

INDUSTRIAL ACTION SPEAKS LOUDER THAN PRIVATISATION

Cont'd from front page

have achieved a lot of what they set out to do in the early 80's, when flexible rostering, open station policy, privatisation of BREL, etc, were the warning signals that Thatcherite anti-industry policies were soon going to be visited upon railworkers.

However, the lack of private sector enthusiasm for rail privatisation means the government cannot sell it even to get-rich-quick asset strippers without increased subsidies which will make them unelectable. This will leave railworkers in a dangerous no-man's land where most of the industry is unprivatised, while attacks on our pay and conditions continue apace.

Faced with a management who are economically bankrupt but politically a strong political response. The RMT campaign for 6% is the starting point for a general fightback against the on-going effects of privatisation. All railworkers who want to scupper attacks on their pay and conditions must support this campaign and work to give BR and the government a bloody nose! However, if we are to avoid

the demoralisation which set in after the Railtrack dispute we need a political strategy for railworkers which will take us beyond this dispute and become a sustained and ultimately winnable campaign to defeat privatisation and put the control of the industry into the hands of railworkers.

A PLAN WORTH FIGHTING FOR

All the main political indicators now point to the need for a break with long-held assumptions. Tony Blair's Labour Party (see editorial comment) has set the seal on any realistic prospect of the railway being taken into 'public ownership under workers' control' as some union activists appear to be hoping. If anything a Blair government will be able to attack low paid workers more effectively than the present shower of incompetents. By pinning their colours to the mast of "public/private partnerships" New Labour will set about privatising the railway and other public sector industries on far more financially viable terms than the Tories are able to do.

If railworkers want to turn back the tide of attacks on their conditions we need to be independent from and opposed to New Labour. Workers have no friends in parliament, not that we ever did. The continued decline of the British economy means that any strategy to defend pay and conditions will have to be based on the ability to win industrial disputes and hold on to power at the workplace, not on social partnership with employers or favours from Labour governments.

Any strategy for the future must include the following: an independent union run by and for its members; an aggressive industrial activism to make privatisation unworkable; a new machinery for negotiations giving us the ability to hold on to conditions and a plan for the future through the implementation of direct workers' control as an alternative to all the failed management regimes (nationalised and privatised). *Transport Worker* believes that only anarcho-syndicalism can deliver such a strategy.

LOCAL CONTACT:

TRANSPORT WORKER

By Transport Workers - For Transport Workers

No. 9

Summer 1995

FREE/DONATION

INDUSTRIAL ACTION SPEAKS LOUDER THAN PRIVATISATION

TRANSPORT WORKER has argued consistently that to protect jobs on the railways means calling strikes against the breaking of national agreements, the erosion of conditions, the exploitation of low paid workers, or indeed any issue that unites as many railway workers as possible. Thus we welcome the present campaign against poverty pay. Apart from the natural justice of the pay claim, recent history shows that when we have used industrial action we have set the agenda for the industry. During the 1994 Railtrack dispute would-be speculators in railway franchises got cold feet and Tory MP's publicly distanced themselves from privatisation. Having returned to work our failure to finish the job has become apparent.

6% WON'T WAIT

The clear danger is that any union campaign on low pay will be split early on by the ASLEF leadership failing to name a figure worth fighting for. While the RMT have justified a 6% pay claim in terms of productivity and comparative pay rates in outside industry and in Europe, ASLEF are effectively seeking a pay freeze, around the rate of inflation (3.4%). Given that BR have offered 3%, even if most ASLEF members vote for the extra 0.4%, BR will soon settle to get them out of the way. *Any ASLEF member who wants to be part of the only fight going on in the industry should return their*

membership card to Arkwright Row and join the RMT yesterday.

Low pay rates are an act of class terrorism against railworkers and their families. We bear the costs every day in bills that can't be paid, excessive overtime, tiredness, worry and stress which destroy any life outside of work. Low pay means just existing not living. The average weekly hours for all BR staff is nearly 52, a figure which rises the lower paid you are. The equivalent figure in Germany is less than 32 hours. *In other words BR staff work two and a half days a week more than their German brothers and sisters and take home only 57% of the average German wage.* When overtime is taken out of the picture the gap is even wider. The average hourly rate of pay in BR (£6.09) is a third of that in Germany (£17.46).

**LOW PAY RATES ARE AN
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THEIR FAMILIES**

The difference is not only that the German economy stills works while Britain's is broken, but is also political. BR can afford a 7.75% pay rise without even increasing the pay bill due to the numbers who have left the industry. The reason they need to cut wages further is to keep you tired, keep you worried about paying the bills, keep you down and unable to resist the further attacks on conditions in the privatisation pipeline. *Likewise, we need to win the strike ballot*

for 6% to stop being so tired, so worried and to prepare for the coming battles over privatisation.

PRIVATE GRIEF

The great danger of rail privatisation has always been that re-organising the industry into business sectors would let BR use the Tory anti-trade union laws and divide the workforce, de-recognise the unions and make the mass redundancies which they have always wanted. Restructuring has wreaked havoc in every grade, bringing the ending of the PT&R for footplate staff; the extension of Driver Only Operation and the attempt to take the operational duties from the guards; a wave of redundancies among station, workshop and P Way/S & T staff; and a new management machinery which all but de-recognises union reps. Such failures to fight by the unions means BR extremely aggressive, railway workers need

Cont'd back page

EDITORIAL:

BLAIR'S DREAMWORLD

It's that time again, when union leaders start arguing that we can do nothing but wait for a Labour victory in the next election. Totally defeated by the Tory government the only hope they can offer is that Labour will come to their rescue.

They are willing to see a Labour victory at any cost. Already they are playing down

Cont'd on page 2

BLAIR'S DREAMWORLD...

the Labour's attitude to the unions. Labour is quite clear that they have no intentions of reversing the vicious anti-trade union laws which have shackled the rank and file's ability to take action. Presumably then, under a Labour government, management will sack workers in the same way that they sacked our 4 comrades at Manchester Piccadilly. The Labour Party is now also back-tracking on its commitment to re-nationalise the pits and the railways, having already made it clear they won't re-nationalise the public utilities. And where was the Labour party leadership during last year's signals dispute? Of course, we were here 2 years before the last election when there was much talk about the Tories being finished. There's no guarantee that the Tories won't be re-elected again and what will our union leaders do then?

But let's imagine for a moment that their prayers are answered and Tony Blair gets into number 10. What, as working class people, will we face? The union movement will be allowed to exist as long as it has no power. We can discount any measures with even the merest hint of socialism. What the Labour Party is offering, in fact, is to run capitalism better and more fairly than the Tories. Hence, unemployment will be cured not through state intervention but through an

expanding market economy. Increased public spending will not come through taxing the rich but through the private sector investing its rising profits in the railways, roads, health, etc. This is nothing more than carrying on from where the Tories leave off - leaving everything to the market. This idea was totally discredited in the 1930's when the unfettered free market led to the Great Depression.

In the Labour Party dream world the British economy will reverse its century-long decline and begin to out-perform its competitors. This leaves aside any analysis of why the economy declined in the first place. For instance, take the question of lack of investment. Both Labour and the Tories would have it that capitalists are going to suddenly start investing in Britain. Why should any capitalist invest in the railways, for instance, with an 8% return when they can get 20% by investing in the emerging economies of the Far East with their, highly trained, low paid workforces? At least Tories like Portillo have, in capitalist terms, a feasible solution - drive down wages to comparable levels to attract investors. But what is Labour's solution? The party that is too timid to raise taxes for the rich by even a few pence is not about to take on the might of the City of London and force it to divert investment, which now goes abroad, into this country. Perhaps, by sharing a few prawn cocktails with the Labour leadership, capitalists can

any worker who dares to be sick. Increasingly, sickness is being used as a reason for disciplinary action including dismissal.

On the railways management use the so-called "Managing for Attendance" scheme under which a workers' sickness record doesn't even come under the disciplinary procedure. Sickness records are strictly monitored and if deemed unacceptable by management workers are dismissed on grounds that they are failing to meet the terms of their contracts of employment.

Many employers don't need encouragement to hound sick workers either back to work or out of the workforce. A CBI survey published last year reported that 83% of firms were willing to use disciplinary procedures to tackle absenteeism.

be charmed into dropping their historic thirst for profit.

Given the increasing globalisation under which production can be easily switched to where it is cheapest, workers in Britain, unless they are willing to accept slave wages, face a daunting future. We have to relearn the lessons of the past. You cannot appease the capitalist system - you can only fight it. In the long term our only hope is to get rid of international capitalism. Under a Labour government, union leaders would certainly have a better life but it's highly questionable indeed what improvements ordinary workers would see. The Labour Party has no solutions to capitalism's problems. In fact they only increase the problems by offering workers false hope.

