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**Preparation to “provoke a battle”: New Right Conservatism, the Trade
Unions and the Conservative Party 1974 – 1984**

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Submitted for a Doctorate of Politics

I, James David Hawkins, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed: _____ Date:

Abstract

This research makes an original contribution to the literature on the relationship between the Conservative Party and trade union movement between 1974 and 1984. Through primary source material I analyse how an emergent New Right within the Conservative Party planned, prepared and enacted industrial conflict with the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) in 1984. This conflict was a result of ideological change in the Conservative Party, which saw internal cabinet opposition marginalised through a challenge to One Nation “wets” within the Cabinet. I argue that the government’s industrial policy counters statecraft interpretations of the Conservative Party at this time. This is demonstrated in the following key areas: the radicalism of the party’s industrial policy; the planning and preparation for industrial conflict; the creation of a recently unclassified “Hit List” of UK pit closures, one that was denied to full Cabinet scrutiny in 1984; and the use of direct government interference with the policing of “The Battle of Orgreave” and its aftermath. These actions fit the remit of *The Ridley Report* of 1977, a template for ideologically driven reform of which the desire to ‘fragment’ nationalised industries was a precondition for denationalisation. I argue that a group within the Conservative Party pushed through these changes to construct a new relationship between labour, industry and government.

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Abbreviations

ACAS Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service

BSC British Steel Corporation

CBI Confederation of British Industry

CEGB Central Electricity Generating Board

CPS Centre for Policy Studies

IEA Institute of Economic Affairs

ISTC Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators

NCB National Coal Board

NUM National Union of Mineworkers

TUC Trades Union Congress

Literature Review

Introduction

This thesis will analyse the development of a New Right within the Conservative Party between the electoral defeat of Edward Heath in 1974 and the Miners' Strike of 1984. My research will demonstrate an ideologically driven agenda, one constructed by a New Right within the Conservative Party, that was to bypass the pragmatism of statecraft theory and engage with long term planning for industrial confrontation in 1984. Therefore, the literature to be reviewed will encompass both secondary sources, detailing a theoretical and conceptual development of New Right thought, primary source material that offers evidence of an implementation of ideologically driven political agenda and the subsequent interpretation and analysis of internal Conservative Party policy towards industrial conflict of 1984. It is with this context in mind, that I will review literature in the following areas;

- The relationship between the Conservative Party and trade unions in the post-war period.
- The rise of a New Right in the Conservative Party.
- The debate between pragmatism and ideological approaches.
- The 1984 Miners' Strike.

The sequence of this literature review reflects the proposed construction of the thesis. Firstly an examination of the post-war relationship between organised labour and the Conservative Party; secondly, the theoretical development of a New Right that was to challenge the accepted role of corporatism, trade union and the role of the state; thirdly, analysis of internal Conservative Party Cabinet divisions and the rejection of One Nation “wets”, government development of, and preparation for industrial confrontation with the National Union of Mineworkers and lastly the 1984 Miners’ Strike and its political aftermath.

The period in question evidences change in a political and industrial dynamic in the UK; one that has clear economic and social significance in contemporary Britain. The thesis examines this political historical period between 1974 and 1984 viewed through the eyes of two contrasting theoretical analyses of Thatcherism and the development of a New Right – was the construct of this New Right and the eventual industrial conflict with the NUM, developed and delivered through an ideological agenda or an implementation of pragmatic statecraft? Therefore, with this question in mind, this literature review will focus on these two interpretations and offer a summary of the secondary literature in detail. Primary source material will be used in the form of CAB¹ and PREM² notes, and archive material in the form of letters

¹ Cabinet Minutes and Papers (CAB)

² Prime Minister’s Office Files (PREM)

and documentation from The National Archives and The Margaret Thatcher Foundation.

Academic Relevance of Research

The first contribution this thesis makes is to analyse a development of New Right thought regarding the British trade union movement and post-war corporatism. This research aims to add to the existing literature on the 1984 Miners' Strike through demonstrating, through academic analysis, the development of, and implementation of an ideological template within a New Right of the Conservative Party to counter the trade union movement; ultimately leading to industrial conflict with the National Union of Mineworkers in 1984. Existing works which covers this period demonstrate a socio-political examination of the subject, that is, accounts of the 1984 Miners' Strike demonstrated as an historical event.

This thesis offers a new dynamic within this genre. Through new primary source material, this thesis adds to this historical narrative – it proves an existence of a New Right strategy that was to plan theoretically and physically for an industrial conflict with the National Union of Mineworkers and a wholesale closure of the UK mining industry. I provide new evidence that counters official government policy that there was not a “Hit List” or closure scheme of productive UK coke plants. Denied consistently by government and National Coal Board officials, prior to and during the

1984 strike, this thesis conclusively reveals the existence of a UK wide “Hit List” of coal mine closures.

