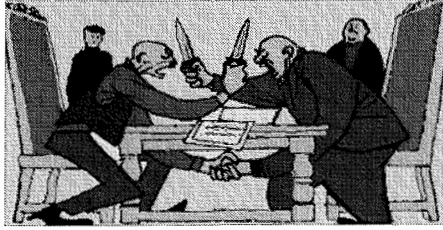


INSIDE THE UNIONS



Why can't Johnson score?

THE latest developments in the postal dispute leave the partisan observer puzzled and frustrated.

How much worse for postal workers, losing pay and rooting to win and wondering why, oh why, can't Johnson score?

It's like playing football with a centre-forward determined to draw. Johnson gets good service from the mid-field — the ball is at his feet again. Run with it, Johnson!

Nought betwixt him and goal but a quaking keeper, Johnson turns round and knocks the ball back to his mid-field.

Sooner or later, you think, they must take him off. Trouble is, he leads the negotiating team.

Trouble is, he thinks you have to give management something or they will take the ball away.

He will bring back the same deal — a pay deal agreed *before* the strikes, and team working — until his side gives in.

He spoke recently to the *Financial Times* about the dispute and his frustration with the postal executive.

They keep turning down the crappy "deal" he has negotiated, and sending him back to try again.

He must be frustrated the strikes are so well supported: scabbing would strengthen his hand.

He's not frustrated with Royal Mail, who want to scrap the second delivery, and make his members part-time workers car-

"Johnson knocks the ball back to his mid-field."

rying heavier sacks.

What motivates this lizard?

Johnson enjoys his position as leader of the single union in a monopoly company in the state sector. The strikes are ammunition to those who would privatise the post office, so he wants to settle. If not, "we could end up losing everything we have fought for."

Johnson takes cred for the government backing down on plans to privatise the post, and for popular campaigns against the closure of Crown Post

Offices. Why can't he sell the strike to save the second delivery to the public?

Last year Johnson helped Blair to win the battle against Clause IV, the Labour Party's commitment to public ownership.

He wants Royal Mail to stay in the state sector. He doesn't want it sold off, or broken up. But rail, telecoms, gas, electricity, water — no need to get Labour to commit to bringing them back into public ownership.

Johnson is a big fan of Tony Blair.

And he likes team working. He buys into workers selling their souls to save their jobs.

If his prime joy in life is an efficient postal service, why doesn't Johnson join Royal Mail management? Why doesn't he become a Labour MP and vote to keep all the Tories' anti-union legislation?

He just might! He is looking forward to giving up the General Secretaryship in 1998. So are we.

By Sleeper