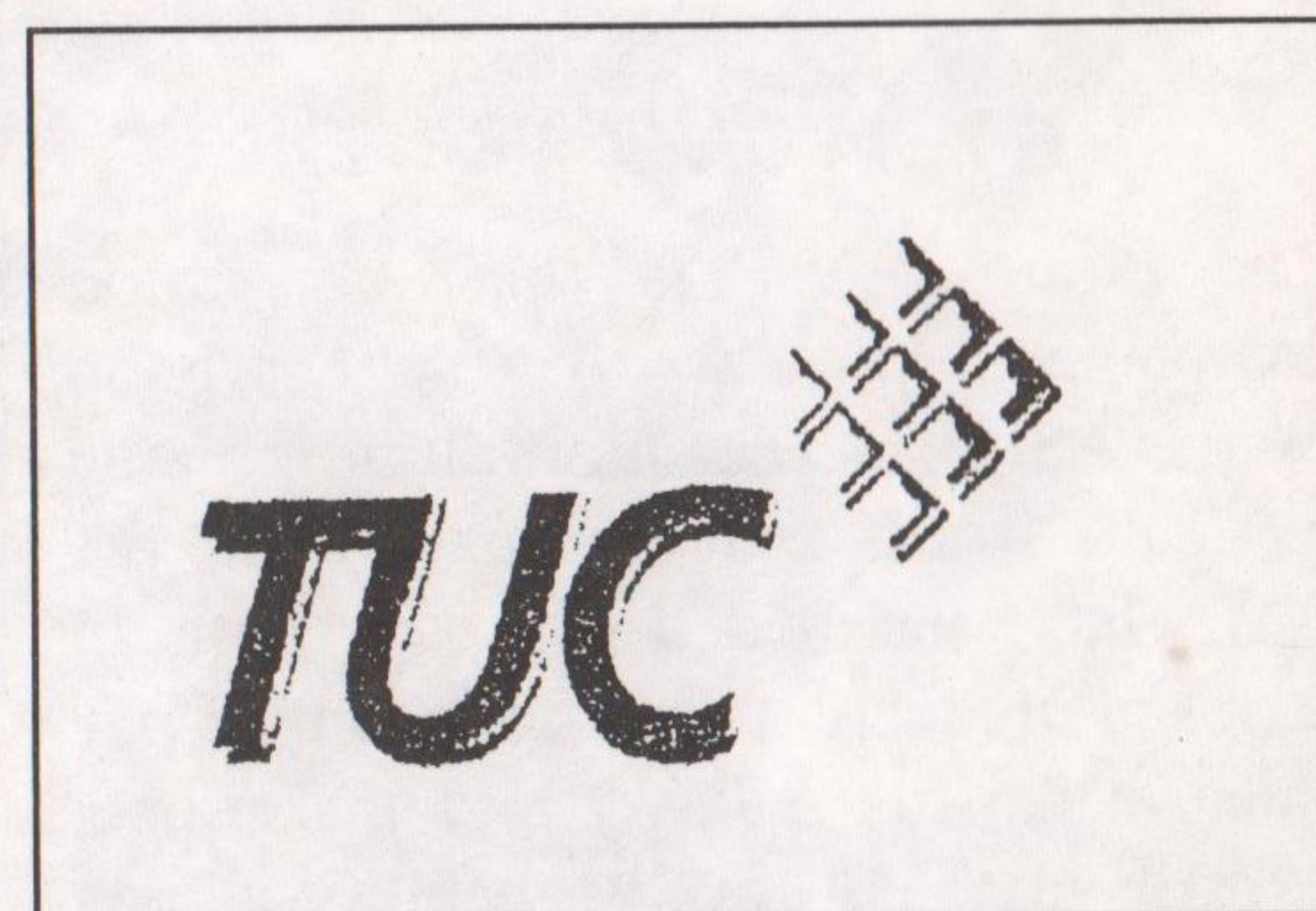
However difficult it may seem at present we must start to argue for and build workers' organisations which once again see their final role in breaking capitalism rather than getting the Labour Party elected at any price. As part of that task of breaking international capitalism we have to build an international working class movement to confront it. A mammoth task, maybe, but one which we have already started here at *Transport Worker* together with the Solidarity Federation which, through our links with the IWA (International Workers' Association), links workers facing the same struggles in every continent.

BOSSSES MAKE YOU SICK

Until 1991, employers could reclaim all statutory sick pay (SSP) costs. This was then cut to 80% and scrapped altogether in April '94, saving the treasury £700 million a year. This has led to a massive increase in harassment of sick workers by their bosses.

The bosses' paper, "The Caring Business" (surely a contradiction in terms) carries a front page article hailing the abolition as giving employers a "greater incentive to tackle high levels of absenteeism". What they actually mean is a free reign to intimidate, harass and eventually sack

TUC LOGO LAUGH

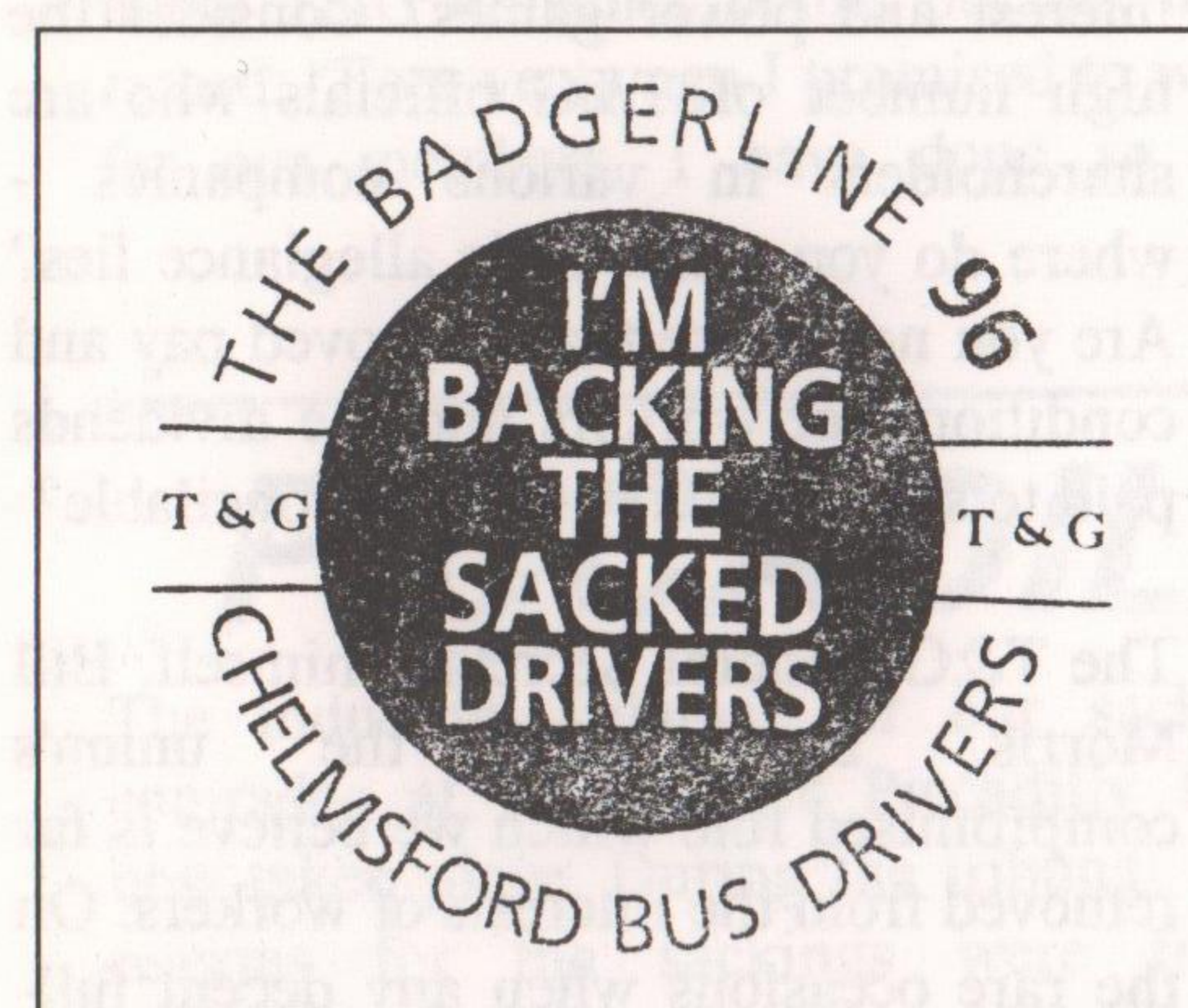


One of the highlights of last year's TUC conference was the unveiling of the new £20,000 logo. Someone mentioned that it looked uncannily like a waffle, and we are inclined to agree. It seems they are stating the tools of their trade in graphic form everywhere now - waffle waffle waffle.