The second contribution is the demonstration of change within the Conservative Party. I offer an academic analysis of the Conservative Party’s change of internal political dynamic, from a form a conciliatory politics to one of confrontation; from one of dialogue and reform to conflict. I evidence the development of a New Right within the Conservative Party and contextualise this construct, through its relationship with organised labour, concluding with the 1984 Miners’ Strike. This will be achieved through an initial analysis of the theoretical change within the Conservative Party, and secondly on an evidence-based demonstration, by new primary source material, of preparation and enactment of industrial confrontation with organised labour.

Thirdly, the unique contribution of this thesis to political studies will be the demonstration and development of primary source material, that sheds new light on the relationship between the Conservative Party post-1974 and the National Union of Mineworkers. I will offer new knowledge, gained primarily from documentation released under the thirty-year rule in 2014, that demonstrates clearly the construction of an ideological agenda to target the trade union movement and engage in a prepared and planned confrontation. My analysis, scrutiny and presentation of new

CAB and PREM documentation will reveal an organised and dedicated approach to implementation of economic ideology, through the political guise of a construct of a New Right within the Conservative Party. The primary documentation, augmented and contextualised by secondary source material, will reveal the lengths to which this New Right would engage in order to formulate a planned timetable for trade union confrontation. It will also reveal a reinterpretation of a “New Conservatism”, the theoretical development of economic conservative template through the economic inspiration, notably that of Enoch Powell, Patrick Minford, Keith Joseph, Milton Friedman and Friedrich Hayek. This reconstruction of Conservative thought and direction, would ultimately, I demonstrate, lead to an expulsion of the threat of the “wets” from cabinet, the preparation for industrial conflict and the defeat of the NUM in 1984, allowing for neoliberal economic policy to be implemented and to flourish.

This analytical framework and timeline add to the canon of existing secondary work on the subject. It offers new primary evidence that demonstrates the existence of a “Hit List”, and whose existence was denied to Arthur Scargill in 1984. Successive governments post-1984 have denied the existence of a closure list of more than the recognised number of 21; this thesis adds to the political debate and academic political literature, in that I have demonstrated categorically the existence of the “Hit List” using primary evidence, justifying Arthur Scargill’s claims, revealing the lack

of clarity offered to Parliament and to Neil Kinnock as Leader of the Her Majesty's Opposition. The existence of a "Hit List" of pits that this thesis demonstrates has both academic and political importance; it offers evidence to refute the allegations of industrial conspiracy, it legitimatises Arthur Scargill's demands for a national ballot on the condition of government clarity and scrutiny, and it presents a new dimension to the dispute that the claims of the NUM were justified and that the strike was not illegal as a legitimate ballot could not have taken place.

Fourthly, I have revealed the direct government deployment of police resources to Orgreave. Through primary source material, this thesis demonstrates government interference with the policing and aftermath of what became known as "The Battle of Orgreave". Again, I offer an academic analysis of the industrial dispute through the revelation of primary sources, which counter official government policy. There has been literature on both the "Hit List" and direct government influence on policing of the strike, but this research offers new analysis, a new interpretation through primary evidence, of an historical industrial event within an academic genre.

This thesis, therefore, adds to political studies of post-war industrial relations and the rise of New Right politics. It legitimises claims and adds genuine evidence to previous conjecture and does not offer neutrality in its conclusion. It also demonstrates conclusively direct government interference in the build-up of coke and coal

stocks, and that Arthur Scargill's assertions of a "Hit List" of pit closures was indeed correct. It shows that there was a template for industrial deconstruction and there was unofficial government interference with localised policing matters in Yorkshire.

Contemporary Relevance of Research

My research offers a new perspective to contemporary UK politics. The legacy of the 1984 conflict can be witnessed in the politics of 2018 and the legacy of industrial decline of a nation that has been divided between post-industrial towns and metropolitan urban conurbations. The miners' strike is a symbol of a class and an industrial generation that does not fit easily within the globalised, service economy that has been generated through neoliberalism. Its legacy is one of decay of mining villages, of industrial towns, of marginalisation of working classes who feel isolation and a sense of loss, mirrored through poverty and social inequality.

These issues are reflected through Brexit. Areas of the country that once felt a sense of identity and belonging, as identified in this thesis in its analysis of pit villages and their particular socio-economic dynamic, were, in vast numbers seen to vote leave in the 2016 referendum on membership of the European Union. Small town and village populations throughout the United Kingdom, were to demonstrate reflect a form of politics that was to seek answers through populism and extremes, that were simply

not viable alternatives when full time work and social cohesion were prominent. The European Union, a neoliberal institution and advocate of free market capitalism, and seen as an assault on UK nationalised industry and sovereignty, was rejected through Brexit.³ I argue, the social cohesion, destroyed through de-industrialisation and reflected through the rise of immigration and European integration, has been replaced by a nostalgia for a time of certainty and consistency; mining villages and towns offered a sense of purpose and belonging, and its disappearance constructed a void that was to fuel drug addiction, poverty and isolation. Brexit can be seen as a clarion call, a cry from these communities that once stood up and fought the tide of neoliberal economic policy.

