

RMT *news*

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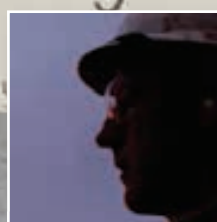
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www.rmt.org.uk

NATIONAL UNION OF RAIL, MARITIME & TRANSPORT WORKERS

Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD



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Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To: The Manager	Bank/Building Society
Address	
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Name(s) of Account Holder(s)

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CROSSWORD

EDITORIAL



NO DOO!

Plans to axe Merseyrail guards and introduce driver-only operated trains have been given a massive thumbs-down by nearly 80 per cent in a survey of passengers by the Opinium polling agency.

The proposals for a £400 million upgrade to the network's trains were revealed last year and could see new trains in place by early 2020s - threatening more than 200 jobs.

The union believes that Merseytravel wants to axe guards in order to help pay for the cost of the replacement rolling stock. As long as this is the case RMT will not stop fighting to defend safe and properly staffed rail services.

Plans to axe and downgrade 81 rail station ticket office across the Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern franchise are also in disarray, with the public consultation delayed, as pressure from the union over the threat to services, jobs and safety has hit home.

When RMT saw the leaked plans we launched an immediate campaign to defend jobs and services at the stations being set up to lose their ticket offices.

We all know why these attacks are taking place, the fact that the private sector is being allowed to run riot in the endless pursuit of profit.

This month marks two decades of privatisation and the legalised larceny on our railways which has bled billions of pounds away in profits while passengers are condemned to travel in rammed-out, unsafe, clapped-out trains.

Twenty years of profiteering by greedy private operators has left Britain, the nation that gave the railways to the world, jammed in the slow lane. The only answer is a reversal of the great rail rip-off and a return to public ownership.

RMT is also resisting the Tory drive to make cuts on London Underground.

Following successful strike action and prolonged negotiations the union has won improved offers on pay and Night Tube running proposals and is recommending a Yes vote in an on-going referendum on the issue.

The union is also fighting LU on the imposition of new track access

arrangements called Section 15 Possessions instead of using the current tried and tested Track Access Controllers.

These moves are leading to the casualisation of the access process which means that staff are undertaking safety related actions from memory with little to no training, no safety critical license and compromising the entire track safety regime.

We have now forced management back to the negotiating table following a ballot which showed overwhelming support for industrial action.

Tory cuts to bus services are also leading to rural bus services were being wiped out in many areas of England and Wales due to cuts in subsidies.

A study by the Campaign for Better Transport (CBT) found that Councils were reducing expenditure on buses by more than £27 million over the coming years as a result of funding from government being slashed by £78 million since 2010.

Trade unions representing offshore workers have launched a fightback against job losses, pay cuts, safety and unilateral changes to terms and conditions for workers.

Five unions representing offshore energy workers including RMT have joined forces to form the Offshore Co-ordinating Group (OCG) after BP revealed another 3,000 job losses as it continued to hack back on budgets in the face of global turmoil.

In this issue we also highlight the threat that the secretive EU-US trade deal the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) to public services and democracy in general.

TTIP will hand huge powers to transnational corporations to sue countries that refuse to privatise services and resources and hand them over to monopoly capital in order to squeeze profits.

The campaign against TTIP is growing as people realise the enormous impact this will have on our economy including the very future of our National Health Service.

Mick Cash

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



PAY AND NIGHT TUBE OFFER

Following successful strike action and prolonged negotiations, London Underground has agreed improved offers on pay and Night Tube running and the union is recommending a Yes vote in a referendum.

The pay offer, which will be backdated to April 1 2015 now includes a protected pensionable salary increase in every year so even if RPI was to fall into negative figures, staff are guaranteed a consolidated pay increase for the next four years up to the next anniversary date of April 1 2019:-

- Year 1 – An average two per cent increase, made up of one per cent plus a flat rate £500 consolidated increase on basic salaries. This represents an above inflation increase for 2015/16 and would be paid through the first available payroll following acceptance.
- Year 2 – RPI or 1%, whichever is the greater,

effective April 1 2016

- Year 3 – RPI or 1%, whichever is the greater, effective April 1 2017
- Year 4 – RPI + 0.25% or 1%, whichever is the greater, effective April 1 2018

The union has stressed throughout these talks that members' work-life balance must be maintained at the very least and should be improved wherever possible. This has led to LUL also giving the following commitments:-

- No-one will work more hours than they do today
- Staff will always have appropriate rest periods between shifts
- Individuals will be entitled to an average of 2 days off for every 5 shifts worked
- Staff will continue to have the option to swap their shifts
- Through local consultation,

staff can help to shape their working patterns

- Annual Leave will remain as today

NIGHT TUBE

The offer protects existing agreements and no member can be forced to work night shifts where they don't do so already. There are some opportunities for Track and Signals, Service Control and Trains members to volunteer for alternative shift patterns if they wish.

Every operational LUL member will also be paid the £500 non-consolidated Night Tube payment upon implementation of the service.

RMT will continue talks to finalise rostering arrangements and a review will be undertaken by each functional council to address any rostering or staffing issues which may arise during implementation of Night Tube.

LUL has also reiterated that it has no objection to any staff/grade across the

organisation working a compressed four-day, 36-hour week and a six month trial for Jubilee Line Train Operators on this basis is due to launch before the end of the year.

The union believes that negotiations have progressed as far as possible and that it is now time to put the offer to members with a recommendation to accept.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the union had come a long way since the initial Night Tube announcement.

"These proposed improvements that the union has negotiated could only have been possible as a result of the united stance and determination, including solidly supported strike action and industrial action," he said.

The revised offer in respect of Fit for the Future Stations and the details can be found on the RMT website via <http://bit.ly/1PnWir9> ■

PROGRESS ON TUBE SAFETY

Strike action involving around 1,500 maintenance and renewals staff on London Underground and Tube Lines has been suspended after employers put changes to basic safety issues regarding 'Section 15 possessions' on hold.

Similar action by around 500 Tube track patrol staff in a dispute over the use of private contractors to casualise and undermine jobs has also been suspended on the same basis.

All Section 15 Possessions and the training and assessment of non-permanent employees for track patrolling purposes will be suspended for a period of two weeks and both sides will return to ACAS at the

completion of the safety review.

RMT opposes the introduction of agency workers in the track patrolling function and has proposed that both parties should work together to achieve the necessary roster cover without the need to engage agency workers.

RMT has suspended strike action but action short of a strike by doing no working of any kind in a Section 15 Possession and by taking meal breaks as per agreements remains on.

The union will also continue with the ballot for action of Service Control Grades over the imposition of Section 15 Protection.

The core issue at the heart of the dispute is about safely accessing the track and moves that are leading to the casualisation of staff who are undertaking safety related actions with little to no training, no safety critical license and compromising the entire track safety regime.

There have already been numerous incidents where people have been left at risk from moving trains but union's concerns have been ignored by an agenda more driven by cost-cutting than by desire to make sure workers are safe on the track.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that nobody should

underestimate the impact on track safety that the changes bulldozed through have unleashed.

"Once everyone knew how to access the track now we have anarchy and uncertainty.

"Into this mix we have engineering train movements that we believe will lead to someone being killed and this union will not sit back and wait for a disaster to happen.

"The union has made itself available for the safety review and we remain determined to secure a long-term agreement that protects the safety culture across London Underground," he said.



TAKE BACK TYNE AND WEAR METRO

RMT has repeated calls for wholesale public ownership of transport services after poor Metro performance led to a Council leader calling for the network's operator to be stripped of its contract following a catalogue of errors.

Last year Nexus said that Deutsche Bahn, the firm that runs the Tyne and Wear Metro service, was acting in a "deliberately misleading" manner over fundamental

failures which saw thousands of people delayed ahead of the Great North Run.

Newcastle City Council leader Nick Forbes said that the firm's contract should not be renewed in April 2017 following consistently poor performance.

The union said that DB's repeated failures on the Metro also render them wholly inappropriate for the imminent takeover of the Northern Rail

Franchise – another service that RMT says should be returned to public ownership.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that just weeks after Deutsche Bahn was awarded the Northern Rail franchise here we have a senior regional politician demanding that they be kicked off the Metro due to poor performance.

"Both services should be placed in public hands, run as public services in the public

interest instead of being milked for profits to subsidise transport across Germany.

"RMT has long campaigned for the Tyne and Wear Metro to be taken under direct public control and the union will readily work with the Council's in the area, and Nexus, to arrange an orderly transition that would secure the future for both passengers and staff alike," he said.



