

‘Unison Threatens the Government’

by Francis Bennion

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For full version of abbreviations click ‘Abbreviations’ on FB’s website

Unison Threatens the Government

A talk on YouTube by Francis Bennion

On 21 June 2011 Dave Prentis, President of the million member trade union Unison, said to his Union conference:

‘Strike action will need to be sustained. It will be the fight of our lives . . . A campaign that weakens our enemies . . . that can break the pay freeze, stop the jobs cull, and *send this Coalition packing*.’¹

Unison has a ‘war chest’ of £30 million.² Sir Simon Jenkins said in *The Guardian*³:

‘The threatened strikes are all in the public sector, whose six million workers embrace 62% of today’s trade unionists. The action is both against the government as employer and against the government as custodian of an embattled economy, with a mandate to cure it . . . Is there no other way of fixing a row in the public realm than through so primeval a weapon as withdrawing labour from the public welfare?’

Many British citizens have been greatly worried at the spread of violent public protest. Young people today are often not educated in the workings of the British constitution and the European Union. Together these provide elaborate structures and safeguards equipping us with a democratic Parliament for making our laws, a fair electoral system for giving us a new democratic government at reasonable intervals, and independent, uncorrupted judges. Yet we have mob rousers like Mr Prentis urging his trade union members to take forcible action to send the elected Government packing.

At common law the act of inciting disaffection against the established order, including the institutions of government, was punishable as sedition. Unfortunately this offence was abolished in 2009 at the instance of the then Labour Government.⁴ The Law Commission had said there is no need for it.⁵ I think they were wrong.

Euripides said ‘mobs in their emotions are much like children and subject to the same tantrums and fits of fury’. Abraham Lincoln said ‘there is no grievance that is a fit subject of redress by mob law’.

A member of a rioting mob may later regret having helped to smash society when he cools down and goes back home to find that his dwelling has been smashed by a second mob so that he is homeless, then goes to his workplace and finds it has been smashed by a third mob so that he is jobless, and finally goes to the bank to draw his pay and finds that the bank too has been smashed by a fourth mob so that he is penniless. All that is only saying that we damage ourselves as well as other people when we engage in or encourage mob violence.

Who is responsible for failing to educate the populace properly, so that they are able to see through such threats as Mr Prentis wields? The teachers are mainly responsible. They should

¹ See Unison website.

² *Daily Telegraph*, 22 June 2011.

³ 14 June 2011.

⁴ Coroners and Justice Act 2009 s. 73.

⁵ Law Commission Working Paper No.72, 1977.

concentrate on their duties and perform them better, rather than threatening to damage by strike action the very education system they are there to serve.

This Video is in continuation of my earlier YouTube Video titled “Teachers’ Pensions: a Flight from Reason” at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gNkgugTM5wk> .

Note: This video was uploaded onto YouTube on Friday 28 June 2011 and is available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AnMdjAu80x4> .