Post-industrial mining communities were to feel the full force of global markets. Deindustrialisation – the policy of Margaret Thatcher and Keith Joseph – was augmented and hastened through the development of the European Union free market, and as Arthur Scargill argued, “the free movement of labour”. Brexit, argues Arthur Scargill, would allow for the ability, “to re-open the cotton mills, re-open the steel plants and invest in new mining facilities with carbon capture – creating jobs and protecting the environment.”⁴ Within the EU, Scargill argues, “We were not allowed to subsidise pits under EU rules unless we were closing them – that’s the kind of

³ Scargill, A, Speech to the SLP Congress, 28th October 2017

⁴ Scargill, A, Speech to the SLP Congress, 28th October 2017

policies that were being dictated to us by the European Union”.⁵ The binary forces of Thatcherite monetary policy and European Union free market liberalism, were the perfect storm to construct a form of politics, as seen in 2018, that would fuel the regression from Europe and the rise of populism.

The rejection of Atlee’s “humane” post-war politics was to be absolute. The prioritising of the pursuit of economic anti-inflationary measures, to the detriment of Keynesian aggregate demand and prioritising of full employment, would emphasise a form of politics that rejected the ideals of collective responsibility. Work patterns and community would change by and through the forces of neoliberalism; neoliberal forces; the sectors of industry, technology and commerce would be removed from the traditional working community, to emphasise a new construct in the UK – that of a service industry which was deindustrialised and globalised, flexible and at one with the ebb and flow of the free market. A society that would be transient and accept market-driven forces and an establishment that would be constructed through the requirements of neoliberalism. A New Right within the Conservative Party would acknowledge through the influence of Thatcher, Keith Joseph, Nigel Lawson and Geoffrey Howe, these new social and economic opportunities that would arise from deregulation, market liberalism and ultimately trade union reform. To establish this,

⁵ Ibid.

and to erode the accepted Keynesian post-war consensus, it would be acknowledged, that there could be no more compromise. No longer could there be a corporate consensual tone to industrial partnership; there could be no more conciliation, as the global new order of technology, money transfer, low regulation and free trade could not be delayed due to the intangibles of human emotion. If an agenda had to be realised, if an economic and social revolution had to take place, there was a legitimate need for conflict.

And the political conflict was not isolated to the mining and industrial community. Conservatism and the Conservative Party, I demonstrate, were to implode in a bitter internal war of ideology. Again, the contemporary struggles, witnessed from John Major's through to David Cameron's leadership, and the division within the party on European integration, the role of the state and the prevalence of an economic model that was to prioritise a neoliberal and latterly austerity agenda, can arguably be traced to the preparation for, and enactment of the 1984 conflict. The divisions within the Cabinet, and the rejection of cabinet responsibility, once seen as such a key ingredient of governance by Harold Macmillan, was to be replaced with division.

Conservatism as a political concept would shift – and this shift is prevalent I argue in the Cabinet of 2018 –the construct of a fault-line of dogmatism and One Nation

politics within conservatism. An engagement with ideology, of a dogma prepared to accept industrial conflict in 1984, mirrors an intransigence within the Conservative Party of today and does not fit well within the traditions of conservatism and One Nation Conservatives. The Cabinet post-1979 was one of Establishment; of men who were not prepared to renege on the status quo and who were not adaptable to the challenges posed by globalised neoliberalism. Through secondary, and more significantly primary source material, I present and examine internal cabinet meetings, reports and agendas that challenge the nature of what conservatism is and the political actor – the “wets” that represented the traditional ideology of conservatism. The nature of the Conservative Party was to change indelibly, and this research presents literature which evidences the initial construct of this change. And it is from this point, from the advent of a New Right, post-1974, that has seen a permanent change within the Conservative Party. Consistent electoral failure, post-Thatcher, saw the rebirth of the Conservative Party as a form of social and neoliberal political entity, one that was at ease with the mantra of personal and socio-economic freedoms. And one that was to ensure flexibility of the work force, the changing relationship between government, the state and the market, and align itself, not with the traditions of One Nation Politics, but those of neoliberalism – of the politics of Britain in 2018. The Conservative Party, from the point that I identify in this research, has been fully reconfigured to reject Keynesian macroeconomics, has prioritised the market over

the role of the state, has internalised market forces within vital public services; and as a political organisation, the contemporary Conservative Party has rejected One Nation politics. The theoretical, philosophical and eventually ideological thought processes, that lead to this point, are demonstrated through the literature of this research.

