban people. We will always remember his unconditional solidarity to the cause of the Cuban Five, his fiery expressions of solidarity at the RMT Garden Party against the blockade and his unwavering defence of the right of workers and the Cuban people build a socialist society in the midst of countless attacks and campaigns. The unions of Cuba extend our condolences, we will always keep Bob in our memories and our hearts, because, as José Martí said: "Death is not true when it is done well the work of life".



RMT STANDS UP FOR ITS MEMBERS

If you have suffered an avoidable injury or illness, our team of expert lawyers can help you

The law says you're entitled to compensation for illnesses or injuries caused by the negligence of others. And because the RMT only uses expert personal injury lawyers, you can be sure of a service that is second to none.

Contact us now for fast and efficient advice – even for your family members.

FOR THE BEST LEGAL ASSISTANCE FOR RMT MEMBERS CALL FREE ON 0845 712 5495 (0800 328 1014 in Scotland). Lines open 8.00am-8.00pm Mon-Fri (except public holidays) and 9.00am-5.00pm Sat and Sun. For the 24 hour criminal law line call 0765 911 8181 (0800 328 1014 in Scotland)



PROTECTING AND PROMOTING OUR MEMBERS' INTERESTS



ZERO RIGHTS: Workers are fighting back against zero hour contracts and casualisation



ZERO HOURS, ZERO SAFETY

Packed health
and safety
conference calls
for an end to
zero hour
contracts

Over a hundred delegates attending this year's health and safety conference meeting in Doncaster called for an end to zero hour contracts in the rail and shipping industries.

Lee Davidson, Dover Shipping said that an industrial and political campaign was required to pressure shipping companies into ending the use of zero hour contracts in the maritime industry.

"In Dover zero hours contracts are everywhere and people are doing 13 hour shifts then being dumped," he said.

The union already regards the use of zero hour contracts across all transport sectors, including the rail industry, as unsafe and a direct attack on employment rights.

Conference also noted comments by the Office of Rail Regulator which shared the union's concerns over zero hours contracts which promotes casualisation, bogus self-employment and dangerous work practices.

ORR director of rail safety Ian Prosser stated in a letter to the union last year that this dangerous form of employment was "not conducive to a safe railway".

Delegates agreed that the same criteria should apply in the maritime industry.

"In the event of an emergency onboard ship every member of the ship's crew has a specific duty to perform which can involve wide ranging safety critical duties," Lee said.

He said that these duties include fire fighting, preparing lifesaving equipment, crowd management, bomb searches, rescue boats, first aid, helicopter operations and abandon ship.

ORR MEETINGS

Delegates called on the union to arrange a programme of meetings between lay health and safety reps and the union's health and safety officer on a regular basis to discuss issues and campaigns of major concern.

Neil Hodgson, Piccadilly and District said that such an initiative would broaden RMT's input into meetings with Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) and other vital national and international forums.

That we note the vital importance of fighting for Health and Safety standards, not only for our members day to day in the workplace, but in defending railways against profiteering.

"Health and safety reps have consistently challenged the employers both to maintain health and safety standards and to highlight breaches of

safety by management.

"It is important to have the best relationship and understanding possible with the Office of Rail Regulator to assist in this work.

We congratulate RMT for maintaining regular meetings between senior Head Office staff and the ORR.

RMT INCIDENT CARE PACKAGE

Delegates called on the union to consider developing incident care packages for members.

Wayne Moore, Bletchley and Northampton said that that the present counselling in place was "nowhere near good enough".

He said that such an incident care package should be implemented following fatalities, near misses or any incidents deemed relevant upon agreement between health and safety reps and the employer.

"Correct care and welfare arrangements need to be put in place including paid release for the member's health and safety reps after the incident to allow them to investigate the incident and monitor welfare arrangements," he said.

He said that additional or specialist counselling was required, average payment of overtime to prevent an early forced return to work due to financial issues and a clear plan for a return to work with agreement.

"It is important that all this is tailored to the individual involved and that the health and safety rep is fully involved in the whole process," he said.

Ann Joss, Aberdeen said that union reps were often seen as an 'obstruction' and that attitude had to change.

"Our job is to ensure our people are happy and safe at work, if that makes me an 'obstruction' then so be it," she said.

Richard Constable, Deptford said that hardworking staff required a chain of care.

HEALTH AND SAFETY FOR SEAFARERS

Delegates called for a political campaign to improve the health and safety training standards of seafarers.

Ian Boyle, Southampton shipping said that seafarer legislation was governed by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) rather than the Health and Safety Executive and the legislation does not allow for trade union training.

"The two most dangerous occupations in the UK are fishing and merchant navy so we need to campaign

to highlight the lack of training supported by this conference would give our seafarer members greater knowledge and protection.

"MCA is not interested in defending seafarers so we have to force companies to allow trade union training," he said.

Lee Davidson said that seafarers were "years behind" in terms of health and safety training and the union needed to fight to change that.

"We have reps having to lose pay just to get training which is not on," he said.

PRESIDENTS' ADDRESS

After a minute's silence in memory of the victims of the Tebay disaster delegates heard RMT president Peter Pinkney pay tribute to Tom Angus, Steve Metcalfe and the union itself for campaigning for ten years for secondary protection.

