

RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker

UNITED!



Table 1: represent of profit from the OTT to main operating companies emergency agreements

Company	Total DMA four payable (2021)	EDMA from the OTT (2.5%)
Chiltern	£1,800,000	£45,000
Great Western	£5,300,000	£132,500
East Anglia	£1,700,000	£42,500
Great Thameside	£6,100,000	£152,500
Great Western	£1,420,000	£35,500
South Western	£1,911,000	£47,775
South Western	£1,911,000	£47,775
Westlink, Southern and W. Northern (OTT)	£10,021,000	£250,525
Portsmouth Express	£17,811,000	£445,275
Great Portsmouth	£2,870,000	£71,750
Great Portsmouth	£11,113,000	£277,825
Southlink	£5,100,000	£127,500
W. Sussex	£8,871,000	£221,775

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www.rmt.org.uk

WORKING FOR YOU

RMT membership helps you at work and saves you money

RMT has developed a number of benefits to save members money. This includes negotiating access to savings and special offers from our approved partners.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

The union has a dedicated team of elected officers and local reps to serve your interests negotiating with employers on issues from pay, hours of work, pensions and working conditions. They are supported by a team of researchers to formulate pay claims to obtain the best negotiated terms for you.

CAMPAIGNING

The union has a political fund to run campaigns and provide a political voice to benefit members' interests in the workplace. RMT has a very active parliamentary group which raises issues of concern for members at Westminster, the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly.

PERSONAL INJURIES

Personal injury claims cover if you suffer an accident in work or outside work. RMT underwrites settlements that would not be provided by no-win, no-fee companies. Call 08457 125 495.

INDUSTRIAL DISEASES

Members who have suffered an industrial disease will receive free legal support to make a claim. Such claims are underwritten by the union and members will not have any deduction from their settlement unlike claims run by no-win, no-fee companies. Call 08457 125 495

EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNALS

Should a member find themselves unfairly dismissed, discriminated against or have any claim which has reasonable prospects of success at an Employment Tribunal, RMT will provide

legal representation and pay the fee. Even if the union is advised that the claim is unlikely to succeed, members who make a claim are eligible to receive free legal advice.

ACCIDENT BENEFIT

Payable if you have an accident at work or on the way to or from work. Accident benefit is only payable if you have been off for three days or more.

Accident must be reported to branch secretary within 26 weeks in order to qualify for accident benefit.

RETIREMENT BENEFIT

Payable to any member who retires over the age of 60 or aged 55 if retired through redundancy or resettlement. Ill health retirement is also payable; proof of this must be sent with application for retirement benefit.

TAX AND WILL PREPARATION

The union can provide a personal taxation service and will preparation service.

DEMOTION COMPENSATION

Payable to any member who is experiencing loss of wages through being permanently demoted or downgraded as a result of illness or injury.

Payment of £300 provided that member reports this to branch secretary within 12 weeks.

ORPHAN FUND

The beneficiaries of this fund would be any child of a member or spouse if the member dies in service or if a members' spouse dies and the member has responsibility of the children.

Benefit is paid while a child is

in full-time education up until the age of 22. Payment is made quarterly and the rate is £12.00 per week for children up to the age of 16, then £12.75 per week from 16 to 22.

RMT CREDIT UNION

Accessible savings and affordable loans from RMT's Credit union.
www.rmt.org.uk/about/credit-union

ONLINE SHOPPING DISCOUNTS

Shop online with RMTrewards.com and earn cashback savings from hundreds of retailers, like B&Q, Argos and Tesco. It's free to join, plus you'll get a FREE £10 Welcome Bonus in your online account! (Terms and conditions apply)
www.rmtrewards.com

FINES POOL

if you drive a company vehicle as part of your job you can join the RMT fines pool for £7 per year. The Fines Pool will reimburse members for any speeding fines, related court costs and lost time to attend a court hearing.
www.rmt.org.uk/member-benefits/fines-pool

BEREAVEMENT BENEFIT

A Death Grant of £600 is payable to the nearest relative or legal representative if a member dies through any cause prior to retirement.

CASHBACK PREPAID CARD

Fancy cashback on your everyday shopping? Use your RMT Prepaid Plus Cashback card at over 50 partner retailers, including Sainsbury's, ASDA and Boots, and earn unlimited cashback! It's

different to a credit or debit card - you can only spend what you load so there's less chance of getting carried away.
www.rmtprepaid.com

FREE £5,000 ACCIDENTAL DEATH COVER

As a benefit of your RMT membership you can register for £5,000 Free Accidental Death Cover. Cover is for UK residents aged 18-69.

12 months free cover. Annually renewable and always FREE. The Cover is underwritten by Advent Insurance PCC Ltd - UIB Cell.
www.rmtprotect.com

INSURANCE

UIA offers great value, Home, Motor, Travel and Pet Insurance to RMT members and their families.

- Interest free direct debits (spread over 10 months)
- No fees to amend your policy
- Accidental damage to TVs, laptops and game consoles covered
- Cover for damage caused by subsidence
- Alternative accommodation for family and pets if needed

Call on 0800 030 4606 to talk to UK-based call centre agents from 8.30am to 8pm Monday to Friday.

HEALTH CASH PLAN

For a small monthly premium you can claim cash-back on dental, optical and therapy treatments. Visit www.bhsf.co.uk

Join RMT by visiting
www.rmt.org.uk

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CROSSWORD

EDITORIAL



TAKING UP THE FIGHT

Firstly, congratulations to members at Merseyrail for winning a seven per cent pay increase and securing hundreds of jobs in the crucial role of the onboard train manager on the new class 777 fleet.

RMT has also won pay deals on London Underground of 8.4 per cent, MTR Crossrail 8.2 per cent and 9.25 per cent on the Docklands Light Railway. It is clear we can win decent pay rises when operators are not controlled by the dead hand of the Department of Transport and when free collective bargaining can take place.

RMT has now done several deals with transport operators that begin to deal with the cost-of-living crisis. We want negotiated settlements in all our industrial disputes and we are not afraid to use strike action where needed.

That is why, as we go to press, the union has been forced to take further strike action in the national rail dispute.

Make no mistake this government wants to close ticket offices across the country, attack the safety-critical role of the guard and further diminish catering grades. They want to introduce seven-day working as mandatory in all train operators and impose new grading structures, salaries and roles on new entrants who will be working for less money and with no

realistic prospect of retirement as well as longer hours. In other words, work longer and harder for less money.

On Network Rail, they want a complete restructure of the Maintenance function with fundamental changes to working practices, rostering, competency, organisation and other measures as well as productivity and technology measures for signallers.

Meanwhile passengers are spending up to five times as much of their salaries on season tickets than our continental counterparts whilst the train operators profits go to seven owning groups by foreign state rail companies, effectively subsidising transport systems in other countries.

The other 50 per cent of train operator profits will go to Go-Ahead and FirstGroup's investors, mainly a group of 13 major asset management funds, some of whom have holdings in both companies. Just last year, train companies paid out £800 million to shareholders.

Transport services whether it is bus, rail or ferries should not be cash cows for private investment funds but public services democratically run in the interests of the taxpaying, travelling public.

h.g.



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BIGGEST STRIKE ACTION FOR A GENERATION

Majority of RMT members take strike action against low pay, job cuts and attacks on terms and conditions and pensions

RMT members working on London Underground, Network Rail and train operating companies took strike action last month generating a huge outpouring of public support.

Over 50,000 members struck over a multi-year pay freeze and a lack of job security, with Network Rail and the train operating companies threatening thousands of compulsory redundancies.

Network Rail and train operating companies members took three days of action and tube workers took 24-hour action as London Underground members voted overwhelmingly for a new strike mandate. Members at Govia Thameslink Railway have also voted for renewed strike action in another ballot beating the thresholds introduced by Tory anti-union laws.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that members were

leading the way in standing up for all working people trying to get a pay rise and some job security.

"In a modern economy, workers need to be properly rewarded for their work, enjoy good conditions and have the peace of mind that their job will not be taken away from them.

"Grant Shapps needs to get in the room or get out of the way so we can negotiate with these companies who we have successfully struck dozens of deals with previously.

"What we cannot accept is thousands of railway workers being thrown on the scrapheap after being praised as heroes during Covid.

"RMT will continue its industrial campaign until a negotiated settlement is reached," he said.

Talks continue with Network Rail and the train operating companies and scheduled strike action remains on.

"Claims made by the rail industry that support for our strike is waning are a fallacy.

"The people who turned up for work were managers and contractors, who were not balloted, in a vain attempt to break the strike.

"Despite attempts to undermine our action, the rail network barely ran any

services and many of those were delayed on a tiny timetable.

"Without the work of RMT members, the railway network cannot run in this country.

"And we will take further effective strike action if a negotiated settlement on pay, and job security cannot be reached," Mick said. ■



Former miner's leader Arthur Scargill joins the picket line







RMT DECLARES CLEANERS' DISPUTES

Union launches national campaign for £15 an hour, sick pay and travel facilities for cleaner members

The union is balloting and re-balloting cleaners on contracts across the rail sector in pursuit of claims for £15 an hour, sick pay and travel facilities.