TORIES SNUB UK TRAIN MANUFACTURING

Derby-based train manufacturer Bombardier has been snubbed as the deal to build carriages for Northern Rail went to Spanish firm CAF – effectively ruling out using any British steel in the process.

The Tory government was yet again accused of sticking the

knife into manufacturing for allowing a lucrative £490million train building contract to go to Spain.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash accused David Cameron of further betraying struggling British firms, who have already been battered by closures thanks

to EU rules that outlaw state support for industries.

"This is yet another kick in the teeth to train building, in the nation that gave the railways to the world.

"At a time when manufacturing jobs and the steel industry in Britain are

under the cosh it is nothing short of scandalous that this contract has been sent overseas."

Britain's only remaining train maker Bombardier was on the shortlist for the Northern Rail contract but lost out – depriving it of cash to secure its future. ■



BEECHING FOR BUSES

Rural bus services being wiped out due to tory cuts in subsidies

Cuts to bus services are on a par with the controversial *Beeching Report* into the rail network which decimated services, according to new research.

A study by the Campaign for Better Transport (CBT) found that rural bus services were being wiped out in many areas of England and Wales due to cuts in subsidies.

Councils were reducing expenditure on buses by more than £27 million over the coming years as a result of funding from government being slashed by £78 million since 2010, according to the report.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the axing of nearly £80 million from bus service funding by the government was wiping out services across whole swathes

of the country exactly as RMT had predicted.

"The reality is that in many areas where these cuts are hitting hardest the bus service is the only transport option for those who don't have a car.

"This systematic destruction of lifeline bus routes will condemn many in the communities affected to fuel poverty and will leave them as prisoners in their own homes.

"We need publicly supported and operated bus services, integrated with the rail network, that give transport options for all instead of just the rich," he said.

CBT spokesman Martin Abrams, said that the research revealed that up and down the country "utterly devastating cuts" were now being inflicted on vital bus services on a par with the swingeing and

misguided cuts the government and Dr Beeching made to the rail network which decimated services back in the 1960s.

He said that it was a "bitter irony" that many of the bus routes being cut had originally replaced the thousands of rail services that Dr Beeching recommended should be ceased, leaving more areas without any public transport.

People living in Lincolnshire, Derbyshire, Somerset, Dorset, West Berkshire, Wiltshire, Oxfordshire, Hertfordshire, North Yorkshire and Lancashire would be worse affected, the CBT found.

Local Government Association transport spokesman Peter Box said that councils were finding it "impossible" to continue to make up a funding shortfall for the concessionary fares scheme,

which is in place for young, elderly and disabled people.

"The way the concessionary travel scheme is funded by Whitehall has long been unfit for purpose and has not kept up with growing demand and cost.

"Unless the government commits to fully funding concessionary fares, vital bus services that support the most vulnerable in our society will continue to come under pressure," he said.

Labour's shadow transport minister Daniel Zeichner said that David Cameron had promised to keep the free bus pass but he cut the buses instead.

"Labour would make sure that local communities have the power to make bus operators provide the services local people need," he said. ■

RMT RESISTS TICKET OFFICE “CARNAGE” PLAN

Plans to axe and downgrade 81 rail station ticket office across the Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern franchise are in disarray, with the public consultation delayed, as pressure from the union over the threat to services, jobs and safety has hit home.

When RMT saw leaked plans earlier this month the union launched an immediate campaign to defend jobs and services at the stations being set up to lose their ticket offices.

RMT has learnt that the public consultation on the plans has now been delayed, although not scrapped, as the company have encountered a groundswell of public anger from the Midlands down to the South Coast.

RMT has made it clear that the campaign will be stepped up as Govia Thameslink regroup and redraw the consultation timetable.

A postcard campaign is ready to roll urging the public to engage in the pending consultation and asking them to apply pressure to local politicians across the routes affected.

There are three categories of stations in the closure programme, the first wave, which includes stations like Tooting, Circlewood, Streatham, Alexandra Palace, Selhurst and Wandsworth Common are to close immediately.

A second wave will close shortly after once passengers have been “re-educated” sufficiently into using ticket machines and includes Balham, Loughborough Junction, Reigate, Shoreham, Sutton, City Thameslink and Falmer.

A third wave, which will close outside of peak hours when a longer period of “re-education” has been undertaken,

with the threat of eventual total closure, sets up services at stations including Epsom, Leatherhead, Eastbourne, Lewes, Horsham, Hove, Hitchin, Kings Lynn, Hatfield and Potters Bar.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the TOC’s were looking to sacrifice, jobs, services and safety in the drive to line their own pockets at the passengers’ expense.

“The consultation timetable is now in disarray as the plans have sparked a storm of public outrage and the union will step up the fight as the company now regroup.

“We have no intention of allowing these plans to be bulldozed through and Govia should be forced to pull the proposals in their entirety.

“These plans, driven by the desire to de-staff our railways in the quest for profit, across rail franchises that are already seen as the basket-cases of Britain’s

privatised railway network, can be stopped.

Govia is preparing to milk these routes for every single penny that they can extract regardless of what the travelling public think of them.

“Ultimately these essential rail services should be taken into public ownership before these latest profit-driven cuts are allowed to rip through these 81 stations from North to South.

“It is no coincidence that this threat comes as Southern are already gearing up to axe guards from their services in yet another lethal gamble with safety-critical jobs on some of Britain’s most dangerously overcrowded trains and platforms.

“RMT will be stepping up the campaign of opposition to these delayed and discredited plans and we will be working with the travelling public to stop them in their tracks,” he said. ■



MINDING THE GAP?

RMT blasts “poisonous cocktail of cuts and overcrowding” for huge rise in injuries

Londoners have been indoctrinated into safety by recordings and notices imploring them to “mind the gap” between train and platform.

However, the system is failing as hundreds of people are now falling in the gap between train and platform every year.

A Freedom of Information request by London Loves Business has revealed that in 2003, a grand total of 56 incidents were recorded. But this number has increased every year to 2014 (the last full set of figures available), when an astonishing 298 such incidents were recorded.

This is an increase in the number of accidents of 432 per cent overall.

Transport for London (TfL) records these mishaps as “PTI falls”. PTI stands for “platform

train interface”, and is what TfL calls the troublesome gap/doors area. But today there are now far more passengers.

Of course, having a growing number of people using the Tube would naturally make the frequency of accidents rise, and indeed, the number of passengers on the underground has shot up in recent years.

According to TfL’s figures, since 2003 there has been a 34 per cent increase in passengers on the Tube. But the rise in frequency of accidents has not been proportionate.

Back in 2002/3 a total of 942 million passenger journeys were made according to TfL, and a total of 56 PTI falls were recorded for 2003.

Those 56 falls made up 0.00005 per cent of all journeys, or one in 17 million journeys.

By 2013/14 though, 1.26 billion passenger journeys were

undertaken on the Tube, and a total of 298 PTI falls were recorded for 2014.

These 298 falls made up 0.00236 per cent of all journeys that year, or one in 4.2 million

journeys.

So, though the overall percentages are very small, the figures reveal that as passenger numbers have risen, the proportional frequency of

Calendar Year	Severity					Grand Total
	Minor	No injury reported	Major	Person ill	Fatal	
2003	38	16	2			56
2004	70	20	1			91
2005	56	25	3			84
2006	75	13	2			90
2007	80	20	3			103
2008	83	15	2	2		102
2009	67	22	4	1		94
2010	73	42	4			119
2011	81	37	4	1		123
2012	112	39	3			154
2013	116	101	5	1		223
2014	158	133	5	2		298
2015	124	112		2	1	239

Source: TfL

TAKING UP THE FIGHT



accidents has risen by 75.2 per cent.

TfL said: "Incidents of our customers being injured getting on and off Tube trains are rare, with less than one in every four million journeys last year.

"The safety and welfare of all our customers and staff is always our top priority, and the Office of Rail and Road Regulation's Health and Safety statistics indicate that the Tube is the safest big railway in Europe.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the shocking figures can be put down to the poisonous cocktail of station staffing cuts and severe overcrowding which is wrecking the safety culture on London Underground.

"RMT has warned that passenger safety is being compromised but the Mayor and his officials have ignored us.

"These figures should be the wakeup call that forces those running the tube to halt their cuts programme," he said.