CHELMSFORD BUS DISPUTE

Last year's sacking of 91 Chelmsford bus drivers, followed by further sackings and resignations, at Eastern National was the response of management to a short strike over a proposed increase in the already long hours worked by drivers. It was another kick in the teeth to all bus workers that take seriously the implications to their lives and those of passengers that arise from ever-increasing working hours.

The TGWU response was surprisingly out of character. Rather than call it a day on



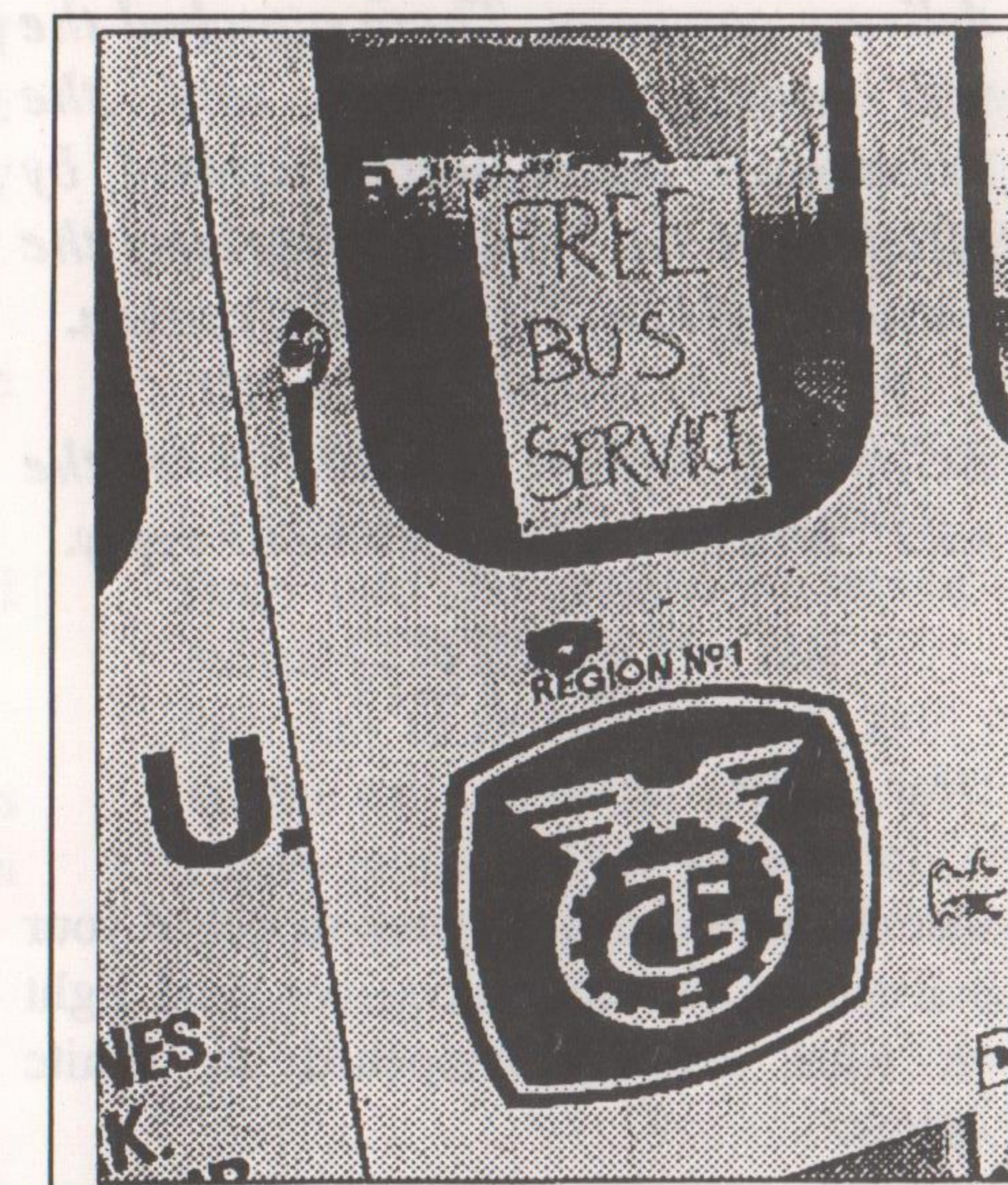
yet another defeat, the drivers were supported over the following months with a TGWU-supplied free mini-bus service. This both needed Eastern National and has without doubt hit their revenue to the order of tens of thousands of pounds. It

has also maintained and built on the sacked drivers' local public support. Nevertheless, Eastern National has been more than able to weather this thorn in their side, as the free buses have not been able to match their fleet or develop a true and effective boycott. These drivers may be in the extraordinary position of being the only TGWU branch to say a good word for the general secretary, Bill Morris. His out-of-character backing has gone a step beyond his usual "vocal support only" and then dump'em quick.

However, there are signs that the end is nigh for the strikers' honeymoon with Morris, as he prepares to dump them in time-honoured fashion. For the nth time, this dispute, as with all others the TGWU manages, shows the same fundamental flaws. TGWU free bus services is fine as a tactic, but it was soon apparent that it was their entire strategy. There has been no call for support from other TGWU branches in the bus sector, never mind within the same bus group - Badgerline. The TGWU's response has been governed by the same concerns as ever - "avoid doing anything that might put union funds (ie bureaucrats' wages) at risk".

The union continues to be organised through isolated branches run with minimal membership involvement and consultation, rather than industry-wide

organisation that breaks depots out of their isolation from each other by creating



action and support-based self-defence bodies across every city, county and region as well as company-wide. To illustrate this, a recent appeal from the Chelmsford strikers to Eastern Counties TGWU (also owned by Badgerline), for solidarity was flatly rejected by the Norwich branch secretary. In these grim days for all bus workers, the TGWU has proved yet again that it is not and never will be fit to meet the tasks ahead and do justice to bus workers fleeced every day by the bosses.

STAGECOACH ROADSHOW

The bus company, Stagecoach, has half-yearly profits of £14.5 million, an increase of nearly 70%. It just goes to show what can be achieved by driving down workers' pay and conditions and adopting a totally anti-trade union attitude. Stagecoach has also, in a relatively short time, acquired nearly 15% of the total UK market. In some areas, it is attempting to become the sole bus operator which prompts us to ask: What happened to the free market strategy of the government which was supposed to deliver "healthy" competition. Answer: There's nothing healthy in leaving the free market to monopoly capitalism.

PAMPHLET REVIEW

Anarchosyndicalism in Puerto Real (from shipyard resistance to direct democracy and community control)

£1.25 (including post and packaging)

When the Spanish government announced a programme of 'rationalisation' at Puerto Real Shipyards, the workforce came out on strike. The great determination and ingenuity of the workforce, and the communities too, brought results despite state and police attacks.

The work of the CNT in and around Puerto Real established direct democracy as an inherent part of local political culture, rejecting control by unaccountable politicians, union officials or 'experts', and implanting workplace and locality-based control.

Mass meetings in the yards and surrounding localities involved workers, their families, neighbours and all supporters. Subsequently, struggles concerning health, taxation, environmental and other issues have been drawn into the activities of resistance.

Make cheques, postal orders, etc payable to Transport Workers Network and send to: PO Box 73, Norwich, NR3 1QD.

WHITE ARROW UPDATE

Throughout the spring and summer of last year we circulated a number of leaflets to all the depots in the White Arrow Express mail order delivery company. These attacked the way wage negotiations and the subsequent ballot were handled by officials in the T&G, particularly the national officer, Graham Stevenson.

Below we reprint a letter from the said "brother" along with our reply.

