

Bakerloo News



National Union of Rail, Maritime & Transport Workers

October 2005

Good luck Paul Bowman

RMT Assistant General Secretary, Pat Sikorski made a presentation to Paul Bowman at a recent Branch meeting. Paul is a former level 1 Rep for train drivers at Elephant & Castle.

Paul's presentation was for services to the Branch. While Paul was the Rep, he helped increase RMT train membership to over 50% on the line and was instrumental in protecting several members jobs at the Elephant. Paul is now a driver at the new Hammersmith depot.



Defend Section 12 - Join the demo

The November 1987 Kings Cross Fire caused the death of 31 people. After the disaster management plans, drawn up before November 1987, to cut hundreds of station staff jobs were quietly put on the shelf.

An inquiry, chaired by Desmond Fennell QC, was launched into the causes of fire with a view to bringing forward proposals which would stop similar disasters in the future.

One of the most important conclusions of the Fennell Report was that London Underground had inadequate fire safety procedures. To address these problems the Government brought forward the Fire Precautions (Sub-Surface Railway Stations) Regulations 1989 which were made under Section 12 of the Fire Safety Act.

However in 2004 the Government announced that it wanted to get rid of the Regulations. RMT intervened, through our Parliamentary Group, and successful lobbying of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister by organisations including RMT, TUC, SERTUC, FBU, and Transport 2000 caused the Government to step back until such time as guidance has been produced on Fire Safety on the Tube.

The Government has now signalled the intention to revoke the Regulations by spring 2006. The RMT Group of MPs in Parliament has tabled an Early Day Motion in the House of Commons calling for the Regulations to be retained in full. To date the motion has received the support of 41 MPs.

In line with our on-going campaign

Bakerloo branch RMT believes it essential that the Regulations remain in place. They are currently applied to 115 London Underground sub-surface stations, the Glasgow Subway, as well as a small number of stations on the mainline. Every station on the Bakerloo line between Elephant and Castle and Kilburn Park is affected by the regulations which set out wide-ranging fire fighting and precaution measures including means of escape, means of fighting fire, minimum staffing levels, staff instruction/training means of detecting/warning of fire and fire resistance.

The Government wants to replace these minimum standards with a purely risk assessment based approach. This is completely wrong-headed. The Regulations have proved to work very effectively. Since their introduction in 1989 there has not been an instance where a fire has got out of control and caused loss of life to either LU workers or to the public.

In addition hundreds of jobs have been created across the London Underground due to the standard set out in the Regulations that a minimum of two staff members have to be on duty at all times when the public has access to the station. If the Regulations are removed these jobs are at risk. Management is looking to make savings on the station side in order to pay for the implementation of 35 hour week. The scrapping of the 1989 Regulations would give them the green light to look at reducing staff numbers at existing Section 12 stations.

RMT General Secretary Bob Crow has explained that "We argued that scrapping minimum standards, allowing management to conduct their own risk assessments and effectively leaving fire-precautions to their discretion would be a recipe for cost-driven corner-cutting. It would have led to a weakening of fire precautions, fewer station staff and more risk to our members and the public"

To defend the Regulations RMT has called a national demonstration on Saturday 26 November at 11.30am at Kings Cross station. A good turnout will show both the Government and LU management that we are determined to defend the safe operation of the Underground in the interests of both the workforce and the travelling public.

**Join the demonstration.
Saturday 26 November,
11.30am Kings Cross Station**

**Branch Meeting
Upstairs at The Clachan,
Kingly Street.
Near Oxford Circus tube.
Thursday
November 3
16.00hrs**

ALL GRADES UNITED IN ONE COMMON OBJECT

'Don't mention PPP'



Brian Munro

Branch Secretary

“ As an RMT rep you blame PPP for a lot of the problems facing tube workers and passengers. From the terrible facilities some of us work in, to the substandard infrastructure, or to management's continual attacks on safety. But it's becoming a bit like mentioning the war (the second world war and Iraq war rolled into one), it's not the done thing to talk about in polite society.

LUL bosses want the PPP to go away. They want your reps to stop raising the fact that fragmentation is the primary reason for a lot of the ills on the underground. In the same way, New Labour wishes that the Iraq war would disappear from our TV screens and newspapers. The problem for LUL and Labour is that neither will.

The after effects of the Iraq war is constantly referred to in the media; so as an opponent of war and privatisation, it was interesting to see that PPP also made national news recently.

The shambles on the Northern Line where the failing tripcocks on the 92 stock trains led to drivers refusing to work on the grounds of health & safety have again called the whole PPP into

question.

Where once, London Underground operated as a unified structure, the Northern Line debacle has shown how divided we have become under privatisation. LUL blame Tube Lines. Tube Lines blame Alstom. We don't know yet which dog Alstom want to kick.

To resolve the matter LUL had to invoke "emergency instructions" to get engineers of their choice into Alstom to try to get some progress: ie trains running with proper emergency brakes in case a train passes a signal at danger. But this involved an untold amount of lawyers ploughing through thousands

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of pages of contractual legalese. As Bob Kiley said, "dealing through these contracts is like peeling an onion - and it smells worse at every layer."

Apparently the PPP contracts include 135 documents, covering 28,000 pages and more than 2 million words. You think the contract for the Northern Line is bad? Check out the one for the drivers step back facilities and toilets at the Elephant. So you want something done on the tube? Call the lawyers!

Now Kiley wants to end Alstom's PFI contract for train maintenance. But there is also a growing call from the national press to end the whole mess on the tube; with the recognition that the only rational way to do this, is to end PPP.

When national newspapers blame PPP, it shows that the RMT's war against privatisation is just. It's time this PPP is finished off, once and for all.

POMageddon

Ticket office staff have been at the receiving end of LU management's half baked schemes for the past couple of years, but with the introduction of the new coin handling units for passenger operated machines, the bottom of the barrel has been definitely breached.

Following a small trial of prototype machinery at Victoria, a further roll out of less than perfect replicas has followed at Victoria and Oxford Circus Group. The plan being a general roll out across the network.

The new coin handling units, it has been promised, will do away with old recurring problems, whilst reducing the need to float the machines with different coins as often as present. The reality has been totally different!

A PPP mentality has run through the whole trialing process, with no agreement between LU and CTS: the firm who provide the maintenance of the machines, as to what is required and how it will be fully tested. It remains a mystery as to who signed off the new machinery after such a small trial at Victoria in the first place.

The new machinery has had numerous problems which staff were told had been eliminated: such as the code 176 coin tube jam. The process of introducing the machines has occurred without the prior consultation with staff. As is shown by Few Fare Machines (FFMs) having coin tubes for £1 coins, and Multi Fare Machines (MFM) having no coin tubes for 20ps. Also it appears that no accommodation is being made to employ extra staff to deal with the extra workload at the point where the machinery is changed over.

If, as seems clear, LU's plan by introducing the new machinery is to cut back on ticket office and station grade jobs, staff should not be breaking their backs to get the new machinery up and running. Whatever LU's plans the roll out of the new machinery should now be fully suspended until staff and our representatives have been properly consulted. Staff also need to be assured that there will be a suspension of ticket office performance figures, over the period of the introduction of the new machinery, at the groups concerned.

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