



THATCHER, THATCHERISM AND THE TRADE UNIONS

John Lloyd considers the lasting legacy in the workplace left by Margaret Thatcher's attacks on union rights

THE THATCHER years industrially will always be remembered for the 1984-85 miners' strike. Philip Bassett, then an industrial correspondent, wrote of the strike that 'as a stoppage, (it) was

both untypical and an absolute'.

The strike was followed by what two other contemporary industrial correspondents, John Lloyd and Martin Adeney, called a 'loss without limit'. These losses for trade unions were stacked one upon another by a Conservative government that abandoned the Macmillan era's sense that the trade unions had a place in the wider governance of Britain.

Steadily, the government's perceptions of

how to neutralise trade union power rewrote the balance of power in many workplaces.

They assaulted the unions legally. James Prior with caution, Norman Tebbit with abandon, and others with ever increasing meanness took the bases of union power apart.

First the closed shop was abolished in episodes. Between 1980 and 1990, the number of unionised workplaces governed by the closed

CONTINUED PAGE 7

Thatcher, Thatcherism and the Trade Unions is the title chosen by the Unions21 steering committee for our Sunday evening fringe event at Labour Party Conference including speakers Owen Jones and Kay Carberry, for all fringe listings see page 3

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To find out more, contact one of our trade union relationship managers:



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Unions 21 – Around the fringes

TUC Congress

MONDAY 9 SEPTEMBER 12.45-14.00,
Purbeck Bar, Bournemouth International Centre

The Fair Work Commission pay debate

SPEAKERS include Nicola Smith, head of TUC economic and social affairs department; Christine Payne, general secretary, Equity; Ged Nichols, general secretary, Accord

MONDAY 9 SEPTEMBER 17.30 - 19.00,
Purbeck Bar, Bournemouth International Centre

Responsible capitalism: Protecting working people through the downturn

How unions protect working people when employers go into administration

SPEAKERS include Fiona Wilson, head of research and economics, Usdaw; Roy Rickhuss, National Officer, Community; Nick Cusack, assistant deputy chief executive, Professional Footballers Association

LibDem Conference

SUNDAY 15 SEPTEMBER 11.00-12.30
Glasgow Campanile Hotel, Room Picasso 3

SPEAKERS include Baroness Jolly, President of the Society of Chiropractors and Podiatrists; Grahame Smith, general secretary STUC

Unions21 Events Space at Labour Party Conference

All take place at Castor & Pollux Beach Front Gallery, 165 Kings Road Arches (right)

SUNDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 18.30-20.00

Rally for Fair Work – reception and fringe event

SPEAKERS include Ian Murray MP, shadow employment relations minister, and Michael Leahy, general secretary of Community

SUNDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 20.15-21.30

Thatcher, Thatcherism, Unions – Past, present, future?

SPEAKERS include Kay Carberry, TUC assistant general secretary, and Owen Jones, writer and broadcaster. Other speakers TBC

MONDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 8.30-9.30

Justice post Jackson: Trade unions – the gateway to preserving our legal rights – Pattinson & Brewer Solicitors

SPEAKERS include Paul Kenny, general secretary GMB. Chair: Frances McCarthy, managing partner, Pattinson & Brewer

MONDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 10.30-12.00

All work and no pay: Should Labour end unpaid internships, and how? – Intern Aware

SPEAKERS: Carl Roper, TUC national organiser; Ben Lyons, co-founder, Intern Aware; Hazel Blears, MP for Salford and Eccles; Ian Murray MP, shadow employment relations minister; Owen Jones, *The Independent*

CHAIR: Shelly Asquith, president of the University of the Arts students union

MONDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 12.45-14.15

Extending union influence: A new approach – Prospect

SPEAKERS: Ian Murray MP, shadow employment relations minister; Paul Nowak, TUC assistant general secretary; Mike Clancy, general secretary, Prospect

MONDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 15.00-16.30

Riding the tiger – Is ethical capitalism possible? – TU Fund Managers

SPEAKERS: Iain Wright MP, shadow competitiveness and enterprise minister; Paul Noon and Baroness Margaret Prosser, TUFM Directors; Nicola Smith, head of the TUC economic and social affairs department

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MONDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 18.00-19.20

The Big Pay Debate: How do we create a fairer system of pay? High Pay Centre

SPEAKERS: Iain Wright MP, shadow competitiveness and enterprise minister; Stefan Stern, visiting professor in management practice, Cass Business School; Mariana Mazzucato, RM Phillips professor of economics, University of Sussex; Mike Clancy, general secretary, Prospect

CHAIR: Deborah Hargreaves, director of the High Pay Centre

MONDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 20.00-21.30

The Unions21 Education Debate

SPEAKERS include Stephen Twigg MP, shadow education secretary and Dr Mary Bousted, ATL general secretary. Other speakers TBC

TUESDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 8.30-9.30

Zero tolerance for zero hours – British Airline Pilots Association

SPEAKERS: Jim McAuslan, general secretary, BALPA; Ian Murray MP, shadow employee relations minister; Mike Clancy, general secretary, Prospect

TUESDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 10.30-12.00

Why we need a Public Service Users Bill – We Own It

SPEAKERS include Jane Lethbridge, Director of Public Services International Research Unit; Neal Lawson, Chair of Compass; Cat Hobbs, Founder of We Own It

TUESDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 16.30-18.00

Organising communities to win for Labour – TSSA

SPEAKERS: Rob Jenks, TSSA senior community organiser; Sean Scorer, Community; Liane Groves, Unite; Dan Whittle, director, Unions 21

TUESDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 18.45-20.00

Britain: Entertaining the world

SPEAKERS: John Smith, general secretary, Musicians' Union; Gerry Morrissey, general secretary, BECTU; Labour Party speaker TBC

TUESDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 20.30-21.30

The Unions21 Health Debate

SPEAKERS Andy Burnham MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Health; Jon Skewes, Royal College of Midwives; Eddie Saville, Hospital Consultants and Specialists Association; Paul Bromley, Society of Radiographers

Government could do more to create good jobs

Sustainable employment offering training and skills development should be a precondition for government investment in private sector jobs, says **Dai Hudd**

CONCERNS ABOUT unemployment now permeate middle income households, and with good reason. A recent report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development shows that young workers spend an average of 28 months out of work and many of these are newly qualified people, including graduates.

The government is right to say that new jobs have been created, but says little about the quality of work they provide. Poorly paid, part time, unskilled and untrained jobs do not chart a pathway to aspirational growth. The New Economics Foundation worries that this trend may be systemic. If so, potential opportunities for social mobility will continue to be severely curtailed.

The rise in outsourcing, first witnessed more than 20 years ago in lower skilled service jobs, has spread to higher skilled jobs in engineering and manufacturing as well as to some professional and managerial roles. So, in the hour-glass labour market, secure mid-range jobs are becoming scarcer.

Some may see this as a positive feature of the UK's much-vaunted flexible labour market. But we neglect the innovative and wealth-generating engineering and manufacturing sectors at our peril. Even a cursory comparison with the much more successful German economy shows that there, such jobs are nurtured and valued.

It would be easy to take a nostalgic view of the UK labour market, when routes through apprenticeship and training provided routes to supervisory and management roles. But this key

part of the labour market has become increasingly fragmented.

The privatisation of many large organisations in energy, telecoms and other sectors led to a relentless focus on shareholder value. De-layering to save money has also ruthlessly stripped out roles that previously provided vital steps in a career pathway. And these trends continue.

There is always scope for debate about how a strategy to deliver more, higher quality jobs would be funded – though this ignores the social and financial costs of failing to invest.

Some have argued for greater state

intervention and control of key industries, for example, through renationalisation. But, even if desirable, this would be a controversial, politically unpopular and unachievable goal.