He said that events like Tebay should never happen again but warned that Network Rail budget cuts were creating dangerous conditions including casualisation and zero hour contracts.

"Network Rail is dealing with massive cuts while the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) slaps fines on NR for health and safety breaches," he said. He pointed out that this was a self-defeating set-up.

Peter reported on a recent trade union protest in Strasbourg against EU plans for a Fourth Rail Package demanding for wholesale privatisation of national rail networks across Europe.

"It is no surprise that British and Swedish unions are the most hostile to these plans as these countries have the most 'liberalised' ie privatised rail networks and we understand the dangers involved.

"If these plans go through then if Britain remains in the European Union will be unable to renationalise their railways," he said.

Q AND A SESSION

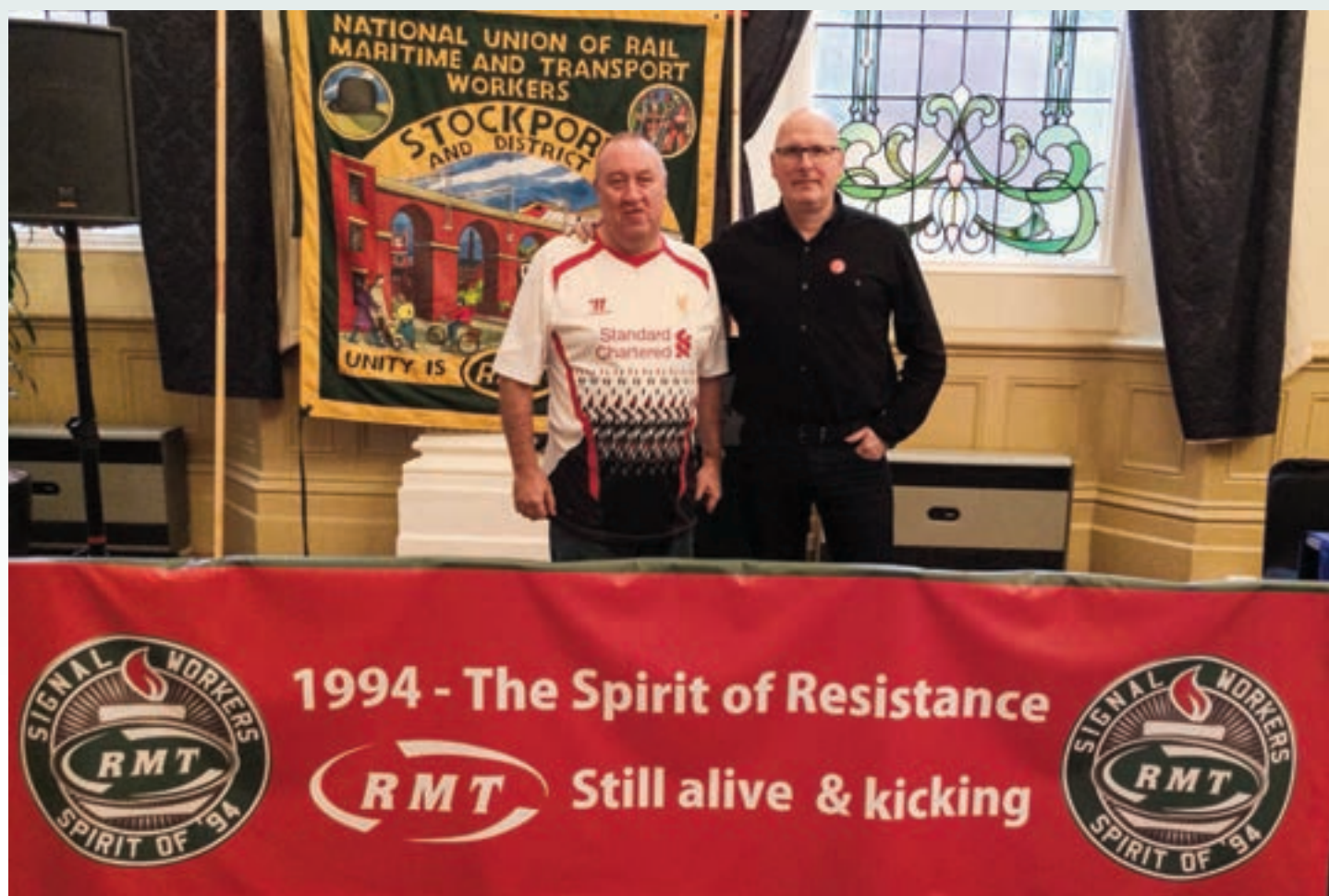
Following presentations around the issue of dealing with stress at work from ORR occupational health manager Claire Dickinson, Network Rail head of health and wellness strategy Chris Jones, Royal College of Nursing employment relations adviser Kim Sunley, King's Centre for Military Health Research Neil Greenberg delegates took part in a lively question and answer session.

This debate was webcast and can be viewed in the members section of the union's website.



THE SIGNALLERS' DISPUTE 20 YEARS ON

Alan Pottage, head of organising and education, looks back at the 1994 signallers' dispute



I served on the RMT's national executive in 1994 and was elected secretary of the signal workers national strike committee. The strike was hard fought but was a victory for our members, a victory for our union.