LETTER

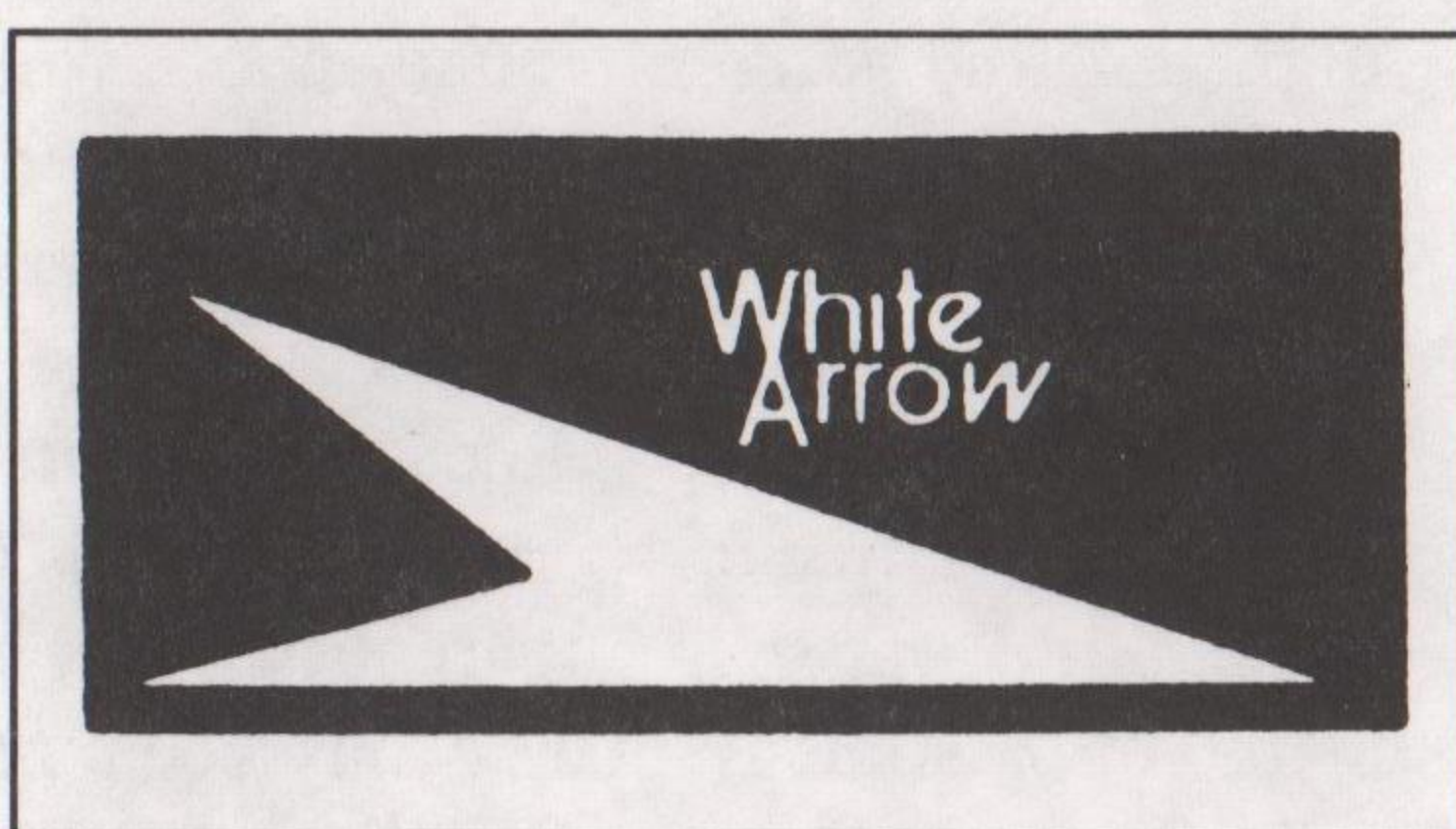
Dear Editor,

there is a good deal to your report in your bulletin no. 8 which does not shed light on what actually happened in White Arrow.

1. You say that I "agreed" to hold a workplace ballot, when in fact I proposed this.
2. You do not say that the postal ballot was convened in response to pressure from lay delegates for a quick response because we were entering an economically and sensitive period.
3. You do not say that the ballot papers went to a 93% accuracy of delivery was because the addresses supplied by the Company were in error (It is a fact that many ERS run ballot papers have a similar accuracy level, due to deaths, home moves, etc. etc.).
4. You say I had a meeting with the Company "to seek their advise". This is untrue, the Company asked for a meeting with the lay member NNC to ask us to consider our position with them in a negotiating forum.
5. You say that "the Committee" did not agree to the Company's position that the ballot stand, but do not report that the validation process which was agreed was mutually supported by the Company and the Union sides of the N.N.C.
6. You do not report that the NNC unanimously agreed that there was no evidence of a majority for strike action, but was reluctant to confirm acceptance of the offer whilst there was doubt about the ballot.
7. Your mathematics seems more dictated by mischievousness than common sense.

You do not report that a re-run ballot of union members verifiably denied a vote was decided upon.

8. The only item you will not know about (all the above were clearly in the knowledge of your informant) is the new result. Adding those members who recently voted to those who voted in the earlier ballot provides a vote of 883 against strike action to 493. If non-members were presumed to have voted and to have voted against a strike (both unlikely, one more than the other), we are still left with a majority of 249 against a strike. Finally, out of our 2,000 members only 491 voted for a strike.



It seems to me that "liars can figure, but figures do not lie". to slightly paraphrase your own headline.

I doubt that you will have the courage to print this letter in your "journal", so I am copying it to every White Arrow Shop Steward. The day that TGWU activists resort to supporting an anonymous journal which does not clearly declare its political allegiance, rather than seeking to resolve our own concerns within our elected lay member structures, will be a bad one.

Yours faithfully,

Graham Stevenson.

National Secretary, Passenger Services Group (acting pro-tem as Road Transport Commercial National Officer).

REPLY

Dear Graham Stevenson,

The first thing we have to say to you is that your letter stands an infinitely greater chance of publication in *Transport*

Worker than any critical correspondence does in the T&G Record.

With regards to your statement that *Transport Worker* is "an anonymous journal which does not clearly declare its

political allegiance", may we point out that we have NO political allegiance to ANY political party, but strive to put the concerns of workers above the narrow interests of any party or organisation - do you? Please try reading the bulletin if you are unclear of our "allegiance".

Do you think the T&G's allegiance is to the workers it claims to represent? Or to the Labour Party? Or is it simply to self-interest and power games? Consider the high number of T&G officials who are shareholders in various companies - where do you think their allegiance lies? Are you not aware that improved pay and conditions for workers and the dividends paid to shareholders are not reconcilable?

The T&G General Secretary himself, Bill Morris, bears out the union's compromised role which we believe is far removed from the interests of workers. On the rare occasions when any decent full-time official does stand up for workers they are immediately attacked by Morris and his cohorts as illustrated by the John Farrell case in Liverpool, among many others. Bill Morris' behaviour is on a par with that the most dictatorial and unprincipled employer imaginable.

Rather than "resorting to supporting an anonymous journal", for the present at least, we and countless others are left no other choice than to resort to union structures that offer us little more than unimaginative, half-hearted and ineffectual strategies for our working lives. The Transport Workers Network, unlike the TGWU, is attempting to inject a culture of involvement, debate, information, militancy and action into the workplace.

TWN.

HOW THE T & G SPENDS YOUR MONEY

LETTER

Dear TW,

if you thought the political system was corrupt with the Tory party, you ought to take a closer look at the trade union movement and in particular the T&G.

At the back end of August Bill Morris, General Secretary of the T&G, took himself and a good many senior officers to Geneva to attend a Transport conference. Whilst there they all stayed at the Hotel Europa which I'm told costs five grand a night just for a bed each, on top of which was no doubt the lavish meals that they've become used to us paying for and of course the bar bill...nuff said.

All this, I'm told, cost the T&G somewhere in the region of £57,000 and Morris had the nerve to cry poverty when the T&G office staff, on less than a quarter of the wages we waste on him demand something more than a 3.5% increase and they get no cars or subsidised mortgages and a big lump of their pension surpluses were used to finance the early retirement scheme for officers. Some people might be forgiven for thinking many of those officers retired the day they were appointed.

Many of us in the T&G are getting pig sick of the direction we appear to be travelling with the Witchfinder General Secretary sacking or demoting the one or two decent officers who don't fit his identity-kit vision of whom will be saleable to

the GMB for merger talks and then using the union's facilities to wage a propaganda war against anyone who disagrees with him like the staff or like John Farrell for having the nerve to defend himself in the best tradition of trade unionism.

Those who understand the nature of politics and of the trade unions, even in so-called lay member organisations, know that conferences exist for no other purpose than to give credibility to the activities of its leaders (usually in retrospect) but every now and then those lay members get the chance to bite back and to give a smack in the eye to a leader who has become so remote from the membership by surrounding himself with sycophants too scared to speak out for fear of losing executive offices to which they are not entitled under the union's rules because many have not worked for years or represent trade groups in which they do not work.