There is a better way forward.

The National Infrastructure Plan acknowledged the urgent need for massive government expenditure on infrastructure projects. The Treasury's 2012 infrastructure pipeline update includes over 550 projects worth over £310 billion.

Most of this will be for major programmes including highways, rail, nuclear, offshore wind and broadband. A significant proportion will be paid directly by taxpayers or financially underpinned, for example, through economic regulation.

Many beneficiaries will be the previously privatised industries which, after 20-30 years, are returning for a further round of public funding. A report by Brewin Dolphin, one of the largest British investment management and financial planning firms, gives an insight into the extent that these companies secured public assets at knockdown prices and have since successfully sweated them, often out-performing the FTSE 100.

Lessons need to be learned so that industries do not benefit again without providing returns in the form of good, sustainable employment, training and skills development.

Since the investment now required is not optional, there is a once in a generation opportunity to influence how it is used.

Commitments must not only be secured, but also need to be enshrined contractually and rigorously enforced.

The Olympics project demonstrated that government can plan on this scale and successfully deliver a complex project with a lasting legacy. Rather than viewing this as a one-off success, we must continue to think big. Unions have an influential role to play.

■ Dai Hudd is deputy general secretary of Prospect



Poorly paid, part time, unskilled and untrained jobs do not chart a pathway to aspirational growth

Labour and the unions: the missing link

The Labour Party should pay more attention to the needs of people in non-affiliated unions, says **Hugh Lanning**

ALL THE publicity in the wake of the selection row in Falkirk has focused on Unite, trade unions and money. Although an important debate, it ignores the reality that most of the trade union movement is not affiliated to the Labour Party.

As, until recently, a senior official in PCS – a major non-affiliated union – and an ‘out’ Labour Party member, I had occasion to raise with the party its relations with non-affiliated unions – or rather the lack of them.

Of the 58 unions in the TUC, 28 have political funds and just 14 are party affiliated. Most of these decisions are historical rather than political.

The affiliated unions are primarily those with traditional blue-collar origins, which established the party or affiliated before World War II. The non-affiliated unions, in the main, are the professional and public sector unions that emerged after the war.

Many have created political funds in response to legislative pressure, but use this resource to carry out campaigning rather than to affiliate.

Other political organisations target and focus resources on organising within these unions, but the Labour Party does not. In fact, the party has never had a strategy about its relations with what is now the largest part of the trade union movement.

Yet these non-affiliates number among their membership many Labour Party members, activists and supporters. People in unions such as NUT, UCU, PCS and Prospect represent upwards of 25% of the identifiable individual union members within the Labour Party and, in reality, probably more.

Non-affiliates also represent millions of voters who work and believe in public services. Many are low paid, women and a significant proportion are black. Others are professional public servants.

Given the nature of the work they do, many are also active in civil society organisations. Put this way, it is strange that they have not become a target group for Labour.

Why not? Obviously the Labour Party is mindful of the relationship with Trade Union and Labour Party Liaison Organisation (TULO) unions.

What is the point of affiliating if you can get

the service and access for free? Further, there are no organised structures for developing a relationship with non-affiliated unions, except through the TUC.

Non-affiliated unions will, of necessity, have a more distant relationship with the party. But they have much to contribute and are keen to influence.

This is a well organised constituency that any potential Labour government can ill-afford to ignore.

Given the changes in the trade union movement and the growth of broader social movements, the Labour Party will have to learn

to work with organisations not tied by loyalty or affiliation.

Whatever happens in the future about the funding of political parties, the number of identifiable affiliated members within unions is likely to continue to decline.

The challenge for the Labour Party is to develop new ways of communicating and organising within this climate.

It will be critical to identify issues on which it can campaign together with, or at least in parallel to, trade unionists.

This can best be done by trying to identify common areas of concern – growth, jobs and tax justice are obvious examples of areas of overlap, if not total agreement.