The strike was crucial just for the signal workers but for the entire union. It was the first national strike since the miners' strike 10 years earlier and it was clear from the offset that we were heading for a protracted battle to secure justice for our members.

The yes vote was announced

on June 2 with a thumping 80.6 per cent majority for strike action and an unprecedented 80 per cent participation rate for a secret postal ballot.

We were soon after up against government intervention as well as a hostile employer and media. The Health and Safety Executive also refused to act against dangerous incidents on strike days as a result of unqualified scab managers attempting to break the strike.

RMT supervisors faced bullying and intimidation on a brutal scale but most refused to buckle but they did not betray

our striking members. TSSA members shamefully were another matter!

No matter how much we tried we could not get the Labour Party to support our striking members. The best they could offer was a mild 'we support the signal workers claim'. It was that political cowardice that actually made me decide to leave the Labour Party.

The first strike took place on June 15 and in the end our members struck for 19 days over a 15-week period and the solidarity from working people

was magnificent.

Most of the public could see fairness in our claim despite the entire rail network grinding to a halt.

We were inundated with messages of support which we then sent out to our members. When the strike dug in and we upped the action to 48-hour strikes these messages of support help strengthen resolve. Every single delegate at the TUC conference in September gave our members a five minute standing ovation after we unfurled a solidarity banner from the gallery.

The way our union performed was a great example of democracy and organisational strength. Our members led the strike through decisions made by their representatives, branches and Grades Conference which were in turn considered by our national leadership

There were many debates and heated exchanges as we all tried to fathom out the best way to win a victory. The pressure was sometimes intense - it was a national strike and we had to deal with a wide range of opinions and feelings from all over the country.

Accountability to our members is of paramount importance on our executive and if you make honest decisions that you can then explain and defend then you are serving your members well.

I remember most on the national executive grafting hard to keep in touch with our members throughout the country. Communication was vital as was the question of leadership.

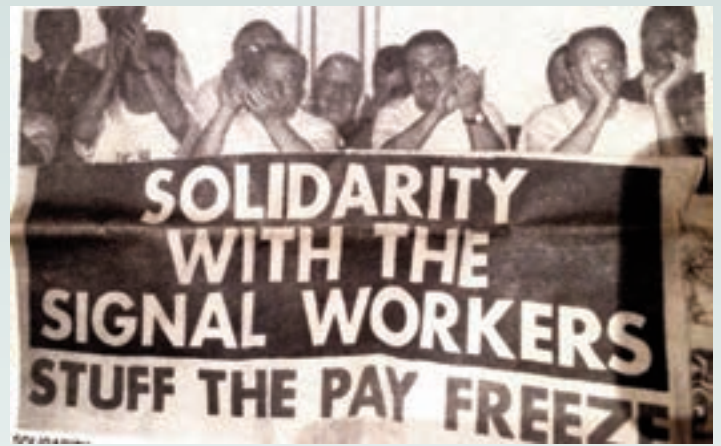
Fellow executive members including Phil Boston, John Tilley, Pete Skelly, Mick Tosh, Pat Sikorski and Bob Crow covered countless meetings up and down the country. We were always first on picket lines - sometimes having slept on the floor of Unity House.

In 1994 we were organised well enough to sustain action. There weren't many 'nons' in signal boxes and during the strike we recruited any that were freeloading off our members.

We were able to expose the government interference throughout the duration of the strike. An initial offer of 5.7 per cent was withdrawn as a direct result of this interference and most of the public realised this.

The usual media attempts to demonise our general secretary failed and instead the RMT's exposure of a 325 per cent pay rise given to Railtrack head Bob Horton hit a sympathetic chord.

Our members stood up to intimidation dished out by some managers and dealt with financial hardship in order to



win justice.

The final offer was accepted by 85 per cent of our striking members. However I will say that I regard a rushed telephone ballot, supposedly to prevent losing millions in pension fund, to have been a mistake but we live and learn.

The victory achieved may not have been the entire 11 per cent demand for an interim payment but we certainly achieved a lot and we created the foundations for future improvements.

I believe that signal workers today would not have anything like the same pay and

conditions had that battle not been fought.

20 years on signal workers and operations grades face another potentially fierce struggle. The introduction of Regional Operations Centres as part of an unpopular Network Rail '30 year plan' will see thousands of jobs threatened.

My message to this year's signalling conference meeting in Buxton was brief but important, we need to learn lessons from the past and ensure we are organised to fight.



CUMBRIA AWARDS

RMT regional organiser John Tilley was a guest at the inaugural meeting of the Cumbria Lakes branch. All branch positions were filled

and the meeting was very well attended. John presented 10 year badges to branch secretary Bernard Atkinson and branch chairman Russell

Tuck and Philip Ridley, the longest serving member with around 40 years service to the union.