Opposite are the figures for incidents on the Tube. ■

I am honoured to be the new chair of the RMT Parliamentary Group. RMT has a proud record as a fighting and democratic union that gets results for its members and it is well respected because of that.

It is also great to be taking over in such circumstances. As readers will know, the new Labour Leader Jeremy Corbyn and the Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell are long standing members of the RMT Parliamentary Group. Although parliamentary rules mean that Jeremy and John can still be group members John can no longer be chair of the group.

But of course we now have a Labour leadership and Labour Party whose policies are in line with the unions key objectives, public ownership of the railways and tube, repealing anti-union laws and support for seafarers jobs. And from my perspective, it's fantastic to see hundreds of thousands of new members, including tens of thousands of trade unionists, join or even re-join the Labour Party, meaning that we can now create a genuine mass socialist anti - austerity party that gives people hope.

But the union still needs its own parliamentary group to support that progress and provide specialist campaigning in the interests of transport and offshore workers. And I have had a busy first few months as Chair including meeting the Secretary of State for Transport to lobby against the breakup of Network Rail; meeting the Business Minister to continue to argue against the exploitation of seafarers and working with the shadow offshore minister over the unions concerns on safety and jobs. It was also very enjoyable and productive assisting with latest RMT political school

And as my first report to your National Executive made clear, the RMT Parliamentary group is continuing to roll up its sleeves and fight on a number of fronts,

including opposing the continued threat of Driver Only Operation and station de-staffing and casualization. We are also getting ready to closely scrutinise the buses bill to ensure not only that passengers get a better deal but the interests of bus workers are protected.

Of course the biggest threat to trade union members throughout the country is the Government's Trade Union Bill which is now going through the Lords. As a member of the Bill committee in the House of Commons I fought tooth and nail against it, and RMT members should make no mistake that the Bill is deliberately designed to neuter the Trade Union Movement both industrially and politically.

Industrially by setting ever higher thresholds for action and handing even more powers to the bosses to go to the courts to stop action - even when members have voted for it. Politically they are attacking the unions' very ability to fund the Labour Party, so clearing the way for Big Business Bucks to completely take over political world in favour of the bosses at the expense of working people.

I am delighted that Labour under Jeremy Corbyn is unequivocally committed to repealing the Bill if elected but we also know that whatever the Tories throw at us our history tells us they will not succeed.

But even without the Trade Union Bill we also need to take a serious look at the whole legislative framework for unions which should have been put right by previous Labour Governments. The RMT and the wider movement have been here before, we have fought back, survived and made advances

I am confident that is what we will continue to do, taking up the fight and winning - industrially and politically.

Ian Mearns is the Labour MP for Gateshead and Chair of RMT Parliamentary Group

SAVE UK RATINGS

RMT demands government and industry do more for UK ratings as the number of engine ratings and deck ratings continues to decline

RMT welcomed a nearly five per cent increase in the number of UK ratings at sea in 2015 but urged the government and industry to do more to train and employ the next generation of

UK ratings in every department of a ship.

According to the Department for *Transport's Annual Seafarer Statistics*, the number of UK ratings in the shipping industry

increased by 410 (4.8 per cent) in 2015, the first increase since 2011.

However, this modest increase was almost entirely confined to the catering and on-board services departments, where insecure employment contracts such as zero hours are common.

The number of engine ratings fell by 13 per cent and deck rating numbers remained flat. If this trend continues, the UK will have no deck and engine ratings by the end of the decade and the UK will lose the capacity to operate all classes of ship, damaging the skills base, as well as harming the UK's economic

and national security.

National secretary Steve Todd said that the union welcomed any increase in jobs for UK seafarers but this is no time for the industry and government to start patting themselves on the back.

"Make no mistake the headline figure may be a five per cent increase but overall UK ratings again lost out in 2015 and the position for ratings remains desperate.

"Government needs to get its finger out and compel industry to use the Tonnage Tax scheme and new maritime apprenticeships to sign up the next generation of UK ratings in



deck, engine, catering and on-board services.

"The UK cannot afford to lose the expertise of deck and engine ratings that still work in the industry just because the government does not have the gumption to get a grip on low cost operators like Condor and Irish Ferries.

"We must see UK ratings retained, employed and trained in greater numbers than we have seen so far this century otherwise we will continue to lose jobs and the vital links between seafaring skills and economic and national security," he said.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the government and industry will have to do a whole lot more to build on this modest and unbalanced increase to avoid a record of

neglect of UK seafarers.

"This union remains committed to increasing training and employment of UK ratings but the industry must stop side-stepping policies such as the new link to Ratings training through the Tonnage Tax if the slight increase over 2015 is going to lead to a balanced and sustained revival in UK Ratings' employment and skills.

"The overall decline in UK seafarer numbers in recent years continues to damage seafarer communities, employment standards and the national maritime skills base.

"RMT will no longer stand for industry setting the agenda and will continue to call this government out on its failure to protect UK seafarers' jobs from unfair competition in an

industry addicted to cheap labour, flags of convenience and undermining UK employment and equality legislation."

The union has reiterated that urgent action was long overdue from industry to train and employ UK ratings.

Although government make public money available to train UK ratings through the SMaRT scheme, industry chooses to ignore it, preferring cheaper agency staff and replacing retired UK staff with non-UK ratings on lower pay.

The link to ratings training being piloted in the Tonnage Tax scheme must be taken up in order to get a better deal for UK seafarers and the taxpayer from the near £2 billion in tax concessions the industry has enjoyed from the scheme.

The union has also worked with Nautilus and employers to design new Catering, Deck and Engine Ratings Apprenticeships which will be available to employers and apprentices later this year.

"Shipping companies have to take up these opportunities but the union is aware that all the time the government fails to take action to stop low cost operators like Condor, Seatruck and Irish Ferries from employing non-UK ratings on sub-minimum wage rates of pay, industry will be reluctant take on UK ratings in the numbers needed to restore jobs to seafarer communities and repair the maritime skills base.

"We will continue to fight for UK ratings' jobs, on every industrial and political front," said Steve Todd. ■

LONDON TAXI DRIVERS FIGHT BACK AGAINST UBER

RMT taxi drivers in London joined protests earlier this month to highlight their rage at the regulatory capture of taxi authority Transport for London.

The first of a series of steadily escalating demonstrations saw driver from various organisations staging a 'go slow' outside No.10 Downing Street.

Transport for London was entrusted with enacting and defending measures designed to safeguard the travelling public.

Yet, despite this mandate, it has singularly failed to protect and update existing rules governing the taxi trade.

From bitter experience, regulations were put in place to restrict the people and vehicles that can pick passengers up off the street and from ranks. Minicabs (private hire vehicles) have to be pre-booked, meaning recording the details of the driver and vehicle transporting often vulnerable people.

But RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the enforcement of these rules have



been thrown out of the window.

"Those bureaucrats at Transport for London who did stand up for protecting taxi regulations, found themselves hamstrung by politicians mesmerised by the glitter of global corporations.

"The politicisation of reforms to London's taxi and private hire industry should have been checked by the collective power of Transport for London, the Greater London Assembly and the Department for Transport," he said.

There has been a 20 per cent downturn in applicants

becoming licensed taxi drivers and a 40 per cent upturn in PHV applicants substantially motivated to work for Uber.

This has impacted on London's traffic congestion and air pollution as the total number of private hire vehicles has reached record levels – roughly 1 in 10 of cars navigating London's traffic.

Where rogue minicab operators have failed, predatory corporations such as Uber have succeeded – with the viability of London's historic black cab trade hanging by a thread.

"This sorry saga provides

ones of the clearest examples of the indifference of the Tories to the problems of ordinary working people.

"Boris Johnson in particular has stood idly by as Uber have ridden roughshod over 185 years of legislation, greedily exploiting both drivers and passengers," he said.

It has also been revealed that deputy Mayor for Transport Isabel Deding is leaving for a new role with controversial public sector contract dependent firm Arup – ironically advising the company on how to navigate regulatory hurdles. ■

CITY LINK SCANDAL CONTINUES

RMT calls for legal protection for workers following news that bosses took £350,000 in fees prior to collapse

City Link owners Better Capital group charged the courier company £345, 141 in consultancy fees just months before its collapse on Christmas Day 2014, putting 2,700 staff out of work.

The Times newspaper has revealed that accounts lodged at Companies House by Better Capital LLP show that it received “director’s fees and expenses from City Link Limited”. This is on top of the £428,015 in fees that Better Capital claimed from City Link in the previous year.