The companies to be balloted for the first time are Atalian Servest on LNER, SWR and GWR and Mitie on Network Rail Stations North and South and Bidvest Noonan on NTL, TPE and c2c.

The contracts to be re-balloted are Churchill and GTR trains and stations and South East Trains and Network Rail HS1 Stations and Eurostar.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that cleaners needed to be recognised for the essential role they played during the pandemic and now.

"The dirty truth about rail cleaning is that 80 per cent of cleaners are outsourced to private companies and over 60 per cent were struggling to make ends meet even before the cost-of-living crisis.

"Cleaners get no sick pay, they get no travel facilities and they are overworked and underpaid.

"In contrast company profits are soaring, Atalian Servest paid £16 million dividends to their French parent company in the last two years and their highest paid director got a 26 per cent pay rise.

"Bidvest Noonan's profits were up 32 per cent in 2021, they paid a £14.6 million dividends and their highest paid Director got a 68 per cent pay rise.

"For the outsourcing fat cats, Covid has been a chance to grow their business, make bigger profits and award higher Executive pay packets," he said.

RMT has declared a dispute on the Tube and balloting for strike action after it emerged that heroic tube cleaners have been condemned to three more years of outsourcing following what the union described as "a stitch up behind closed doors".

In a letter to the London mayor Sadiq Khan, Mick Lynch condemned Transport for Department officials for renewing a contract worth in the region of £450 million in secret using Chair's Action between meetings. The decision was taken on March 24 and only became clear in papers published retrospectively.

In his manifesto, mayor Khan had promised to instruct TfL to review its cleaning contract with ABM, including an assessment of extending the free travel cleaners receive whilst at work to their journeys to and from work."

The decision leaves the cleaners with nothing and TfL said that it was still hasn't taken a decision on free travel.

In the letter, the union expressed shock and disgust at the decision to extend the outsourced cleaning contract with ABM with no published paperwork.

"This is deeply shocking and raises serious questions



about TfL officials and the functioning of the Board. It also raises serious questions about your role.

"Who is running TfL? The democratically elected mayor who is chair of TfL or the Commissioner of TfL who the Mayor appoints? It appears to us that unelected officers are

now in charge of the capital's transport system.

"The cleaners who you are responsible for deserve better than this and I give notice that the RMT will be declaring a dispute and balloting our cleaning members for industrial action," he said.

NO FIRE AND RE-HIRE AT WABTEC DONCASTER



Workers at Wabtec Doncaster have suspended industrial action after the company conceded a number of issues in the long running dispute.

These included the reinstatement of a five-minute wash up at the end of the day, two tea breaks, 14 roles saved by removing all employees from being at risk of redundancy, a one-off payment of £500 in December

2022 and apprentices to be included in the collective bargaining agreement for future negotiations

The union noted that while this represented an improvement to previous proposals, they still failed to meet the reasonable aspirations of workers and members remain effectively coerced by the threat of fire and re-hire.

RMT members in Doncaster

have been negotiating for the last 12 months to try and find a solution to the financial problems faced by the company.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch congratulated workers for already taking part in fantastically solid industrial action.

"Staff at the company have continually rejected new working arrangements repeatedly and the move to

fire workers and re-hire them on worse contracts than before would not go unanswered.

"Wabtec Doncaster has a proud history, where predecessors built the *Flying Scotsman* and *Mallard* locomotives.

"This management should continue to engage with workforce and retreat from attempts to throw 80 skilled workers on the scrap heap," he said. ■

MERSEYRAIL VICTORY

Members working for Merseyrail have won a seven per cent pay rise and secured hundreds of jobs on the new class 777 fleet which means the role of the train manager has been protected for the long-term future.

RMT members welcomed the pay deal following intense negotiations at the rail

company. The train operator which is owned jointly by Serco and Abellio agreed the deal on a no strings attached basis.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch congratulated the dogged determination of members to secure the crucial role of the onboard train manager.

"After a five-year dispute and 16 days of industrial action stoppages, our members have job security and can make an important contribution to the running of this new train fleet for the travelling public of Merseyside.

"It is clear that we can win decent pay rises on train

operators when they are not under the auspices of the Department of Transport and when free collective bargaining can take place.

"We want negotiated settlements in all our industrial disputes, and we are not afraid to use strike action where needed," he said. ■

TORY CONTRACTS BOOST RAIL FAT CATS' PROFITS

RMT research reveals government's switch to management-fee based contracts guarantee profits of around £124 million each year

Train operating companies are only back in profit thanks to transport secretary Grant Shapps pandemic bailouts and new rail contracts, according to a new RMT report.

The report *Bailing out the TOCs*, based on analysis of the train operating companies' accounts, reveals how the government's switch to management-fee based contracts that guarantee profits of around £124 million each year has restored profits for the year of £600 million across the industry for 2020-21, with every owning group improving its position during the pandemic year.

The report also shows how the TOCs, having lobbied for these changes since before the pandemic because of the failures of franchising, are now reassuring their investors that they're well placed to pay out regular dividends from their rail operations.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that the government and the rail fat cats were working together to turn fares and taxes into profits for shareholders at public expense.

"I'm sure the fat cats will find a nice way to thanks Grant Shapps for his commitment to their bank balances but ordinary working people, rail workers and the travelling and tax-paying public are suffering as the attack on our public transport system is added to the escalating cost of living crisis," he said.

Table 1: Payments of profit from the DfT to train operating companies under emergency agreements

	Total EMA fees payable (2%)	ERMA fees over 18 months (1.5%)
Chiltern	£1,885,000	£4,242,000
Cross Country	£5,386,000	£13,104,000
East Midlands	£4,798,000	£10,794,000
East Anglia	£6,169,000	£13,881,000
Essex Thameside	£1,428,000	£3,213,000
Great Western	£13,911,000	£32,445,000
South Eastern	£7,973,000	£23,919,000
South Western	£10,033,000	£22,575,000
Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern (GTR)	£17,831,000	£42,231,000
TransPennine Express	£2,876,000	£6,468,000
West Coast Partnership	£11,313,000	£25,452,000
West Midlands	£5,187,000	£12,285,000
Abellio ScotRail	£8,873,098	£19,964,469
Caledonian Sleeper	£497,189	£1,177,554
TOTAL	£98,160,287	£231,751,023

Table 2: Total rail group franchise profits and dividends, 2019-21

Group totals	Profit for the Year		Dividends	
	2019-20	2020-21	2019-20	2020-21
First Group	£46,014,000	£132,443,000	£40,000,000	£63,500,000
Go-Ahead	£39,680,000	£39,996,000	£30,000,000	£0
Abellio	-£493,073,000	£426,576,000	£1,000,000	£10,000,000
Arriva	£6,416,000	£0	£12,000,000	£0
Trenitalia	-£114,739,000	£0		£0
TOTAL	-£515,702,000	£599,015,000	£83,000,000	£73,500,000

The report shows that:

- Emergency funding agreements and its new rail contracts have taken all the financial risk out of train operating and rescued the profits of companies that were struggling even before the pandemic.
- Department of Transport data shows that during between March 2020 and April 2022, the TOCs will have received around £300 million in management fees, which form the basis of their profits. (Table 1)
- Analysis of the TOCs company accounts shows that the new funding agreements and contracts transformed the position of the train operating companies, restoring their profits to an aggregate of £600 million for the year 2020-21, compared with a significantly worse position prior to the pandemic. (Table 2)
- In just one year South-Western Railways went from a £4 million loss to a £28 million profit. First Transpennine Express went from a £6.5 million loss to a £57 million profit. FirstGroup's profits for the year from its four contracts trebled from £46 million to £132 million. (Table 3)
- Abellio Greater Anglia went from a £300 million loss to a £295 million profit for the year. Abellio's Group position was similarly transformed, from a recorded loss of £493 million to a profit of £426 million. (Table 4)
- Go-Ahead's profits also rose between 2019 and 21 as the margins increased on Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern and would probably have increased further had the DfT not had to step in and strip Go-Ahead of the Southeastern franchise for concealing money owed to the public over years.