CUMBRIA LAKES Members of the Cumbria Lakes branch: (Left to right) Philip Ridley, Paul Knipe, Ken Mcleod, Branch secretary Bernard Atkinson, Philip Viney, branch chairman Russell Tuck



AWARD: John Tilley presented with a barometer for his dedication to the work he has done looking after the workforce at Windermere Lake Cruises for nearly ten years

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Terms and Conditions Apply. Full details can be found online. To apply for your free £5,000 cover simply go to the website and fill in the form. Following your application a RMTProtect representative will telephone you to explain the Free offer and other benefits available. RMTProtect is a trading name of Union Income Benefit Holdings Ltd (UIB) who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority, register number 307575. This can be checked on the FCA website www.fca.org.uk. RMT Personal Accident and Accidental Death Cover is arranged by UIB and provided by Stonebridge International Insurance Ltd.



BRING CATERING IN-HOUSE

The annual RMT catering grades conference calls for on-board catering to be brought in-house

RMT's annual conference of hotel, catering and ancillary grades meeting in Birmingham renewed the union's call for all catering to be brought in-house and pledged to fight to defend on-train catering.

Graham Roberts, Plymouth No 1, outlined how the InterCity Express Programme (IEP) will have a devastating effect on catering members on the East Coast and Great Western routes because new trains are being designed without buffet or shop facilities.

He explained that RMT has been carved out of the consultation process because management were aware of the union's opposition to the lack of buffet facilities, despite the fact that the models can still be modified to accommodate this.

"The union needs to pressure the Department for Transport to reverse the proposals and to

provide a buffet car on the new trains. Our members should be able to work with dignity in a safe working environment which a buffet car provides," he said:

Becci McGovarin, Plymouth No 1 called for all caterers to be given the option of having first aid training as they are often the first person to come across a passenger in distress.

Pat Collins, Council of Executives welcomed delegates to his home city and reported back on the union's work – and the various difficulties that had been encountered – with regard to the grade over the last year.

RMT assistant general secretary Steve Hedley told delegates that the McNulty report showed that catering grades are in for a rough ride.

"Along with guards, their roles are seen as non-essential when it comes to franchise bids.

"The InterCity Express Programme intends to reduce catering and have the guards' cabin removed. They only want catering for First Class. Our reps are calling for catering across the grade," he said.

He added that it is not always profitable for catering to be contracted out because of the minimum wage. This has left Rail Gourmet as the major player in regard to outsourced catering and therefore it is a real priority for RMT to be organised there.

"There have been lots of problems with Rail Gourmet with regard to the bullying of Reps and harassment of staff and the abuse of terms and conditions and rostering agreements.

"They have a recognition agreement with RMT, but they don't want the union there" he said.

Derek England, Leeds City called on contractors to pay staff a decent wage.

"All Train Operating Companies have a moral and ethical duty to pay its subcontractors the Living Wage and London Living Wage as they do with staff that are directly employed," he said.

Conference called for the union to step up its campaign to highlight the effects of the McNulty report across the industry and to continue to oppose the report to protect the catering grade.

Graham Roberts said that the implementation of the McNulty Report were already taking place across the rail industry, which also put the future of the catering grade at risk.

"The report gives TOCs the right to casualise labour, meaning a 'race to the bottom' in terms of pay, terms and conditions.

"Conference has witnessed the rise in agency/contract workers working in stores or on board catering as well as the erosion of services provided on trains such as restaurant services and the closure of buffet car facilities which has led to our members working trolley services in an unsafe environment," he said.

Delegates congratulated conference secretary Becci McGovarin for the hard work she had put in organising the event during a difficult year for the grade and ensuring such a strong turnout.

FLOODS AND STORMS PROTECTING YOUR HOME

With the recent floods and storms, home insurance provider UIA, provides some useful information about what to do should you ever find yourself affected by such an event.

During 2012, UK insurers handled 411,000 claims for flood and storm damaged homes, at a cost of £690 million.

The above statistic from the ABI demonstrates the benefit of having adequate insurance for your home and as Nick Starling from the ABI points out – ‘the vital role insurance plays in helping communities recover from increasingly volatile weather’.

Flooding is considered the greatest natural threat facing the UK and the risk is increasing with more housing developments being built in high flood risk areas.

Although we can't stop

floods, there are things we can do to reduce the impact on our homes. The Environment Agency (www.environment-agency.gov.uk) provides some really useful tools for homeowners including:

- A three-day flood risk forecast
- How to make a flood plan
- A guide to preparing your property for flooding

If you live in a known flood area, use the tools above to look out for flood warnings in your locality, and if you can, move items upstairs if there is a risk of flooding.

Additionally, lots of water damage to homes is caused by escape of water within the property rather than from a naturally occurring flood. If you find yourself in this situation you should:

- Turn off the water
 - Find out where the flood is coming from?
 - Call out a plumber if needed
- Finally, regardless of whether your home has become damaged by storms, flooding or escape of water you should:
- Try not to dispose of any items
 - If you have to dispose of items then photograph them first
 - Move items away from the area effected to prevent further damage
 - Take temporary measures to prevent further damage
 - Don't drink water out of the tap in a major flood
 - Don't turn electric on if it is a major flood
 - Get your policy number

- Contact your home insurer as soon as possible for advice, and to get your claim moving.