Better Capital’s results also revealed that its 11 equity members shared an average profit of £211,146 each with one

member receiving as much as £470,000 in the 12 months to the end of March last year.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the fact that Jon Moulton’s Better Capital outfit extracted a massive £350,000 in “consultancy fees” while City Link was teetering on the brink of collapse showed that this was a corporate scandal that was refusing to go away.

“With the management knowing that City Link was going under they encouraged drivers to work through Christmas Eve in the knowledge they wouldn’t get paid while they were busy lining their own pockets. It’s another vicious kick in the teeth for the nearly 3000

workers at City Link dumped on the stones.

“This news shows again the raw and uncontrolled nature of bandit capitalism in Britain and RMT will continue to fight for a shift in the law that protects workers and punishes bad bosses,” he said.

At the time the taxpayer was handed the bill for over 2,400 workers sacked and hundreds more owner-drivers, subcontracted to operate City Link vans, received no compensation at all.

Three City Link directors including CEO David Smith and Better Capital executive Thomas Wright got round paying the redundancy bill by lodging papers at Companies House in early 2015 for a firm named ‘City Link B2b’.

At the time Labour MP Michael Meacher said that the scandal was “a modern form of private equity asset-stripping”.

He said that Jon Moulton had

transferred basic redundancy rights to be funded by the taxpayers and used a secured loan as investment to ensure that he would rank ahead of staff when the proceeds from the liquidation came to be distributed.

“As a result he now expects to screw off £20 million from the liquidation while leaving nearly 3,000 workers high and dry,” he said.

Mick Cash said that the whole affair was a microcosm of everything that was wrong with business in Britain, revealing how little protection workers have got and the power of bandit capitalism to protect itself.

“RMT will continue to advise and represent members caught in this corporate failure while those responsible will slink away with their own resources ring fenced and leaving the taxpayer to pick up the redundancy tab,” he said. ■



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OFFSHORE JOBS CULL CONTINUES

Trade unions launch fightback against job losses, pay cuts, safety and unilateral changes to terms and conditions for workers

Five unions representing offshore energy workers have joined forces to form the Offshore Co-ordinating Group (OCG) after BP revealed another 3,000 job losses as it continued to hack back on budgets in the face of global turmoil.

BP slumped into the red by £3.6 billion and confirmed that it will axe another 3,000 jobs worldwide in its downstream business - including refining,

marketing and distribution - by the end of 2017.

This is on top of the 4,000 cuts announced last year in a desperate scramble to slash costs without assessing the longer term implications for safety and assets.

The OCG, comprising of Unite, RMT, GMB, BALPA and Nautilus unions, condemned the government's £250 million deal for Aberdeen as "too late" for

the city's offshore and supply chain workers who have been hit by over 65,000 job losses and a savage attack on pay and terms and conditions for those who have held onto their jobs.

OCG said that it was "far from satisfied" that the deal, and other support packages announced recently, would meet the challenges facing the industry and north-east as a whole.

It also set out a series of steps which unions believe can turn the tide, such as a crackdown on the employment of foreign labour on low wages in shipping and on operators demanding rates cuts from contractors.

The commitment to expanding Aberdeen harbour, where a record number of offshore supply ships are currently laid up, is welcome

but there is no strategy to assist offshore and supply chain workers made redundant in the down turn back into work.

In the decommissioning sector, for example, over 50 fields in the North Sea are expected to be in the decommissioning process by 2018, attracting over £2 billion of expenditure.

The fall in the price of oil has also lost the North Sea £2 billion in investment, with up to £12 billion capital investment likely to be lost by 2018 if this trend continues.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the human cost was becoming clearer as livelihoods are destroyed and decent working conditions in our safety-critical environment are undermined.

"When the banks were in similar turmoil eight years ago there was no shortage of government intervention to pull them through and yet all

we have had so far from David Cameron are warm words and promises of jam tomorrow.

"RMT will be working with our sister unions in the offshore field, and the Scottish TUC, to mobilise the maximum possible industrial, political and public support for our lifeline energy industry," he said.

RMT regional organiser Jake Molloy said that the offshore sector had been losing vital skills and experience at a rate equivalent to the closure of a steel plant every week for the last year.

"It has taken the loss of a staggering 65,000 plus jobs to finally see Mr Cameron and his government think about intervening.

"That intervention may already be too late and without some innovative proposals to protect and sustain employment and ensure the infrastructure is fit for purpose, the government objective of 'maximising economic

recovery' from the UK Continental Shelf is at serious risk," he said.

The OCG also want to ensure operators do not bully supply chain companies is a vital part of the battle to safeguard the North Sea's workforce.

BALPA general secretary Jim McAuslan, who represents North Sea helicopter pilots, said that he wanted contractors to "speak up about bullying practices of operators".

"No one wants to compromise safety but it is inconceivable that prices for contractors can be squeezed without an impact on safety, a 30 per cent cut will have an impact.

"We want to expose the risks at the heart of the oil companies' constant salami-slicing of contract prices.

"The launch of OGC is an attempt to gain the attention of regulators, politicians and oil companies and persuade them

that while all eyes are on the economic impact of the oil price collapse, there is a more corrosive effect on attitudes to safety," he said.

Scottish Trades Union Congress general secretary Grahame Smith accused certain employers of treating workers with contempt and said that the new group would give staff a strong, unified voice.

"Through co-ordinating campaigns and policy development, the OCG will support the fightback on jobs, safety and terms and conditions and ensure that trade unions make a positive contribution to achieving the UK and Scottish Governments' objective of maximising economic recovery," he said.

RMT national secretary Steve Todd said that employers had undone 30 years of progress when they imposed three weeks on/three off rotas on the workforce and said that OCG was making a stand. ■

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NO TO DOO!

Rail unions oppose Driver-Only Operation at Merseyrail

Merseyrail guards and supporters held protests outside Merseytravel HQ at Mann Island in Liverpool earlier this month over the threat to their jobs from plans for driver only trains.

The proposals for a £400 million upgrade to the network's trains were revealed last year and could see new trains in place by early 2020s - threatening more than 200 jobs.

RMT regional organiser John

Tilley said that the union believed that Merseytravel - which intends to buy the trains rather than lease them as they do now - is axing guards to help pay for the cost of the replacement rolling stock.

"It's clear from the plans that have been released to the five companies invited to tender for the new trains that the intention is to operate them as driver-only - and remove guards from trains.



"We believe that the business plan at the heart of financing the repayment of the loan for the trains will in a large part be by savings accrued from the removal of the 217 guards.

"But this is a false economy - it's not what passengers want.

"We and ASLEF, the union representing many train drivers, have said we will not support driver only trains.

"There are too many incidents, people getting trapped in doors and so on, it does not bear thinking about.

"We believe the first port of call should be safety," he said.

The union has polled passengers and 82 per cent opposed removing guards from the Merseyrail network trains.

Of those surveyed, 98 per cent currently felt safe travelling on the network - but more than two-thirds said they would feel less safe if guards were axed.

That unease was amplified among the over-55s, nearly three-quarters of whom - 74 per cent - would feel less safe without guards on their trains, while a clear majority of young people aged 18 to 34 - 56 per cent - would also feel less safe.

John Tilley outlined union concerns to Merseytravel chair Councillor Liam Robinson at the well-attended protest.

"The councillors on the Merseytravel committee should listen to the massive majority of the people who elected them, who have made it quite clear that Merseyside says NO to DCO," he said.

Mr Robinson claimed that no decisions had been taken into whether the new trains would incorporate Driver Controlled Operation (DCO) - where the driver, with the use of cameras and associated technology, is responsible for the dispatch of the train rather than a guard.

"While we have not specified that any new trains should be DCO, this method of dispatch has become increasingly commonplace in the UK and we do expect this may feature in the proposals put to us," he said.



PROTEST: RMT regional organiser John Tilley explaining the union's view to Liam Robinson, chair of the Merseytravel committee

JOINT ASLEF/RMT STATEMENT OPPOSING DRIVER-ONLY OPERATION AND DRIVER-CONTROLLED OPERATION

"We are completely opposed to Driver Only Operation and its forms, including Driver Controlled Operation (DCO) / Drive Door Operation (DDO), throughout the network.

We firmly believe this method of operation is less safe for passengers and the workforce and our unions will not agree to the extension of DCO or DCO /DDO under any circumstances.