In both private and public sector workplaces there is a climate of fear and insecurity.

The pressure during the political conference season will be the demand to repeal all anti-trade union laws.

A better framework would be to focus on the workplace and identify how the rights and lives of all workers can be improved.

Ironically, identifying solutions that will work for all unions, not just a ‘Warwick 3’ deal with those that are affiliated, could produce better results for everybody.

■ Hugh Lanning was deputy general secretary of PCS until June 2013



The party has never had a strategy about its relations with what is the largest part of the union movement



Bank's new way to back jobs and communities

Unity Trust Bank is supporting investment in small businesses through the use of 'crowd funding'

UNITY TRUST, the bank for trade unions, will be unveiling an innovative new approach to funding small businesses in the UK.

Designed to support those business that make a difference to communities across the UK, the 'crowd funding' concept enables individuals to contribute small amounts of money to a larger pot.

The bank is launching CommUNITY Lending at www.community-lending.co.uk later this year.

The small businesses of our villages, cities and towns provide jobs and services that we value but they're slowly being squeezed out of existence.

Until recently financing small business typically involved the backing of a wealthy individual or getting a loan from one of the big banks. Increasingly these loans are hard to get, particularly for small enterprises or individuals who may not meet the lending criteria.

Crowd funding is turning this idea on its head, using the internet to help those seeking a loan talk to thousands – if not millions – of potential backers.

Unity already provides loans for the social enterprise sector, but is keen to do more.

It is launching the website in association



with the Community Development Finance Association (CDFA). The bank is working with the CDFA's individual members – Community Development Finance Institutions (CDFIs) around the country – to identify businesses that will have a positive impact, often in deprived communities.

This might be by funding young entrepreneurs who are creating new jobs or by supporting a small business where jobs are threatened.

Alternatively the funding may mean the continuation of services and trades that would otherwise be disappearing from our towns and villages.

The CommUNITY Lending website will



enable individuals to support UK businesses that the CDFI has already agreed to make a loan to.

The beauty of this relationship is that the business venture has already been checked out, so individuals who contribute can be sure that it is a bona fide enterprise with a sound business case.

The CommUNITY Lending website will feature a range of small businesses which have received a loan from their local CDFI. The site will tell visitors about the individuals involved and the positive impact that their business vision will have.

People who would like to get involved can review the enterprises and then choose to pledge money via a not-for-profit loan from as little as £15. In effect, these small individual pledges backfill the formal loan provided by the CDFI, enabling them to reallocate funds and support more businesses that might otherwise fail to get funding.

As the business repays the CDFI, for example over two years, the individual investor receives a monthly repayment of their loan, which they can choose to withdraw or relend to support another business.

Through a guarantee provided by Unity if a business does not succeed individuals will get a minimum of 50% of their contribution back.

More information about the CDFA and its mission to create a thriving community finance industry is at: www.cdfa.org.uk

Watch your language: How papers represent unions

IS THERE a general discernible pattern in the way unions are talked about in the British press?

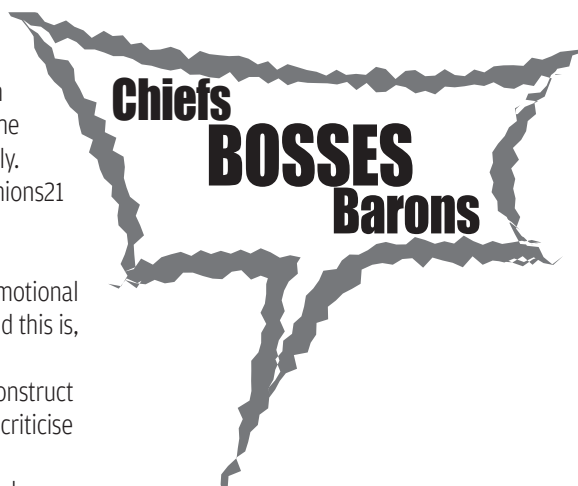
The University of Huddersfield built two databases, each containing around 750,000 words, of news reporting from British newspaper articles from 1993 and 2012 that mention unions.