For more information on home insurance or to get a quote call UIA Insurance on 0800 030 4606* or visit www.rmtinsurance.co.uk

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APPRENTICE SUCCESS: (left to right) RMT members and CalMac apprentices Sean Hunter and Chris Gibson, Scottish Labour party leader Johann Lamont and Dan Henderson



CAL MAC APPRENTICESHIP SUCCESS

RMT members Sean Hunter and Chris Burton told leading Scottish politicians about their experiences as Caledonian MacBrayne apprentices recently during a trade union week at the Scottish Parliament organised by the Scottish Trades Union Congress.

The event also allowed MSPs to meet with constituents from local workplaces and shine a spotlight on the valuable contribution that trade unions make to civic society and the economy.

RMT was invited by Scottish Union Learning to take part in a lunchtime event focussing on modern apprenticeships.

RMT Highlands and Islands Lifelong Learning project worker Dan Henderson, RMT Cal Mac coordinator Brian Reynolds joined apprentices Sean and Chris to meet MSPs and staff to discuss the work that unions are doing to provide apprenticeships in Scotland.

Chris and Sean spoke about their time at college in South Tyneside and how they were adapting to their new careers at sea in roles in the engine room and on deck. Both apprentices

are in the second phase of their training and are currently working towards gaining two months sea time before returning to college for stage three.

Both Chris and Sean are part of a group of ten apprentices working with CalMac after securing their places in a remarkable recruitment process which saw over one thousand people applying for places.

Dan Henderson said that the STUC event was an excellent way to showcase the results that can be achieved working between trade unions and employers.

"We will continue to work together to promote the sustainability of the Maritime Occupations Apprenticeships and look forward to many more coming into the industry in the years to come," he said.

Brian Reynolds warned that unless the shipping companies and ferry operators recognise the importance of offering proper training opportunities akin to those that CalMac have, then maritime skills developed and passed on over decades were at risk of being lost.

"This would be a further kick in teeth for the unemployed youth of today who would flourish if given the opportunities that should be available in the maritime industry," he said.

Both apprentices met with their constituency MSPs and others including Scotland's First Minister Alex Salmond, all of whom were keen to hear how their training was progressing and how they were enjoying their new careers at sea.

MSPs learned about the work that RMT is doing within the maritime industry in Scotland to promote modern apprenticeships and secure a regular intake. The initiative is the first of its kind in many years in the industry and has come about through the hard work of many people. Thanks must go to the RMT Western Isles Port Committee and in particular its chairperson, George Lonie who has worked tirelessly to help secure these opportunities.

Scottish Union Learning manager Sylvia O'Grady was delighted to welcome the RMT delegation to the event.

"RMT has worked closely

with CalMac to successfully introduce modern apprenticeships and supports the delivery of learning into the maritime industry," she said.

Scottish Labour party leader Johann Lamont said that it was great to meet the CalMac apprentices. "The maritime industry has been the backbone of the Scottish economy for generations.

"Indeed, my father was at sea all of his life and worked as a carpenter on the Mallaig to Skye ferry and the King George V cruise ship when I was growing up.

"Initiatives like the CalMac apprenticeship scheme provide the maritime industry with an injection of youth, energy and talent, which helps to ensure that vital skills are preserved, allowing it to continue playing an important role in Scotland's future," he said.

Education and Lifelong Learning minister Michael Russell said that it was good to "meet two young people who, with the help of their employer and their trade union, are making such great use of these chances".



YOUNG MEMBERS DISCUSS POLITICS

Young members discuss Scottish independence, No2EU, ending workplace violence and much more

Young members' conference opened in Edinburgh on the case for independence for Scotland from a socialist perspective by John Milligan who gave history of Scotland and outlined his reasons as to why Scotland should vote yes to independence.

The upcoming referendum is of further significance to young members as it is offering an electoral voice to 16 and 17 year olds, a fact not lost on delegates and confirmed by a resolution calling on RMT to campaign for a reduction on the voting age to 16 for all forthcoming elections.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow explained why RMT was supporting the No2EU electoral coalition in European elections on May 22 under the slogan Yes to workers' rights.

He cited the example of the EU's proposed Fourth Railway Package, which will mean that all rail services across Europe

must be put out for private tender, as proof that the EU exists solely to promote privatisation and to destroy the welfare state.

He said that EU structures were all about increasing corporate profits, creating a race to the bottom in terms of pay and social welfare. The solution, therefore, was to forge a new future free from the restrictive practices and constraints issued from the European Union.

A motion also urged RMT to mount a campaign to encourage young members to register to vote, creating a lively debate where it was clear that young members feel that an increasing number of their peers are disenfranchised and that greater efforts must be made to engage politically with all members of society irrespective of age.

A further motion called on the union to do more to engage with apprentices and to address the issue of violence towards

young workers by developing a charter of protection demanding that employers create and adhere to workplace violence policies.

People's Assembly national secretary Sam Fairbairn explained how his organisation aimed to link disparate campaigns to bring about a unified front against austerity so that people can be mobilised and a nationally coordinated response can be planned.

Sam praised RMT over the success of the recent London Underground strike and how it demonstrated a change of mood and growing opposition to Con Dem austerity.

Young members also invited Mel Hepworth to speak about the thirtieth anniversary of the miners' strike after he set up a facebook page on the issue.