This includes recent proposals for DCO by Great Western in respect of the new IEP trains and the Governments proposals for DCO for the next Northern Rail franchise.

The responsibility of the driver of the train is to drive, which requires 100% focus. It is less safe for both the driver and passengers if the driver is distracted by additional duties such as protecting the platform train interface. The Guard / Conductor should retain responsibility for door operation. We are particularly concerned for example that there have been a number of incidents in the last year across all sectors where even more pressure has been placed on drivers rather than questioning the safety of DCO.

We are also opposed to DCO and DCO/DDO because its introduction would remove the current guarantee that passengers will always have a safety critical safety second person on the train who can not only deal with emergencies but can also provide general reassurance and assistance to passengers.

It is also essential for the safety of both the driver and passengers to have the guarantee of a Guard / Conductor on the train to protect the train driver and passengers in the event of driver incapacity. This was demonstrated by a recent incident at Sutton Weaver where a driver received a severe electrical shock and was assisted by the Guard who was able to call for the emergency services and accompany a doctor who was travelling on the train to provide emergency first aid. With record passengers numbers we now need more rail staff, not less. Services for passengers should be improved by investment in modern railway infrastructure and rolling stock - not by dismissing and deskilling Guards and placing even more responsibility on the driver.

We will campaign in unity to oppose any extension of DCO and DCO/DDO and to seek to explore ways of reversing it where it has been introduced. This will include making our views clear to the employers, government and other politicians."

Mick Whelan
ASLEF General Secretary

Mick Cash
RMT General Secretary



DEFEAT TOXIC TTIP

Mark Dearn of War on Want outlines the fight against the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and its assault on public services, workers' rights and democracy

Last year the secretive EU-US trade deal the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) was hardly known about except among a select group of democrats, trade unionists, activists and campaigners.

But after a year of Tory austerity here and anti-austerity hopes crushed in Greece by the EU's anti-democratic programme of neoliberal rule, the fight against TTIP took on extra significance.

This year is critical to not only the fate of the secretly negotiated TTIP, but its 'evil twins' CETA (the Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement) and TiSA (Trade in Services Agreement), with their agendas of deregulation, locked-in privatisation and entrenched 'investor rights'.

Although under negotiation since 2013, TTIP has always been clandestine; the European Commission's desire for wholesale secrecy was made abundantly clear by its initial demand that the public be restricted from access to key documents for no less than 30 years.

A series of leaks prompted a sham 'transparency' agenda and, slowly but surely, people around the world have become increasingly aware of TTIP's bogus growth claims with its projected one million job losses.

Rather than accept the spin of ill-informed MPs and the ideologically driven European Commission, more than 3.3 million people across Europe have now signed a petition against TTIP and CETA - against the immense threat to our ability to create social, health and environmental protection rules; to retain public services; and to prevent taxpayers paying out when corporations sue states in their own private justice system designed to safeguard their profits above all else.

Today Scotland Against TTIP, Artists Against TTIP and Students Against TTIP have been launched. Celebrity chef Jamie Oliver spoke out about his fears for food safety under TTIP.

High street cosmetics store Lush joined War on Want to launch a TTIP-themed shower product so customers could "T-TIP that dirty deal down the plughole".

At the same time, an increasingly hard line against the deal has grown within mainstream political parties with the new Labour leadership making clear its opposition to the deal. The Green Party and Plaid Cymru have remained steadfastly against the deal in its entirety and the SNP has taken a stronger position focused on public services.

WHAT IS ISDS?

UK-based opposition has been reinforced by support from the United Nations. An unprecedented 10 UN independent experts, each with a different human rights focus area, released a joint statement condemning TTIP and similar 'new generation' trade deals.

Zeroing in on the "investor-state dispute settlement" (ISDS) 'corporate court' mechanism which gives overseas corporations the power to sue states for policies affecting profits, the experts argued that: "States have been penalised for adopting regulations, for example to protect the environment, food security, access to generic and essential medicines, and reduction of smoking, as required under the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, or raising the minimum wage".

Only months before, the demand that Argentina pay out \$405 million to water companies including Suez and Anglian Water highlighted their point. Argentina, which has been sued more than 40 times for actions it took during its economic crisis in the early 2000s, capped the price of water to ensure its affordability - in line with the Human Right to Water.

But an ISDS tribunal of corporate lawyers incorrectly argued that human rights law cannot override investor rights. As UN independent expert Alfred de Zayas argues: "Agreements or arbitral

decisions that violate international human rights law are null and void."

In step with rising awareness of and anger at anti-democratic corporate courts, the European Commission sought to spin its way out of its ISDS mess.

ISDS had been removed from TTIP negotiations after the highest ever response to a Commission consultation saw 97 per cent of the 150,000 responses call for ISDS to be removed from the deal. The Commission's response was to wholly ignore this and bring back a cosmetically-reformed 'corporate court' mechanism while falsely claiming ISDS to be 'dead'.

When War on Want asked Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmström how she could ignore the wishes of European people, her icy response summed up the Commission's attitude to retaining any semblance of democratic accountability: "I do not take my mandate from the people of Europe".

The 'reformed' ISDS has been labelled the "Investment Court System" (ICS).

It attempts to deal with some

of the most controversial elements of ISDS, including the lack of a right to appeal and transparency, but it remains fundamentally the same system: one that destroys equality before the law by privileging overseas big business above all others, and one in which democratic policies which protect people or planet remain fair game for a private court case if they threaten a company's future profits.

Beyond this, there still remains no argument as to why 'corporate courts' are needed: there is no evidence the system promotes investment and, most importantly, no reason why our domestic courts are not fit for hearing such cases.

As Alfred de Zayas has categorically outlined, in words that can equally be applied to the whole raft of new generation trade deals seeking to hand over the reins of democracy to big business: "ISDS cannot be reformed, it must be abolished."

"A peaceful, just, stable and sustainable international order cannot be ensured by the private sector, whose driving force is short-term profit". ■



WE DON'T JUST HEAR YOU, WE LISTEN

Samaritans railway suicide prevention campaign launched



Rail suicides have an enormous impact, particularly on train drivers, rail employees and witnesses, as well as the family and friends of the deceased.

In February 2016, a new Samaritans communications campaign “We don’t just hear you, we listen”, will launch across the rail network.

The campaign includes posters that will replace the existing campaign that has been running since 2012. The aim of the new campaign is to prompt behavioural change and encourage those most at risk to seek help whenever they are struggling to cope.

It is also designed to raise awareness and increase understanding of Samaritans with the general public so that people see the act of calling the helpline as a positive, empowering first step in taking control of their lives.

The new campaign focusses on the expert listening service provided by Samaritans volunteers. The creative posters contain hidden messages to highlight the real meaning behind a series of seemingly everyday conversations, accompanied by a range of different people with their heads turned away from the camera

illustrating the sense of isolation people can feel when struggling to cope.

Campaign ideas were tested in focus groups run by the independent market research agency Ipsos MORI to ensure that they resonated with both the target audience (men aged 30-55 from deprived backgrounds) and the wider general public and would be likely to encourage them to consider contacting Samaritans. The groups were held in a number of locations across England, Scotland and Wales.

The “We don’t just hear you, we listen” posters performed

consistently strongly across all groups in terms of its visual appeal and how it helps to explain the Samaritans service and who it is for.

The campaign resonated with the target audience and general public alike; people identified with the themes contained within the hidden messages around loneliness, struggling to cope and feeling desperate and thought that showing people with their heads turned away from the camera would help to make the campaign eye-catching. They also agreed that showing the backs of peoples’ heads reinforced the

confidentiality and anonymity of the Samaritans service.

The campaign will be rolled out across the rail network on posters and digital formats this month and it is anticipated that the campaign will be live for two years.

Rail suicide prevention and support programme

In January 2010, Network Rail formed a partnership with Samaritans, the leading suicide reduction charity, to decrease the number of suicides on the railways and to improve the support available for people affected by them.

The partnership has since developed into a rail industry-wide programme, funded by Network Rail on behalf of the rail industry and supported by UK train operating companies and the British Transport Police. The poster communications campaigns are an important part of reaching out to those in need to encourage them to seek help, before difficult feelings spiral out of control.

As part of the partnership Samaritans also deliver two award-winning training courses; the Managing Suicidal Contacts course, and the Trauma Support Training course.

For information on these courses please email railcompanies@samaritans.org, or visit www.samaritans.org/railindustry. The rail industry's Suicide Prevention Programme has also developed a video-based learning tool featuring inspiring accounts from rail employees across the industry who have made a potentially life-saving intervention or been involved in a fatality. This tool is available via www.npsglearningtool.co.uk.

