

Limerick Socialist Party says:

No to franchising...

FIGHT

PRIVATISATION

OF CIÉ

“I want to move as quickly as possible to introduce controlled competition in the form of franchising as the primary means of regulating bus services in the greater Dublin area. Beginning with new services and extending on a phased basis to the existing service network.”

- Seamus Brennan, Minister for Transport, 7th November 2002

Fianna Fáil and the PDs are planning to break up CIE as part of their Thatcherite plans to privatise the state's public transport system. CIÉ, An Post, Aer Lingus, Aer Rianta, are just some of the semi-state companies which they government are planning to sell off to private sector profiteers. This will mean higher prices for consumers, a poorer service, job losses, wage cuts and non-union working conditions.

Brennan is planning to bring in 25% franchising in Dublin at the beginning of 2004, and to then phase in the complete privatisation of the Dublin bus network. This 'model' will then be extended throughout the country. Multinational transport companies are already lining up to bid for these new franchises.

These companies will under-bid Dublin Bus and Bus Éireann for these contracts by employing non-unionised workers on short-term contracts, with lower wages, and no pension schemes or benefits.

The Experience in Britain

- Thatcher's privatisation of public transport in the 1980s has been a disaster for transport workers and the public. Even Blair has raised the possibility of re-nationalising the railways because privatisation has meant massive fare hikes, a deteriorating service and many deaths as profits have been put before health and safety.

- In the first six years after privatisation the operating costs of bus companies fell by 36%: the vast majority of these savings were made by cutting workers' wages!

During the first 12 years after privatisation bus fare in the Greater London area rose by 37%, and by 57% in the rest of the UK.

The traffic congestion crisis in Dublin and the rest of the country's major urban areas will be worsened by the privatisation of public transport (as has been the case in Britain). Ireland has the lowest public transport state subsidy in Europe. Dublin Bus receives a state subsidy of only 11% compared to an average of 50% in northern European cities. A properly state-funded public transport system is the only way to deal with the country's traffic congestion problems.

The NBRU, SIPTU and the other CIÉ unions need to take a principled stand against privatisation. Today's stoppage should be the beginning of a major campaign by the CIÉ unions to stop privatisation. A major public relations battle should be fought by the unions, which aims to educate the general public on how privatisation will result in a more expensive and poorer public transport service. Today's strike should be the first in a series of such stoppages and protests in order to send a warning shot across the government's bows, that if they try to privatise CIÉ that the unions will bring the public transport system to a halt until they reverse their franchising and privatisation plans.

- ▶ **No to the privatisation of public transport.**
- ▶ **Stop the break up of CIÉ – fight Brennan's franchising plans.**
- ▶ **No to trade union 'consultations' with government on privatisation – for a principled union stand against Fianna Fáil and PDs sell-off plans.**
- ▶ **Fight the closure of Ianrod Éireann's freight service.**
- ▶ **No sell off of CIÉ lands to private speculators.**
- ▶ **Decisively switch the emphasis from road building into public transport to upgrade rail infrastructure and service frequency.**
- ▶ **For an integrated public transport system that links buses, trains, DART, LUAS, etc.**
- ▶ **For a united trade union campaign to stop the privatisation of state companies.**

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