

# Campaign to Defend Political Strategy

# No to Labour Affiliation at SGM



A Special General Meeting (SGM) will be held on 30 May to consider whether RMT should affiliate to the Labour Party.

A document is now being circulated, in the name of the Labour Party, that seeks to make the case for affiliation.

But the arguments in the document do not answer the points raised at our last AGM when delegates clearly did not want to affiliate on the terms available. Those terms have not changed at all. The Campaign to defend RMT's political strategy calls on branches and the SGM to reject immediate affiliation.

## Some Questions put to Labour and their answers:

### Q. What will Labour do to ensure their councillors and mayors with control of Merseyrail, Rail North and Transport for London do not implement DOO or austerity cuts?

A. Nothing. The LP document says *"The cut to Transport for London's subsidy was carried out by central government under the Conservatives, therefore the London Mayor does not have the power to reinstate the subsidy."* This is the same old position as the Blairite LP. Make the cuts, sack workers, privatise and then say it wasn't our fault. RMT should have no truck with this defeatist approach. The LP response says nothing about DOO.

### Q. What is the financial cost of affiliating to Labour?

A. £3 per member affiliated. That means £240K to affiliate all members. That would all but wipe out our political fund. We would have no money to pursue our own political objectives. We'd have given the lot to Labour HQ. We could affiliate fewer members to reduce the costs but as the number of affiliates reduces so would the already limited influence we'd be getting in return.

### Q. What influence would RMT get for affiliating?

A. Individual members can participate at local level but this is the case whether we affiliate or not. Most of the so called new powers we'd get are in fact down to the role of individual LP members who are in RMT. In return for our affiliation fees we would have a very limited chance of winning support from other unions to get an NEC position. The LP document claims RMT would be able to nominate candidates for national elections but in fact, short-lists are drawn up by party executives. Even Unite has failed to get its candidates onto short lists in some constituencies. We'd get up to 16 delegates Labour Conference (if we affiliate the whole membership) and the right to submit one motion, which may not even get onto the agenda. The document says by affiliating we can propose policy for inclusion in the Labour Manifesto but as Mick Cash pointed out at the last AGM, "The Labour Party manifesto contained many pro- RMT polices including ending austerity, repeal of anti-trade union laws and public ownership of rail and buses." The truth is that as a fighting militant union we have enormous influence, affiliated or not.

## The Campaign to defend RMT's political Strategy supporters include (Individuals in a personal capacity):

RMT Glasgow and district engineering  
RMT London Underground Engineering branch  
RMT Newcastle and Gateshead branch  
RMT Offshore Energy branch  
RMT South East Essex branch  
RMT Wishaw and Motherwell branch  
Carlos Barros (Branch Chair, LU Piccadilly and District)  
Richard Begley (Branch Sec Glasgow & District Engineering)  
Chris Bown (ULR)  
Andy Budds (NEC member)  
Connor Chenye (young member, Inverness branch)  
Cat Cray (Political Officer, London Transport regional council)  
Mick Crossey (Camden 3 Branch Secretary)  
Nigel Eivers (Branch Secretary, Neasden branch)  
Kim Gibson (Branch Secretary Inverness No 1 branch)  
Dave Grant (Branch Secretary, Lincolnshire Road Car branch)  
Jim Gray (secretary Scottish Regional Council)  
David Hailey (Branch Sec, Wishaw and Motherwell branch)  
Mark Hall (Branch Secretary Wakefield and Healey Mills branch)  
Gary Harbord (SGM delegate)  
Marie Harrington (LTRC women's officer & stn grades chair)  
Glen Hart (LTRC Sec, Chair, National BEMA conference chair)  
Les Harvey (Asst Branch Secretary, LU Engineering)  
Noreen Hayes (Memb officer Piccadilly and District West branch)  
Dan Henderson (Chair, Glasgow Shipping branch)  
Greg Hewitt (RMT tutor, former NEC member)  
Stan Herschel (Br Sec, Newcastle and Gateshead branch)  
Mick Hogg (Regional Organiser