Therefore, there is a direct link to Brexit. I argue this thesis engages with, through the post-industrial malaise of community, the rise of populism and ultimately the issues of Brexit within both the Conservative Party and the post-industrial community. As demonstrated in this work, Thatcher's form of creative destruction heralded the ability for the entrepreneur as an individual to succeed through the deconstruction of the permanent; that is the permanency of the collective ideals of the trade union and the permanency and solidity of the mining community. Literature in this work highlights the distinctive nature of the working-class coal mining community, reflected in the industrial communities throughout the country. Though certainly insular and intransigent, these communities were constructs from an industrial age – mining and pit villages, steel villages and towns; reliant on industry, and to a large extent self-reliant for social provision, these unique communities were vulnerable to the vagaries of global change, economic reform and deindustrialisation. Documentation and evidence in this research demonstrate the targeting of these communities

by Government – the targeting of the men and women, of the families of these communities whose insularity, community and political allegiances made them an obvious nemesis to a New Right seeking momentum in this time of economic and political change. And the consequences of this change, the deindustrialisation and political neglect that has been observed through neoliberal economics is relevant to the changes occurring in 2018. It is within these ex-mining and ex-industrial communities, challenged by government, and evidenced through this research, which were fragmented and ultimately depoliticised, and pulled into levels of poverty, drug dependency, unemployment, academic underachievement and social discontent that would ultimately lead to disenchantment and Brexit. There is a linear connection between 1984 and 2016; the development of New Right thinking, I evidence from 1974 onwards, that have had lasting consequences on working class communities in Britain.

Therefore, this research adds to the existing literature on the subject matter. Through the presentation of new primary source material and augmented by secondary reading, my research adds to the academic analysis and understanding of the development of a New Right within the Conservative Party – and evidences the development of a theoretical and ideological political force that was to target and redesign both the Conservative Party, trade unionism corporatism and industrial Britain, notably

the mining industry and the NUM. I have presented evidence that enhances, challenges and changes some existing theories regarding the New Right's construction and its preparation and conduct of the 1984 miners' strike, primarily through the revelation of an industrial "Hit List" that adds legitimacy to Arthur Scargill's political concerns at the time of the strike. There has been writing that engages with the proposal of a "Hit List" as argued by Scargill, but there has been no concrete evidence thus far. My research therefore adds to existing theories on the 1984 Miners' Strike and the redesign of the Conservative Party's industrial strategy and ultimately its integrity regarding industrial policy from 1974 to 1984.

Ideology and Statecraft

The academic relevance of my research and its demonstration through primary source material is contextualised in two areas – statecraft and ideology. The primary findings and secondary reading are examined through the debate of Thatcherism, that the New Right and industrial strategy, was either a reflection of statecraft – sound political decision making and party management, that enabled government to reach for a higher ground of politics, or the construct of a grander ideological programme, a hegemonic power grab that would bypass the practicalities of statecraft in an attempt to redesign a neoliberal economic agenda.

I argue and demonstrate in this research, that the period of Conservative Party internal change and challenge to the trade union movement between 1974 and 1984 was driven through ideology. This thesis therefore adds to the academic understanding of ideological change within political organisations; through secondary reading, I contextualise the theoretical implementation of economic and neoliberal ideology; through primary resources I demonstrate the practical implementation of this ideological agenda. I demonstrate that the wholesale rejection of conciliatory processes within the Conservative Party and between the government, National Coal Board, police and striking miners, ultimately does not and cannot reflect statecraft theory; it evidences a form of ideology that can be demonstrated visually through historical sources in both CAB and PREM note forms, letters, diary entries, speeches and memo form. I demonstrate an ideology that was to reject a political consensus, reject corporate power sharing and was to fulfil a long-term, strategic objective; the de-industrialisation of Britain to allow for the implementation of neoliberal economic reform.

I demonstrate through primary sources a series of theoretical and ultimately practical demonstrations of ideology that was to emerge as New Right thought within the Conservative Party. It would be an ideology, this research reveals, that was based around the implementation of an economic dogma, that would bypass the traditions of Cabinet responsibility, One Nation conservatism and a corporate power sharing

agenda; it was an ideology that was to place economic control, the control of inflation and monetarism, over the pursuit of full employment: the advent of neoliberalism.

This I argue is evidenced through this research. The 1984 conflict with the NUM, I demonstrate, was not one that was to reflect the long-term decision making and practical implementation of the policy of statecraft theory. The evidence I have produced points to and analyses an ideological agenda within the Conservative Party as a political organisation and a grander hegemonic project that would ultimately lead to the advent of a neoliberal agenda that is prevalent today in the UK.

The Conservative Party

This research dovetails two events. Edward Heath asked the nation in 1974 “Who Governs?” and the answer was to be defeat at the hands of Harold Wilson and the trade union movement; in 1984 the imagery was one of a Conservative Party who was resoundingly in charge, crushing the trade union movement at Orgreave. This research adds to the literature of the Conservative Party during this period of transition, offering analysis and proposing answers, through primary sources, as to why the party would reinterpret its identity and embrace dogma. I evidence this change through an embrace of economic and cultural ideology; the rejection of One Nation

Conservatism's innate distrust of radicalism, of change and revolution, to formulate an economic and moral form of politics through to an interpretation of Thatcherism, which embraced moral endeavour, economic counter inflationary measures, monetary control, within a strong state mechanism.