These two points in time were chosen to coincide with the founding year and the 20th anniversary of Unions21 respectively. The conclusions were reported to the Unions21 conference earlier this year.

The research so far suggests that:

- The press focus on the (supposed) emotional response of unions as a whole group, and this is, more often than not, anger;
- There is an increasing tendency to construct union leaders as barons and chiefs, and criticise them for their high pay;
- Tax payers are routinely differentiated from union activists, union reps, and union members.

While the press is rather reluctant to report on the good work unions do in the workplace and beyond, these findings are, nevertheless, useful to union representatives for a number



of reasons. The way we use language constructs our identity and simply being more aware of how unions are perceived by the press can help unions to counter negative stereotypes. We also need to continue to rethink the way in which we as union members describe ourselves and the work that we do. All this will help in the presentation of unions as rational, measured and logical organisations able to better represent their members' interests.

■ To read the full article by Brian Walker of the University of Huddersfield see Unions21.org.uk/news.

language unlocked

We want your proposals and ideas for events, publications, research, news

Twitter: @Unions21 • Email: dwhittle@atl.org.uk

Thatcher, Thatcherism and the trade unions

FROM FRONT PAGE

shop fell from 36% to 8% (and by the end of the 1990s it was less than 1%).

Secondary picketing was rendered illegal and all sorts of supporting secondary action, where strong unions aided those seeking recognition or other help, gradually petered out.

Strikes could not be called by instruction from shop stewards or full-time officers. All disputes had to be based on ballots – made ever more complex, expensive and long-drawn out procedurally.

However, unions' rhetorical response did not always strike a chord with members or non-unionists. Thatcher and Tebbit, in particular, kept up a stream of abuse – decrying the 'tyranny' of the closed shop where plucky Englishmen were 'bullied' by alien representatives of the 'enemy within' who, in their words peddled 'restrictive practices'.

So the flexible workforce was born and trade union concerns about job security, casualisation and the individualisation of the contract of employment were discounted.

National agreements in the private sector disappeared. While well organised plants were able to reap some benefits from local negotiation, it became harder to get justice at work in workplaces with weak or no organisation. Unemployment kept workers' heads down.

The extent of petty tyranny at work was reflected in huge rises in tribunal applications. The 'loadsofmoney' culture – expressed in both labour-only sub-contracting in construction and the finance sector post 'big bang' – eclipsed areas of union strength.

Why did this not appal moderate opinion everywhere? One unpalatable truth is that Thatcher was able to portray unions as providing a worse alternative.

Employers prioritised making the most of workforce insecurity over the hard work of engagement. And privatisation of public services broke up collective bargaining, collective culture and collective responsibility for national industrial success.

Not a lot has changed since.

■ John Lloyd is a member of the Unions21 board of directors

Unions21



FWC event in Manchester

Unions21 considers new Fair Work Commission report

OVER THE past year the Unions21 Fair Work Commission has brought together people interested in how we reduce unfairness in the workplace and improve the quality of jobs on offer to British workers.

Unions21 has held events in Bournemouth,

Manchester, Liverpool and Jersey and round tables with the shadow business secretary and the shadow employment relations minister.

The Unions21 steering committee is considering plans for a second Fair Work Commission report on a new vision for the workplace, taking account

of the debate around responsible capitalism and the role of unions in economic decision-making.

■ You can submit your views by attending a Unions21 event or by email to Unions21 Director Dan Whittle, who also acts as the secretary for the Fair Work Commission: dwhittle@atl.org.uk



RALLY FOR FAIR WORK

Labour Party Conference
Sunday 22 September
18.30-20.00

SPEAKERS include Ian Murray MP, shadow employment relations minister, and Michael Leahy, general secretary of Community
See www.unions21.org.uk/events

