



## ISS ATTACKS RMT CLEANERS

### JUSTICE FOR MARY - JUSTICE FOR ALL OUR MEMBERS

The dastardly attacks on our cleaning grade activists by ISS, the largest of the cleaning companies, intensified throughout January. Mary Boakye, our dedicated rep at Northumberland Park depot, was wrongly sacked following an accident at work in October, reinstated and then sacked again at a hearing on December 9th. Mary had an appeal hearing at the ISS head office on January 8th. At the same time the secretary of the cleaning grades committee, Clara Osagiede, was facing a trumped up charge of going home early after representing a member. A large crowd of supporters protested outside the office and obviously rattled ISS management, particularly in the face of complaints from their neighbours in the mainly residential area. They dropped the silly charge against Clara. At her original hearing management took the decision to dismiss Mary before evening listening to the defence argument. At her appeal, Mary was represented by Steve Hedley, our new regional organiser, who stated that management just ignored every point he made. Because of the supporters outside, chicken managers reserved judgement, only to confirm Mary's dismissal the following day. A further protest took place outside the ISS office on January 15th.



**Mary's supporters protest outside ISS HQ in Greenwich**

A well attended public meeting, on behalf of Mary and the other cleaners, took place at the Exmouth Arms on January 23rd where RMT members and supporters vowed to continue the battle to defend our cleaning activists. On Monday January 26<sup>th</sup>, another protest took place and supporters occupied the ISS office for a time. Even though supporters left the office before the arrival of the police, the constabulary adopted a heavy handed attitude and refused to allow a peaceful protest outside. They threatened to arrest us for breach of the peace if we didn't move away. At this time, Steve Hedley was in the building representing Philip Mambuliya, the cleaning grade chairman, who was being questioned about his national insurance number. Shortly afterwards, Steve & Philip

emerged to tell us the news we had feared: Philip was sacked for allegedly having a dodgy National Insurance number 6 years ago, even though there is currently no problem with his immigration status.

We need to stop the cleaning companies in their tracks, and make sure they get the message that we will not tolerate their attacks upon our cleaning colleagues. The fightback has already begun with more lobbies and protests, such as the recent one outside ISS HQ, by cleaners and their supporters planned. The union is also building up support amongst cleaners for a strike ballot. It was the strike of last year which eventually secured the London living wage of £7.45 an hour for Underground cleaners; perhaps it will take another strike to stop these same companies from attacking and sacking our cleaner members.

**ZAK KHAN – the agony continues...  
Appeal result deferred  
Report on page 4**



# TETRA WAVES...

## SHOCK REPORT REVEALS HEALTH DANGERS

Report by Ifor Davies (Revenue Control BCV)

**Y**ou may be aware that the LUL Connect Radio System and the emergency services Airwave system both use Tetra Wave Radio technology. Safety reps have recently received a shocking copy of a Police Federation Report questioning the safety of Tetra Wave Radio as shown at

[www.planningsanity.co.uk/reports/trower.htm](http://www.planningsanity.co.uk/reports/trower.htm)

As Tetra radio uses pulsed microwaves and electromagnetic frequencies some of the health problems alleged to be associated with Tetra include arthritis, skin problems, ear problems, leukaemia, childhood cancer, sleep problems, depression, memory loss, difficulty in concentrating and many other medical conditions. This report is essential reading for anyone concerned about their health.

As a result of this report on Friday 26th September 2008, RMT Finsbury Park Branch held a Presentation by an Independent Researcher on TETRA/Airwave radio waves, attended by many RMT Health & Safety reps. The presentation showed over 10 years of documented study material and findings into the effects of Tetra radio waves that are being emitted from the new communication

equipment that we currently use each day. The researcher cited the work of recognised scientists in their field via slide presentation and then attempted to make the findings clearer to the layman. This event was specifically aimed at all Health and Safety Reps to help create awareness in their local areas.

The general feeling after the Tetra presentation was their is no doubt that TETRA/Airwave radio appeared to be unsafe. Anyone who has read the scientific study done by the Police Federation scientist or who have researched a little of the wealth of information about this subject on the internet would probably be concerned. Another essential wealth of Tetra wave relevant information and is viewable at

[www.tetrawatch.net](http://www.tetrawatch.net)

Different quotes on Tetra, with many links to sites where the quotes come from are all shown at

[www.whale.to/b/tetra\\_q.html](http://www.whale.to/b/tetra_q.html)

One quote about Tetra from the Police Federation scientist Barrie Trower sticks out the most:

**"The government, government scientists and [this industry] will be responsible for more civilian deaths in peacetime than all the**

**terrorist organisations put together."**

As a result of these concerns some local safety reps have asked management to provide the following:

### **1/ A Certificate of safety compliance**

(to show that the system complies with all relevant legislation)

### **2/ Provide evidence of an agreed monitoring system**

(To check agreed levels are not breached in regard to radio waves and microwave radiation)

### **3/ Provide an Insurance Certificate**

(Proving insurance has been obtained specific to connect)

Train Operators are also concerned about the cumulative effect of radiation in their cabs. This is because they have other devices including incab CCTV, signalling and 630-volt motoring. This equipment emits its own electromagnetic waves in a closed environment deep below ground.