He gave an illuminating and passionate potted history of the dispute that saw the miners out on strike for over a year.

Bob Crow also recalled that when he was a young member he had seen NUM representatives speak at the RMT AGM. Bob said that the media had ran a smear campaign against the miners and that it was important that we share the realities of these struggles and this was why RMT invested so heavily in education for its members.

Bob said that it was vital that every member who comes away from the union's education centre in Doncaster must take what they have learned back with them to their workplace, their branch and their company and regional councils.

"The more trained representatives we have on the factory floor the better it is to fight against the continued regime of austerity and the on-going attacks on workers terms and conditions," he said.

NEW NORTH SEA HELICOPTER SAFETY MEASURES ADOPTED

Union warns that new offshore safety recommendations may not be enforced when the number of inspectors was being cut

Major changes are to be introduced to improve the safety of North Sea helicopter operations after a spate of accidents over the past five years that have killed 20 people.

Changes announced by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) will include a ban on flights during the most severe weather conditions and amendments to seating arrangements so that all passengers are next to an escape route, as well as changes to pilot training and improved equipment levels.

From April 2016, there will also be a ban on offshore flights

unless all occupants wear emergency underwater breathing systems.

The 32 measures put forward follow a review of offshore helicopter operations carried out by the CAA along with the Norwegian CAA and the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA).

There have been five serious helicopter incidents in the North Sea in five years, including a crash off Shetland last August in which four people died.

In 2009, all 16 people on board a Super Puma aircraft died when a Super Puma

plunged into the sea off Aberdeenshire after a catastrophic gearbox failure.

Since 1992, there have been a total of 25 UK offshore helicopter accidents, including seven incidents resulting in 51 deaths.

Flights will in future be prohibited in the most severe sea conditions, so that the chance of a ditched helicopter capsizing is reduced and a rescue can be safely undertaken.

The review also found that current UK helicopter underwater escape training was unrealistic and said repeat training should take place every two years rather than the mandatory four.

It also compares unfavourably with the Norwegian oil industry, which spends more time on health and safety and emergency training.

Helicopter operators will also be expected to make improvements to aircraft and survival equipment by fitting side floats, adding hand holds next to push-out windows and

improving life rafts and lifejackets.

RMT offshore regional organiser Jake Molloy welcomed the proposals but said that it was unreasonable that the offshore workforce's concerns were only now being addressed, five years after 16 people died.

He also said that the union could not see how the recommendations were going to be enforced when the number of CAA helicopter inspectors was being cut.

"An opportunity has been missed here for actions that would improve the confidence of our members in the safety of offshore helicopters, including the system of reporting of incidents and accidents which the review completely ignored.

"RMT needs to know more from the CAA on exactly how they intend to enforce these recommendations and we continue to demand a public inquiry into the offshore oil and gas industry as a whole, including offshore helicopter operations," he said.



FASCIST PUTSCH IN UKRAINE

Kenny Coyle examines
the origins of the
growing crisis in Ukraine

Fast-moving events in the Ukraine have moved beyond political conflicts to a dangerous military stand-off.

Russian forces appear determined to defend the mostly Russian population of Crimea, while the US has sent air and naval forces to bases near the region.

The background to the crisis is multidimensional yet most British media coverage has been superficial. Since the Ukraine became an independent state in 1991, the country has been bitterly divided.

Ukraine's eastern half is more industrialised and urban, mostly Orthodox in religion, with a large ethnic Russian population. Around 18 per cent of the Ukraine's population is ethnic Russians but the Russian language is considered the mother tongue of 30 per cent of the population, including some ethnic Ukrainians.

Crimea became part of Ukraine in 1954, when Soviet leader Nikita Krushchev transferred the peninsula from Russia. At the time, Russia and Ukraine were components of the Soviet Union so the change made little difference. With the end of the Soviet Union in 1991, the largely Russian population of the Crimea, which is 60 per cent of the total, was promised autonomy and language rights.

With the current uncertainty, there is tremendous momentum toward returning to Russian sovereignty, especially given

fears that autonomy and language rights are under threat from the new government in Kiev.

In Kiev, the interim government includes not only conservative and neo-liberal parties but also the neo-Nazi Svoboda (Freedom) Party, which holds three cabinet posts, the position of national prosecutor and one of the deputy premierships.

The Svoboda leadership glorifies Ukrainians who served in the Waffen SS. It praises terrorist groups that collaborated with the Nazis during the Second World War, actively participating in the Holocaust, in the mass killings of ethnic Poles as well as anti-fascist Ukrainians.

During the violent clashes in Kiev in January and February, which saw both protesters and police killed, the fascist paramilitary Right Sector and other extremists left their mark on what had until then been largely peaceful protests. While there has been international condemnation of Yanukovich's use of armed riot police, the key role of the fascist paramilitaries in escalating violence has been downplayed.

In Kiev, New York Times reporter Andrew Kramer interviewed one of the far-right paramilitary leaders. He wrote: "During the Independence Square protests, Dmytro Yarosh made a name for himself as an expert with firebombs. Now, just



FAR RIGHT: Supporters of the far right wing Svoboda (Freedom) party with 'white power' flags burn the flags of the Communist Party of Ukraine and the Party of Regions of Ukraine during a rally in support of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army which fought alongside the Nazis during World War II.

weeks later, Right Sector leader Mr Yarosh, leader says he is running for president".