SAMARITANS

Talk to us about whatever is troubling you. Call us free any time, from any phone on 116 123,

Or visit samaritans.org ■

President's column



REMEMBERING TEBAY

As RMT president there are many occasions when you feel honoured and humbled to be representing members.

None more so than earlier this month at the 12th anniversary of the Tebay rail tragedy, the final commemoration in memory of four workers that left their families to do a night's work and never returned.

We now finally have secondary protection but until there is an end to the culture of profit before safety, with fragmented, labour-only agencies that are still using zero-hour contracts the potential for further disasters will remain.

I'm being asked more and more about our position on EU membership?

RMT has a long-standing policy for EU withdrawal. In fact the NUR first called for this country's withdrawal from the then European Economic Community at our AGM in Torquay back in 1979.

This is because the EU stands for privatisation, the removal of democracy and the transfer of power from the member states to unaccountable EU institutions.

That is why Bob Crow set up No2EU in 2008 in order to alert the labour movement about the true nature of the EU and who today can say he was wrong, particularly looking at the state of Greece?

Under the Lisbon Treaty EU laws and legislation were changed from an intergovernmental system to a super state and we never had the opportunity to discuss this Treaty before ratification.

If we want to leave the EU it is the Lisbon Treaty which must be discussed not the charade of the trivial reforms now on the table in Brussels.

The government is also pushing support for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Treaty (TTIP) a corporate charter for exploitation if ever there was one.

The TUC and most trade unions oppose TTIP. But these same institutions support the EU which is a complete contradiction. You cannot be both against TTIP and for the EU.

Since the 1975 referendum the deindustrialisation of Britain is all but complete, we used to have a coal industry, a steel industry, shipbuilding and manufacturing and traded across the world. These industries were the backbone of the economy which created wealth to pay for all the public services such as the NHS, education and the welfare state.

Today there are around two million unemployed in Britain and many of those are young people. We have soup kitchens and food banks. The alternative to EU membership is to have an economy based on manufacturing, associated industries and to trade across the world including European states, instead of an economy based on the financial and banking sectors which got us into deep water in addition to being locked into a crisis-ridden EU. Thank goodness we did not join the euro.

We need to invest in our industries, including the transport sector and bring it back into public ownership, something that the EU will fight every inch of the way. We will also need a merchant navy to carry the goods and a ship-building industry to make these ships.

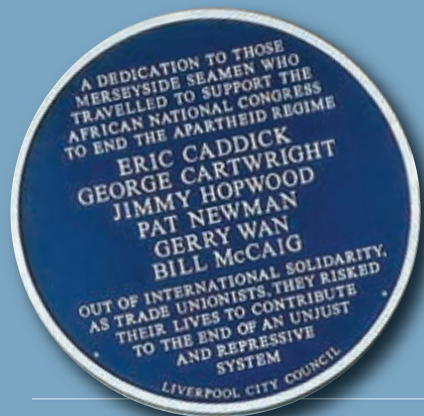
The only way to oppose TTIP and EU legislation from Brussels and free movement of everything is to vote to leave the EU.

Offshore members have been at the sharp end for some time now, with upwards of 100,000 jobs already lost in the industry. Our team in Scotland has helped set up of the OCG which consist of RMT, GMB, BALPA, Nautilus and the STUC which is a small step in the right direction to reflect the views of many of our offshore members that are filled with "FURIE".

It was great to see so many comrades join with Geoff Revell's family and the RMT band this month to say farewell. The word 'inspirational' could have been patented for Geoff.

"The time is always right, to do what is right!" Martin Luther King Jr

In Solidarity, Sean Hoyle



LONDON RECRUITS

New film tells the untold story of union members' secret missions against apartheid South Africa

Almost 50 years ago a group of British seafarers embarked on an extraordinary secret mission in support of the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa.

The men – members of RMT's forerunner, the National Union of Seamen – were recruited to crew a ship returning exiled activists of the banned African National Congress to their country.

Internal resistance to South Africa's racist regime had been smashed by the capture of Nelson Mandela and the ANC leadership in 1963. What remained of the organisation had regrouped abroad, based mainly in London.

The plan was to sail a ship from Somalia and secretly land the ANC members at a remote spot on South Africa's coast. Once arrived, they would help

re-establish underground resistance to apartheid within the country.

The crew – Eric Caddick, George Cartwright, Jimmy Hopwood and Pat Newman – were all seafarers from Merseyside. They were NUS activists who had been recruited for the dangerous task through links which the London ANC had made with British leftists.

Among the reception party awaiting them in South Africa was another Mersey seafarer Bill McCaig and Bob Newland, who would later become a rail worker in Britain and serve on the London District Council of the National Union of Railwaymen.

Posing as tourists, they had already arrived in the country. It was their responsibility to select the landing spot and prepare the

ground for the safe infiltration of the returning South Africans.

An entirely separate mission was carried out single-handedly by yet another Liverpool seafarer, Gerry Wan. His ship regularly docked in South Africa and Gerry was tasked with smuggling anti-apartheid propaganda. During shore leave he would distribute the material, along with cash and passports, to contacts in the ANC underground.

The selfless bravery of these men went largely unknown for many years. A rare combination of modesty, self-discipline and political maturity kept them from speaking of their exploits until recently.

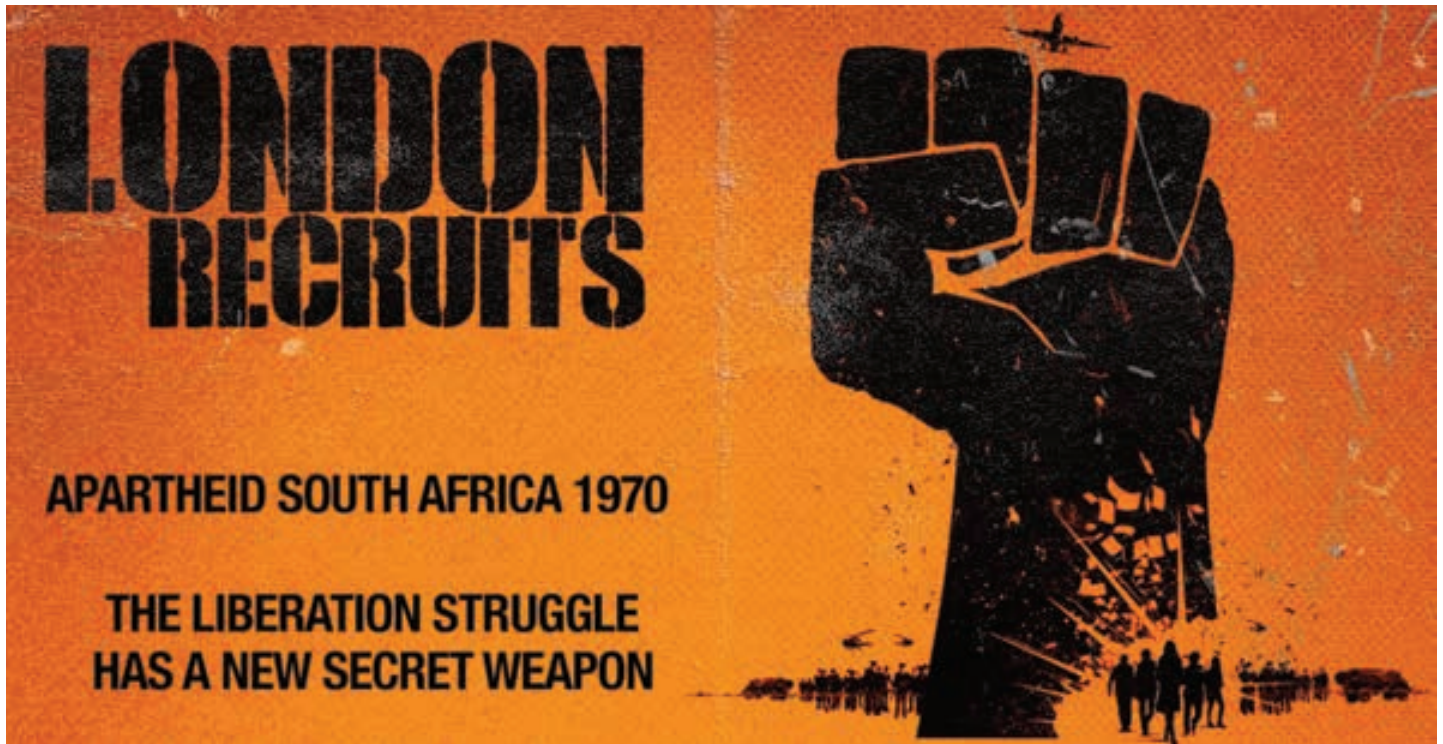
It was only with the publication of the book *London Recruits* in 2012 that many details emerged. It recounted

how dozens of non-South Africans undertook secret missions for the ANC during the 1960s and 1970s. After decades of silence they could at last tell their dramatic stories.