Table 3: First group rail franchise profits and dividends 2019-21

First Group	Profit for the Year		Dividends	
	March 2019-2020	March 2020-2021	March 2019-2020	March 2020-2021
First Greater Western	£45,170,000	£31,289,000	£40,000,000	£19,000,000
First MTR South Western	-£4,113,000	£28,919,000	£0	£0
First Trenitalia Avanti West Coast	£11,542,000	£13,446,000	£0	£11,500,000
First Transpennine Express	-£6,585,000	£58,789,000	£0	£0
TOTAL	£46,014,000	£132,443,000	£40,000,000	£30,500,000

Table 4: Abellio rail franchise profits and dividends 2019-21

Abellio	Profit for the Year		Dividends	
	December 2019-2020	December 2020-21	December 2019-2020	December 2020-21
Abellio Greater Anglia	-£317,206,000	£295,458,000	£1,000,000	
	March 2019-20	March 2020-21	March 2019-20	March 2020-21
Abellio East Midlands	£20,029,000	£7,208,000		£10,000,000
Abellio West Midlands	-£195,896,000	£123,910,000		
TOTAL	-£493,073,000	£426,576,000	£1,000,000	£10,000,000

Table 5: Go-Ahead rail franchise profits and dividends 2019-21

Go-Ahead	Profit for the Year		Dividends	
	July 2019-July 2020	July 2020-July 2021	July 2019-July 2020	July 2020-July 2021
Govia Thameslink Railways	£17,761,000	£39,996,000	£0	£0
London and Southeastern Railways	£21,919,000	Lost franchise	£30,000,000	
TOTAL	£39,680,000	£39,996,000	£30,000,000	£0

(Table 5)

- Dividend payments have remained healthy, with £73.5 million declared so far for 2020-21, while the

TOCs are forecasting that they are well-placed for future dividend payments over 2022. (Table 2)

* The full report Bailing out the

TOCs: How the Tory government saved – and boosted - the Train operating companies' profits is available on the RMT website.■

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Incoming national health and safety committee chair Ann Joss looks at priorities in the workplace

It's been a real honour to be elected to chair RMT's national health and safety committee especially as this is the first time a woman has been elected to this position and I hope that during my time as chair we can address some of the many issues that affect women in our workplace.

On health, I believe we should be campaigning harder for better menopause policies and the overall effect this has on women in safety critical roles and shift work. I believe that in a male dominated industry that this is still very much a work in progress.

On pregnancy, the same applies, we are still having to ask for things such as risk assessments etc. to be done when it should be a given. There are nowhere near enough facilities for breast feeding babies at work or women being able to express milk at work.

On safety, too many stations are understaffed and many women feel vulnerable when travelling to and from work sometimes finishing at 1am or as starting as early as 4am. Companies are not interested in providing any form of transport home and in the current economic climate taxis are not affordable.

I believe firmly that we need to increase the number of women putting themselves forward to be safety reps and then that in turn will help us to improve workplaces for women and help us better to understand the issues that affect women.

The last two years have been the hardest ever for safety reps across all grades. COVID brought challenges

that we couldn't have even imagined. As a committee I hope that we can look more at the impact of COVID, what we've learnt and what we can do to continue some of the good practices that we've adopted. We had no training on how to deal with a pandemic and most of what we were doing was very much driven by determination to do whatever we could for our members. The results were not consistent across all grades and routes, some had better facilities, and some had next to nothing and with sometimes devastating impact.

Mental health has been more prevalent than ever since COVID and getting professional help or counselling has been harder than ever. We will as a committee continue to work on clean air policies, ensuring that buildings are properly ventilated and where new buildings are being looked at that such as signalling centres that they are designed from day one as fit for purpose and hopefully we will have a proper industry standard fit for the future.

We have an ageing workforce - retirement age has steadily increased over the years meaning our members now are finding themselves having to work much longer but there is no provision in many parts of our industry to facilitate issues that come with that and employers need to look at how work could be adapted to the worker, rather than looking at excluding older workers.

We cover all grades from rail to bus, from shipping to offshore and it's only right that



Ann Joss

the committee as part of our work plan looks beyond the grades we personally represent and see what we can do for and learn from other grades such as bus drivers and lorry drivers. As a former bus and lorry driver those industries are very much on my radar, they are poorly paid and in many instances lip service is paid to H & S and more particularly welfare. There is poor quality PPE or none at all, poor MFA policies with sanctions not support for

members.

Health, safety and welfare is very important for all our members alongside all the industrial issues that affect our day to day lives at work. In my experience it can take a lot of time to bring about small changes but nevertheless, if we look back, we have collectively made huge changes and I look forward to the next three years challenging ourselves to make changes that matter to all our members across our grades. ■

AGM

BIRMINGHAM 2022



Mick Lynch



RMT / AGM / 2022

A FIGHTING UNION



RMT annual general meeting delegates resolve to fight for on pay, jobs, conditions and equality

"We are in the fight of our lifetime," RMT general secretary Mick Lynch told delegates at the union's annual general meeting in Birmingham regarding members involved in the disputes.

Mr Lynch, who has become a media sensation following a string of successful and combative interviews, said that these were the "toughest negotiations" that the union had ever been involved in.

He accused Network Rail and the train operating companies of "doing the government's rotten business and trying to cut thousands of jobs on the railways."

"They are trying to cut thousands of jobs and they have no scruples in cutting back on safety regimes in order to do so."

"They are seeking to rip up working practices and conditions, agreements that protect our members and in doing so they will drive up unsocial hours, work fatigue and occupational ill health."

"And they are seeking to make our members poor with below inflation pay offers

which do not take into account the cost-of-living crisis," he said.

Reflecting on the recent three days of strike action, he said that it was normal for an employer to be a little more reasonable in talks.

However, he revealed: "Since that solid strike action, which was fantastic, they have not diluted their stance.

At Network Rail they are ramping up their demands.

"Similarly, the train operators put on the table that virtually every rail worker would be re-contracted on a new contract of employment and a new set of terms and conditions."

"And they are going to bring back the driver-only operator (DOO) disputes in every single train operating company. They have told me that face to face. They said it was their mandate from Department of Transport."

"So, this is as serious as it gets. It is the fight of our lifetime and of our generation," he warned. He said that the union was in for

the long haul in a bitter dispute that has also led to thousands of workers flooding into membership.

The general secretary busted the myth of the reasons for the economic crisis in Britain, pointing out that workers wage demands were not the cause of inflation.

"It is a myth put round by the establishment that workers' wages are the cause of inflation. It is the profit making and protecting the wealth of the super-rich that is responsible for inflation."

"We have not got a wage price spiral - wages are lagging a long way behind prices and it is the job of the trade unions to ensure wages catch up."

Remarking on his meteoric rise in the media where he has over eight million Tik Tok views the #MickLynch hashtag, the former Eurostar engineer said: "We smashed it on Tik Tok - whatever that is."

"I was trending on twitter and I was only knocked off by Love Island," he quipped before receiving a standing ovation from delegates.

Steve Layne, Paddington said that despite the smears against the union, opinion polls and social media had revealed an outpouring of public support for the strikes which chimed with the fight against the cost-of-living crisis.

"It is great to see spontaneous support up and down the country on our picket lines from across the political spectrum."

"But we have to navigate a range of complex anti-trade union laws and we clearly need to have a campaign to restore trade union rights to reduce inequality and increase working class power," he said.

Charles Fisher, Deptford spoke of spontaneous donations from the public on the picket lines and urged the union to develop its dispute fund to provide hardship payments as it looked like to be a prolonged fight.

Jessica Robinson, Darlington backed the call and pointed out that low paid women committed to taking strike action were particularly exposed to hardship and needed support.

Jim Buchanan, Dorset Rail

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Julie Tobin

said that branches should be building support networks in their local communities to create solidarity and support rather than just burdening head office.

Replying to the debate, Mick Lynch backed the call for support and pointed out that branch management funds can be utilised to support workers with travel expenses etc during strike action.

He also reiterated the union's political strategy of not being affiliated to any political parties while working with all forces that support union objectives.

"We will work with those who support us, and our campaign must remain outward looking, non-sectarian and positive to maintain the broadest possible support to defend the interests of all RMT members," he said.

Solidarity

Communications Workers' Union general secretary Dave Ward brought solidarity greetings to conference delegates and hailed RMT as "inspirational" for its national rail strike action.

Mr Ward whose own union recently successfully won a huge mandate for strike action at British Telecoms for the first time in 35 years, said that this year was an opportunity for the trade unions to "win and build for the future".

"Trade unions need to commit to agreeing bargaining agendas across sectors of the economy.

"We should set the

standards for sectoral bargaining and sign up to the same agenda. Imagine how powerful that would be?" he said to applause.

He also pointed out that there was a need for unions to engage with the wider community and using local meetings as a tool to engage the public.

"A strand of the new deal for workers is bringing working class people back together again.

"We must end the manufactured divisions and trade unions have to lead the way in bridging the divides in society, designed to keep us apart.

"I am a great believer that trade unions need to lead the way in fighting against racism, poverty and all forms of inequality," he said.

Looking ahead to the industrial campaigns for both organisations, Mr Ward said that unions should, as well as winning "concessions" in disputes, start to rebuild "collectivism".

"We want every branch to affiliate to community



Darren Procter

organisations. I've never seen more activism in the UK. The trouble is a lot of it is outside the trade union movement and it is our job to bring it all together," he said.

FIGHTING FOR CLEANERS

Members working for contracted cleaning companies are launching a campaign to end super exploitation in the transport industry as a number of ballots are taking place across the country.

Delegates unanimously endorsed several motions on underpayment of wages and additional resources for its national cleaners' campaign.

Bella Fashola, Hastings and Tonbridge, who has been at the forefront of organising cleaners taking several days of strike action at the company Churchill, said: "The union is united as one voice, telling contracted cleaning companies - your reign of exploitation is coming to an end.

"As an all-grades union, RMT is dedicated to its cleaning members and will fight every step of the way to secure decent wages, good conditions and respect at work.

