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### **Trade unions and 'cash for influence'**

You report that the biggest rail union, the RMT, has cut its affiliation funding to the Labour Party from £112,000 a year to £20,000. Its general secretary Bob Crow is reported as saying that the RMT could move to total disaffiliation next year if the Government do not make significant policy concessions.

This open attempt to influence Government policy by means of money contributions is in flagrant defiance of all recent attempts to clean up the "cash for influence" scandals. Commercial donors to Mr Blair's coffers would never dare come into the open in this way. Why should it be different for trade unions?

As you report today (later editions), Mr John Prescott has recognised the position by resigning from the RMT and condemning their threats as a breach of parliamentary privilege. It is to be hoped that the authorities will take action against the RMT accordingly.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, 28 June 2002.