

waiting for good dough

(Apologies to Samuel Beckett and Consolidated)

A Network Rail track worker writes ...

Here we are again, just like last the last pay claim. Leave it long enough and pretend that the final offer is somehow a great achievement.

Just to remind everybody, not one of the original demands in our play claim has been met. RPI is not a true reflection of the cost of living yet the fact we caught management trying to sneak in the use of CPI, an even worse representation of the cost of living, is somehow seen as a triumph of 'radical' trade union leadership. Keeping the present employment terms and conditions for new starters is not radical, it's trade unionism 101, but again, it's waved about like we've just won a general strike.

The south east allowance will be kept, but with no increase now or in future years: this is explicit in the offer. This has been allowed to slide over the years and now seems to be an embarrassment to our leadership who

want it to die away as its value decreases.

The 'no compulsory redundancies' policy has been in place since 2010 and is always part of our pay claim. While not being automatic, the commitment no compulsory redundancies is an aim in itself, not a



bargaining chip. Neither should it be agreed that this will definitely end in 2021.

That is another fight which our leadership should be laying the grounds for.

A union willing to sacrifice the relative protection of our present conditions for a lousy pay offer, with no guarantees of what will be acceptable, is no way to convince the membership that it wants to fight.

The loss of free/ privilege travel when we were privatised is a long-standing scar as new starters see old hands keeping this and wonder why the union has not seriously fought for this for all members. It has been RMT policy for a decade without any effort to actually achieve it, and it's now dangled as an enticement not to fight.

The role of joint working parties has always been suspect. The idea that our reps should sit down at a table and talk to these people as though it can all be sorted out without any need for industrial action is one of the great myths of our time. How many times have we ever gained from this sort of negotiation? More often than not it leads to 'trial' areas that bleed out to the whole country while 'Canutes' in head office tell us to stop the tide of changes their inactivity has helped create.

This pay claim has the ring of the old adage: first time as tragedy, second

time as farce. Unfortunately, it is now multiple times as farce, with the same old rubbish being wheeled out. We need a leadership which takes the fight seriously, plans for combat, agitates accordingly and aims to win the concessions we all deserve.

RMT's National Executive is recommending this shabby offer to a meeting of reps on 16 May. Our hope of salvaging a decent deal depends on members making it clear to reps that we do not accept this recommendation and that we are prepared to fight for more.

what workers are saying

I'll be rejecting it, because it states that our no compulsory redundancy guarantee will end and 'WILL NOT' be extended. No way I'm signing up to that!

The regional allowance hasn't changed in years and has again been ignored. My workmates and I are justifiably angry.

When they come for our jobs in 2021, we will regret signing a deal like this. We must reject it.

We deserve better than this. But you don't get what you deserve, you get what you fight for. Why would we accept this without even putting up a fight?

the offer: key clauses

1.2. With effect from 1 January 2019, an **increase of 3.2%** [RPI, November 2018] to basic rates of pay including a minimum uplift of **at least £555** (pro rata for part time working).

1.3. With effect from 1 January 2020, an increase to basic rates of pay of the value of the increase to the November 2019 **Retail Price Index (RPI)** published in December 2019. This will include a minimum uplift of **at least £575** (pro rata for part time working).

1.4. An increase to the bottom of the Band 5-8 pay ranges in line with the **'Real Living Wage'**, ...

2.1. The cap on season ticket subsidies shall be increased by £250 from £2,500pa to **£2,750 pa**.

4.2. South East Allowance shall continue to be paid under the existing arrangements but be **frozen at current rates** and not increased in future years.

5.1. Network Rail guarantees **no compulsory redundancies** across all members of these bargaining groups until 31 December 2020, at which point **this guarantee will cease and not be extended**.

7.1. Network Rail and the trades unions agree to establishing **joint working parties** to negotiate in good faith with a view to reaching agreement to address the following **productivity challenges**: [maintenance response teams, replacing departing staff, complexity of contracts, rostering, role clarity contracts, allowances, performance management, family-friendly policies, working hours above 35 per week]

off the rails

- is written by railway workers
- **is for all railworkers, whatever your job, employer or union**
- provides information, support and a forum to discuss strategies
- **welcomes reports and opinions**
- is published by socialist group Workers' Liberty, and is open to all activists who share our basic outlook
- **is fiercely pro-union, but independent of union head offices**
- can be posted to you every month if you send us a tenner

Off The Rails, 20E Tower Workshops, Riley Road, London SE1 3DG
office@workersliberty.org www.workersliberty.org/blogs/rails

off the rails

Special issue - May 2019

Network Rail workers: Reject this Shabby 'Deal'

- **No union demands agreed**
 - **'No compulsory redundancies' policy to go**
 - **Allowances frozen**
 - **No movement on staff travel for newer workers**
 - **Inflation-only pay rise for most staff**
- ... and RMT's Executive want us to accept this?!

action can win a better deal