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# MailOnline

## John Major's underpants, a very rude trade union advert... and an unlikely defender in former PM's ex lover Edwina Currie

By [Simon Walters](#)

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Former Tory Minister Edwina Currie has defended a rail union banned from publishing an 'offensive' advertisement which uses her affair with John Major to mark the 20th anniversary of the then Prime Minister's decision to sell off Britain's railways.

The advert shows a cartoon of Mrs Currie and Sir John with the slogan: 'It wasn't just Edwina who John Major screwed. He also screwed our railway and millions of passengers.'

The Advertising Standards Authority is refusing to allow the TSSA rail union to publish the adverts this week to commemorate Sir John's rail sell-off in 1993, unless it removes the 'offensive' word 'screwed'.



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Lovers: Edwina Currie was devastated when John Major said he was ashamed of their affair

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Mrs Currie, who had an affair with Sir John before he became Prime Minister in 1990, said the adverts, which depict her with a pair of underpants on her head, were silly.

But she said she could not object to the word 'screwed' because she had used it herself as Health Minister to shock women into realising the risks of cervical cancer.

Mrs Currie said: 'They are making a perfectly reasonable point but this is not the way to do it. I once said about cervical cancer "Don't smoke and don't screw around" so I can't criticise this kind of language. But if they are offensive no one will take any notice.

'They are shooting themselves in the foot. They can go ahead because they will make fools of themselves, not me. The last thing people will be talking about is the railways.'

TSSA general secretary Manuel Cortes said: 'We are disappointed the ASA has vetoed the wording of our original ad but we are surprised and pleased with the lukewarm support of Edwina.

'We are still in talks with the ASA, who have said we can use the cartoon, and remain hopeful we can agree on a new form of words in the next 48 hours. We simply wanted it to highlight the consequences of John Major's disastrous decision to sell off our railways.'

# The Great Railway Disaster



*Edwina: "I suppose this is the end of the line, John."*

**It wasn't just Edwina who John Major screwed....**

**He has also screwed our railways and millions of passengers.**

**Twenty years ago the Tories voted to sell off our railways to private firms:**

- **Fares have more than doubled, up 102.5% since 1995\***
  - **Taxpayer subsidy has gone up fourfold, up from £930million to £3.8billion\*\***
  - **We now have the most inefficient rail network in Europe and the most expensive fares\*\*\***
  - **We also have the only privately-run railway in Europe**
- Germany, Italy, Spain and France all have publicly-run railways.**

*Let's have a public railway that puts passengers ahead of private profit*

**TSSA: the Transport Salaried Staffs' Association**

Sources: \*House of Commons Library; \*\*The McNulty Report, May 2011; \*\*\*The McNulty Report, May 2011

**Offensive? Edwina Currie has defended the wording of the TSSA union's advert**

However, the ASA refused to see the funny side and told the union it would veto the advert unless the word 'screwed' is removed. Its rules say adverts 'must not unfairly portray or refer to anyone in an adverse or offensive way', unless with written permission.

Mrs Currie, 66, was forced to resign as Health Minister in Margaret Thatcher's Government in 1988 after she claimed most egg production in the UK was infected with salmonella.

In 2002, she revealed she had had a four-year affair in the Eighties with Sir John, then a junior Tory Minister, which ended when he became a Cabinet Minister.

Rail privatisation was the last substantial state asset sold off by the Tories between 1979 and 1997. Mrs Thatcher delayed it several times but Sir John argued it was the only way to improve efficiency.

Sir John was unavailable for comment last night.

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This is just a start of the gutter tactics we can expect from the left wing unions!!

- [EnglandandStGeorge](#) , Derby, 13/1/2013 08:20

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It's all simply pathetic. RENATIONLISE NOW !!!!!

- [Mr Angry SW](#) , TIMBUKTO - MALI, United Kingdom, 13/1/2013 07:42

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Let's have the railways back in public ownership!

- [Me](#) , Here, United Kingdom, 13/1/2013 07:30

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Despicable woman

- [zipo](#) , West Midlands, 13/1/2013 07:07

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And I suppose the unions played no part in the downfall of our railways and industry....can they not remember how they held the country to ransom with petty disputes, and priced us out of the world markets. Have they also forgotten that successive Labour governments also took no effective action to prevent the decline....I'm afraid the rest of us have rather better memories, and this so-called cartoon is childish and meaningless. Every time a union official gets up on its hind legs to make a speech I'm reminded of Fred Kite in the film "I'm all right Jack", a 1950's satire that ultimately proved to be closer to the truth than anyone thought at the time. And before anyone suggests (as they surely will) that I'm union-bashing, they would do well to remember the original aim of the movement, which was to improve workers' pay and conditions, and not become a tool for political blackmail....

- [Uncle Bill](#) , Munich, Germany, 13/1/2013 06:40

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Truth hurts doesn't it?

- [Mark R](#) , COVENTRY, United Kingdom, 13/1/2013 06:06

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Well the Unions got that right , didn't they - given what British rail would have been like with the progression of time , I can't see that privatisation has worked . Apart from Virgin , the rest is pretty ordinary , in fact I reckon the companies that took over the old Southern Rail , have gone backwards .

- [Eric Grinham](#) , Sydney, Australia, 13/1/2013 05:02

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Private monopolies are worse than public monopolies. You only have 1 track, so rail is a monopoly business. Even Thatcher said that rail privatisation was a "step too far".

- [UKIP Supporter](#) , Bromley, Kent, 13/1/2013 04:39

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The advert is 100% correct, problem is the ASA Tory minded don't like the truth.

- [Scargil](#) , Cha Am, 13/1/2013 03:53

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John Major was deeply ashamed of his affair - Edwina Currie delights in embarrassing him on a regular bases. What a shame she is not embarrassed by the hurt she must cause his wife.

- [Lizzy](#) , London, 13/1/2013 03:51

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