

Dates For Your Diary 2013

February

LGBT History Month

28th of March

Nominations for this year's LGBT conference must be received by RMT HQ

17th and 18th of May

The RMT's LGBT conference takes place in Blackpool. It has been extended to two days following a motion and executive decision.



Contact Us - Email the Equalities Officer Jess Webb at j.webb@rmt.org.uk. We're on Facebook too – search for 'RMT LGBT Members'

Standing Proud



RMT Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender News - Winter 2012/13

***“Cure homophobia not
homosexuality”***

RMT Hold Protest Outside Ugandan Embassy Over Threat To LGBT Rights

December 7th

The Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers Union held a protest outside the Ugandan embassy in London over the government's plan to introduce a new law known as the 'Kill the Gays Bill.' If this bill is enacted, Uganda would be one of the legally most discriminatory places for sexual minorities in the world.

RMT members handed out hundreds of leaflets in Trafalgar square and helped to spread awareness of LGBT Ugandan's plight to thousands more with flags and banners which caught the attention of many passers-by. Several people approached us to voice their support for LGBT Ugandan's and disgust at what the government there is planning.

This included an ambassador from an EU nation who said he was fully against the discrimination of Ugandans government and was encouraged to

hear that the protest and stance we have taken is supported by the union.

Following a resolution passed at this year's LGBT conference, and later by the unions AGM, the RMT has been campaigning against international discrimination of LGBT people. Protests have also recently been held at the Zimbabwe and Russian embassies.

During the protest a letter was handed to the Ugandan ambassador which was signed by RMT General Secretary Bob Crow and dozens more RMT officials and members.

Letter to Ugandan ambassador

UGANDA ANTI-HOMOSEXUALITY BILL

At the time of writing this letter, Uganda's proposed Anti-Homosexuality 'Kill the Gays' Bill is on the schedule of the country's Parliament and will be debated sometime very soon.

We join others in describing this bill as abhorrent and an offence to decency, and we stand shoulder-to-shoulder with all people opposing this draconian anti-gay legislation.

If the Ugandan Parliament passes this bill into law, it would bring in one of the most discriminatory legal regimes in the world for sexual minorities.

We note that many Ugandan parliamentarians describe homosexuality as 'un-African', when in fact the history of British colonialism in Uganda and other African countries reveals it was anti-homosexual legislation rather than homosexuality that was introduced by external forces. It is homophobia that is 'un-African', not homosexuality.

We, the undersigned members of the RMT National Union of Rail, Maritime and

Transport Workers, ask President Yoweri Museveni to veto the Anti-Homosexuality Bill and renounce it once and for all; protect the universal human rights embodied in the Ugandan constitution; and defend the rights of all Ugandans regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation.

Read more about RMT's activities in defending international LGBT rights: www.rmtlondoncalling.org.uk/LGBT





LGBT Conference 2013

• *Get your nominations in quick!*



The National LGBT Members' Conference has been extended to take place over two days. The next conference will be in Blackpool on **Friday 17th and Saturday 18th May 2013** at The Best Western Carlton Hotel, 282-286 North Promenade, Blackpool FY1 2EZ.

Branches and Regional Councils have been invited to submit motions for the agenda of the Conference. These should be relevant to the concerns of LGBT members throughout the transport industry and must conform to Union policy.

All motions must be received at Unity House by 28th March 2013 at the latest. In addition to the above,

invitations would be welcome to host the 2014 Conference.

Branches and Regional Councils are entitled to nominate a maximum of four delegates each. Nominations must be returned to Head Office by 28th March 2013. Should delegates

require childcare this must be indicated on the form.

Bob Crow, RMT General Secretary said: *I wish to remind Branches and Regional Councils of their duty to pay their Delegates' expenses. A £35 per delegate payment is made to*

Branches, up to a maximum of seven, i.e. £245 per Branch per year, payable in respect of sending delegates to a Grades Conference or the RMT National Women's; Young Members'; Health and Safety; Black and Ethnic Members'; LGBT Members' Conferences.

Please be aware that members of the National LGBT Advisory Committee are not automatically nominated to the Conference. If Advisory Committee members wish to attend they will need to be nominated by their Branch or Regional Council.



RMT members at the 2012 LGBT conference

RMT Protest Russian Governments Attacks On LGBT People

22 November, 2012

The RMT held a protest outside the Russian Federation Embassy in Kensington to voice our disgust at the government's attacks on gay rights and to voice our support for LGBT people in the country.

RMT's activists organised leafleting and a demo at the embassy and 200 leaflets were handed out. We also handed a letter signed by numerous RMT Members to the Russian Federation Embassy staff:

VIOLATION OF RIGHTS OF LGBT RUSSIANS

We, the undersigned members of the RMT National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers, urge President Vladimir Putin to stop attacks on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) Russians; honour Russia's International human rights obligations and treaties, and stop pushing discriminatory anti-gay legislation.

In October 2010 the European Court of Human Rights found Russia in violation of freedom of assembly for denying activists the right to hold pride marches. But despite this legally binding ruling, attempted gay pride rallies and LGBT rights pickets in Moscow and St Petersburg have been repeatedly dispersed by police, and gay rights advocates arrested and detained for the simple act of publicly demanding their rights.

On each occasion, police have used excessive force and failed to protect peaceful LGBT protesters from the violence of anti-gay protestors, Russian Orthodox Church activists, neo-Nazis, and extreme nationalists.

