

CONFIDENTIAL

cc NO



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EB

David Norgrove Esq
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1

30 AUG 1985

Dear David,

BRITISH RAIL INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

I enclose a short note by the Department which covers recent developments and updates the note I circulated on 27 August.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Secretaries of State for Employment, Energy, Scotland, Trade and Industry and Wales, and to Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

*Yours,
Richard.*

R A ALLAN
PS/Secretary of State

29 August 1985

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Prime Minister

Note by the Department of TransportJEW
20/8

BRITISH RAIL INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

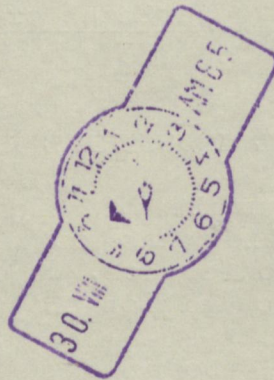
1. The result of the National Union of Railwaymen (NUR) guards' ballot has compelled the union to recall its Annual Delegate Conference, the only body which can overturn the existing prohibition on productivity talks.

2. The BR Board met NUR leaders this morning. The NUR said that progress on driver-only-operation (DOO) of trains was contingent on the recalled Conference (probably mid-September) changing their policy. In the meantime the NUR would endeavour to secure the resumption of the 3 original freight DOO trials (see Annex A to the Departmental note of 27 August) and normal working of DOO-modified passenger stock at Glasgow and Kings Cross provided that BRB reinstated guards sacked for refusing normal duties. BRB rejected this as unacceptable; their position remains that the question of the dismissed guards may be considered only when the NUR has formally agreed to the Board's proposals. BRB will be continuing firmly with their plans to switch other services to DOO.

3. The NUR Executive recently sanctioned strike ballots for two other NUR groups (Signalling and Telecommunications Technicians, and British Rail Engineering Limited workshop grades). The Railways Board doubt whether, in the light of the guards' vote, the union will now press either case to a ballot.

4. There are good signs that NUR unofficial action over DOO will fall off quickly. And ASLEF train drivers will have to decide whether there is now any point in persisting with sympathy action. BRB judge that some unofficial action by drivers and guards may linger but only in a very low key. But there is bound to be disruption to passenger services at Glasgow Central, and to some South Wales and Immingham freight services, until dismissed guards there have been either reinstated or replaced.

29 August 1985



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e. Mr. ~~Wicks~~
(No 10)

COPY FOR

Y0981

Brigadier Budd

MR UNWIN

Railways and Power Stations

1. You might like to see the attached copies of items from today's Daily Mail - pointers for the future perhaps?

2. I understand that the Secretary of State for Energy will minute the Prime Minister in the next few days on the likely effects of industrial action in the power supply industry. You may be aware that the TUC have stated their intention of organising a day of action by all their members if any union member at GCHQ is sacked and two unions (EEPTU and NUPE) have said they will ballot their members to seek authority for a 24 hr strike as their contribution.

R. W. Hargrave

BRIGADIER J A J BUDD

30 August 1985

The concern about guards
is precisely the presentational
point that B.R. have
not so far responded to
convincingly. There is
genuine concern among (mainly
female) travellers & commuters, & B.R.
ought to be doing more to allay this. You
told me that Dept Transport had this
point well in mind. But I should be
grateful if you would express further
concern to them.

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JH 30/VIII

GUARDS: Sorry BR I'm not convinced

by DIANA HUTCHINSON

WOMAN'S EDITOR

THE NEWS that British Rail plan at least 12 more routes with one man trains will have brought no comfort to the hundreds of women who wrote to me in praise of the old-fashioned guard.

Speak to Sir Robert Reid, the austere, forthright Chairman of BR, and you find him concerned, but quite unapologetic. 'I detect some undercurrent here because we are men talking to you...' he told me.

Sorry to seem sexist. But can a man ever understand the difference in the climate of fear for a man and a woman travelling on certain trains, on certain routes, at certain hours?

He sees our fears for our safety as something fanned by misguided and possibly malicious trades unions. And though he showed me unpublished figures that prove more than 3,000 crimes of violence and sexual offences are reported last year on trains, and confessed the figures are rising slightly, his faith is in the new technology to be our knight in shining armour.

'The Victorian railway guard might have gone into our culture as a friendly figure,' he thundered, 'But have you seen some of our guards on television during the Glasgow dispute?'

