



# On Guard

**strike special 3. 28th April 2017**

## **The fight for DOO goes on. RMT must spread the fight across the rail industry.**

**O**nce again On Guard congratulates all RMT members taking strike action today at Northern, as well as on Southern Rail. The resolve to fight for safety on the railways goes on.

### **Merseyrail**

For the first time, this strike is going ahead without Merseyrail workers despite the fact that talks between the RMT and their employers broke down. According to the union press release the company had only been prepared to discuss the terms of the union's surrender rather than anything serious about keeping Guards on trains. However, by the time the talks broke down the deadline had passed to notify Merseyrail of strike action on the 28th.

### **The fight will go on**

Nevertheless, the prospect of a successful fight against DOO on Merseyrail remains incredibly strong, with a well-established culture of respect for picket lines mean that Drivers don't work on strike days, and few trains run.

### **Virgin Trains East Coast cave in**

Meanwhile, over at Virgin Trains East Coast, RMT had given notice of two days strike action on 28th and 29th of April. However, this

has now been called off, with the company saying that they are willing to guarantee a second member of staff on every train carrying out safety critical duties. If just a threat of further industrial action can produce this kind of result in negotiations, it is promising for workers elsewhere.

### **Spread the fight**

Every company is different and every Department for Transport franchise specification is different..... but not that different. The fight for rail safety is the same across all the companies. RMT must spread the fight with the same demands for guarantees of passenger safety. Otherwise they will play us off against each other offering different things here and there but all amounting to the same thing.

### **We are the rock**

The government is driving the industry push for DOO and the companies are all chiefly motivated by money. If we fight hard enough, they will have no choice but to go back to the DfT and beg to be let off the hook. The DfT are a hard place - rail workers must be the rock with the TOCs caught in between!

**NO DOO! NO DCO! NO COMPROMISE!**

## strike news

### Calling ASLEF Drivers! Don't cross the picket lines!

With some Drivers at Northern supporting the Guards strike by refusing to cross picket lines, we know many others will be thinking about doing the same. As we have covered in previous issues of On Guard:

**YES** you can refuse to cross the picket line

**NO** you can't be sacked for doing so

**YES** the company is allowed to discipline you but as yet they have not done so and are highly unlikely to put themselves into dispute with ASLEF.

#### Confidence

The company is very keen to point out, in every Special Brief it puts out, that the industrial action "only involves members of the RMT". It would be best in On Guard's opinion if both unions were openly fighting the bosses over DOO. Many drivers do not feel confident to show their solidarity outwardly by refusing to work. This is because their union has not given clear guidance on what to do or what support they will get from the union. The union must give leadership to their members.

#### Two cards?

If in the meantime it gives drivers more confidence to do the right thing why not take out dual membership of ASLEF and RMT for the duration of the fight against DOO? Although ASLEF has a rule preventing any member who is also a member of another Trade Union from holding a *position* in the union, there is nothing stopping rank and file members joining RMT while retaining their ASLEF card.

#### More protection

It isn't necessary in order to stay the right side of the picket line but it might make you feel more protected. Besides, your subs will help the only

union that is currently fighting DOO on Northern, and you will get a right to a say in that union via its structures, as well as a vote in any future ballots on the issue.

You don't have to tell the company either, you can sign up via Direct Debit.



### One law for them.....

On Guard has been informed of another manager causing problems whilst working trains in place of striking Guards. On the second strike day, the 8th April, the door procedure was carried out incorrectly by the scab manager. The doors were opened from the front! If one of us had done it we would have been placed on retraining or even disciplined. But management will probably brush it under the carpet for one of their own. It stinks.

Drivers - if you don't want to risk working with incompetent scabs who could leave you in the shit, don't cross the picket line!

### Arriva Rail North scared of ASLEF

The company seem very keen not to provoke ASLEF right now. They are making fairly positive noises in the Drivers harmonisation talks but have not pushed for discussions on DOO. They have brought managers into line who have threatened Drivers for not crossing picket lines and the threats have stopped. They have even reinstated on appeal a Driver that was recently sacked after rumblings from branches. No Merseyrail driver was

### What is On Guard?

On Guard is a monthly socialist bulletin by and for rank and file workers at Northern. It is published by socialist group Workers' Liberty.

We will be featuring a lot of updates and articles on Driver Only Operation, but welcome content on any issue from Northern workers themselves.

We welcome reports and comments from all rail workers.

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disciplined in the last two strike days for refusing to cross RMT's picket line. Northern Drivers are in a strong position to support the Guards with or without ASLEF's official sanction.

#### DCO=DOO at Northern

Despite all this ASLEF appears terrified of provoking the company. It is clearer than ever after the latest Special Briefing from senior management that they fully intend to run half of Northern services under DCO. Not only that, they have provided more detail of what they mean by DCO and it's not like on Scotrail or Cross Country - it's DOO by another name.

#### Vote Labour June 8th

On Guard believes that all workers should vote Labour in the June 8th General Election. Rail workers, like all public sector workers, have a particular reason for doing so. Labour has pledged to kick the privatisers out of our public services including the NHS and the railways and to renationalise of the railways as its official policy. More Tory rule means more attacks on workers rights.