"Ultimately all cleaning contracts should be taken in-house but while contractors rake in millions of pounds in profit from our labour, we will take them on, and we will win," she said.

Roy Osarogiagbon, Jubilee South said that the union was seeking "justice" for cleaners



Jessica Robinson



Mark Hall

RMT / AGM / 2022

and accused ABM cleaning contractor on "reneging on its promises" to staff.

"Right now, we are going through the worst situation imaginable. Every day is hardship for our members," he said.

He went on to describe how low wages led to reduced "purchasing power" and impoverishment for cleaners where they cannot pay electricity bills or put enough food on the table.

"The cleaning grade in the union is formidable, solid, united and powerful," he said.

Jim Buchanan paid tribute to Bella and Roy for their campaigns and said that if cleaners on low wages can take strike action, then other RMT members can also do so in their own struggles.

"When cleaners go out on strike for two or three days, when they earn 9/10 pound an hour, that's real sacrifice and suffering," he added.

Rounding up the debate, assistant general secretary John Leach said that he applauded all the cleaning activists who work for deeply "hostile" employers.

"They are getting stuck in day in day out. It is a hostile place to be and they [cleaning contractors] will sack activists as soon as they can and we have to be vigilant to that".

Mr Leach added that the union would defend sacked activists to the hilt, saying companies would not get away with it "on our watch".

Conference also backed recruitment and recognition campaigns in the road transport sector in workplaces such as Pentalver Transport at Southampton docks.

Ann Joss, Aberdeen said that at present RMT was banned from such sites despite the fact that the union represents many members.

"We should be seeking formal recognition with the company and this is about recruiting and organising in



Eddie Dempsey

the road freight and logistics sector.

John Leach said the campaign was about challenging low pay.

"We must directly challenge this race to the bottom and promote a real levelling up agenda on our terms," he said.

FIGHTING PENSION POVERTY

RMT will take on the scourge of pensioner poverty by stepping up its campaign for good pensions for members.

Final Salary schemes have come under increased attack in recent years, but the union said that it would push for new Final Salary schemes to be opened.

Speaking about the successful motion, general secretary Mick Lynch said: "RMT continues to campaign to protect and to improve our members occupational

pension arrangements across the union

"This is illustrated recently with successful industrial action ballots at Hull Trains and LUL where management and Government are attacking our members final salary benefits.

"We will campaign alongside our retired members' section and the National Pensioners Convention to improve working people's retirement expectations by improving the Basic State Pension a key element of working-class peoples' retirement income," he said.

DEFENDING APPRENTICES

Non-unionised apprentices risk being super exploited as cheap units of labour on the transport network, young RMT members warned conference.

Delegates from across the transport industry said that minimum wage apprentices must be a priority for recruitment with the current rail disputes.

Freddie Seale, LU fleet delegate said: "With all the restructuring going on in the railway industry, there is a strong likelihood that companies will exploit apprentices as a cheaper unit of labour to undermine RMT disputes".

Mr Seale pointed out that outside of London, apprentices can be paid as

little as 4.80 an hour and that the union was a major tool to keep them in the industry.

"We are passionate about organising apprentices and we want the union to support us so we can continue and develop that work," he added.

Mark Hall, Wakefield and Healy Mills delegate told conference: "We have a real problem. 60/70 per cent of our apprentices are not members.

"With the 'modernising' maintenance plans of Network Rail - they want to use them as part of the team. They will be sent out to work, often on minimum wage, and be left in a really vulnerable positions," he said.

Delegates called on the union develop a national organising strategy for apprenticeships and devote lead officers to liaise with the young members committee on regular basis.

RMT senior assistant general secretary Eddie Dempsey paid tribute to young RMT members developing new plans for the union and said that the committee was going from strength to strength.

"Apprentices are disproportionately affected by low wages and fixed term contracts. With attacks on jobs on all TOCs, London underground and network rail there is a real risk that apprentices will be used as



Alex Gordon addresses conference

RMT / AGM / 2022

units of labour to cover jobs and reduce wage costs and then not gain a permanent contract.

"The need for a renewal on the union's apprentice organising strategy is needed to represent the future labour of the railway and protect vulnerable workers," he said.

WORKLOADS

Delegates heard serious concerns about the increasing workloads for signallers.

Bob Cross, Stockport and District said that no additional workloads should be forced on signallers.

"Too many times additional workload has been placed on signallers without any financial rewards or national pay award," he said.

Steve Loeber, Colchester and District said that members were dealing with more and more line blockages which was putting more pressure on signallers and more strain leading to mental health issues.

Ann Joss, Aberdeen rejected claims that the union was opposed to using technology when questioning workloads.

"The problem here is that we have no clear job description but rather a 'fluid constitution' as well as a lack of training.

"We clearly need defined job descriptions like other grades, more recently the Mobile Operations Managers," she said.

Charles Fisher warned that trainee signallers should not be taken off their training packages to cover any post that they have passed except in a dire emergency.

"The training of signallers is very important and should be treated as such without disruption. Yet there has been a change of management attitude to the point of 'it doesn't say you can't'.

"This has given rise to the need to clarify what you can, and more importantly, what you can't do," he said.

Replying to the debate, Eddie Dempsey said that all the issues raised were symptoms of an industry with not enough people working in it.

"We are seeing a chronic understaffing of signalling grades which includes over

650 unfilled vacancies combined with poor planning.

FIGHTING ASSAULTS

Delegates backed calls for transport workers to be included in Emergency Workers (Offences) Act to give them the same legislative protection as emergency service staff when it came to assaults.

This would mean stronger sentencing guidelines for offenders at a time when assaults on transport staff are "through the roof" according to RMT surveys.

Moving the successful motion, Ross Marshall, Central Line West said: "There are a lot of delegates who have been to the rostrum to say how bad assaults have become in the transport industry.

"The latest RMT survey showed that 75 per cent of London Underground staff had experienced an assault at work.

"Several members of my team have end up on long term sick or on the operating table as a result.

"This motion sends a



Dave Ward

message that our transport workers are supported in the same way as emergency service staff are," he said.

RMT is also launching a campaign against violent attack on bus drivers following an increase in incidents.

A 2019 union survey found 72 per cent of RMT bus members suffered violence and assaults with 90 per cent of those who had experienced such attacks more than once.

Moving the unanimously backed motion delegate Julie Tobin, South Devon bus said: "The stats don't lie.

"We are asking for our employers to keep us safe and ensure that they are held to account.

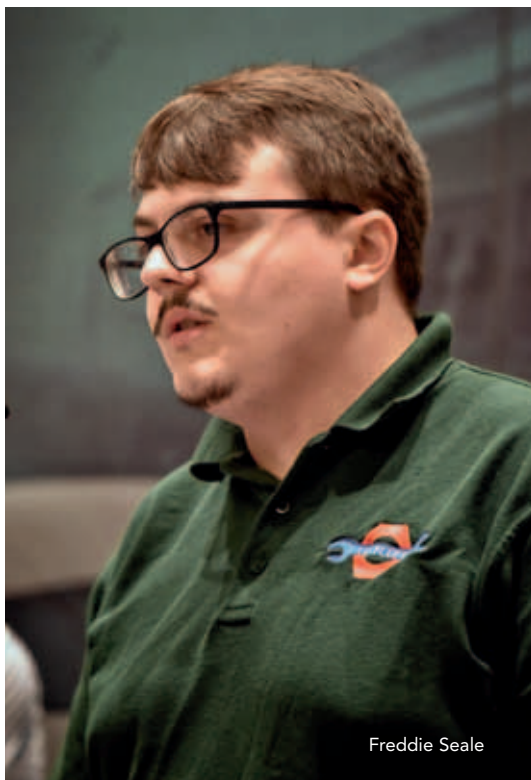
"It is not in my job description to put up with sexual assault, being spat at and other kinds of abuse. We don't get paid enough to put up with that and it should not be an expectation that we have to put up with it."

Highlighting declining living standards in Devon, she said: "When you have poverty and deprivation, you have higher levels of crime and abuse of our members on buses".

"Part of the bus company directors' bonuses is maintaining good PR. It is bad for business when bus drivers get assaulted, so it is swept under the carpet," she said.

OFFSHORE MATTERS

Delegates backed a call to oppose extended tours for



Freddie Seale



Charles Fisher

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offshore workers working in the energy sector.

Scot Agnew, Offshore Energy said that in 2015 oil operators extended tours to 21 days in the form of 12-hour shifts for three weeks solid as part of a cost-cutting agenda.

"Seven years on and the price of oil has soared, but trade union members still work for Longer," he said.

Darren Procter said that the three weeks on, three weeks off was often worse than that as workers were 'fogged in' and stranded on the rigs.

Delegates also called on the union to demand that windfarm operators of sea-based wind energy sites to ascertain their specific training requirements for workers.

Darren Procter said that the wind energy sector was a growth area but training and certification were chaotic leaving workers exploited and exposed.

Scot Agnew said that workers were spending thousands of pounds every year on courses and were still losing out on work. The agreement should cover

divers, riggers and other trades accessing the turbines and CTV crew.