The literature, both secondary and primary, focusses on this metamorphism of political identity and looks at a Conservative Party that was prepared to question the true meaning of what conservatism actually is; a challenge from political economists, of Minford, Joseph, Friedman and importantly Hayek, as to what conservatism actually entails; this research analyses the withdrawing of conservatism from the political engagement with the economic and indeed the moral agendas, of which the malaise of the 1970's represented – a moral, economic and national decline, emphasised by the inability of the Conservative Party to effectively govern within a corporate agenda. Therefore, this research adds to existing literature in identifying a socio-political period of Conservative Party history of relevance to modern Britain. The rejection of One Nation conservatism, the rejection of Macmillan's *Middle Way* alternative to dogma, a rejection of the moderates within the Cabinet and an embrace of economic ideology, one that would ultimately lead to long-term neoliberal hegemony.

Trade Unions

This research reveals a dedicated political template to counter the influence of the trade union movement post-1974. I demonstrate, through both secondary and primary reading, the theoretical change of a mindset and a readjustment of government's position in relation to the trade union movement from a conciliatory, mutuality of existence of government and trade union, to one of hostility, of conflict and of enmity. The relevance of this research is the nature of the premeditated conflict with the trade union movement; the trade union movement was to be highlighted as a stumbling block to neoliberal reform of the labour market, denationalisation and privatisation of public utilities. It was a collective not viewed as a progressive, liberated and reforming entity, but one that was regressive and antiquated. The post-war acceptance, I reveal in primary and secondary literature, of trade unionism as an essential arm of government was to be rejected out of hand; trade unions were reimagined as the hindrance regarding economic development and not the solution.

This, as this research analyses and demonstrates, was a predetermined and manufactured construct. The trade union movement was not only to be targeted physically at Orgreave, but theoretically and psychologically, and reconstructing the template for

a post-Keynesian neoliberal agenda, that is prevalent today. Therefore, it is developed and evidenced through this research, that the defeat of the trade union movement, its targeting by a New Right of the Conservative Party, and its eventual defeat, as highlighted by the 1984 Miners' Strike, was a long-term strategy. A policy that did not adhere to One Nation conservatism but mirrored the needs of those who saw the market place, and not the collective, as the means to end Britain's economic and moral decline. Therefore, I argue through this research, and evidence through primary and secondary sources, that the defeat of the NUM and Arthur Scargill was a prelude to the effective implementation of neoliberalism through Thatcherism; the 1984 conflict was a door leading from a collective world to one of denationalisation, deindustrialisation and market liberalisation – the advent of neoliberalism. Therefore, this research adds to existing contemporary political literature.

Literature Review.

This research analyses a changing dynamic and relationship between two representational organisations – the Conservative Party and the trade union movement. The period in question from 1974 to 1984 demonstrates a post-war period where a conciliatory relationship began to change and to morph into something more hostile and less open to negotiation and dialogue, with the eventual consequence of the “Winter

of Discontent” and ultimately the conflict with the NUM in 1984. Yet, the post-war period did see times when the Conservative Party viewed trade unionism in a positive light. The post-war relationship between trade unions and government reflected, as Kavanagh and Morris argue, in their work *Consensus Politics from Atlee to Thatcher*⁶ a period of conciliation. The Labour Government of 1945- 51 having laid the foundations of the welfare state, constructed a set of political and social principles that were to be broadly agreed upon. As well as a commitment to a welfare state, active government and policy to address inequality and poverty, there was broadly a commitment to full employment and an acknowledged conciliatory approach between government and the trade union movement.

Paul Addison argues in *The Road to 1945*⁷ that a “massive new ground had arisen in politics” to the commitment to “principles of social and economic reconstruction” of which all parties were agreed on an acceptance of “pragmatic reform in a mixed economy”.⁸ Addison’s explanation of “pragmatic” decision making reflects a post-war political environment, that though still divided regarding the role of nationalisation, was striving to formulate policy, forged through war, that engaged in the political and not the ideological reasoning behind post-war social and economic reconstruction. The Conservative Party would accept this “post-war settlement”, none

⁶ D. Kavanagh & P. Morris, *Consensus Politics from Atlee to Thatcher* (Wiley – Blackwell, 1989).

⁷ P. Addison, *The Road to 1945 British Politics and the Second World War* (Random House Books)

⁸ P. Addison, *The Road to 1945 British Politics and the Second World War* (Random House Books), Intro.

more so that R.A. Butler who would oversee the development of a “New Conservatism” – one he saw as “humanised capitalism”.

Butler’s conservatism argues Richard Austen, in *The Art of the Possible: The memoirs of Lord Butler* was one that “made Keynesian economics official; public intervention in the economy became not a matter of ideology but practical judgement”.⁹

W.H. Greenleaf describes in *The British Political tradition: The Ideological Heritage*¹⁰ how Butler “urged the party” to adopt greater redistributive taxation to reduce inequality and poverty. This acknowledgement of “humanised capitalism” reflected a recognition of the role played by the state in capitalism, in that it “acted as a trustee for the interests of the community and a balancing force between different interests”.¹¹ The accepted economic wisdom was that of Keynesianism – state monitoring of the market place, and a prioritising of full employment which meant that capitalism was not simply an area of “industrial go as you please”. Butler argues that the Conservative Party would place an “assurance that, in the interest of efficiency, full employment and social security, modern conservatism would maintain strong and central guidance over the operation of the economy”.¹² In other words, a Conservative Party that would be prepared to smooth the rough edges of capitalism and the

⁹ A. Richard, *The Art of the Possible: The memoirs of Lord Butler* (Hamish Hamilton, 1971).