A documentary, inspired by the book and also entitled *London Recruits*, is currently in production. Many of those involved in the various missions will feature, including the surviving Mersey seafarers and the ANC leader who directed the operations.

Liverpool's mayor Joe Anderson, who recently unveiled a plaque in honour of the group, said:

"I am so proud that, when confronted by the horrors of persecution and apartheid, these men did all they could to fight for the rights and freedoms of the South African people. This



excellent film will document that struggle and I hope shed further light on what is a remarkable episode in the history of this city."

Other recruits were mainly engaged in propaganda work, although this was no less dangerous. One of these was Graeme Whyte, a 20-year-old London Transport worker and NUR member.

Telling friends, family and colleagues that he was going away for a short holiday, Graeme flew to South Africa in 1971 with a false-bottomed suitcase packed with thousands of ANC leaflets printed on lightweight airmail paper.

After arriving in Durban, he assembled a number of "leaflet bombs." These were not designed to hurt anybody, but rather scatter the leaflets at busy bus and rail stations where African workers gathered in large numbers.

While assembling the devices in his hotel room, the air thick with solder and leaflets piled around him, Graeme was disturbed by an astonished African maid, who surveyed the scene with alarm.

Realising that his mission was immediately compromised he took the risk of giving her a leaflet to read in a desperate bid to stop her reporting what she'd

seen to hotel management or the police.

After carefully studying the leaflet, the maid told him: "You are here to fight for us." Graeme swore her to secrecy. She kept her word and the mission went ahead successfully.

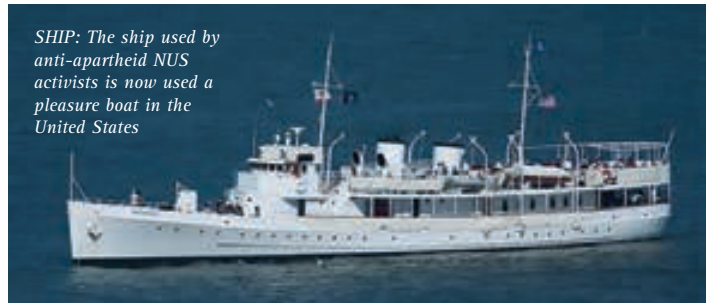
At the precise moment that Graeme's leaflet bombs detonated in Durban, similar devices went off in every other major South African city. Unknown to Graeme, other London Recruits had been sent into the country with exactly the same mission timed for maximum effect.

It had an enormous impact. The apartheid regime thought it had defeated the ANC. But newspaper headlines now screamed that the organisation was back with a vengeance.

Graeme was fortunate the hotel maid hadn't betrayed him. Other recruits who were captured were subjected to brutal interrogation and received lengthy prison sentences.

Many of the recruits were union activists and the British labour movement has responded to the making of the film with generosity. RMT donated £2,000 to its initial production costs last year, as did other unions. It also has the backing of the TUC and anti-apartheid veteran Peter

SHIP: The ship used by anti-apartheid NUS activists is now used a pleasure boat in the United States



RECRUIT: A 20-year old Graeme Whyte in Durban on his secret mission in 1971

Hain.

The film-makers, Cardiff-based production company Barefoot Rascals, have just embarked on a final stage of fundraising in order to complete the project.

RMT is encouraging its branches, regional councils and even individual members if they wish, to contribute to the film's crowd funding appeal, using the web link below.

A number of rewards are available depending on the size

of donation, from signed copies of the London Recruits book up to the film-makers organising a private showing with a Q&A session at branches and/or regional councils upon its completion.

To find out more about London Recruits, and to help bring this proud story of British labour movement solidarity to the screen, visit www.londonrecruits.com/support.



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LEGAL



YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS UNDER ATTACK



Gerard Stilliard of Thompsons solicitors outlines government plans to take away your rights to legal access following road accidents

The same Tory ministers who are making workers pay to bring a case to the Employment Tribunal and to neuter trade unions through the Trade Union Bill, are trying to impose a cost on the injured for legal representation in road traffic accident cases.

This means the potential end of the person at fault paying what a case is really worth and the injured either having to take on insurance companies alone in their own time or seeing compensation that is meant to be for lost wages or broken limbs being spent on lawyers.

In November's Autumn Statement, the chancellor announced that he wants the small claims limit to rise from £1,000 to £5,000 in road traffic cases and the government is even consulting on extending this increase to all cases with a value below £5,000 - including claims against employers.

This means that for any injury caused by a road traffic accident, if the level of compensation awarded is less than £5,000 the injured person

would not be able to recover the money spent on a solicitor to represent them.

While some people may be fortunate enough to have the skills to fight an insurance company, for many - arguably the vast majority - the idea of representing yourself whilst recovering from injuries without the support of a solicitor would be a nightmarish prospect.

And who, without expert advice, will know what their case is really worth, what the long term medical impact of an injury is going to be, or how much they have really lost in wages? Injured people will increasingly accept settlements the insurers deem 'appropriate' and there will also be those who won't go ahead with seeking compensation at all - you only need to see the 70 per cent drop in Employment Tribunal claims since fees were introduced to see how that would work out.

The government, along with its mates in the insurance industry, says that there is a 'fraud and claims culture in the motor industry'. The Association

of British Insurers (ABI) claims that they 'detected' 67,000 instances of 'fraud' in 2013 alone.

But there has never been any independent verification of the insurers' figures and, by the ABI's own admission, they include cases which 'might have had an innocent explanation' or where claims handlers have a 'suspicion' of fraud and an applicant accepts a substantially reduced offer, withdraws a claim without 'credible explanation' or allows communication with the insurer to lapse.

When pressed by a cross-party group of MPs, the ABI admitted that there had only been 84 convictions in the period January 2012 to September 2014 by the police unit set up specifically to tackle the problem. If fraud is such a widespread problem, why are conviction rates so low?

Motor insurance is compulsory and the £15 billion a year market is looking pretty healthy by anyone's standards. Direct Line and Admiral paid out £1.65 billion in dividends to their shareholders in the last three years (that's equivalent to £221 per policyholder). The CEO of Direct Line had an 82 per cent increase in his rewards package last year which probably reflects the fact that his company's shares rose 32 per cent between when the Conservatives were elected in May to December 2015 (out-

performing the rest of the UK stock market by seven per cent over the same period).

The chancellor claims that the proposed rise in the small claims limit will save the insurance industry £1 billion. However it is unclear how this has been calculated or how this saving would be passed on to the motorist.

Ministers have admitted that they do not intend to intervene in the market to require savings to be passed on and, while some car insurers have 'guaranteed' that they will pass all savings on to the policy holder, many haven't.

While this government continues its attacks on ordinary people, RMT members should remember that your union's legal scheme will continue to work hard to protect you from the worst effects of Tory policy. If you or a family member are injured in a road traffic accident don't go it alone - contact Thompsons and get support from expert solicitors who represent union members in personal injury cases every day of the week.

Thompson's is working to fight these changes before they are sneaked through as law. Help us fight them too - read the latest on our car insurance campaign at www.thompsons.law.co.uk/cutpremiumsnow or by searching Facebook for 'Small Claims, Big Impact'.

HOLD ON TIGHT

RMT assistant general secretary Mick Lynch reviews a new book by Martin Eady on London Transport and the Trade Unions

This fascinating and rewarding book from longstanding union activist Martin Eady charts the history of the London Transport system and its predecessors, from the point of view of the staff, placing events in their historical context.

It documents the struggles of the trades unions and their members across the 'Combine' following the development of the bus companies, trams and Underground.

But it's not a dry academic study. It's written from the perspective of a rank and file union activist who has a real command of the historical development of London's transport network and of the workers' movement within it.

