



On Guard

Issue no. 14 January 2019

Defend pickets against fascist attack! The labour and socialist movement must unite

What happened

On 5 January an RMT picket line of striking Northern guards in Manchester was attacked by far-right thugs connected to the Democratic Football Lads Alliance and the rump English Defence League. An Asian striker was specifically targeted for abuse. In the same week a meeting held by the Socialist Party in Leeds was invaded and disrupted by fascists.



Hundreds attended Manchester RMT's picket line on Saturday 12th January in solidarity after the far right attacked pickets the week before. *Photo: Reddit*

Who are they?

The DFLA and other organisations are not groupings of working-class football fans concerned about "extremism" or child grooming. They are far-right political forces serving the interests of the rich. Within the context of Brexit and its attack on migrants rights, far-right forces in Britain have been emboldened to march and attack minority communities, labour movement and left-wing activists and organisations.

Globally far-right activists are on the march, from the Trump administration in the USA, to the BJP government of India, from the Bolsonaro government of Brazil to the leaders of Italy, Poland and Hungary here in Europe.

The cause of labour, of the working class, is international. We must unite with workers across the globe.

Transformation

British fascists made great efforts in recent years to transform themselves from a group oriented to street agitation, outright racism and anti-Semitism, threat and intimidation into a

"legitimate" political operation. The shaven headed, jack-booted, thugs disappeared for a while to be replaced by slicker, populist political operators — people like Sadie Graham, Nigel Farage and Nick Griffin.

Brexit

But the situation with Brexit is seeing the boot boys come back into the street. The rightwing Brexiters in the Tory party, and others, argue that a second referendum will only enrage those who voted to leave and diminish their faith in democracy, allowing a far right backlash. This is nonsense. The far right are not interested in democracy. Their cause is to attack migrants, smash the labour movement and protect capital by violent means.

Tory Chaos

Theresa May suffered a catastrophic defeat in the vote on her Brexit plan, and only narrowly saved her skin in a confidence vote tabled by the Labour Party.

Labour

Labour should now lead the fight against Brexit, lead the demand for a second referendum and finish the Tories off.

*Defend freedom of movement
Demand a second referendum
For a socialist Europe.*

SHEFFIELD SOCIALIST FORUM

STOPPING THE FAR RIGHT

Speakers:
Sheffield and District RMT Branch
Speaker from Sheffield Antifascist Network (invited)

Monday 28th January
7pm - 9pm
Union Street Co-op
18-20 Union Street
S1 2JP

local roundup

RAT WATCH



Atten-shun! Which manager on Northern had to leave the management christmas party at the Comedy Club? It seems the compere of the show was well informed and cracking jokes about the DOO dispute. Said manager (otherwise known as The Tinpot General) is reported to have shown extreme anger at having the p... taken out of him and his mates. You wouldn't get that in the army! It seems he can dish it out, but can't take it. *On Guard* wants to know, should Northern Rail employ bullies with anger problems? What happened to the smart corporate image? Perhaps some training could be offered.

Quiz Question

What jokes should the compere have made about DOO and the manager? Best joke wins a rat (which can be named as winner sees fit).

Quote of the month

"We are treated like property".
(SSP staff who happen also to be human beings)

Have your say!

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

We welcome content on any issue from Sheffield rail workers, all grades and companies.

Got a story for On Guard?

Contact us:
onguard.bulletin@gmail.com

The Rail Gourmet Slot

(Off Your Trolley)

Until recently, On Guard has learned, Rail Gourmet staff had to repay the retail price of any goods damaged or missing from their trolleys out of their own wages. This practice of cutting the already low pay of the staff even further has been taken up by the union and stopped: though OG has heard that in some instances it is still happening. If you know of any cases let OG know. You can do this anonymously. We will pass the information on to the union. Otherwise, you can contact the union directly yourself. Management do not have to know who blew the whistle on this disgusting practice.

How many RG workers would find themselves having their trolleys stripped of snacks and drinks by unruly or drunk passengers when there is no guard on the train? Yet another reason for all grades and all workers to support the action against DOO.

We understand that the union also stopped management practice of making the RG staff signing on too early in order to prepare their trolleys without wages and in their own time.

It is well known that union notices get taken down from the boards in RG. The question has to be asked, why does management not want you to know about the union? Perhaps they fear a workforce who know their rights and demand them.

Question: when is a EMT rail gourmet worker better or worse than a TPE one?

Answer: Never! We are all workers, doing the same job. It only suits management to have us fighting each other. That's why we all have different contracts.

Ghost Trains

Northern's brand new trains are nowhere to be seen on the network. They were supposed to have started being introduced by December '18 but instead they remain at the testing stage. Rumours abound that they can't be introduced into service until they have a certain number of hours fault-free testing, and that the company can't even get them off the depot and out onto the track fault free. Whatever the details are, it is clear that they are nowhere near to introducing a single new train into passenger service, with not even a one training course run.

They just can't stop racking up example after example of their incompetence. If we, the rail workers, caused repeated delays to the service we provide, we'd be hauled over the coals. This shoddy outfit must go - they can't run a railway to save their lives.

Nationalise Northern Now, under Workers' Control!