The long term effects of prolonged use of TETRA are already potentially very concerning. RMT Head Office needs to take a leading role on this issue and the health monitoring must start as soon as possible.

# Pay 2009 the storm clouds gather...

**A**s you probably know, the 3-year pay and conditions deal to which we have been committed since 2006 is coming to an end. LUL asked our union to send them our pay claim early so that negotiations could start promptly; we are all familiar with the routine whereby we end up waiting until Christmas before the pay rise is finally settled. Well, our claim, details of which were published in the last edition of Monthly News, was submitted in November. The company responded on 16<sup>th</sup> December. Sadly, they ignored every single demand in the claim and chose instead to talk about their desire to lock us into a 5-year deal. They also spoke about our pension scheme and made some veiled threats concerning the cost to the company of our current scheme. It was clear to our negotiators that the company intends to play hardball and that many of our hard-won terms and conditions could come under threat this year. The company hopes to be able to use the current recession to frighten staff into accepting an inferior pay award this time round – an award which we would have to swallow for the next 5 years, if they get their way.

## 5-year deal

If the company was to make an offer which substantially improved our pay and conditions over the next 5 years,

then we would have no problem with that in principle. As the opposite seems to be the case, our union is sticking to its claim for a single-year deal which delivers a real improvement to our terms and conditions.

## The truth about our pension

As it was LUL which brought up the issue of the pension scheme, we need to be clear about the facts. It is true that for every pound you pay as a scheme member, the company is now paying about £9, a sum which they clearly think this is too generous. However, they are committed to contributing this sum in order that the scheme is able to meet its liabilities to retired members. It's neither our fault nor the fault of pensioners if the recession has reduced the value of the scheme's assets. Of course, LUL isn't responsible for the recession either. However, LUL (or, more accurately, London Regional Transport) is responsible for taking a 'pensions holiday' during the 1980s. At a time when the economy was buoyant, LRT **decided to stop paying any contributions** to the scheme because the scheme's investments were rising in value. Please note, however, that staff was still paying their 5% contributions throughout this time!

If the company had not decided to stop its contributions during that time, our scheme would be in a much healthier position

today. So we will not be lectured by LUL about how hard it is for the company to maintain their contributions, and we should be prepared to use every means at our disposal to stop any attempt to close or in any way diminish the scheme.

## The Recession

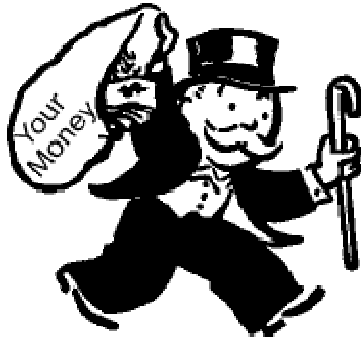
Does the fact that we have entered a recession mean that we need to 'tighten our belts'? This is the message we get from the business world and the politicians, but is it right? Let's look at some facts:

- We, as ordinary working people, are in no way responsible for this credit crunch – the blame lies with greedy bankers and speculators and the politicians who have indulged their every whim;
- Having created this mess, our government bailed out the banks to the tune of **£500 billion**. That's £500 billion of our money, money which should have been spent on public services and decent pay and pensions;
- In 1989, the average Chief Executive of a FTSE top 100 company earned 19 times more than an average worker. Today, the ratio is a staggering 75:1, such have been the ever increasing rewards for those at the top;
- In 2007, London was home to 23 billionaires with a combined wealth of £45 billion. Yet they were allowed to pay a paltry

£14.7 million in tax due to a legal loophole which lets them smuggle their assets to offshore tax havens;

- Ex-Prime Minister and warmonger, Tony Blair, earns an average of **£164,000 per 90-minute after-dinner speech**, and receives **a pension of £63,000 a year** at our expense;
- Last, but by no means least: **London Underground now carries more passengers than at any time in its history – and it is we who**

*make this happen through our daily hard work*



Now, those responsible for crippling the country through their short-sighted greed are not only still living the high life, but

have the gall to expect the rest of us to pay for their mess by 'tightening our belts'. Well we're not falling for it. We deserve a decent reward for our efforts at making the Underground the busiest railway in the world and if it means we have to fight for it then we should be prepared to do just that. Look out for future reports on the pay negotiations, but be clear about this: we will need to stay strong if we are to resist a management attack on our conditions.

