

### 3 Facebook Posts

1. There is so much more wrong with the way this deal has been handled than the supposed democratic credentials of opt-out/in.

I have three problems with Andy's statement.

First, I dispute his use of the word "few" to characterise the number of drivers who have a problem with the way that union members are being asked to come to a decision on this issue. Andy tries to narrow down the problem of union decision making by concentrating on the question of how democratic an opt-in/opt-out option is: he does not want to deal with the wider problem exemplified by what happened after the straw poll result for example. If you add in things like this I'd say that in fact almost everybody has a problem with it because they know that it has been handled badly but some then put those concerns aside because they think it is more important that we get this deal.

Secondly, he says above "... you get the offer accepted by the EC." The EC accepted this deal, the members did not and as it stands at the moment never can. The timeline is: a deal is put to the members and a straw poll indicates they reject that deal. The deal is then improved and the EC accept it! Drivers question how the EC can accept it when the straw poll says no but we are assured that we will get a vote on it, people think, another straw poll at the least then. But no, we don't even get a straw poll, there is no vote on it, you just get the option not to be part of it. To most members the EC's actions were wrong but Andy has earlier given us some insight into how he thinks the democratic structures work: "Strictly by rule the EC should have accepted the deal over the table as it all complies with charter. But they are looking for a deal that allows those who are strongly against to opt out." There you go says Andy, so what if the members voted to reject, strictly speaking the charter gives the EC the right to override the wishes of the membership! And Andy is trying to give us lessons on democracy, I'm not buying it.

We like to think that ASLEF is a members led union, this series of events proves that we are not.

And thirdly. The main reason that drivers have achieved the strong position they are in today is because they act as one; and they can act as one because they all have the same T&Cs. People have already given examples of where they have personally been out of pocket from past deals but they accepted the will of the majority because that is the done thing, and it is the done thing because many decades of bitter experience has taught us that it leads to better outcomes for union members: unity is strength.

It is embarrassing to have to give this kind of lecture to people who have been in the union for decades and hold high office in it. For the sake of unity could you please just admit you were wrong and give us a 50%+1 ballot.

2. Here is my reconstruction of what happened at AAD concerning the emergency motion taken on Friday 13th May (4 day 156 RD no referendum if voluntary).

A bit of background first.

Motions from branches to the AAD have to be at HO on the 2nd Monday of December. Emergency motions and amendments to motions have to be in by the 1st of March. 'Emergency' emergency motions (EEM) can appear at conference anytime in response to any event happening after 1st March although if an EEM comes in before AAD starts the conference arrangements committee (CAC) will do its best, having taken instruction from the chair on its suitability, to inform the delegates about it as soon as possible. This will give delegates as much time as possible to think about it before it is taken; democratic functioning demands no less. It is down to the chair who is flanked and advised by the GS and President at AAD to say if an EEM can be heard at conference.

Motions to AAD are usually taken after the relevant section of the Annual Report of the Executive Committee (ARotEC); so, you get a bit of the report, discuss relevant motions, then another bit of the report, discuss relevant motions until you get to the motions that aren't really dealt with in the ARotEC. You can also have Supplementary

Reports which are as the name suggests something important that wasn't covered in the ARotEC. One such supplementary report was taken on Tuesday concerning Freightliner.

So, on Friday morning, the last day of conference, delegates are expecting that the first item of business will be to finish off the debate started the afternoon before on a motion concerning a rule change for retired members. Instead the chair announces that there is going to be an EEM taken immediately. The vast majority of the delegates have never seen or heard of it up until that point, they are unprepared and caught off guard.

Paddington branch is in the chair, Marylebone branch moves the EEM, and Euston seconds. In the ensuing debate, the president of the union, as part of his contribution speaks in favour of the motion because it has a bearing on the situation of freight drivers. This begs the question of why, if he was that concerned about freight drivers it wasn't mentioned under the Supplementary Report on Tuesday concerning Freightliner: it is doubtful that the situation of freight drivers had deteriorated significantly in 3 days; or again, why wasn't there a specific motion concerning displaced freight drivers at conference? For instance, why wasn't it proposed that we have a levy of all ASLEF members to support those drivers until they could be found alternative employment rather than cynically using their predicament to try and guilt trip EMT drivers into a hasty decision on their deal?

Among the speeches against the EEM two were made by the delegates from Derby and Nottingham who represent the drivers at EMT's two largest depots. Both these branches had, prior to the AAD, submitted motions to the EC saying that they wanted a 50%+1 Yes/No ballot on whether to accept a deal on Sunday working (why these motions weren't dealt with by the AAD, which sits as the EC for the duration of conference is still unknown) rather than what we actually got which was that it was accepted on our behalf by the EC with drivers then only been given the choice to opt-in or out of it. The only gauge of the members wishes before the deal was accepted by the EC was a straw poll which showed that 73% of drivers were opposed to it.

The manner in which the AAD was bounced into discussing this emergency motion is a further indication of the low regard the leadership has for democratic process. It also seems likely that it was only put up for debate so that the EC could retrospectively legitimise their bad decision to accept the EMT deal without balloting the drivers and indeed going against the wishes of the majority as expressed in the straw poll. Thus, they hope to head off any criticism of their action by many of us EMT drivers which has been mounting in the run up to AAD and will hopefully be taken up by other democrats in the union which is likely considering that a third of the delegates voted against the EEM. It is especially important for those members in companies that don't yet have Sundays in the working week to fight this.

I do believe the leadership when they say that they sincerely believe that this is the best deal we can get and that could be true but that does not then give the EC the right to accept a deal without first putting that deal to the members concerned through the normal procedure of a Yes/No ballot, which returns at least 50%+1 in favour of acceptance. I will never subscribe to the sentiment expressed in another part of the president's contribution where he said: "Sometimes we have to save the members from themselves."

**3.** In your original post you say that people should decide based on what is right for them and their family, other contributors over the weeks have put it this way too. This is the wrong way to look at it. We should decide on what is best for all of us, together, collectively and that means not splitting the grade. You remember when Thatcher said there is no such thing as society, there are individual men and women and there are families Do you see how similar your and her statements are? She was saying that to break down the idea that we owed any allegiance to each other. I think we do.

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**Defend union principle, opt-out to force a 50%+1 ballot**