

# **CITIES OF LONDON & WESTMINSTER TRADES COUNCIL**

## **JAN/FEB 2010 NEWS AND EVENTS**

### **TC NEW ADDRESS**

**c/o GFTU, Headland House, 308-312 Grays Inn Road, London  
WC1X 8DP**

**Telephone 0207 520 8340**

e mail stays the same – [secretary@clwtc.org](mailto:secretary@clwtc.org)

### **A YEAR OF BATTLES**

**2010 is shaping up to be a year of heavy battles for unions. We have a general election coming up in May in which the major parties are trying to outdo each other in the cuts they will carry out to pay for the crisis created by the bankers. The Tories threaten to outdo the disastrous Labour record and behind their sanitised sound bites their spokespersons have revealed their real intentions in briefings to special interest groups and in dialogue with the privateers. The Labour Government ploughs on regardless of all the evidence with plans to privatise, sell off and outsource key parts of the public sector. There are disastrous proposals for important bodies like the Land Registry.**

**The TubeLines part of the PPP on the London Underground is in danger of collapsing like Metronet before it, at great cost to the public purse. The proven poor value for money of the privatised railways is now seeing the Government offering even longer contracts to the avaricious companies who have been sucking profits out of the system.**

**We have seen in the recent Cadbury takeover by Kraft how the bosses look on the interests of the workforce. What on earth could persuade the CEO who had said the takeover was a disaster for the company and had made common cause with the workers to fight it? Oh that's right, the offer of a few million pounds and he had a sudden and sincere change of heart.**

**We also have the increasing intervention of the courts using the anti-union laws. The BA case before Xmas showed the bias of the law for the employers when an**

overwhelming ballot for action was overturned on a small technical point affecting a group who's exclusion would have made no difference to the outcome, with the judge introducing considerations about the effect of the action which is not in the legislation. This follows numerous attempts to stop ballots on the railway, tube and buses. A further injunction hit workers at Westbourne Park garage who had voted for action as part of the Unite battle for common terms and conditions for London bus workers. We had the same things played out over the national postal strike which is still crawling its way through a negotiating process under ACAS. Local authorities, teaching and further education are braced for massive cuts and threatened job losses. London hospitals are earmarked for closure or bed cuts And on and on it goes.

We will therefore have a heavy year of fighting to preserve jobs, pay and conditions. Vital in this fight is co-operation and solidarity between workers in different areas and jobs. This has to start at local level. It has to challenge the anti-union laws. It has to send a wave of solidarity to produce strengthened joint action at regional and national levels.

As part of this the Trades Council is discussing holding a meeting to build such solidarity in the lead up to the election. We hope to have details shortly.



**RAIL UNION RMT today called for an immediate halt to plans to axe up to 1500 safety critical rail maintenance jobs as a new report for the Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB) revealed that six out of ten key safety recommendations on track inspection and repair, following the fatal derailment on the West Coast Mainline in February 2007, have either not been implemented at all by Network Rail or have not been fully implemented to the satisfaction of the Office of Rail Regulation(ORR).**

The RAIB report into the Marks Tey derailment, published this week, contains a specific section on the Grayrigg derailment on the 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2007 in which one person died and 30 suffered serious injuries. The RAIB report says that the Office of Rail Regulation **“does not believe that sufficient work has been done”** on four out of ten key track inspection and repair recommendations and on two of the recommendations **“Network Rail has proposed not to implement”** contrary to the view of the ORR that the recommendations remain valid.

RMT believes that the failure of Network Rail to either implement, or implement fully, the majority of the track inspection and repair recommendations arising from the Grayrigg disaster, identified in the Marks Tey report, is tied in with the cuts drive and that the safety position will be undermined with lethal consequences if the maintenance job cuts are bulldozed through.

RMT will be lobbying parliament on the issue next Wednesday – 27<sup>th</sup> January 2010.

Bob Crow RMT General Secretary, said today:

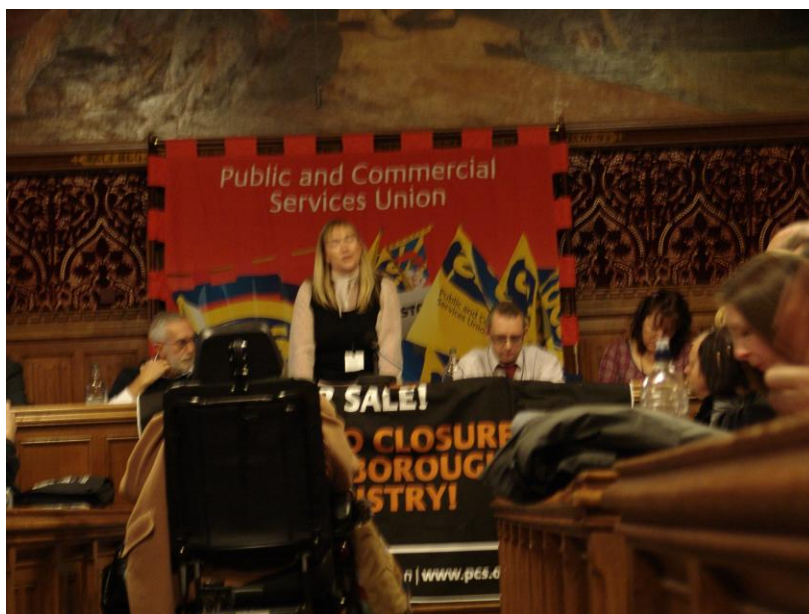
“It is a shocking indictment of Network Rail’s attitude to safety that, three years after the fatal derailment at Grayrigg, they have failed to either implement, or implement fully, the majority of the key track inspection and repair recommendations outlined in the report into Marks Tey.

