

DT001 - Freedom Under Law and Grunwick

My attention has been drawn to an item on the Grunwick dispute in which you called the National Association for Freedom (NAFF) a right-wing ginger group and went on to describe me as 'the association's Mr Francis Bennion.' In fact I am not the association's Mr Francis Bennion, and never have been. When in 1971 I founded Freedom under Law (which you are no doubt confusing with NAFF) it was upon the clear principle that it would not be party political. Its object was to help in enforcing legal rules which uphold personal freedom, but without party bias. Freedom is always two-sided. There is freedom to do a thing and there is freedom not to have it done. In the Grunwick case there is to be considered the freedom of staff to unionise and the freedom of an employer to have exclusively non-union staff. NAFF is concerned only with the latter. It is thus one-sided and mischievous.

I have always supported trade unionism because without it workers rarely escape severe exploitation. For any employer to dismiss staff simply because they join a union is reactionary and unacceptable. That does not mean I condone breaches of law by pickets. Disputes of this kind are however settled by people who accept that there are two sides to be considered and reconciled. Extremists of either sort can only do harm.¹

¹ *Daily Telegraph*, 6 July 1977. DT1