

Two modern arguments against nationalisation

The two best arguments against nationalisation today are the Post Office and the nationalised rail companies Network Rail and HS 2.

Both of these have lost taxpayers a fortune. Both have failed to deliver good service and to achieve the aims set for them by governments.

The Post Office under Labour and Lib Dem Ministers bungled putting in an expensive new computer system. It then blamed its sub postmasters demanding money from them they did not owe and putting many into court and prison. Under Conservative Ministers since 2015 the Post Office has delayed and diluted efforts to correct the record and compensate those falsely accused.

In recent years the Post Office has racked up losses of £1400 million plunging the balance sheet into the red. The Post Office is only allowed to trade by its auditors with a Treasury guarantee to pay all the continuing losses. Without a taxpayer guarantee the PO is now bankrupt.

HS2 Ltd has presided over a massive escalation of costs to build a railway line, and allowed long delays in building the track and ordering the trains. So bad has it been it has resulted in deleting important parts of the original plan whilst we await a new track between Birmingham and London for a train which was meant to improve connections for the north. If they had stuck to the original budget and timetable we would at least have got a new railway to the north.

Network Rail has presided over colossal losses. It regularly shuts sections of railway down for maintenance at holiday periods when more people might need a train. They do not resurface the main runways at Heathrow over a bank holiday. It is often the reason for train delays and cancellations with points and signals failures, and with flooded and undermined track.

Network Rail has been slow to introduce digital signalling that would allow more trains to run safely on the same track, knowing exactly where all the other trains are. Its vast rambling property estate is poorly kept, and underdeveloped with often a negative response to ideas to develop station property better.

All 3 of these nationalised companies have paid large salaries and bonuses to senior executives regardless of the losses and poor performance. There have been many changes of Minister and 3 different governing party governments (Lab/Coalition/Conservative) presiding over these companies. How can you argue this has been a good way to run things? Don't private sector companies like Amazon and Microsoft do things better?