In June 2012, the Moscow City Government banned gay pride events in the city for 100 years. In

Saint Petersburg, it is now illegal to speak in public or publish any article about being LGBT. After Ryazan, Arkhangelsk and Kostroma, St Petersburg is the fourth city to pass such a law.

Such laws unmistakably contravene Russia's obligations as a signatory to the European Convention on Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, both of which impose obligations on countries to protect the right of individuals not to be discriminated against, and the rights to freedom of assembly, association, and expression.

We are appalled by the homophobic extremism of deputy Vitaly Milonov, a noted and outspoken proponent of Russia's Orthodox Church and the author of the St Petersburg anti-gay law. His repeated reference to LGBT

people as "perverts" and his invented claim that gay rights activists are "waging an aggressive campaign of conversion among Russia's children with the backing of Western governments" is scandalous and defamatory. We note his recent interview on the Russian talk radio show Ekho Moskvyy, when he likened same-sex attraction to "a bad habit" and "an illness which can be cured". "God can send many temptations upon us" he said, "but the thing is, this illness is easily treated by fasting and praying." "I do not know of a single case within the Russian Orthodox Church that a man would not be cured by his sincere repentance in this sin. People get rid of it, just like they get rid of kleptomania".

We call on President Putin to end the persecution of LGBT Russians, honour Russia's International human rights obligations and treaties, and respect the rights of all Russians regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation.



Executive Response to motion on the effect on young LGBT people of scrapping housing benefits

At the November advisory committee the following resolution was passed.

Scrapping Housing Benefits For Under 25s

We note the plans announced by the Conservative Party leader on 25 June 2012 to scrap housing benefit to under 25s. We note the comments of Bob Green, Chief Executive of the LGBT Housing Association Stonewall

Housing, that there is a risk that the LGBT people fleeing homophobic or transphobic violence “will remain in serious situations and some may have to move further away from their support networks. In essence, LGBT people may not be able to afford safety”

We believe that plans to remove housing benefit are an attack on young LGBT people’s independence and their ability to escape homophobia/transphobia.

Recognising the role of the LGBT Advisory Committee, we ask that RMT, in pursuing its policies as determined by the AGM and /or Council of Executive on this issue,



please include the impact on young people outlined in this resolution.”

The RMT’s executive have since responded to the motions call.

We note that this is already Union policy and this horrendous attack on under 25s is part of this rotten Government's attacks on working people and noting that our LGBT members feel under further attack as many of them are trapped in circumstances where they are afraid to 'come out', which causes them more problems.

The General Secretary is instructed to write to the TUC explaining our position and we are already campaigning with other groups eg. The People's Charter, in a broad based campaign to defend those under-25s who are very vulnerable.

LGBT History Month

This month is LGBT History Month. This annual event, the website says is designed to: “celebrate the lives and achievements of the LGBT community.

We are committed to celebrate its diversity and that of the society as a whole. We encourage everyone to see diversity and cultural pluralism as the positive forces that they are and endeavour to reflect this in all we do.

2013 will be dedicated to Maths, science and engineering.”

- The website has events listed across the UK - <http://lgbthistorymonth.org.uk/event-calendar/>



RMT vows to fight 'gay cure' organisations

Following a resolution passed at the November LGBT Advisory Committee, against 'gay cure' organisations, the RMT's Executive have committed the union to take action.

Executive response

We note the item from the LGBT Advisory Committee and we instruct the General Secretary to:

1. Support campaigns against anti-gay organisations that fraudulently and harmfully claim they are able to 'cure' homosexuality.
2. Support and mobilise for appropriate protest actions on this issue to bring the fake business of 'reparative therapy' to an end.
3. Request the RMT's Parliamentary group of MPs, led by John McDonnell, to raise this

issue again in parliament - including the issue of CARE funded interns for MPs and ministers in the coalition government.

4. Lobby government to make it an offense to advertise, promote or offer bogus gay 'cures'.
5. Support international campaigns against the 'ex-gay' movement and raise the issue with international trade union contacts.
6. Campaign under the slogan, "Cure homophobia not homosexuality".

Gay cure therapies – what's the issue?

Gay cure therapies may seem a distant reality but they came near to being advertised across London busses. This followed the Stonewall campaign "Some People Are Gay. Get Over It." The RMT passed a motion at last year's conference detailing our disgust at such a situation and demanding it not



happen again. The motion was covered in the Autumn 2012 edition of Standing Proud.

RMT members discovered that a gay cure organisation – Living Waters – which promotes 'gay cures' was planning an event in a UK college. Several members in a personal capacity wrote to the college expressing our serious concerns and shock at the situation. The course never took place as advertised.

These deeply harmful and unscientific therapies ruin lives and encourage people to live a lie both to themselves and friends and family; often in the name of religion. Journalist Ron Strudwick investigated the matter and the

therapist concerned was later struck off. You can read the article here: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/this-britain/the-exgay-files-the-bizarre-world-of-gaytostraight-conversion-1884947.html>



Getting in touch

You can find us on Facebook by searching for 'RMT LGBT' and on twitter at twitter.com/rmtlgbt.

There are lots of LGBT articles at www.rmtlondoncalling.org.uk/LGBT

To contribute or make suggestions about these newsletters contact peter@rmtlondoncalling.org.uk