

## **WLRI Trade Union Seminar Series 2008**

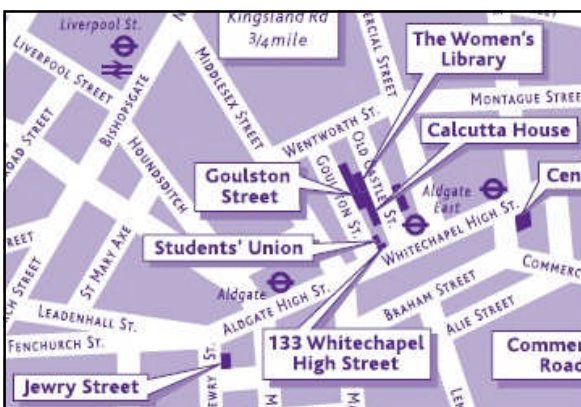
# **Organising, Militancy and Revitalisation: The Case of the RMT**

- **Ralph Darlington**, Salford University / Manchester Industrial Relations Society
- **Alex Gordon**, RMT Council of Executives

**Wed 16th July 2008 at 5.30pm in The Women's Library**

In the quest for union growth and revitalisation the National Union of Rail Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT) has adopted an alternative approach to that of many other unions. This has involved combining a distinct version of the organising model with an explicit rejection of partnership/accommodative forms of unionism in favour of the mobilisation of members through strike action, alongside a politically engaged form of left-wing trade unionism. Yet such an approach has been much neglected by academics and practitioners alike, despite appearing to be more successful than other unions in terms of basic measures such as growing membership levels, collective bargaining gains and the vibrancy of union organisation.

**Ralph Darlington** critically evaluates the relationship between union organising, militancy and revitalisation by specifically examining the role of the RMT within two of Britain's relatively strike-prone industries, the mainline railway and London Underground networks. Methods of research include extensive tape-recorded semi-structured interviews with a range of strategically placed RMT informants at different levels of the union, analysis of documentary industrial relations and trade union material, and personal fieldwork observation. The paper provides evidence of the RMT's success, and examines the key components of its union organising and strike mobilisation approach, combined with a number of other important broader contributory factors. It also explores some crucial limitations and problems with the approach, before concluding with some broader generalisations about organising, union activism, militancy, revitalisation, politics and leadership.



The Women's Library Seminar Room  
London Metropolitan University  
25 Old Castle Street, London E1 7NT (See map)

This event is free, open to all, and there is no need to register. Contact Max Watson for further enquiries: 0207 320 3042 / [m.watson@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:m.watson@londonmet.ac.uk)