Martin Eady was an NUR/RMT activist for 35 years

as a Representative in the tube engineering sector and was elected to the National Executive. His narrative, insights and analysis provide a valuable guide to the development of the system and the parallel responses of the unions.

The volume ranges from the early struggles with the private companies and the development of public ownership to later attempts at re-privatisation through Private Finance Initiatives, the Public Private Partnership and outsourcing.

In doing so it provides a social history too – outlining the introduction of women and immigrant workers and the struggles for equal pay, as well as the abolition of train guards and bus conductors, in the drive

to cut costs.

The book also highlights the divergent approaches of the bus unions and their rail counterparts and the consequent gradual reversal of fortunes, from the early position where the bus workers considered themselves the aristocrats of labour with higher wages, to the present, where the relative positions in terms of pay, conditions and union strength seem to be reversed.

This is a "warts and all" account and while it outlines the often hard-nosed approach of both the public and private versions of the transport companies, and while it charts the strikes, disputes and campaigns, it has its fair share of critical analysis of the unions.

As well as the historical perspective, the book is also bang up to date with a final section on current and recent disputes, including Night Tube.

It is also obvious that Martin Eady has a real fondness for London's transport system,

documenting not only the development of the core bus and tube services, but also the rise and decline of the tram, trolleybus and Green Line bus services which have come and gone.

The book is also lovingly illustrated throughout with fantastic photos of transport workers on the system and deserves to be widely read by those with an interest in the transport industry and labour movement.

Publisher: Capital Transport Publishing Ltd

Price: £19.95; 240 pages



RMT held a ceremony 12 years after the Tebay disaster on February 15 2004 when a runaway rail wagon fatally struck four railway workers Colin Buckley, Darren Burgess, Chris Waters and Gary Tindall.

The union led a long battle to get the secondary protection which is now mandatory where a worksite may be at risk of runaway if it sits on track at a gradient of 1 in 100 or steeper or is within five track miles of such a gradient.

Tebay survivor and Lancaster branch member Tom Angus thanked the union for their support in the campaign for secondary protection particularly the Liverpool office.



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Obituary

FAREWELL TO A RMT FIGHTER



John Milligan reflects on the life of Geoff Revell

Geoff Revell sadly passed away on the 13th January surrounded by family and friends.

Geoff was well-known to thousands of RMT members as a result of a lifetime spent fighting and campaigning.

He made his mark on events leaving a lasting impression on each and everyone with whom he came into contact during a long, varied and profound journey in seeking justice for working men and women at home and across the world.

Geoff had been active since he was a young man back in the 1960s but many members will have recently been inspired by Geoff during their training course for union reps. Geoff spoke during the Wednesday afternoon Organising slot and

captivated each and every class. His presentation covered the history of our union, placing it within the political and industrial landscape. He pulled no punches when it came to attacking the enemies of our union, especially the Bullingdon boys and their ilk.

His unique style never failed to inspire. Members would leave our Bob Crow National Education Centre inspired and ready to fight.

Geoff was elected to the National Executive Committee of the NUR in 1979. Also elected that year was the despicable Thatcher Government.

She began an assault on Trade Unions that continues to this day, wholesale closures,

ruthless privatisations and laid waste to communities throughout the land.

Geoff helped inform us and understand what our Union and the wider movement faced at that time. He guided the project which produced the book – *'Never on Our Knees'* which is a history of the RMT during the period 1979 -2006. A history in which he played a significant part. Read it and you will see that despite the onslaught of the Thatcher government, the continuation of Tory policies by New Labour and their abandonment of the working class our Union fought back and throughout was true to our roots of industrial trade unionism.

Geoff understood completely that what was required was rank

and file control through the democratic structures of the Union. He comments in the book "---within the RMT it doesn't matter what job anybody does, it's our union. That makes people proud of our organisation. They then are more willing to take on the bosses. As long as the union uses its resources to back people up in struggle instead of acting as a policeman, we remain as one. The railway, shipping, offshore and bus companies may be split up but we are not. The union is not the centre, the union is everywhere ---"

Geoff's commitment to our union was ensuring that our members' voices were heard and the leadership was accountable to the members. He was a

dedicated adherent of opening the Union up to ensure democratic members' control.

Geoff's constant desire to support causes against injustice and oppression was infectious. His singular political belief was to transform society on behalf of working people and he agitated for working people to take up the challenge of fighting in defence of justice and freedom. He was prepared to take up the challenge himself with the founding of Rail Against Apartheid. Our members were at the heart of this ground breaking initiative where campaigns took place in workplaces throughout Britain. Geoff is acclaimed rightly for the extraordinary and courageous work he did there. On two occasions Geoff risked his life to take our union's solidarity deep into South Africa during the most turbulent of times. The final time saw Geoff immediately arrested and detained because he was



considered an enemy of the state - a threat to the rotten and brutal apartheid regime!

Participation and control by the members was what Geoff espoused and in his later years he produced some of his most sterling work in that regard. When Bob Crow was elected General Secretary he wisely established what has become the Organising Unit - one of the best decisions this Union has made. Membership had drastically declined and this was

quickly turned around.

A growing confidence was instilled in the membership in all the sectors where we organise. There was a sense of belonging and Geoff played his part. When the Education Centre came along (another great initiative by Bob Crow) Geoff was relied upon to make that place a centre for the dissemination of the ethos of trade unionism. A place to become aware of the legacy of past struggles and of the

solidarity and comradeship they engendered. Building the future of our union is part of Geoff's legacy and his valued work should and must continue.

Many have been privileged to have met and listened to Geoff Revell and those future generations who have not will also benefit as we continue the struggle with the same commitment, passion and aspiration by which he lived his meaningful and inspirational life. ■



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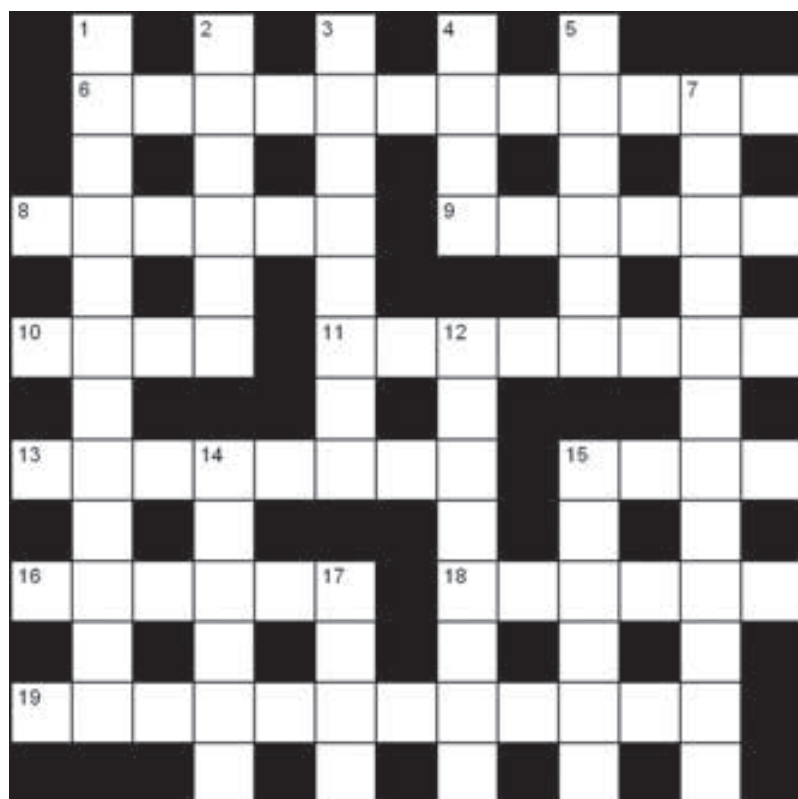
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Winner and solution in next issue.

ACROSS

- 6 Blackmailer (12)
- 8 Encircled (3,3)
- 9 On a vehicle (6)
- 10 Red organic pigment (4)
- 11 Familiar (8)
- 13 Soft Biscuit (8)
- 15 Domed recess (4)
- 16 Made up of lines (6)
- 18 Hearty (6)
- 19 Car crash (6,6)

DOWN

- 1 Convalescent (12)
- 2 Flashing light (6)
- 3 Unauthorised wall daub (8)
- 4 Cuba! (4)
- 5 Notify (6)
- 7 Atmospheric layer (12)
- 12 Amateur mender (8)
- 14 Programme (6)
- 15 Wear away (6)
- 17 Uncommon (4)



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

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