In 1995 the lay delegates to the T&G conference which is set to take place in Blackpool have just such an opportunity and I for one hope they set matters right by re-instating a real working class hero, brother John Farrell.

As a final insult to the whole membership of the T&G it has been mooted to me that moves are being made to expel John Farrell in order to deny him the right of appeal to the union's conference. In order to counter this move the union's agenda has been bombarded with copies of the following resolution from branches calling for John's re-instatement whether

or not he has been expelled prior to the conference:

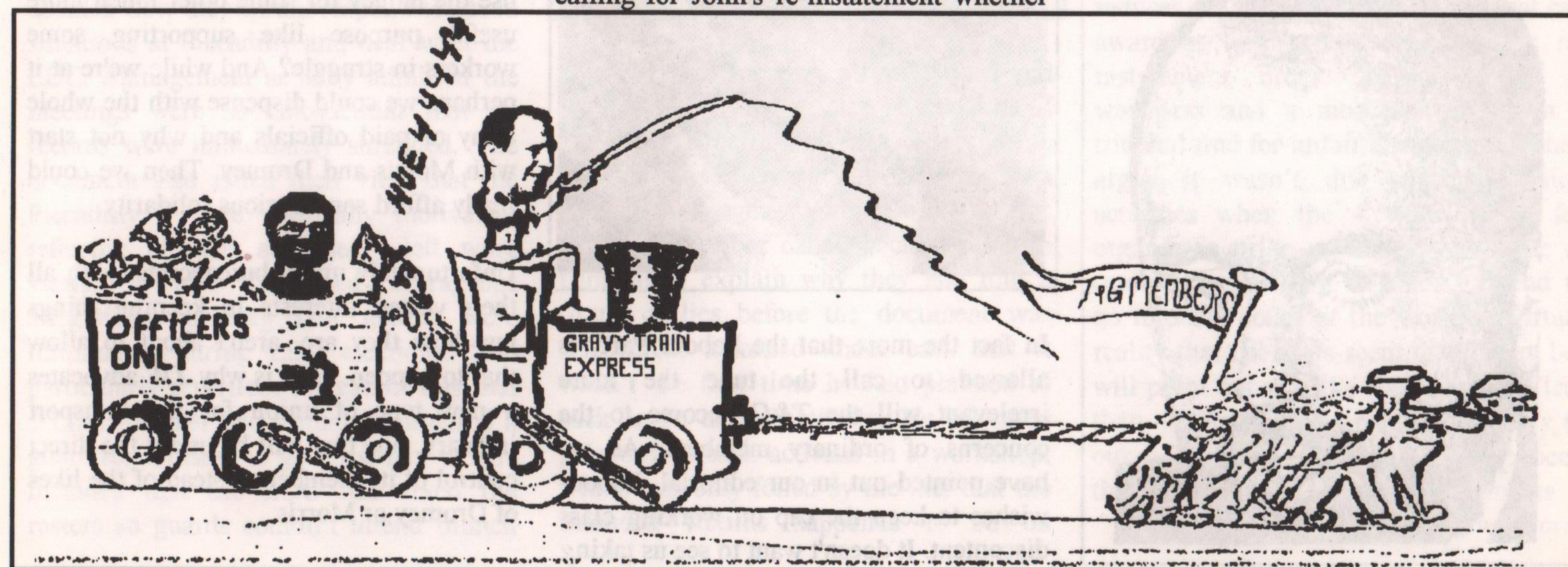
"This conference deplores the underhand methods used in the dismissal of brother John Farrell and instructs the General Secretary to re-instate brother Farrell immediately with full compensation back-dated to the time of his dismissal."

THIS IS ONE JUST CAUSE WE CAN WIN BUT ONLY WITH YOUR HELP

For more information on the John Farrell campaign please write to:
Justice for John Farrell Campaign,
17 Southbourne Road, Wallasey, Merseyside, L45 8QA.

RAT REAPS REWARD

Readers with good memories might remember Victor McGeer and his sell-out tactics when negotiating on behalf of White Arrow Express employees. McGeer, also heavily criticised for his handling of a dispute at TNT Newsfast, where he again sold workers down the river, has now reaped his reward and started work as head of employee relations at TNT Express UK. This is far from an isolated case. It is increasingly common, especially in the run-up to privatisation for stalwarts of the rail unions, who have negotiated away jobs for years to suddenly jump ship and join management. Mind you, there is still some way to go before the unions match ASLEF's plans as described on page 6.

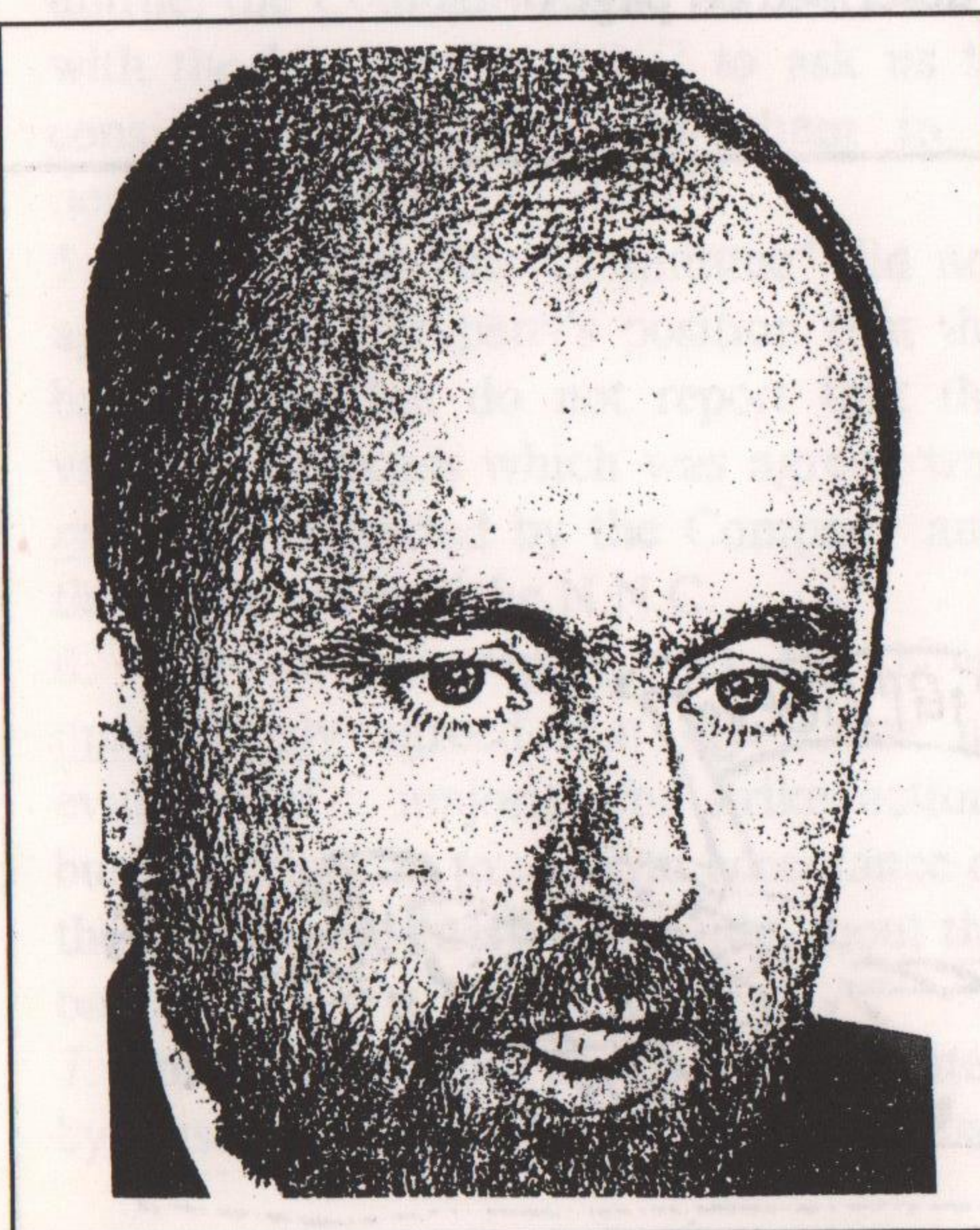


HOBSON'S CHOICE AT THE T&G

The recent TGWU leadership election, which was won by Bill Morris, has been a bit of an eye-opener to say the least. It has once again demonstrated how removed union bureaucrats have become from their ordinary members and from the working class as a whole, not to mention the dire need for workplace activists to seek an escape from the smothering embrace of the Labour Party into which the reformist trade unions have led us.

