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## MINICAB SERVICE AT HEATHROW

In the last issue of Taxi Globe, it was reported that BAA had announced the introduction of a six month trial for a managed pre-booked minicab service at Heathrow. RTG, through their One Transport booking system, would be servicing Terminal 5 and Addison Lee at Terminal 3. Some reports have also claimed that the other terminals would have a freephone service connecting to the booking desks. The taxi trade reacted strongly against the trial, with Radio Taxis Group Chairman, Geoffrey Riesel, together with Geof Kaley, MD of One Transport, the booking platform which was to have been put in place, being strongly criticised for putting private hire first instead of black cabs.



Photograph Bob Crow, courtesy © Stan Marut

Bob Crow, General Secretary of the RMT, arrived at the feeder park on 9th July to talk to drivers and listen to their concerns. The RMT Taxi Division is growing fast and drivers listened to Mr Crow as he told them what the RMT could offer them. Bob Crow, pledged an all-out fight with BAA over their plans to deregulate taxi services on the airport.

The following day, a picket was held at RTG.

### DRIVERS PICKET RADIO TAXIS GROUP HEADQUARTERS

by John Gresham

Around sixty angry drivers picketed Mountview House, Lennox Road, the headquarters of Radio Taxis Group, on Friday 10th July. The group included RMT Members and shareholder/drivers who subscribe to the North London based company. The drivers were protesting about the proposed deal with BAA and One Transport, the minicab arm of Radio Taxis, which will allow One Transport to offer minicabs to passengers arriving and departing from Heathrow Airport.

Executive Chairman of Radio Taxis Group Geoffrey Riesel was made aware of the demonstration in expectation that he would face up to the protesters on the day. It is reported that he commented that he was 'like a tiger when angry', but it seems he was not prepared to leave his lair and employed two bouncers to protect the threshold of Mountview House. Riesel's fifty thousand pound VW Phaeton car with personalised number plated was parked in the car park, but he was nowhere to be seen.



The demonstration was timed to start at 15:00hrs with an on foot picket and a follow up protest of around a hundred cabs to blockade Lennox Road at 16:30hrs. At around 16:05hrs a telephone call was received advising that BAA had agreed to put the proposal on hold, subject to talks with taxi trade representatives. It was then decided to end the demonstration until further information is available. Drivers are planning more action against Radio Taxis Group.



### RMT WARNS OF STALLING TACTICS

Later on the same day, the RMT issued a press release about the situation at Heathrow. The specialist transport union warned BAA that they will not fall for stalling tactics after the company announced this evening that they are delaying their plans to allow Addison Lee and One Transport to operate what is effectively a rank system at the airport. Bob Crow said: "There is no doubt that the big, angry gathering of RMT taxi drivers at Heathrow yesterday has forced BAA into this short-term climb down. However, RMT knows every trick in the company book and we can spot delaying tactics a mile off. We will be strengthening our organisation and our campaign in the weeks ahead to ensure that this temporary delay in opening the door to Addison Lee and is turned into a long-term victory with the plan killed stone dead."

### UNITED TRADE REPS DISCUSS TACTICS

In a United Trade Press Release, the LTDA, LCDC, HALT, HATDU stated that they had been discussing tactics to eliminate the proposed minicab threat t Heathrow, from Addison Lee and Radio Taxis, whilst at the same time Bob Crow from the RMT was talking to drivers at the Feeder Park. The representatives said that these discussions had proved successful and that following "a heated meeting between BAA and the recognised trade organisations, the Airport Authority stated that the proposed minicab scheme was "off the table", and called for regular talks with the recognised trade organisations, aimed at improving the relationship with drivers and the experience of passengers."

A BAA spokesperson said: "In our discussions with the recognised bodies who represent taxi drivers at Heathrow we have always said that we want to proceed on the basis of a consensus. We will therefore continue our discussions with those representatives over a longer period about how we can improve the experience for passengers outside the central London area."

*Mark White, RMT rep at Heathrow, is waiting to see if he is invited to meetings. He says: "I fully expect to be invited to strongly represent my members interests at Heathrow, whether there be one, or one thousand! I understand that there is another Liaison meeting scheduled at Heathrow with BAA to discuss the issues of Private Hire Vehicles being made available for 'immediate hiring'. I am in the process of writing a report for our legal team and would be severely disappointed if the RMT were not allowed to attend any discussions due to take place regarding this issue."*