¹⁰ W.H. Greenleaf, *The British Political Tradition: The Ideological Heritage* (Routledge, 2003), p. 258

¹¹ *Ibid*, p.258

¹² *Ibid*, p.259

market place and would acknowledge the need for social equality and harmony, whilst propagating individual opportunity and responsibility.

In *The New Conservatism*, Anthony Eden argued that, “we are not a party of unbridled capitalism and never have been. Although we believe in personal responsibility and personal initiative in business, we are not the political children of the “laissez-faire” school. We opposed them decade after decade”.¹³ Craig Phelan summarises in *Trade Unionism Since 1945* that during this period of economic and social consensus, the “Conservative Party also adopted a more tolerant attitude to the trade union movement. R.A. Butler chaired the party’s Industrial Committee in 1947 and produced the Industrial Charter which offered a “Workers’ Charter”.¹⁴ The relationship between government and trade union was more “tolerant and moderate” reflecting the overall Conservative policy of “One Nation Tories”. Chris Wrigley in *British Trade Unions 1945 – 1995*¹⁵ cites the development of a new post-war direction for conservatism and trade unions; a series of conservative charters and “broad principles for shaping the post-war world”¹⁶ were developed as early as 1945. These charters were designed to win working class votes and align government and maintain

¹³ W.H. Greenleaf, *The British Political Tradition: The Ideological Heritage* (Routledge, 2003), p. 260

¹⁴ C. Phelan, *Trade Unionism Since 1945* (Peter Lang, Oxford), p. 202

¹⁵ C. Wrigley, *British trade Unions 1945 – 1995* (Manchester University Press, 1997).

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p.5

the priority of full employment – “a very different approach different approach to trade unionism than that of the Conservative policies of the 1980’s”.¹⁷

And yet, the Conservative Party and conservatism was to change. A “New Conservatism” in the post-war period did not reflect the “New Conservatism” of Nigel Lawson and Keith Joseph. These were different politicians with different priorities; from the conservatism of Macmillan, Eden, Butler, to a New Right emerging within the party, they all reflected an interpretation of conservatism that would have to be challenged. Indeed, the whole concept of a political consensus became to be a myth; in fact, consensus, was simply an opportunity for the Conservative Party to enhance electoral success, and was in reality “misleading, uncritical and glosses over both internal party debates and crucial points of conflict with Labour”.¹⁸

Harriet Jones in *A Bloodless Counter Revolution* argues that the post-war acceptance of consensus politics was merely a reflection of an existing “Disraelian condition of concern for “the condition of the people”.¹⁹ The orthodoxy of the Conservative Party during the post-war period to a form of conciliatory politics, of a politics that accepted full employment and the position of the trade union movement, was one that “deliberately exaggerates the extent of policy consensus after the war”. Consensus

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ H. Jones and M. Kandiah, *The Myth of Consensus: New Views on British History 1945 – 1964* (Palgrave Macmillan, 1996), p.3

¹⁹Ibid.

and a cordiality suited, argues Jones, a New Right, who would use the ambiguity of consensus to “distance Thatcherism from what it presented as a weak and flabby consensual conservatism”. There was a shift in an acceptance of consensus politics, and out of the tacit agreement between government and trade unions, grew a “rigorous debate” that was to lead again to new interpretation of what conservatism was and what it stood for – indeed, to yet another “New Conservatism” which in reality was a counter to the “Butler dominated Conservative Research Group” and an “effective anti-socialist front”.²⁰ The reality of consensus politics and a positive trade union relationship was in reality an illusion – a construct.

Ben Pimlott views Conservative Party acceptance of consensus politics as nothing more than “a shamelessly sentimental yearning” that was wrapped in a non-existent nostalgia. In *The Myth of Consensus*,²¹ Pimlott argues that the role of consensus was an artificial construct, an historical narrative that did not exist, but acted as a convenient catalyst in the critique of Thatcherism. The warm glow of consensus cloaked the reality of industrial, economic and moral decline; Pimlott argues, “the consensus is a mirage, an illusion that rapidly fades the nearer one gets to it”.²²

²⁰ H. Jones and M. Kandiah, *The Myth of Consensus: New Views on British History 1945 – 1964* (Palgrave Macmillan, 1996), p.3

²¹ B. Pimlott B, *The Myth of Consensus. In: Smith L.M. (eds) The Making of Britain. The Making of Britain.* (Palgrave,1988).

²² B. Pimlott B, *The Myth of Consensus. In: Smith L.M. (eds) The Making of Britain. The Making of Britain.* (Palgrave,1988).