NOTHING TO CHOOSE

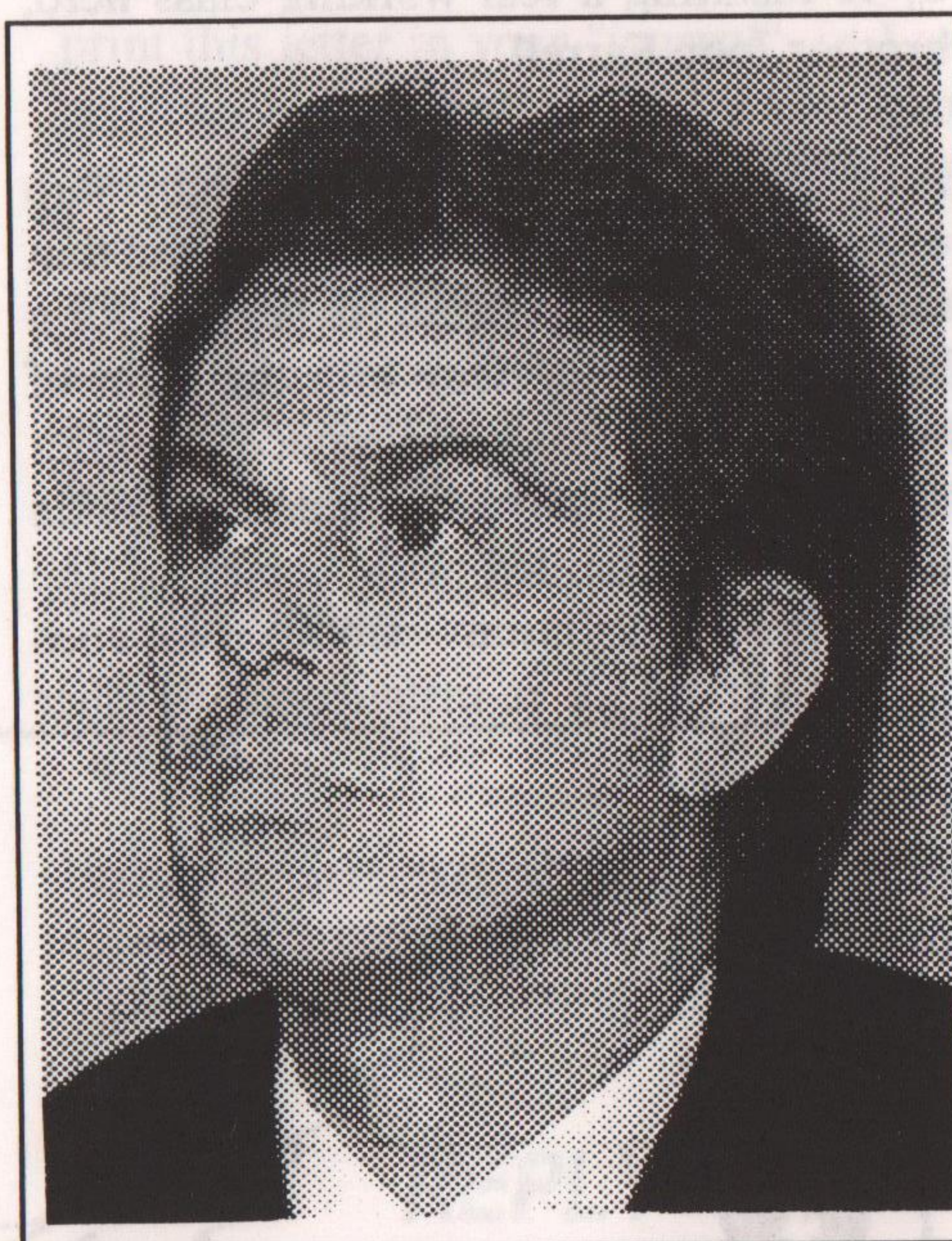
As T&G members, we've been stuck with somewhat of a Hobson's choice in this election. On one hand there is Bill Morris who was elected to the leadership 4 years ago on a left-wing ticket. Once again his leadership has shown the folly of electing supposedly 'more left-wing leaders'. Morris' erstwhile backers on the left have now abandoned him while he can now count for much of his support this time round on the right. Jack Dromey, on the other hand (or should that be the same hand), despite his links to the right wing of the Labour Party, has sought and received support from some sections of the left, mainly on the basis that his name isn't Bill Morris. In reality for members who wish to see a union that can give them real solidarity when it comes to fighting for improved pay and conditions



there is absolutely nothing to choose between the two candidates. Both will do their best to protect T&G funds by preventing workers from taking effective action in defence of their own interests.

NO SUBSTANCE

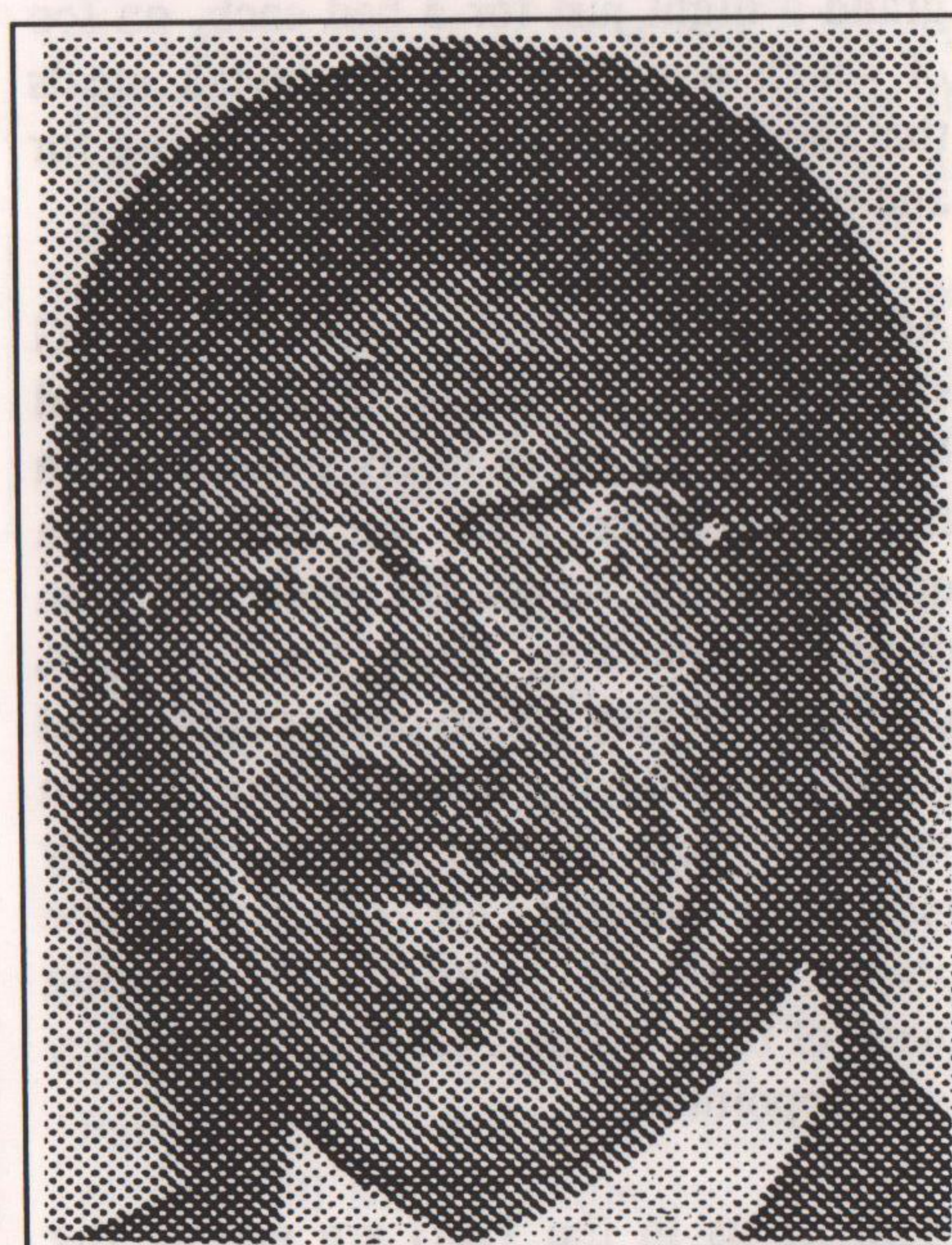
With nothing of any substance separating 2 right wing candidates it is sadly inevitable that all the campaigning has centred on the question of who is most loyal to Tony Blair's New Labour Party. In fact, in an election campaign which was supposed to be about choosing a new leader for the T&G, you would be forgiven for thinking that the dominant personality was Tony Blair. Dromey has been accusing Morris of harming the chances of Labour winning the next election because of his constant opposition to Blair's so-called "modernisation". Morris, meanwhile, has been slagging off Dromey for his disloyalty to the T&G, always putting Labour's agenda first.