## **ZAK KHAN'S APPEAL DECISION DEFERRED**

**Arnos Grove driver, Zak Khan, harshly sacked last month after having a SPAD last October, has had his appeal decision deferred, not once, but twice. At his appeal hearing on 3<sup>rd</sup> February, Zak's rep, Dean O'Hanlon, pointed out the many points which the original disciplinary panel skipped over, along with new evidence, and made a strong case for Zak's reinstatement. Appeal Chairman, Nick Shaw, listened to the points made, before announcing that he was not going to make his decision immediately; the appeal would now be reconvened at 1530 on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> February. when Zak was to be informed by Mr Shaw of his decision. However, on Friday, Mr Shaw informed Zak and his rep that further investigations were to take place and that he would now make his decision some time the following week!**

**We all hope that common sense and fair play prevail and that Zak is reinstated. However, should Zak's dismissal be upheld, we will be calling on all members at Arnos Grove depot to vote YES in the resulting ballot for industrial action in support of brother Khan.**

**When the decision is announced, a local leaflet will be circulated at the depot giving more details of the case and, if necessary (we hope it won't be), reiterating the importance of voting for strike action. What happened to Zak could happen to any driver. UNITY IS STRENGTH.**

## **MANAGERS ABUSE SRT**

At a recent branch meeting it was reported that the Special Requirements Team (SRT) was being misused by management in order to cover such things as sickness, training and for staff taking part in Valuing Time. Stations Functional rep, Neil Cochrane, explained that this was a

breach of the Framework Agreement which states that the SRT is to be used for *special events* only, and must not be used as a reserve to cover local staff shortages. Any GSM needing the services of the SRT for a special event must fill out a request form detailing the nature of the event for

which SRT support is required. Neil is asking all local reps to go to their GSMs and ask for details of all occasions that the SRT has been requested and for the reasons why. This abuse by management of an agreed procedure will then be tackled by our Functional reps.

# HEALTH AND SAFETY EXTRA

## Track Inspection Cutbacks Stopped by RMT

In another example of private sector cost-cutting at the expense of safety, Tubelines recently took away two-person track inspections and replaced it with single-person inspections. Following the intervention of our RMT Health and Safety reps, Tubelines were forced to reinstate two-person inspections. This story shows two things: first, that the private PPP companies are more concerned with making a profit from the railway than with the safety of staff and passengers and, second, that we need a strong all-grades union to force these companies to put safety first.

## Accident Book Entries

As you may be aware, there is no longer an accident book. If you have an accident at work,

the new procedure is for the DMT to make out an EIRF with the details filled in. However, we advise that you should do this together with the DMT, to ensure that all the details entered on the EIRF are correct. This has now been agreed with management. You can also ask to see a final copy. If you have an accident, and the DMT tries to deny you your right to assist them in doing the EIRF, or refuses to give you a final copy, contact one of your reps immediately.

## SPADs – when to reset the tripcock

For many drivers, having a SPAD can be a very uncomfortable experience. This is partly to do with the event itself, but also because of the dangers involved in getting the follow-up procedure wrong; the danger to life and limb, and the danger of losing your job. There is currently some confusion concerning the

precise time at which to reset the train's tripcock after a SPAD. The new rule book omits to answer this for reasons best known to its authors. However, you should be aware that the tripcock *must not* be reset until you have been given authority to proceed (at a semi-automatic signal) or until you are ready to proceed at an automatic signal. This was a rule in the old reference manual and is still taught on ATOR, the logic being that if you reset the trip before you are ready or have been permitted to proceed, then the 3-minute time delay (which is a safety-critical device) is compromised. Amongst the many things the investigating manager looks for on the download of a train involved in a SPAD will be the exact moment at which the trip was reset. So don't risk your job – get it right.

## Help the RMT Credit Union celebrate - £2,000 May Day draw

The RMT Credit Union is celebrating reaching its first 1,000 members and its first £1 million in assets with a £2,000 prize draw for all new and existing members. To be eligible you have to be a member of the RMT Credit Union before 30<sup>th</sup> April 2009. Those who work at Seven Sisters depot, a Credit Union day is being held on the 12<sup>th</sup> February 2009 in the Training Room on the first floor of Pleiades House, between 10.30am and 2pm. For those interested in joining, application forms can be picked up at the booking-on point at Seven Sisters depot. Any other interested RMT members can either complete a Credit Union application form which is published in the RMT News or contact the Credit Union direct on 0207 529 8835.

## WRITE TO MONTHLY NEWS

Monthly News is a newsletter written by and for RMT members in Finsbury Park branch. We welcome articles on all work-related matters from any member with something they wish to share. Please feel free to email us with anything you would like to see published. We won't divulge your name unless you give us permission. All articles to be sent to:

[monthlynews@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:monthlynews@tiscali.co.uk)

## Next Branch Meetings

**February 12<sup>th</sup>, March 5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> at 1600hrs, Twelve Pins Public House, (Near Finsbury Park Station)**

## Vacancies

- **Brixton Group – Industrial and Health and Safety Rep**
- **Victoria Group – Health and Safety Rep**
- **Branch Political Officer**

**JOIN RMT – THE UNION FOR ALL TRANSPORT WORKERS!  
UNITY IS STRENGTH**