

# Scottish Socialist Party

## Scottish Railworkers Voice



# STRIKE TO STOP DRIVER ONLY TRAINS

## UNITE against the profiteering safety-wreckers!

The Scottish Socialist Party gives full and unqualified support to RMT members striking against Scotrail's attempts to impose Driver Only trains.

Scotrail want to drive a whole fleet of trains through the franchise contract with the Scottish government - which insists on two staff on every train.

Everyone knows that the higher level of training required for a Conductor/Guard is to ensure they can deal with any safety or operational problems at any point on the route, including potential disasters - as well as at stations. **It is not just an issue of who opens and closes doors, as the mainstream media have sneeringly alleged.**

And although Scotrail pretend to meet their contractual obligations by putting the invaluable - but lesser-trained - Ticket Examiners on some of their trains, **they have let slip to MSPs that they won't even bother having a Ticket Examiner if they choose to protect their profits by sending a driver off on a journey on his/her own.**

Contrary to the lies and half-truths spun by Scotrail bosses through the media, we recognise this is a fundamental threat to public safety and security, as well as being an exercise in penny-pinching when compared to the £18.444million profits Scotrail enjoyed last year. **For these privateers, profits come first, public safety and workers' wages a poor last.**

The sweeping 83% majority for strike action on an 82% turnout demonstrates the anger and determination of workers to defend public safety. **Scotrail's attempts to use unelected judges to slap injunctions on the RMT shows their utter contempt for democracy.** Scotrail's use of untrained managers and office staff to scab during strike action, suggests they are squaring up for a vicious fight in a purely cash-driven, profit-crazed attack on public safety.

Ticket Examiners should be in line for promotion to the higher-paid Conductors/Guards posts, not used to replace guards - which would undercut the rate for the job and eventually eat away at the wage levels of every Scotrail grade.

**And it is a bloody disgrace that these safety-wreckers could be funded out of the public purse during a strike, whilst workers trying to defend public safety**

lose out in wages - something which the Scottish government should denounce and deny them.

The leadership of ASLEF should back up their drivers, who want to back the fight against DOO, and organise them to collectively refuse to move trains crewed by ill-trained scabs - or literally driver only!

The Scottish government should stand up for Scotland, stand up for safety, stand up for workers' wages and jobs - and insist that Scotrail honour their contract by putting guards on every train.

And the Scottish Socialist Party will not only organise solidarity with RMT members taking action in defence of public safety, but also step up our campaign for public ownership of the railways - with democratic control and management - for people, not profit.

**Stand firm and united – you do not stand alone!**



### WHAT PRICE SAFETY?

£300,000 to put guards/conductors on all the new Edinburgh/Glasgow via Bathgate-Airdrie line.

£429,274 for First Scotrail's highest paid director

£18.444million profit for First Scotrail

£90m profit for First Group

£140m taxpayers' subsidy to First Group last year

**In a new briefing to MSPs Scotrail admit that "...there may be times when we may choose to operate a train without a second person..."**

They want trains run with no Guard, no Ticket Examiner - just a driver stuck away in the cab - to boost their profits even higher by what they save in wages.

for more material on trade union and community struggles - and socialist policies to combat mass unemployment, low pay, anti-union laws, public service cuts, privatisation, and attempts to make workers pay for the bosses' crisis, visit:

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# guard safety! - RMT members speak out

**“This struggle is coming to a head. Scotrail took people out of the training offices, clerks from Delays Offices, as well as managers, to ‘train’ them to replace us when we are forced to strike.**

The long-term plan is to electrify the entire network. If they get away with this Driver Only Operation it will become the norm everywhere.

**Cost-cutting is at the root of it.**

**That comes with privatisation.**

It takes 6 months to train a guard/conductor, during which it is drummed into us that safety comes first, revenue a distant second.

But in practice they are doing the exact opposite by their insistence on Ticket Examiners instead of conductors/guards.

We had an incident last year where a Ticket Examiner had to evacuate a train. They are not trained to do that. He led passengers up an open line! All that was needed was a train to come on the line and we would have had a major rail disaster. That would not have happened with a Conductor, because of their training in proper evacuation procedures.

**The bosses claim DOO is safe – and the statistics might appear to confirm that. But it is only safe if nothing happens!!**

**My house was built in 1921 and it has never gone on fire – but we still need to insure it against the possibility of future fires!”**

**A Glasgow Scotrail conductor**

“ Driver Only Operation (DOO) would mean the driver has sole responsibility for safety, including operating the doors – whereas on the current Bathgate-Edinburgh line it’s conductors who do this, and drivers and conductors share safety responsibilities.

**The attempt to make the new Glasgow/Edinburgh line DOO is the thin end of the wedge.**

Scotrail’s franchise agrees there must be two staff on all trains. On many Scotrail journeys they cover this clause with just a driver and Ticket Examiner.

Ticket Examiners get a basic training, over 4 weeks.

Conductors/guards get 3 or 4 months training, much more advanced.

So if a driver becomes incapacitated (faints, has a heart attack, even dies!) the conductor is sufficiently trained to take over and protect the train and its passengers.

A Ticket Examiner does not have the same level of knowledge or training to cope with this.

**The RMT has uncovered cases where Scotrail are running trains with only a driver - on 400 services over 14 days from one station alone!**

On other lines, with conductors, if only the driver arrived for duty the train would not be moved; it would be cancelled, for very good safety reasons.

**This is purely cost driven.**

First Scotrail has only put forward financial arguments; even they haven’t dared try to argue that DOO is better.

**They say it would cost about £300,000 to put guards on the trains – but Scotrail’s highest paid director made £429,274 in 2008/2009!”**

**A Lothians Scotrail conductor**

**JOIN the SSP - the only Scottish party which since 1998 has consistently fought alongside RMT members**

“ASLEF branch in Queen St passed a motion supporting the conductors, but the union leadership said they’d been given assurances about safety by Scotrail! That is extremely disappointing. The feeling amongst drivers is that they don’t want to operate trains without conductors, but how can they put themselves out on a limb without the backing of their union?”

**A Glasgow conductor**

**Scottish Socialist Party**



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“There about 130 conductors on the Edinburgh Waverly roster alone – yet Scotrail hope to operate scab trains across the whole of Scotland with about 100 managers and office staff that they put

through one-week training! The RMT quite rightly appealed to members who are managers/supervisors not to go on this so-called training, not to be used as scabs.”

**A Lothians conductor**



“On one of our trains recently, a group of ‘trainees’ were being ‘taught’ route training, which is a vital part of the job, to know exactly where we are in the case of an emergency.

**But they were learning routes from inside the coach, looking out the window, where you cannot see junctions or signals.**

**And they were filling in a test on sheets that provided the answers! The training is a joke.**

This is a public safety issue. If an emergency happens and one of these jokers is on the train, where will they tell the police and Scotrail Central they are?”

**A west of Scotland conductor**



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