Scotland)  
John Holmes (SGM delegate Midlands)  
Trevor Howard (RMT tutor)  
Paul Jackson (Branch Secretary, LU Engineering branch)  
David King (Br Sec Newcastle Rail & Catering, striking Northern guard)  
Joe Kirby (Assistant Branch Secretary, OILC branch)  
Andy Littlechild (NEC member)  
Del Marr (NEC member)  
Gordon Martin (Regional Organiser Shipping)  
Mike McCaig (Branch Secretary Offshore Energy branch)  
Paul McDonnell (Branch Secretary Wimbledon Branch, Wessex Regional Council President)  
Sean McGowan (Regional Organiser)  
John Milligan (Wishaw and Motherwell branch, retired, former NEC member)  
Jake Molloy (Regional Organiser Off Shore)  
Matt Morris (vice secretary, Portsmouth branch, youth Chair)  
Ian Norris (Finsbury Park branch, Functional Rep LU service control)  
Mark Nothard (NEC member)  
Paul O'Brian (SGM delegate, LTRC)  
Lewis Peacock (Political Officer, LU Engineering)  
John Reid (retired member, former NEC member)  
Paul Reilly (NEC member)  
Brian Reynolds (RMT convenor Calmac ferries)  
Declan Ritchie (assistant secretary, London Transport Regional Council)  
Warwick Roberts (LLC rep, striking Merseyrail guard)  
Michelle Rodgers (Branch Secretary Manchester South branch, former NEC member)  
Phil Rowan (International Officer Finsbury Park branch, Victoria south industrial rep)  
Paul Shaw (NEC member)  
Mick Tosh (RMT Wessex Regional Organiser)  
Jared Wood (SGM delegate, LTRC)  
Ted Woodley (SGM delegate Midlands)  
Robbie Wyness (OILC SGM delegate)



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## Q. Would any affiliation have to include Scotland?

A. Yes. "RMT affiliation would be to the Labour Party at UK level. "

## Q. Could RMT continue to support other parties or candidates in Scotland?

A. No. We would not be allowed to support any non-labour candidates anywhere in the UK.

## Q. Could we support candidates who stand against councillors in places like Birmingham where the Labour council has fought a vicious war against striking Bin workers? Could we put up candidates or support candidates against Labour councillors/mayors who make transport cuts and impose austerity?

A. No, nor could we prevent our affiliation fees going to assist candidates who do not support key RMT policies.

At a fringe meeting at the 2017 AGM John McDonnell explained that RMT came up with funds for Jeremy Corbyn's leadership campaign before any other union. Without it, he told the meeting, Jeremy could not have fought the leadership campaign as he did.

The LP document claims Jeremy has consolidated his position and will be leader at the next election. But we cannot be confident that the right will not use Brexit or other issues to try, once again, to unseat him. This has to be a real concern for socialists.

If RMT is paying over almost our entire political fund to the LP HQ we would not be able to fund Jeremy in the same way again.

What's more, we could not target our available funds to those on the left. It is nonsense for us to give our funds over indiscriminately so that Owen Smith or Chuka Umunna get the same national RMT funding as Jeremy or John.

## We were told that RMT would be isolated outside of Labour when we were expelled.

"Bob Crow has taken the RMT out of Labour's annual conference and Labour's National Policy Forum which will shape Labour's next manifesto and he has taken his union outside the NEC, which gives the RMT a seat at the table with the prime minister and the deputy prime minister". Ian McCartney, Labour Party Chair at time of our expulsion from the party.

**It wasn't true then and it isn't now. We should make any consideration of affiliation dependent on a real fight to stop Labour councillors making austerity cuts, to de-select pro austerity, pro-war Labour MPs and for Labour to ACT not just talk in the fight against DOO.**

Those calling for immediate affiliation to Labour are presenting this as a question of supporting Jeremy Corbyn's Labour Party or standing on the sidelines. Is this what we've been doing since we were thrown out of Labour for supporting Scottish Socialist Party candidates? No. Of course not. In fact, we have done more to get Jeremy elected to leader than most affiliated unions.

In recent times the RMT has not been affiliated to the Labour Party it has maintained a constructive informal relationship with a number of Labour MPs through the RMT parliamentary Group of MPs and through other Labour MPs who share the RMT objectives.

We should continue to support those Labour MPs and council candidates who support us. We should remain free to support non-Labour candidates, in Scotland but also in Britain, where they better represent the policies of our union. We should be free not to fund cutters, privatisers and, crucially, those who if Labour does win the next General Election, will be doing everything in their power to undermine Corbyn and ditch socialist manifesto commitments. We should make sure we are in a position to effectively support Corbyn again should he face another leadership battle. That can best be done by maintaining control for ourselves of our funds and who we back at this time.

- **Why should we abandon the most effective political strategy of any trade union, one which has seen us grow at a rate never previously achieved, secure more victories and exert influence in a way no other trade union can?**
- **We are free to determine our policies and pursue an agenda which delivers for our members.**
- **Why should we sacrifice this?**
- **Vote no, to keep the status quo!**

**If you would like a speaker for branch or regional council meetings contact Paul Jackson (Br Sec LU Engineering) at [luengineering@rmt.org.uk](mailto:luengineering@rmt.org.uk) or call**

**Follow our campaign at **

**Add your name to our supporters by sending an email to LU Engineering branch stating you wish to support the campaign to defend RMT's Political strategy**