"As Right Sector has made the transition into politics, its leadership has moved from an occupied post office into rooms at a hotel near Independence Square. The group still keeps stocks of beer bottles filled with gasoline on the sidewalk outside, even though there are no longer any riot police officers to fight".

The firebomber Yarosh is now Ukraine's Deputy Secretary of National Security.

Further advances by the fascists cannot be ruled out, especially given the endemic

corruption and incompetence of the established parties. One previous prime minister, Pavlo Lazarenko, was sentenced by a US court to nine years in jail for money laundering. It is estimated he pocketed up to \$200 million while in office.

Victor Yanukovich was elected president in 2010 with 48.9 per cent of the vote in an election declared fair by international observers at the time. His opponent was Yulia Tymoshenko, a close ally of Lazarenko, subsequently jailed for corruption but now released and preparing a presidential bid.

Yanukovich, now a fugitive wanted for murder and

corruption in Kiev, inherited a country in economic crisis and failed to find a solution. Yanukovych fell because he tried to play Russia off against the European Union and failed.

In 2007, Ukraine began negotiations over a Ukraine-EU Association Agreement (AA), a halfway house to EU integration. An alternative offer was to join a Customs Union with Russia and the former republics of Belarus and Kazakhstan.

As the Konrad Adenauer Foundation noted that the EU conditions meant that Ukraine could not sign up for "formats that are contrary to the AA include any formation of customs unions, economic unions, or common markets".

The formerly pro-EU Yanukovych felt that he had been led down the garden path by being forced to accept austerity conditions which at the same time limited Ukraine's room for manoeuvre with Russia. Meanwhile, Putin offered larger loans on better terms and

with the sweetener of lower gas prices.

"For three years in succession they [EU leaders] have shown this candy in pretty wrapping to us. We don't have to be humiliated like this. We are a serious country, a European one. When it corresponds to our interests, when we have agreed (with the EU) on normal conditions, (only) then can we consider signing".

Yanukovych said that Ukraine would need at least 20 billion Euros a year to upgrade the Ukrainian economy to compete on a level playing field with EU states.

However, the EU offered to lend only £510 million, provided that Ukraine met the conditions of an IMF loan agreed in 2010. That loan had been suspended after the Ukrainian government refused to agree to further cuts, including fuel subsidies for households. Not surprisingly Yanukovych eventually opted for the Russian offer.

Just a year ago, a British Foreign Office conducted a



COLLUSION: US Senator John McCain, right, and US Ambassador to Ukraine Geoffrey Pyatt, second right, met with far right Ukrainian opposition leaders, from left, leader of the German-backed UDAR party Vitali Klitschko, future pro-EU and homophobic 'Prime Minister' Arseniy Yatsenyuk, and the anti-semitic Sroboda party leader Oleh Tyahnybok in Kiev, Ukraine discussing the overthrow of the elected government before Christmas.

survey that lamented that there was no groundswell of support for the tilt toward the EU.

"Despite the many benefits that the AA will bring to Ukraine and the generally positive connotations 'Europe' enjoys, support for the AA is not overwhelming amongst the population at large. There is no strong pro-AA lobby in Ukraine."

The report then asked for a budget of £1.9 million to manufacture one.

Ukraine's crisis is the result of the imposition of neoliberal policies combined with the EU and NATO's economic and political rivalry with Russia. We can only hope the current crisis can be resolved quickly through negotiation and without further loss of life.

FIGHTING BACK AND WINNING

The big issue in the last month has obviously been the disputes with London Underground and Transport for London.

In November myself and RMT regional organiser for London Underground John Leach and members of TSSA and Unite attended a meeting with the top LUL managers.

Here they announced the closure of ALL ticket offices with the subsequent losses of 953 jobs. Obviously this was related to the on-going austerity cuts being made by the government. The crisis was not made by us, but we are certainly paying for it.

There is no chance of the super-rich, who caused the financial disaster, paying for it. There is no way that the paymasters of the Tory or Liberal parties will allow that.

However I am not convinced that this was the sole reason for announcing the closures and job losses. I genuinely think that there is more to come, further redundancies and further erosion of our members' terms and conditions. We are relatively

small union, but one that punches well above our weight.

We are the favourite bogie men of the press and media. They know that we will fight back if they attack us, so obviously they have to beat us. If they beat us on the Underground, where we are very strong thanks to the steadfastness of our members, they would roll out the attacks on us throughout the industries we represent.

This determination led to some of the most disgraceful attacks by the media on our union and, in particular on the general secretary, which I have ever seen in my life.

I chaired a press conference where a lot of the media only wanted to talk about Bob's holiday. This was despite my telling them not to and I want to put to some of the myths about that to bed.

The general secretary is entitled to a holiday as he works hard enough and he booked it well in advance to celebrate his partner Nicky's birthday. He had no idea that there would be a strike,

how could he?