EDUCATION

Delegates backed an education programme in schools in conjunction with the TUC to explain the benefits of

industrial trade unionism to a younger audience.

The motion also instructs the union to create a members' pack to educate joiners on the history of trade unions and their role. It said that industrial unionism, organising all workers in the

same industry into one union regardless of their skill or trade, a mantle that RMT has long championed.

Gareth Jameson, Southampton Shipping said: "Our workplaces will be better if every worker is a member, and every member is an

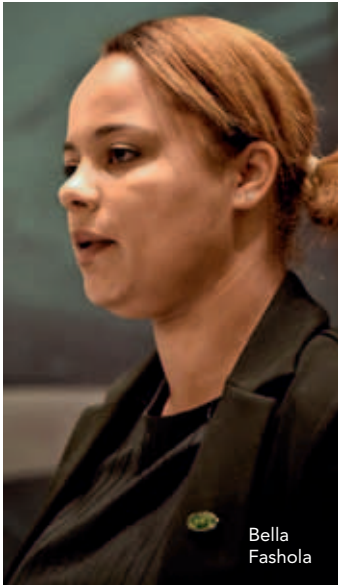


Raymond Williams



Chris Knibb

RMT / AGM / 2022



Bella Fashola

activist.

"As someone once said we shouldn't just teach the masses but learn from them. And the only way we will learn from them is by bring them into the union," he said.

Edward Woodley, Coventry No.1 pointed out working class consciousness had been weakened over decades.

"Many sections of the trade union movement have been asleep this last few decades and ultimately the responsibility of waking the trade union movement lies with us - the members."

Eddie Dempsey told conference that having militant democratic and industrial unions was the most effective way to organise working people.

"Industrial trade unionism is a political and industrial philosophy. It is about mirroring how employer set up an industry and ultimately to take control of the industry," he said.

Conference also supported the campaign for a Windrush Act to end the Hostile Environment imposed to deprive migrants of the right to live and work in the UK even if they have legal status.

Nathan Wallace, Central Line East called for an independent public inquiry into the circumstances which led to the treatment of the

Windrush Generation.

"The Windrush Compensation Scheme will not compensate all victims for all of losses and is being unreasonably slow to pay out," he said.

Conference also agreed to introduce equality training to officers, regional organisers and national executive committee members and new reps on equality issues affecting women, LGBT+, ethnic minority and disabled groups.

Hayley Bouchard, Surrey and Hants said that everyone benefited from education and training should be given to anyone who takes up an elected position within the union.

Delegates agreed to campaign for a ban on 'conversion therapy' LGBTQ+ people.

Callum MacLeod, Glasgow Shipping said that no study

had determined that conversion therapy is successful, there was significant evidence that it can be fatal, and survivors carry the resulting trauma throughout their lives.

"A study found that LGBTQ+ youth who had undergone conversion therapy were more than twice as likely to report having attempted suicide multiple times following the experience.

"It's clear that in order to protect all LGBTQ+ people from significant suffering and trauma,

any ban on conversion therapy must be comprehensive," he said.

Conference also questioned the use of the government's Disability Confident

Employer Scheme, to support and recognise businesses that are actively inclusive of disabled people in

recruitment and retention practices.

Sanna Jenson, Dartford and District said that Network Rail, train operating companies and many other organisations within the transport sector had signed up to the scheme.

"However, a 2019 Freedom of Information request revealed that since employers had signed up since 2013 had pledged to provide just 8,763 paid jobs - an average of less than two-thirds of a job per employer.

"This is a corporate exercise more than anything else," she said.

Conference called on the union to commission an on-line survey of members to establish if the policies adopted by employers meet the aspirations of the Disability Confident Employer Scheme in practice.



Delegates marked the 34th anniversary of the Piper Alpha disaster which killed 165 offshore oil and gas workers and two seafarers.

This disaster triggered the Cullen Inquiry, which reported at the end of 1990. In 1997, Step Change in Safety was

launched by the UK offshore industry and the Health and Safety Executive. Two years later, trade unions reported Shell for failure to comply with more than 60 of Lord Cullen's 106 Piper Alpha recommendations. The effectiveness of the 1989

regulations have not been reviewed since 2011.

Piper Alpha remains a symbol of the threat poorly regulated, profit hungry operators can pose to the lives of offshore workers and their families.



YOUNG MEMBERS

The union runs a course for young members which runs alongside the annual general meeting. This was the first time since the pandemic hit that the course has been able to go ahead.

Young members delegates took time out for a photograph to be taken



with the top table. Young members committee chair Rupert Pickering said that it was great to see the course up and running again.

"There is nowhere better for young people to learn about RMT and trade unionism in general than attending the annual general

meeting and talking with officers and delegates alike and sharing experiences about organising at the workplace," he said. ■

RMT PARLIAMENTARY GROUP SUPPORT

Labour MP Ian Mearns declared his total support for RMT strike action, during his address to the annual general meeting.

Mr Mearns, who chairs the RMT parliamentary group, said that he was proud to join picket lines during the strikes.

"Along with other group members in parliament, I was on the picket lines at Victoria at Gateshead depot and Signal box at Newcastle Central Station where I was joined by the new leader of Newcastle City Council and on another occasion by Jamie Driscoll the Mayor of the North of Tyne Authority and a certain Jeremy Corbyn MP and it was clear to see that the support from passers-by is being reflected in wider support in the country.

"That's because your members actions chime with where people are struggling to make ends meet and angry that they are being asked to a pay the price for various crises that are not of their making.

"It seems as though the Labour Leader abandoned in its entirety the commitments made in the 2019 Election Manifesto, announcing a policy clean sheet.

"The Labour Front bench position, it would seem, is now a policy vacuum," he said.

He praised Mick Lynch's "magnificent" performance on the media and pursuing RMT's campaign for job security and a decent pay rise on the railways.

"Your general secretary Mick Lynch has been nothing short of excellent at exposing the lies and misdirection by the government and in the media, putting Tory spokespeople back in their box, humbling pundits and commentators alike and is a shining example of what can be achieved by simple, honest and direct communication with the people of this country.

"There are many across our movement and on the wider left who could learn from Mick," he said.

Looking ahead to kicking the Tories out of power, the Gateshead MP said: "The scale of the challenges we face are so great, the needs of the people who rely on us so massive, that we need to convince people that we can make things so much better, not merely managing, but changing the system to truly benefit the many not the few".

Mr Mearns also paid tribute to RMT NEC member Joe Kirby who tragically died a few weeks ago at the age of 39. ■



Labour MP Ian Mearns

COVENTRY BIN STRIKERS

Delegates heard from striking Coventry bin worker Peter Randle about their long running battle for a decent pay rise.

"There are times when you cannot afford not to strike," he said to applause. The battle against the Labour council has shocked many as it had brought in scab agency workers on double the normal pay in an attempt to break the strike. Delegates held a collection and donated £520 to the strike fund. ■



ARTHUR SCARGILL ADDRESSES CONFERENCE

It is a real privilege to be invited to speak when your union is taking strike action for a wage increase and against massive job cuts.

I applaud the outstanding leadership of RMT national officials whose advocacy in meetings and in the media has been inspirational.

The government has repeatedly said that the RMT claim is a matter between the union and the employers in the rail industry. On June 28, the transport secretary Grant Shapps acknowledged to the BBC that he and the treasury set an overall mandate which dictated how much was available and that he had final sign off on what was agreed.

If that is not proof that the government are behind what's taking place, then nothing will.

In effect Shapps confirmed that it is the government and not the employers that are dictating policy as was the case in the miners strikes of 1972/74 and 1984/85.

In 1972 the government and the coal board refused to accept a legitimate pay claim, resulting in Britain's miners taking national strike action for the first time in 46 years and one event that was pivotal leading to the victory in 1972. That event took place here in Birmingham.

For three days a handful of local NUM pickets had been able to prevent hundreds of scab lorry drivers from taking thousands of tonnes of coke from a depot in the Saltley area in this city.

Miners from other coal fields responded for a call to

help and on February 5 hundreds of miners including me arrived in Birmingham. The response by trade unions and the people of Birmingham was amazing. I had 13 meetings with other unions and shop stewards that evening and I argued as passionately as I could that miners did not need money or messages of support.

"We don't want your pound notes, we want you to take strike action," I said.

"Will you go down in history as the working class of Birmingham who stood by while the miners were battered? Or will you become immortal".

On February 10 1972 it remains a lasting symbol of what workers united can achieve. On that morning 30,000 Birmingham women and men came out on strike and 20,000 of them marched to join the miners on the picket line at Saltley Gate.

That day they marched into history and the government was shaken to its core.

Today 50 years later, they remain terrified of what the working class of Birmingham showed could be achieved and workers united struggle.

Margaret Thatcher wrote in her autobiography: "Mass pickets forced the closure of Saltley coke depot by sheer weight of numbers. It was a frightening demonstration".

Today it is the RMT who need the support of other unions and who should be taking supportive or taking secondary action.