'Are they the type you would feel confident will look after you? There was never any question but that they would always be on the trains and yet they walked out... Is that the friendly caring guy you want?'

'And the driver will not be locked in. You can walk through and speak to him. He can talk from the train to any signal box and the signal man talk back directly to the customer on the phone. Police could be waiting at the next station, help could come far more quickly.'

Petrified

He pointed out the quaintly nicknamed Bedpan line, Bedford to St. Pancras where the smart new technology has already been in service. The Chairman of the commuters group, a man of course, did have safety reservations, but apparently has no longer.

Unlike one of our readers, a 'Bedpan' passenger who recently found herself petrified, surrounded by drunken yobs and quite incapable of speech, let alone running swiftly up the train to attract the attention of the driver.

Sir Bob told me he is recruiting 'Jumpers'—travelling ticket inspectors to leap on and off such trains: 'We need them because if the public can get away without paying its fare, it will. Today there is far more chance that you will come face to face with a ticket collector? If you are in trouble you should tell him.'

But is this man the embodiment of comfort and helpfulness? And will he be there at the right time? Ticket collectors have homes to go to. I have honestly never met one on the 10.30 p.m. out of Blackfriars.

The final security I was told was: 'You can always pull the communication cord.' It hardly seemed worth mentioning that at 5ft. 2in., a fairly average height, I can only reach it with my fingertips fully extended or by standing on the seat.

'Oh, dear, you surprise me,' said Sir Bob, 'In all my years at the railway I have never heard of that.'

But at least the menace of yobs putting their dirty boots on the seats has been solved. BR proudly announce LOOSE COVERS which can be washed each day. At least until they are stolen.

WHAT YOU SAY

Ever since British Rail announced its plans to run more driver-only trains, letters have been pouring into the Guards' union, the NUR.

These letters support the union's case for retaining Guards - by over 40 to 1.

Rail users say they want Guards on passenger and freight trains. They want someone to be on board to deal with accidents, fires, sudden illness and vandals.

They are angry that Guards were sacked for trying to protect the service and they reject BR's claim that the BR Board only want to do away with Guards on 'some trains'.

The NUR remains convinced that there is a continuing role for the Guard and welcomes growing public support.

We have to persuade BR to think again.

The argument for retaining Guards can be won.

For the NUR knows what rail users know - that with Guards on board, trains are safer - and the public is happier.

And safety and customer satisfaction must surely take priority over the few pence per ticket BR say they could save.



...My son is soon to attend a hostel for handicapped people. He is wheelchairbound, but if he is put on a train in the care of a Guard he could come home on his own - Mary Buggy, Merton.

...Sometimes a child or a very old or disabled person may have to travel on the train alone; without a Guard there will be no-one to keep a friendly eye on them - Steven Spencer, London, NW3.

...What of the deterioration in safety levels that will result from the absence of any back-up to the driver when accidents occur? - Tony Burton, London, W3.

...The future of driver-only trains needs to be aired before the public and seen as patently absurd. Any such decision by railbus would soon be scotched - P. Lloyd, Horley.

...We deplore the concept of driver-only trains and consider it essential to maintain the Guard system for safety, security and the reassurance of the travelling public - Ruth and Esther Dunstan, Falmouth.

...Being a young woman, I would feel very insecure travelling on a train with no Guard. By the time the driver is able to assist me it may be too late - C.J.A. Baker, Bedford.

...Suppose a freight train is derailed and demolishes a signal? I consider it more essential to have a Guard on freight than on passenger services - Michael Down, Epping.

...If drunks start to fight each other there is no-one to stop them. The Guard is an important member of the train - Mr. and Mrs. T. Tighe, Solihull.



How you can help

Together we can win the argument for retaining Guards.

- 1 Write to Jimmy Knapp, General Secretary of the NUR, and tell him of any relevant experiences you have had on rail journeys
- 2 Write to your local MP (c/o the House of Commons, Westminster, London, SW1) and insist you want Guards retained on BR's trains.
- 3 Campaign with us. Write for free booklets explaining the Guards' case and free lapel stickers like the one on the right. Distribute them to your friends and colleagues.
- 4 Help support the families of those Guards already sacked by contributing to our welfare fund. (Make cheques and postal orders payable to the NUR at the address below)



**National Union of Railwaymen,
Unity House, 205 Euston Road, London, NW1 2BL**

*Daily Mail
Friday 20 August
1985*