There is also the fact that he didn't need to be here. Our union is run by the members and they tell the executive committee what they want. They wanted a ballot for action, we gave it to them and they returned a mandate for action. The general secretary then informs the company under instruction from the executive. With modern technology, his presence was not essential.

Now to the ballot itself. There was roughly a 40 per cent turnout, with roughly 70 per cent in favour. London mayor Boris Johnston went into meltdown over this but I don't know how he has got the nerve. He was elected mayor on a 30 per cent turn out with just 17 per cent voting in favour of him. He and the government should look to their own results before they criticise us.

Finally, I want to pay tribute to the members who took action. Despite the media onslaught, they held firm. I was on the picket line at Elephant and Castle and there was the usual



good humour that you find. This was despite the freezing weather. One of the more interesting aspects of it was the reaction of the public. They, apart from one person, did not turn their anger on us they turned it on the management.

I believe we won the propaganda war as the public were, in the main, on our side. A fine example of this was a young woman who came to head office and handed a bag of biscuits to Maria, one of the staff, in solidarity with us.

We haven't won yet, but well done to all who took action and all the staff who worked really hard in getting the information and propaganda out.

RMT president Peter Pinkney

CROYDE BAY SELF-CATERING HOLIDAY OFFERS FOR RMT MEMBERS!

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£39 per person based on five sharing

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Four nights – Monday June 2/6
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£45 per person based on five sharing

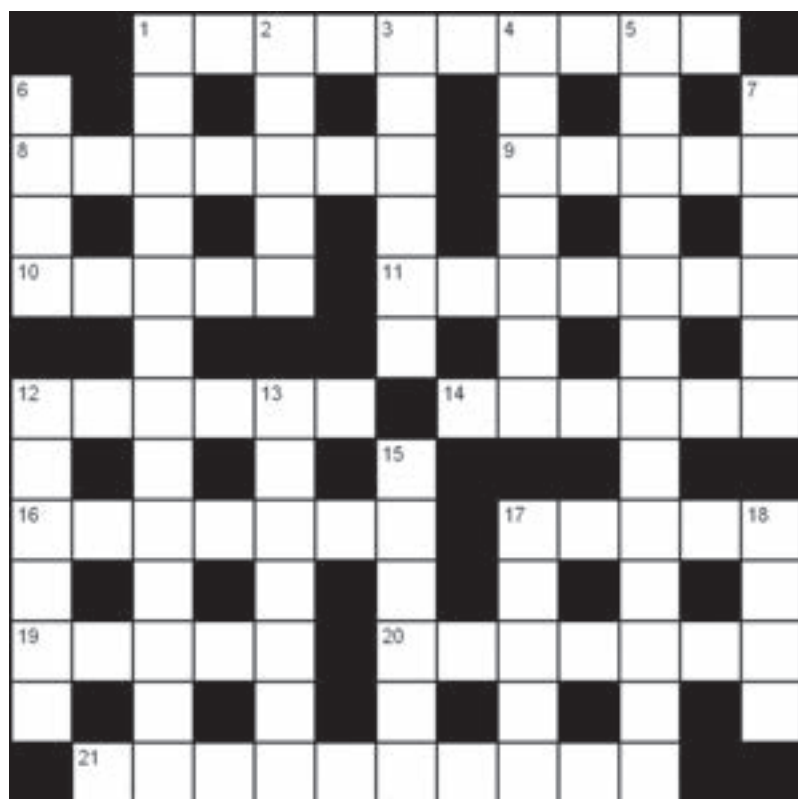
Four nights – Monday March 31/April 4
Three nights – Friday April 4/7
Four nights – Monday April 21/25
Four nights – Monday June 30/July 4
Three nights – Friday July 4/7
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Prices are the RMT rate for the whole break. RMT members will need to quote their membership number when booking and terms and conditions apply.

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£50 PRIZE CROSSWORD



Last month's solution...



The winner of last month's prize crossword is Roger Stone, Andover.

Send entries to Prize Crossword, RMT, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD by April 10 with your name and address.

Winner and solution in next issue.

ACROSS

- 1 Hopeless (10)
- 8 Offensive (7)
- 9 Invalidate (5)
- 10 Escape (5)
- 11 Gangster meet (3,4)
- 12 Disinherit (6)
- 14 Iced drink (6)
- 16 Bishopric (7)
- 17 Prong (5)
- 19 Precise (5)
- 20 Increase (7)
- 21 Replicable (10)

DOWN

- 1 Unemotional (13)
- 2 Strain (5)
- 3 Age discrimination (5)
- 4 US estate agent (7)
- 5 Disobedience (13)
- 6 Discharge (4)
- 7 Rib (6)
- 12 Move unsteadily (6)
- 13 Struggle (7)
- 15 Return to normal (6)
- 17 Colonial address (5)
- 18 Jug (4)



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 ☐

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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 accept instructions to pay Direct Debits.
- If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit RMT Credit Union Ltd will notify you seven working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed.
- If you request RMT Credit Union Ltd to collect a payment, confirmation of the amount and date will be given to you at the time of the request.
- If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit, by RMT Credit Union Ltd or your bank or building society, you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society.
- — If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when RMT Credit Union Ltd asks you to.
- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us.





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