Therefore, interpretation and economic analysis of the importance and role played by trade unions in the post-war world was to change. Chris Howell in *Trade Unions and the State: The Construction of Industrial Relations* argues that “regardless of the reality of trade union power” there emerged a “labour question”.²³ A debate emerged regarding the decline of post-war Britain and “trade union responsibility for economic failure”. Though Howell argues that this debate could be found in the pages of “*The Economist* magazine and *The Times* of London in the 1890’s and the 1970’s” there was renewed concern in the 1960s regarding the association of organised labour to this question of decline. The question of “industrial relations reform” would therefore become a central plan of consecutive governments as Howell argues that “a plausible case can be made that industrial conflict and trade union resistance to those reform efforts brought down two governments”.²⁴

Peter Dorey in *British Conservatism and Trade Unionism*,²⁵ 1945-1964 examines this shift in dynamic and Conservative Party thinking. Dorey examines the “remarkable contrast” between Conservative policy to trade unions in the early post-war decades and to that after the 1970s – this transformation “begs the question of what

²³ C. Howell, *Trade Unions and the State: The Construction of Industrial Relations* (Princeton University Press, 2007), p.3

²⁴ C. Howell, *Trade Unions and the State: The Construction of Industrial Relations* (Princeton University Press, 2007), p.3

²⁵ P. Dorey, *British Conservatism and Trade Unionism, 1945-1964* (Farnham Ashgate, 2009).

changed?”²⁶ Dorey explains the role played by the change in political actor; the post-war years saw a Conservative Party which was predominantly constructed of One Nation Tories; the leading “intellectually dominant” politicians, Harold Macmillan, Anthony Eden and Rab Butler, were sympathetic to the trade unions as they were part and parcel of their own personal background and experiences, therefore formulating a positive association.²⁷ These were politicians whose political experiences had been forged through observing the poverty of the early 20th Century, the economic turbulence of the 1930’s and the need for post-war reconstruction in the 1950s – they agreed that trade unionism was necessary.

Yet, in *The Conservative Party and the Trade Unions* Dorey looks to the changing nature of the “trade union question”. Dorey observes that the trade union movement in the 1960s and 1970s “became particularly problematic” due to the “principles and precepts of conservatism itself”. Although individual political actors may have smoothed over trade union difficulties, there has always been an intrinsic “faith in capitalism” that “clearly constitutes a major reason why trade unions have always been problematic for the Conservative Party”.²⁸ The Conservative Party and trade

²⁶ C. Howell, Professor Chris Howell, review of *British Conservatism and Trade Unionism, 1945-1964*, (review no. 854).

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ P. Dorey, *The Conservative Party and the Trade Unions* (Routledge, 2006), p.3

movement “conciliation” was a post-war construct – a myth with economic, commercial and industrial consequences.

Correlli Barnett’s *The Audit of War: The Illusion and Reality of Britain as a Great Nation* counters this notion of positive trade union relations between state and organised labour. The post-war years were not a New Jerusalem but were riddled with “illusions”. The emphasis on welfare and the pre-eminence of the *Beveridge Report* destined Britain to be second-class economic and industrial citizens; coal, steel and shipbuilding industries were inefficient compared to international competitors; the “fundamental weakness lay in Britain’s human resources” – under skilled, under educated and controlled by elites precipitated by the class structure and the closed shop. British industry, government and business, were under an illusion of prosperity, whereas the reality was that “strikes and simmering discontents” were “rife across the whole industrial scene”.²⁹ Rigid and restrictive labour practices had placed “trade union shackles on productivity” and government policy of “appeasement” and harmful “loyalty” to full employment were fundamental deficiencies in Britain’s role as an industrial nation.³⁰ As Kenneth O. Morgan argues, in *The People’s Peace: British History 1945 – 1990*³¹ that in reality, the “unions were becoming restive” as early as 1949 - wartime restrictions on the right to strike and pay restrictions, saw a

²⁹ C. Barnett, *The Verdict of Peace: Britain Between her Yesterday and the Future* (Macmillan, 2001), p.200

³⁰ Ibid, p.441

³¹ K.O. Morgan, *The People’s Peace: British History 1945 – 1990* (Oxford university Press, 1992)

trade union movement challenge its natural bedfellow the Labour Party; Aneurin Bevan, argues Morgan, “the darling of the left” saw the inevitability of emergency action by government to “prevent a socialist government being undermined at a critical moment by indiscipline and subversion”.³²

Therefore, post-war unity between government and trade unions was transient; this is reflected in the authorised biography, *Edward Heath*,³³ by Philip Ziegler. Ziegler examines the contrasting relations between No. 10 and the trade union movement. Although Heath’s introduction of the 1971 Industrial relations Act saw some members of the TUC critique Heath’s administration as “the most dogmatic since the war”³⁴ he was to “personally establish a good relationship with most union leaders” and he “loved the trade unionists more than he loved the industrialists” considering them “by far the more important partner”.³⁵ Heath was both moderniser and yet a conciliatory figure who sought “patience and goodwill” in dialogue with union leaders; this ultimately was to be “a false dawn” of a cooperative yet modernising administration – “it was the miners who shattered the Conservative dream of wage restraint” and it was a trade union, the NUM, who was “immeasurably strengthened” by the defeat of Heath in 1974.