“There is no doubt that the impact of the planned maintenance job losses will have lethal consequences and will create the perfect conditions for another Grayrigg, Potters Bar or Marks Tey derailment. That is the message that we are taking to MP’s next week with the demand that the maintenance jobs massacre be halted immediately.”

[www.rmt.prg.uk](http://www.rmt.prg.uk)



## LAND REGISTRY CAMPAIGN HITS HOME



On January 20 PCS Land Registry held their very successful lobby of Parliament, the culmination of a strong campaign to get the Government to re-think their plans. A packed

Committee Room at Westminster heard a succession of speakers show the illogicality of the Government arguments. MPs attended including John McDonnell MP who had pushed so hard to raise the issues in Parliament. The Trades Council was represented at the meeting along with the Greater London Association of Trade Union Councils (GLATUC).

## PCS NEC confirms industrial action ballot on compensation scheme



The PCS National Executive Committee (NEC) met on 28 January to review progress in discussions with the Cabinet Office on the civil service compensation scheme.

While they recognised there had been some movement they felt it still did not go far enough in protecting a significant proportion of PCS members' existing rights and produce the best possible redundancy protection and compensation for all members, now and in the future. The NEC confirmed that in the absence of an acceptable offer they would proceed with the ballot, due to begin on 4 February. Additionally, PCS will commence legal proceedings to confirm members' rights under the civil service compensation scheme.

The NEC stressed that it will continue to seek negotiations with ministers and senior government officials to find an acceptable settlement and urged all members to vote 'Yes' in the ballot.

### **WHY THE BALLOT**

The Cabinet Office has published proposals for changes to the civil service compensation scheme. If implemented, the changes will leave many PCS members tens of thousands of pounds worse off in the event of voluntary or compulsory redundancy.

This is a disgrace, and is particularly cynical at a time when we can clearly see that tens of thousands of jobs are at risk over the next few years.

The CSCS is the redundancy and early retirement payment scheme for the civil service and many other public bodies. As it is a statutory scheme changes have to be agreed by parliament.

PCS, with the other civil service unions, have been in negotiations with the Cabinet Office about the scheme since the autumn of last year. The published proposals which have not been agreed with the unions do not represent the best offer that could have been made.

The employer refused to put a further offer that would have given some protection during transitional arrangements when PCS was not prepared to be coerced into giving an undertaking to recommend acceptance. Even this revised offer was completely unacceptable and would still have meant a detriment to the vast majority of existing staff, particularly those facing a redundancy situation in the future. We believe the proposals are an outrageous attempt to cut people's jobs on the cheap at a time when many are worried about job security.

[www.pcs.org.uk](http://www.pcs.org.uk)



## **BA cabin crew dispute arrives in court**

2nd February 2010

The dispute over new schedules for British Airways cabin crew took off at the High Court today as the hearing before Sir Christopher Holland in London will resolve whether there should be a permanent injunction preventing BA from imposing cost-cutting proposals commenced.

Steve Turner, Unite national officer for civil aviation, said: "This court case is about a matter of huge importance to workers everywhere. It's about whether an employer can, without due notice or negotiation, systematically change the long-standing contracts of employment of its workforce.

"So the High Court is being asked to rule on a matter of justice. It is our clear view that, the moment BA imposed new terms on 13,500 cabin crew, the law was broken. The court must put this right.

"But let's be very clear on one other matter; this is not about cabin crew or Unite blocking change to BA's operations. A year ago we proposed lasting changes

which would return tens of millions of pounds to BA's business immediately but the company dismissed these changes.

"Management by imposition will ruin BA. It has forced us to the High Court and it has caused a ballot of cabin crew determined to protect their jobs. BA must think again - negotiate, stop attacking a prized asset in your cabin crew, and bring your workforce with you."

[www.unitetheunion.com](http://www.unitetheunion.com)



## **UCU warns funding cuts will shatter dreams of generation told to apply to university**

1 February 2010

**UCU today said planned cuts for higher education exposed the failings of the government's confused university funding policies.**

The union said the cuts, coupled with regressive student funding policies, would shatter the dreams of thousands of potential students the government had actively encouraged to apply to university.

For 2010-11, cuts of £135m have been added to 'efficiency savings' of £180m, with a further £600m to follow. The higher education sector is taking the biggest hit in public spending cuts and the union pointed to the fact that Germany, France and America had all pumped additional funding into higher education as part of their economic recovery programmes.

UCU general secretary, Sally Hunt, said: 'If these cuts go ahead the dreams of thousands of students, consistently encouraged to apply to university by the government, will be shattered. The government has spectacularly failed to understand that massive funding cuts will have a massive impact. The sector simply cannot do more for less.'

'Our higher education system is already creaking under the pressure of government efficiency savings and the planned cuts will be a devastating blow. Other leading economies are investing money in universities in order to help economic growth and widen participation, yet our government seems intent on doing the opposite.'

UCU has already identified over 5,000 jobs at risk in higher education and believes the cuts will lead to thousands more. University chiefs said recently that 30 universities risked going to the wall. The union has further warned that unless the cuts are reversed, over 14,000 staff risk losing their jobs and our students will face some of the biggest class sizes in the world.

[www.ucu.org.uk](http://www.ucu.org.uk)

[www.clwtc.org](http://www.clwtc.org)

[secretary@clwtc.org](mailto:secretary@clwtc.org)

[meet monthly \(except August\) on first Tuesday of month](#)