In fact the more that the Labour Party is allowed to call the tune the more irrelevant will the T&G become to the concerns of ordinary members. As we have pointed out in our editorial, Labour wishes to keep the cap on working class discontent. It doesn't want to see us taking

on the Tories' anti-working class policies because, after all the future Blair government intends nothing but more of the same.

Indeed, in view of all this we here at *Transport Worker* would ask what advantage is there for T&G members (and members of any other present union for that matter) in seeing our hard-earned dosh being poured into the Labour Party's



next election campaign in the form of a huge chunk of the political fund. Wouldn't it make more sense to disaffiliate completely from Labour and use the money for some other much more useful purpose like supporting some workers in struggle? And while we're at it perhaps we could dispense with the whole army of paid officials and why not start with Morris and Dromey. Then we could really afford some serious solidarity.

Unfortunately union bureaucrats, with all their vested interests in keeping things just how they are, aren't about to allow that to happen. This is why *TW* advocates a new type of union for the transport industry, one that will be under the direct control of its members instead of the likes of Dromey or Morris.

THE 'SUCCESSSES' OF BILL MORRIS

As all active members of the T&G should be aware it is against union rules to use the union's facilities to conduct an election campaign, no matter what the position. It is with some surprise that we find in the run-up to the election for general secretary that Morris has continued to put out his monthly bulletins using central office facilities which amount to no more than blatant electioneering.

However, some enterprising members have turned the tables on Morris by spoofing his election address in which he has made some pretty incredible claims about his record in office. The alternative address which has been circulated to many T&G branches points out his true record: "Four years ago I promised to win for our members, I have done so by

ensuring that T&G officers do not rock the boat with companies by holding such unnecessary distractions as strike ballots. We have capitulated on every occasion where companies have so much as whispered the word **de-recognition** and I have sacked any officer who has had the audacity to even attempt to defend the lay members of MY union."

The leaflet goes on to describe more of the hard work Morris has done for us all:

- Sacked more than 300 Officers and staff.
- Closed over 40 offices.
- Raised contributions numerous times (almost on a par with prescription charges).

- Spent loads of **your** money swanning around Britain and Europe living it up in top class hotels.
- Spent loads more of **your** money obtaining a building which overlooks Buck House.
- Lost over 360.000 members since I took office while the competition (the GMB) have maintained their membership levels since 1977.
- Almost succeeded in closing **your** convalescent centres in Ayr and Conwy and have subsequently run them into the ground in revenge at decisions made by the last BDC. In fact they're in such a poor state now no one will use them.
- I have presided over **your** union's first ever national strike by your own staff by offering them a derisory pay award.

PICCADILLY 4 TRIBUNAL RESULT

The industrial tribunal for our sacked comrades at Manchester Piccadilly has now taken place. During the tribunal the reasons for the sackings were fully exposed. At first management tried to maintain the Piccadilly 4 were no different from any other LDC. This was shown to be a lie when, after the 2nd day, a document was brought to light which fully detailed their attitude to the 4 and why they were sacked.

This document referred to a number of meetings at a high level in BR which had come up with a 'what if' scenario. This detailed how they would respond to given situations at Piccadilly and deal with the LDC. Management actually admitted the meetings were so confidential that all records were immediately shredded. The document also stated their view that the Piccadilly 4 were politically motivated, referring to their supposedly left wing views. It also contained outrageous allegations claiming that guards were intimidated during LDC elections. One particularly scurrilous allegation was that 1 LDC member had virtually murdered a guard for refusing to go on strike. Others included that the LDC had fixed the rosters so guards couldn't attend branch

meetings. It was even claimed branch meetings had been changed from fortnightly to monthly to stop members attending even though this was done years before the sacked members were elected.

How can a tribunal find for unfair dismissal and then argue it wasn't due to trade union activities when the 4 were sacked for organising strike action, the very core of trade union activity?

These allegations were all unfounded and would be so bizarre as to be amusing if they hadn't been part of a detailed plan to sack active LDC members. A high ranking manager, Warburton, who was one of a number called back before the tribunal to explain why they had told a tissue of lies before the document was uncovered, admitted under oath that it wasn't the first time he had planned to sack trade union activists. He admitted planning to sack activists in a workshop, which was only foiled by the fact that the intended victims happened to be on

holiday when they were supposed to be sacked. Management also admitted that after the sacking of our comrades a system was put in place whereby all new recruits would be vetted for any record of trade union activity.

Despite management being exposed as outright liars and the overwhelming evidence that they'd planned the sackings, the tribunal didn't find that the 4 were sacked for trade union activities. Instead it was decided they were unfairly dismissed because management failed to follow proper procedures. This, of course, greatly reduces the final settlement a tribunal can award as well as the chances of a reinstatement order. This decision is worthless and a mockery. How can a tribunal find for unfair dismissal and then argue it wasn't due to trade union activities when the 4 were sacked for organising strike action, the very core of trade union activity. We don't intend to go into the detail of the world of virtual reality that tribunals seem to exist in, but will point out that the final award of less than a year's pay is an insult not only to our 4 comrades, after all they've been through, but to all trade union members.

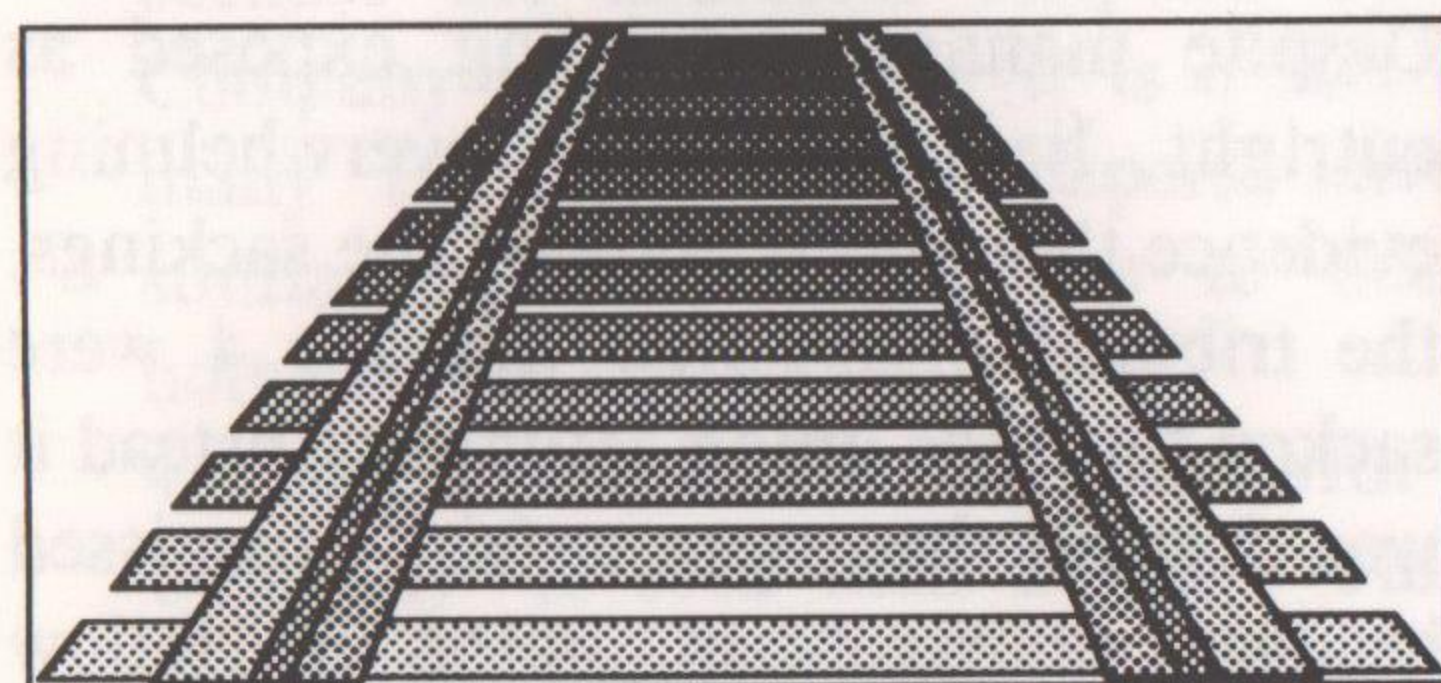
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PICCADILLY 4....