Mick Lynch and Arthur Scargill

It is not for me to advise any union on what it should do. The RMT leadership has conducted an outstanding campaign and you have the right to ask other unions to take supportive collective action, against employers and government who are taking collective action against you.

It would not surprise me if the government started to use legislation to stop the RMT strike or to bring action against the union leadership as was the case with the NUM in 1984/85.

Unions should not be intimidated by any threat of sequestration or receivership.

I was appalled tonight that the leader of the Labour Party refuses to support RMT and its members. I am sick and tired of listening to politicians who support the right to strike in other

countries but oppose and threaten British workers who legally have the right to strike without interference from the government.

Our movement has historically defied unfair laws. The trade union movement won the right to exist not because of benevolent politicians but through strike action and struggle.

I have been an active trade unionist and socialist all my life. And until the day I die, I will remain committed not only to the trade union movement but to the vision of a socialist society.

I have utter pride for those who have built our movement and I say to you tonight, on the brink of your struggle, I applaud your actions and I am proud to stand full square behind the railway workers in Britain. ■

LEGAL

UNFAIR DISMISSAL WIN

Union wins rare wrongful dismissal case and member returns to work



An RMT member has been successful in his claims for unfair dismissal and wrongful dismissal against Govia Thameslink Railway Limited and has now been reinstated to his role.

The member had been employed by GTR for 14 years when he was dismissed in July 2020. The Tribunal accepted that he had an excellent work record and was known to be reliable, always punctual and never absent. It also accepted that he had a clean disciplinary record.

The matter for which the member was dismissed arose from his genuine misunderstanding of GTR's newly introduced 'home standby process' and the notice that staff would be given if they were required to attend work whilst rostered to be on home standby.

GTR did not challenge the genuineness of his misunderstanding. During the subsequent investigation meeting, GTR acknowledged that the member had been honest and suggested that would be taken into account to his advantage. The member was also told not to worry.

Despite those assurances, and the home standby process stating that the implications of not attending for work when called from home standby was being marked as absent and forfeiting the day's pay, the matter was progressed to a

disciplinary hearing. The disciplinary manager concluded that as the member was in breach of the relevant policy, he had committed gross misconduct and was dismissed with immediate effect.

In evidence before the Tribunal, the disciplinary manager said that she believed that summary dismissal was the only option and there was no argument in mitigation that the member could have made which would have changed her view. The letter sent by GTR confirming the member's dismissal stated that the disciplinary manager had taken into account mitigating factors, however the Tribunal found that her evidence at the hearing made it clear that she had not.

The member appealed against GTR's decision to dismiss him and an appeal hearing was held. The appeal manager told the member that he found the decision to refuse his appeal difficult as it did not seem 'morally right', but the Tribunal found that it was clear he felt that the wording of GTR's policies gave him no scope for manoeuvre.

RMT's legal department submitted claims of both unfair and wrongful dismissal to the Employment Tribunal on his behalf. The case was heard by the London Central Employment Tribunal at a two-day hearing in February 2022.

The Tribunal upheld both claims.

It found that GTR did not follow a fair process as the disciplinary manager had made up her mind before the disciplinary hearing that dismissal was the only outcome based on her understanding of the relevant policies and principles. She also stated that any breach of the policy was gross misconduct. On reviewing the policies, the Tribunal found that this clearly was not the case as there was scope for mitigating factors to be taken into account and there are some offences which are not categorised as gross misconduct. The Tribunal found that the disciplinary manager was wrong to conclude that any breach must result in dismissal, whatever the circumstances, and that this resulted in a substantive unfairness because the member's representations in mitigation were destined to fail as the outcome had been pre-determined.

The Tribunal also found that dismissal was not an appropriate sanction, fell outside the range of reasonable responses and that no reasonable employer would have dismissed in the circumstances. It took into account that the member was honest throughout, even though it would have been to his advantage to lie; that he had an exemplary attendance

record, clean disciplinary record and long service; that his explanation, while amounting to a misunderstanding of the rules, was genuine; that the publicised penalty for failing to attend shift was forfeiting a day's pay and being marked absent; and that gross misconduct offences in the relevant policies are focussed on safety on the railway, which was not at stake in this case.

The member's claim of wrongful dismissal was also upheld as the Tribunal found that he was not in fundamental breach of his contract of employment and that he had not committed gross misconduct. The Tribunal was due to consider remedy in the case, including the member's application for reinstatement, at a further hearing. However, GTR agreed to reinstate the member before the hearing took place.

This was an excellent result for the member as reinstatement following Employment Tribunal claims is rare. Tribunals order that a claimant be reinstated in less than one per cent of all unfair dismissal claims. In cases where the Tribunal does order reinstatement, the employer is not obliged to comply. Where an employer fails to comply with an Order for reinstatement, it will be ordered to pay additional compensation. ■

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MARITIME GRADES MEET



The biennial maritime industrial organising conference was held in Liverpool, the first time that the meeting was held in-person since 2018 when maritime and dock members travelled to the Isle of Man.

In 2022, there was a progressive emphasis on organising, education and campaigning to build members and industrial power in the maritime and docks industry.

The passage of time saw nearly 50 members and retired members pass away, including the union's first national secretary Tony Santamera and national executive committee member Joe Kirby. The name of all members who have passed were read out by the current national secretary Darren Procter and a minute's silence was observed.

RMT president Alex Gordon addressed delegates with a message of solidarity across all grades in the union and across the international trade union movement. As the union's general secretary has done in numerous media interviews, he drew an important parallel between the appalling actions of P&O Ferries and the Tory government's destructive proposals on the railways.

The fall in the number of workers covered by collective bargaining agreements since the days of Thatcher was a serious challenge and delegates were reminded of the need to recruit as many ratings into the union as the

union can – over half of UK Ratings are not in RMT but they should be.

Reviving the convenor and port committee structure from the National Union of Seamen days, as the union was doing in the Royal Fleet Auxillary would be a good start.

In a rousing summary, the president told the meeting that P&O's attack on nearly 600 Ratings jobs was an opportunity to recover those jobs and members across the industry. Recent successful campaigns in Orsted and Thames Clippers were an inspiration and an example of what the union can achieve as a collective.

These points were backed up in the report delivered by the national secretary Darren Procter who stressed the need to build an organising union that built agreements and terms and conditions for Ratings in the ferry sector and in growth areas like offshore renewables.

The meeting passed a number of detailed resolutions from Shipping Branches in Belfast, Glasgow, Liverpool, Dover and Portsmouth. These covered industrially vital areas such as organising and education and opened up new areas for campaigning, such as an end to outmoded language such as 'Seamen', 'Stewardess' and 'manning' when there is a concerted effort to attract more women to work in the maritime industry.

Delegates also agreed that

crew on offshore supply vessels needed to be part of the Union's Fair Ferries and other post-P&O campaigns for collectively bargained terms and conditions of employment for Ratings.

The plight of El Salvador dockers union STIPES general secretary David Flores was raised as he had been arrested without charge. He is being kept behind bars as part of a crackdown initiated by the country's president, the self-styled 'CEO of El Salvador' Nayib Bukele which has seen over 30,000 people arrested in a matter of months. Delegates and the union sent a message of solidarity and support to David and other brothers and sisters in El Salvador in their struggle against twenty-first century fascism.

Due to Covid-19, maritime organiser Ian Boyle was unable to make his planned speech to the meeting but Gerry Hitchen of the organising unit was an able replacement, telling delegates that it was up to them and their branches to set organising strategies for seafarers and dock workers in their regions. Delegates were encouraged to make suggestions and these provided much food for thought for the national secretary and NEC member present Sean Miskimmon.

The BGM concluded with unanimous support for Belfast as the venue for the next meeting and a note of appreciation to Liverpool Shipping for hosting and organising the 2022 conference. ■

ELECTIONS

Midlands NEC Election - General Grades Region 6 (Casual Vacancy to December 31, 2022)

NORA GRAHAM (Birmingham Rail)

Nominating Branches: Birmingham Rail; Wolverhampton

DAVE GREEN (Worcester No. 1)

Nominating Branch: Worcester No. 1

MICK RAMSEY (Birmingham Rail)

Nominating Branches: Birmingham Engineering; Derby Rail & Engineering; Walsall

TED WOODLEY (Coventry No. 1)

Nominating Branches: Coventry No. 1; Leamington; Nuneaton

London Transport Regional Organiser – Period of Office five years Nominations close on August 11 2022

JARED WOOD (Neasden Branch)

Nominating Branches: Bakerloo Line; Central Line West; Jubilee South; LU Fleet; Piccadilly & District West; TfL No. 1 & LU MATS Grades

MARITIME CHARITIES SUPPORT EX P&O FERRIES STAFF

Maritime welfare charities are pulling together to publicise the support available to seafarers who have been made redundant, including ex P&O Ferries staff.

The Maritime Charities Group Redundancy and Retraining Bursary provides help towards the cost of training to stay in maritime while The Seafarers' Charity's UK Maritime Anchor Fund provides financial help, relationship counselling and

mental health and wellbeing support.

Taken together this package of measures is helping seafarers who are out of work and experiencing hardship to get back on their feet and into employment. Between them the charities have helped 138 seafarers so far to the tune of over £66,000.