However, the fight is far from over. The struggle now moves back to where it should have been fought in the first place. As we go to press there are 2 motions to the RMT AGM arguing for a national ballot for strike action to force the re-instatement of our sacked comrades. Once these are passed it is imperative that all members campaign firstly to ensure union leaders carry out conference's wishes and organise a ballot, and then work to ensure a massive yes vote. Re-instatement will not only be a victory for the 4 but a massive boost in the fightback that needs to be organised.

RAIL NEWS IN BRIEF

It appears that ASLEF are going to go the whole hog and abandon Trade Union activities altogether and become managers instead. Many of us on the railways feel they have been halfway there for a long time. It now seems they are to become a drivers' employment agency if privatisation goes ahead. It would then appear that drivers will be looking for a new union to protect their pay and conditions from their new bosses in ASLEF. This, of course would mean setting up a new union, an idea that we at *Transport Worker* have had every sympathy with for a long time.



If you happen to find yourself waiting for a train at Bolton railway station make sure you don't get caught short. In a sign of the chaos to come under privatisation, Regional Railways, who run Bolton station, can't provide proper toilet facilities. The logic of privatisation means that Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive (GMPT) is unable to provide funds to build toilets on all platforms. If they do so, then Railtrack, who owns the track running through the station, will use the fact that the station has been up-graded as an excuse to increase the charges to companies, including GMPT, who provide services.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

IBERIA AIRLINES

Iberia airlines' recent so-called "viability plan" has a lot in store for its workers. A wage cut of up to 15%; 2,120 redundancies in the context of 5,000 jobs having already gone over the last few years; and the cutting back of clothes and transport allowances are all part and parcel of Iberia's austerity programme.

Of course, the workers at Iberia haven't taken all this lying down. Union affiliation rates, at 75%, are high and workers' organisation has broken through the duplicity and incompetence of the "official" so-called majority unions. Our comrades in the CNT, a Spanish revolutionary union, have linked up with other radical unions to form a Union Platform and have had far more success in rallying support than the old socialists and communists. Strikes and occupations (including wildcat strikes and blocking of runways and access roads) have been called for by this Union Platform and have been remarkably successful because they have built across union divides and job categories and because decisions have been taken by the workers themselves, not by some faceless self-interested bureaucracy.

(from CNT)

DANISH SOLIDARITY

Almost a quarter of a million Danish workers recently took part in a 24 hour unofficial strike in support of 50 sacked bus workers. The sacking took place after they opposed the privatisation of their local bus company and took on wider implications after the initial protests were turned into widespread opposition to the Danish governments' wide-ranging public sector privatisation programme. The strike didn't have the support of the official union confederation, the LO, and as a result not only did workers lose a day's pay but were also fined for taking



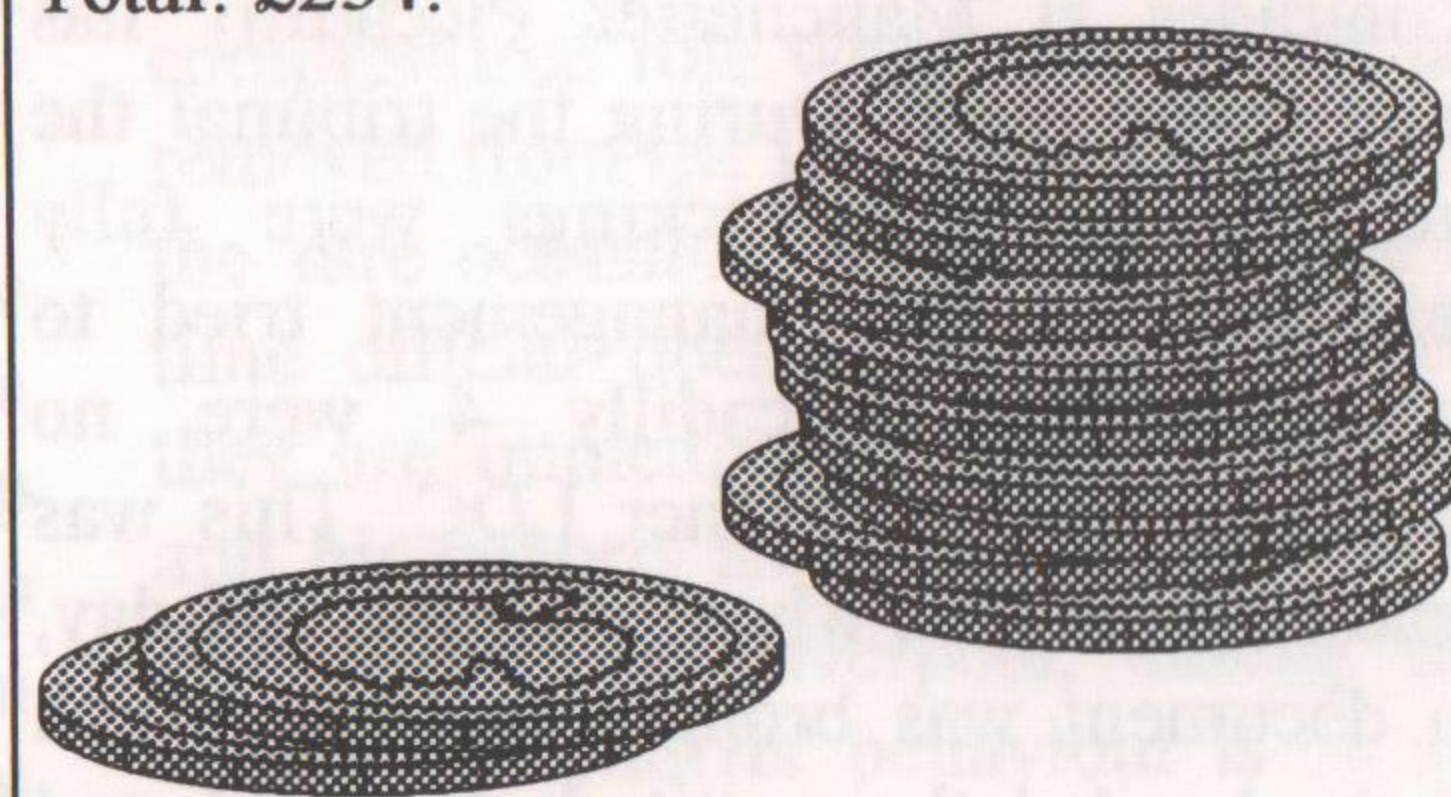
unofficial action. Despite this the strike was a huge success with dock workers, transport workers, brewery workers, airport workers and many other sectors walking out in support of the bus workers. This is the way to defeat privatisation - with mass strike action rather than the timid publicity campaigns so loved by the British trade union leaders.

DONATIONS

August '94 - June '95. Many thanks to all those who have helped to keep the bulletin going.

Solidarity Federation, £100; J., Middx, £62; R., Kent, £5; J., Bristol, £10; A., Sheffield, £25; N., Somerset, £1; T&G branches, £50.

Total: £254.



Once again, thanks to all who have donated. Your continued support is vital.

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SOLIDARITY FEDERATION

Solidarity Federation was formed in March 1994, by the joining together of industrial networks in the Transport, Education and Public Service sectors, the Direct Action Movement and other groups and individuals. This is a considerable step forward for anarchosyndicalism in this country. SF gives what has been lacking for many years - a concrete base in the working class, for uniting struggles in the workplace with the wider political struggle. In other words a revolutionary, social and economic organisation.

Whilst not a fully fledged revolutionary union, SF is a significant step towards this aim. As industrial networks grow in members and influence so does the scope for action. The networks already have established a reputation in their industries and are beginning to show real results in membership and effectiveness.

The federation is not just organised through industrial networks. It also organises locally through 'locals'. A local is made up of all SF members in an area regardless of network membership. The work of locals is varied: general solidarity with the networks and other workers; local political campaigns like anti-fascism and environmental struggles; holding public meetings; and producing and distributing anarchosyndicalist material.

Many of the already established locals are working towards creating and actual building or Solidarity Centre to be permanently based in. The Norwich, and Deptford locals have already achieved this. while one will soon be set up and running in Manchester.

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