The MCG fund was set up in November 2020 in response to the growing number of seafarers losing work due to

Covid-19 and has now helped 100 seafarers. It provides up to £500 for training and refresher courses to UK-based seafarers who have lost work during the Pandemic and has stayed open to meet growing demand.

Deborah Layde, CEO Designate at The Seafarers' Charity said that hundreds of seafarers have been hit by sudden changes at P&O Ferries.

"Many will be adversely

affected and need support, perhaps for the very first time. The Anchor Fund can help with family or relationship counselling, signposting to welfare services and access to grants to cover increased welfare needs.

"Many ex-P&O Ferries seafarers have been helped by the Fund and we just want to make sure that others in the same position know it's there for them too," she said.



RFA HOSTS FALKLANDS CELEBRATIONS

The crew of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessel Mounts Bay participated in the Falkland 40 event at Portsmouth as part of the city-wide celebrations which started with a parade on June 19 with the unveiling of a new memorial plaque dedicated to the RFA, RN and the wider MN who lost their lives in the 1982 conflict.

RMT was represented onboard by assistant national secretary Mark Carden and RFA/RMT convenor Ian Parkin took the opportunity to visit and update members on current issues hosted by RMT member and ship's Bosun Shaun Hennessey.

RFA Mounts Bay is one of three LSDA class ships in RFA Service capable of carrying up to 500 troops along with helicopter support and vehicles, with docking facilities to support port and maritime movements via MEXE Floats. ■

RFA/RMT Convenor
Ian Parkin with Mark Carden



RMT member
Shaun Hennessey
with Falkland
veteran Andrew
Saunders



'ROUSE, YE WOMEN!'

RMT regional organiser Kathy Mazur addresses the annual chain makers' strike festival in the Midlands

In 1910 the women chain makers of Cradley Heath laid down their tools to strike for a living wage and the successful 10-week strike more than doubled their wages and gained international recognition.

Led by the legendary union organiser and campaigner, Mary Macarthur, the dispute made the principle of a national minimum wage a reality. The work was hot,

physically demanding and poorly paid, an example of a "sweated" trade, where workers (often women) were paid a pittance to produce cheap goods.

The Trade Boards Act of 1909 set up regulatory boards to enforce minimum rates of pay for workers in four of the most exploited industries - chain-making, box-making, lace-making and clothing. The Chain Trade Board announced

a minimum wage but many employers refused to pay the increase. In response, the women's union, the National Federation of Women Workers (NFWW), called the strike.

Union founder Mary Macarthur used mass meetings and the media to bring the situation of the striking women to a wider audience and developed a strike fund raising over £4,000.

At the end of the strike Mary Macarthur proposed that surplus money in the strike fund should be used to build a 'centre of social and industrial activity in the district'. Thousands of local people turned out for the opening of The Cradley Heath Workers' Institute in 1912.

The Institute was moved brick by brick to the Black Country Living Museum in 2006 where it now stands as a



memorial of the women's struggles which is celebrated with a festival every year.

RMT's first elected female regional organiser Kathy Mazur told festival goers that struggle of women workers over a hundred years ago was still inspiring workers today.

"Just as the women of Cradley Heath took on their employers who refused to pay decent wages, over 40,000 transport workers in RMT carried out the largest strike action for a generation this month against low pay, jobs cuts and attacks on terms and conditions.



"So, what can we as women do about it? I'll share with you a quote from the novelist Alice Walker who said: "The common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any".

"Women have historically given up their power and this can be seen in the fight for equal pay and how pensions were less than their male counterparts because they had stopped at home to raise their children.

"If we think about the case of Mrs Patience Round from Cradley Heath she was 79 years old and still working as a chain maker as she had done from the age of 10, supporting her husband who was disabled, she was on a low wage and needed to continue working to survive and keep her house.

"Returning from a strike meeting in 1910 she was quoted as saying: 'These are wonderful times, I never thought that I should live to assert the rights of us women, it has been the week of my life – three meetings, and such beautiful talking'.

"Mrs Round had realised that she had rights and could exercise them after years of thinking she had none. So, if you are in un-unionised industries speak to the unions about recognition and get your workplaces unionised.

"Together we are stronger we may all come from different unions and different parts of the country. But we are one union family who can support each other regardless of gender, race, sexuality etc and I would encourage more women to follow in my footsteps and fight for what you believe in," Kathy said to applause.

- Folk legend John Kirkpatrick and Neil Gore have written a folk opera about Mary Macarthur and the women chainmakers called *ROUSE, YE WOMEN!* ■

President's column

REMEMBER SPAIN

Speech delivered at the International Brigades Memorial Trust's 2022 annual commemoration of the British and Irish volunteers who fought fascism in Spain (1936-38).

Solidarity greetings from RMT to this celebration of the XV International Brigade volunteers.

IBMT was founded to celebrate and commemorate women and men from these islands who volunteered to defend the Spanish Republic against fascist forces that came to crush their democracy in 1936. If you are not an IBMT member, take this opportunity today to join us.

In the entrance of RMT's head office, Unity House is a plaque bearing names of 113 former members of the National Union of Seamen (NUS) and the National Union of Railwaymen (NUR).

Since that plaque was unveiled in June 2004 by Jack Jones, President of the International Brigades Association, many more union members of the XV International Brigade have come to light.

So, the total number of NUS and NUR members who volunteered to fight in Spain because – as the poet Cecil Day-Lewis wrote their "open eyes could see no other way" – numbered over 120.

They were able-bodied Seamen like Otto Estensen who joined the National Union of Seamen, Middlesbrough Branch in 1925 at the tender age of 15. They were railway Engineers, Workshopmen, Trackworkers – rail workers of all descriptions. My union is proud to honour them.

RMT is proud to be affiliated to the IBMT. Recording our history accurately is particularly important at a time when politicians and media attempt to rewrite it to suit their own narratives.

IBMT reminds us that the International Brigades volunteers from these islands had to travel to Spain undercover and with great difficulty, because the policy of Britain's Tory government in 1936 was to appease fascism, a policy it described euphemistically as 'non-intervention'.

Tory foreign policy in 1936 sought an accommodation with Hitler, Mussolini, and their fascist allies. This meant allowing Italy to invade Ethiopia, and German and Italian troops to support Franco's coup in Spain. In return, fascist powers allowed Britain to maintain its global Empire.

This policy of giving fascists a free hand was challenged by the volunteers of the XV International Brigade who we commemorate today. But their commitment to democracy began long before the Spanish Civil War broke out and, in many cases, continued long after the War ended.



Jim Prendergast was a communist, civil rights activist and a leading figure in the NUR. Jim joined the Irish section of the International Brigades and wrote for the *Daily Worker* (today's *Morning Star* newspaper). He later helped found the Connolly Association in 1938 to support Irish immigrants in Britain and was editor of the newspaper *Irish Freedom*.

Later Jim worked with the scientist JBS Haldane developing diving equipment for British Special Forces and became a rear gunner in Wellington bombers, the most dangerous position in the RAF.

In 1966, as Secretary of the NUR Marylebone branch, Jim Prendergast led a successful campaign to expose and end racial segregation (the 'colour bar') in job promotion within British Rail.

One of Jim's NUR branch members, a Guard named Asquith Xavier, reported that he had been refused promotion on the grounds that he was a black man. Jim marched his NUR members out of Marylebone Station and down the Euston Road to confront the NUR executive committee in its headquarters opposite Euston Station.

Dissatisfied with their response, Jim went directly to the *Daily Mirror* who led with the story of British Rail's shameful racist employment practices. The British Railways Board promptly retreated and appointed Asquith Xavier to the position he had applied for as an Intercity Guard at Euston.

Jim's combination of clarity of analysis and willingness to take direct action are part of that legacy of the International Brigades that we celebrate here today.

Alex Gordon

OUR COMMON HERITAGE



Harsev Bains of the Indian Workers Association introduces South Asian History month

What is my inheritance? To what am I an heir? To all that humanity has achieved, to all that it has thought and felt and suffered and taken pleasure in, to its cries of triumph and its bitter agony of defeat, to that astonishing adventure of humanity, which continues and beckons to us.

But there is a special heritage for those of us of India, not an exclusive one, for none is exclusive and all are common to the human race that has gone to make us what we are and what we are likely to be, wrote Jawaharlal Nehru first Prime Minister of India in his book *The Discovery of India*.

The *South Asian History* month in July and August co-founded by Dr Binita Kane is now in its third year and gaining widespread recognition. It will be followed by the well-established better known *Black History* month in October.

Black Africans and South Asians share a common heritage as colonised, oppressed, enslaved people, with rich cultures, ancient civilisations, diversity of

languages, phenomenal creativity, technical skills which were all destroyed. People made destitute and beggars in their own lands.

Human beings forcibly removed from their native habitat as slaves then being enslaved to serve the colonial masters in the Americas and the Caribbean. Their substitution by more than a million Indians following the 'abolition' of the "slave trade" in 1833 and the proclamation of the India Act in the same year creating indentured servitude.

The abolition of slavery act provided that after a brief period of 'apprenticeship' every enslaved African in the British Empire should be emancipated and an enormous sum of £20 million was paid by the British tax payers upon till 2015 to compensate the owners of the enslavers for 'their loss'. This magnanimous act of 'reparations' was done during a period of economic distress faced by the working class in Britain.

India Act of 1833, started the second era of British

Indian history according to Ramsey Muir late professor of history at University of Manchester; from the first phase of conquest to that of reorganisation and penetration. The India Act set out noble ideas "that the interests of the native subjects are to be consulted in preference to those of Europeans whenever the two come into conflict and the principles of British law could never be made the basis of an Indian code".

The actual reality in implementation was as far

removed as rules and legislation are to the current British government and its PM today.

Two key events of our heritage, which RMT members may be familiar with are the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 1919 and the less talked about Bengal famine. In 1943 up to four million Bengalis starved to death when Winston Churchill diverted food to British soldiers Commenting on the Bengal famine in 1943 Churchill is quoted as saying "I hate Indians. They are a beastly people with a beastly



religion”.

Jawaharlal Nehru, having witnessed the Bengal famine in 1943, described the pain and anguish “Famine came ghastly, staggering, horrible beyond words.

“In Malabar, in Bijapur, in Orissa, and above all, in the rich and fertile province of Bengal, men and women and little children died in their thousands daily for lack of food. They dropped down dead before the palaces of Calcutta, their corpses lay in the mud huts of Bengal’s innumerable villages and

covered the roads and fields of its rural areas. Men were dying all over the world and killing each other in battle; usually a quick death, often a brave death, death for a cause, death with a purpose, death which seemed in this mad world of ours an inexorable logic of events, a sudden end to the life we could not mould or control. Death was common enough everywhere.

But here death had no purpose, no logic, no necessity; it was the result of man’s incompetence and

callousness, man-made, a slow creeping thing of horror with nothing to redeem it, life merging and fading into death, with a death looking out of the shrunken eyes and withered frame while life still lingered for a while. And it was not considered right or proper to mention; it was not good form to talk or write of unsavoury topics. To do so was to ‘dramatise’ an unfortunate situation. False reports were issued by those in authority in India and England. But corpses cannot easily be overlooked; they came in the

way”.

On August 15 India marks 75 years of independence from Britain, linked with the horrendous traumatic toxic experience of partition with the creation of East and West Pakistan on August 14, 1947. This was the parting gift by Britain to their previous colonies who were considered backward and incapable of self-rule. £43 trillion was looted from India by the end of British colonial rule, leaving impoverished divided countries with broken economies. ■



SHELLSHOCK

A family in Knebworth were left shocked after their beloved tortoise, Twin, who had been missing for eight months, was found by three Network Rail workers.

John Keeley, Matt Cooke and Tony Russell were carrying out railway inspections along the East Coast Main Line, when they spotted Twin walking alongside the track.

After Twin was given a clean bill of health, John visited shops in Knebworth to see if anyone had lost a tortoise. Finally the power of social media proved fruitful, with Lizzie Jeanes, spotting a post and contacting John to claim

Twin who has lived with them since 1952.

John said: “It’s not every day you see a tortoise on the railway, so we definitely did a double take when we spotted Twin!”

Lizzie said: “I was absolutely elated when I heard that Twin had been found. When she went missing, we searched high and low for her, but we’d given up hope when she’d been missing for eight months.

“I can’t thank the team enough for reuniting us once more with Twin, who has been in our family for 70 years. We’re all delighted,” she said. ■

LANCASTER AWARDS



Lancaster Stagecoach bus drivers Bruce Outram and Gez Nichols received their 25-year membership badges. ■



ABERDEEN AWARD

Aberdeen Shipping Branch member Keith Elliott receives a medal to mark 40 years of RMT membership from general secretary Mick Lynch and

national secretary Darren Procter. Keith had to retire from Northlink Ferries last year for health reasons but remains an active member of the union. ■

Getting ready for Summer but still counting your pennies? That's where we can help!

The Union Rewards app has thousands of special offers, discounts and deals from big-name retailers you know and love to help you save money this winter. Plus, you get a FREE £10 bonus* just for joining! Here are just two of our exclusive in-app offers for RMT members this month:

HUSSE

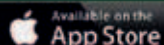
As they put it themselves: Huggle is the UK's most flexible way to get fit. They offer access to premium gyms, whether near work, home or even whilst travelling. There are no contracts or sign-up fees, just unlimited access to 1000's of venues including gyms, swimming pools and spas. With 14% off for Union Rewards members, your wallet will thank you!

Next, what better way to beat those January blues than to start planning a holiday? Bag a bargain with fantastic offers on travel, hotels and tours PLUS an additional 7% off from Inspire!

Inspire offers access to a great range of travel options. Most can be booked online but they offer even more choice if you decide to call their UK based call centre. With over 250 of the most well-known travel providers in the industry, there's plenty of options to choose from!

From groceries at Morrisons to the latest Adidas trainers, or even just topping up on your regular toiletries at Boots - you get even more for your money with Union Rewards! Download the app before 31st August 2022 to be automatically entered into our prize draw to win a £100 Love2Shop gift card.*

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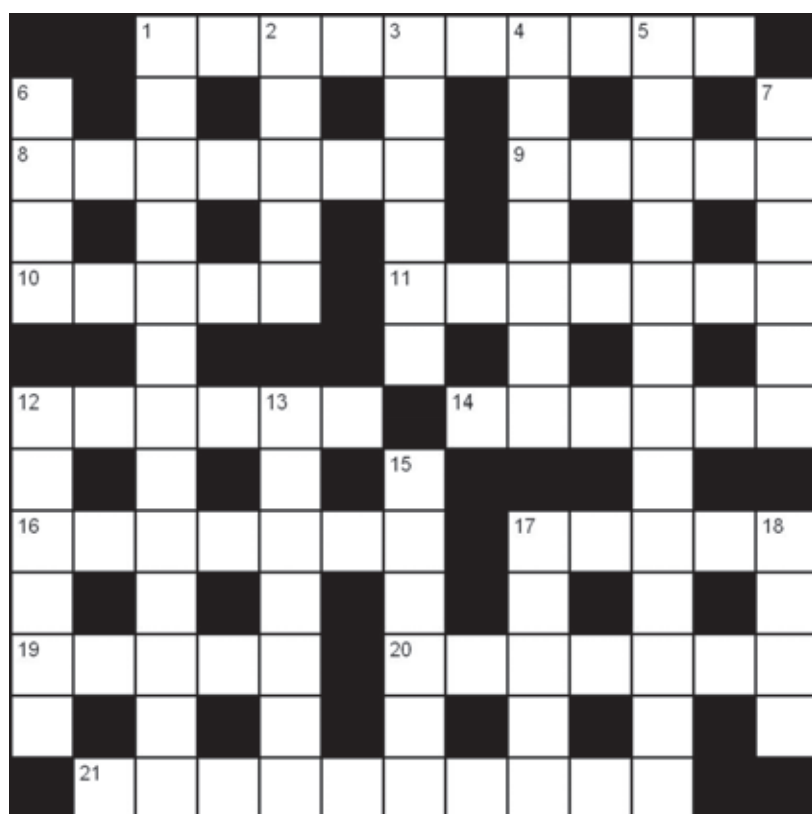
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£50 PRIZE CROSSWORD



Last month's solution...



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

Last month's winner is Steve Wood, West Mids.

ACROSS

- 1 Regulated (10)
- 8 Thin tower (7)
- 9 Entrails (5)
- 10 At that place (5)
- 11 Arch of facial hair (7)
- 12 Practical intelligence (6)
- 14 Become king or queen (6)
- 16 Oozing (7)
- 17 Competitor (5)
- 19 Match up (5)
- 20 Wide scope (7)
- 21 Discouragement (10)

DOWN

- 1 Have the idea for (13)
- 2 Assurance (5)
- 3 Quite (6)
- 4 Female large feline (7)
- 5 Fizziness (13)
- 6 Flake of soot (4)
- 7 Defective (6)
- 12 Shining (6)
- 13 Learner (7)
- 15 Retry (6)
- 17 Mature (5)
- 18 Flightless bird (4)



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MEMBERSHIP NUMBER

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

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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.

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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

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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.

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- This Guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay Direct Debits.
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Britain's Largest Specialist Transport Union

STOP *the profiteering*

An RMT report has revealed that the government's switch to management-fee based contracts **guarantee around £124 million each year** for train operating companies, restoring profits for the year to £600 million across the industry for 2020-21, with every owning group improving its position during the pandemic year.

The 'Fat Cats' have lobbied for these changes because of the failures of franchising and they are now reassuring their investors that there will be regular dividends from their rail operations.

Network Rail has also been told by the government to make **£billions of cuts**. All this is being paid for by slashing jobs, cutting services, closing ticket offices and suppressing the wages of transport workers.

START *investing in rail*

The entire transport system is under threat from years of profiteering, job cuts, pay freezes and attacks on terms and conditions.

Rail workers have had enough!



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