³² Ibid, p.98

³³ P. Ziegler, *Edward Heath* (Harper Press 2011).

³⁴ P. Ziegler, *Edward Heath* (Harper Press 2011). p. 335

³⁵ Ibid.

John Campbell argues in *Edward Heath: A Biography*³⁶ that Heath misjudged the mood of the trade unions, “there was no conception” of the “damage the miners could inflict” and the “government was fatally slow to react” as Heath’s “appeal to moderation cut no ice”.³⁷ The authority of government could “not withstand another miners’ strike” and the 1972 strike was to lead “directly to the second strike of February 1974”. This was to end Heath’s premiership and, Campbell argues, it was Heath’s “unsuccessful conciliation led just as surely to losing Downing Street”.³⁸ Lessons would be learned from this political humiliation.

The Rise of the New Right in the Conservative Party

The defeat of Edward Heath, argues Ben Jackson and Robert Saunders in *Making Thatcher’s Britain*, was to lead to “myths about the industrial and potential political strength of miners that sustained the victors and aggrieved the vanquished”.³⁹ The “inflation of 1974-5 could be laid at the door of the Heath government” – his “irresolution” to the trade union question was to ultimately to be “succeeded by Thatcherite determination”.⁴⁰ Therefore, the subsequent years following the defeat of

³⁶ J. Campbell, *Edward Heath: A Biography* (Pimlico, 1993).

³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 418.

³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 422.

³⁹ B. Jackson and R. Saunders *Making Thatcher’s Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), p.148.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p.149.

Edward Heath, was followed by “Thatcherite determination”⁴¹ to reconstruct conservatism from “one strand to another”.⁴² Dennis Kavanagh argues in *Thatcherism and British Politics: The End of Consensus?*⁴³ that this would entail the construction of a “more resolute conservatism”. Kavanagh argues this conservatism was born from an existing tension existing within the Conservative Party, “the liberal and the collectivist” and he argues that these “strands” have existed for much of its history; post Heath’s “spectacular U-turns” the neo-liberal strand of the Conservative Party would emerge to emphasise the “importance of individual and the limited role of government” that “clearly derives from classic liberalism”.⁴⁴ This “more resolute conservatism” is analysed by Richard Toye in *From Consensus to ‘Common Ground’: The Rhetoric of the Post-war Settlement and its Collapse*⁴⁵. Toye documents that “by the early stages of the 1970 – 74 Heath government demonstrated many of the rhetorical tropes associated with the Thatcherite assault on consensus”.⁴⁶ These “rhetorical tropes” as described by Toye were the theoretical foundations of a “New Right” within the Conservative Party – a New Right that had found inspiration from Powellism.

⁴¹ Ibid, p.149.

⁴² D. Kavanagh, *Thatcherism and British Politics: The End of Consensus?* (Oxford University Press, 1990), p.188

⁴³ Ibid, p.188

⁴⁴ Ibid

⁴⁵ Toye, R. *From ‘Consensus’ to ‘Common Ground’: The Rhetoric of the Post-war Settlement and its Collapse*. Vol. 48, No. 1 (JANUARY 2013), pp. 3-23 (21 pages)

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Camilla Schofield looks at the influence of Enoch Powell and post-war Powellism. In *Enoch Powell and the Making of Postcolonial Britain*⁴⁷ Schofield argues that through the challenges facing a post-war Britain, “New forms of representation and contestation in the media, new technologies of domestic housework, social planning and anxiety surrounding the future of family life, investigations into the experience of working-class masculinity... and cultural movements of migration” Powell was steadfast to the “survival of the nation”.⁴⁸ Powellism celebrates the certainties of organic representation and identity; the celebration, sanctity and survival of the natural fabric of England and Englishness, a “web of understood relationships which sustain society” – of the Church, of identity, of Englishness and the sovereignty of Parliament. These webs of intricate, historical, delicate and unbinding rituals would be challenged by socialism, corporatism and the trade union movement, “paper constitutions of Western invention” that offered only “sham independence and real chaos”.⁴⁹ Simon Heffer describes in, *Like the Roman; The Life of Enoch Powell*⁵⁰ Powell’s fascination with the “Mother of Parliaments” uniqueness: she has in fact “neither daughters nor peers” no other institution may challenge this “unique” phenomena. Through its uncoded and evolutionary development, Parliamentary sovereignty was, argues Heffer, “the focus of the nation” it’s true source of legitimacy

⁴⁷ C. Schofield, *Enoch Powell and the Making of Postcolonial Britain* (Cambridge University press, 2013).

⁴⁸ C. Schofield, *Enoch Powell and the Making of Postcolonial Britain* (Cambridge University press, 2013), p.12

⁴⁹ Ibid, p.92

⁵⁰ S. Heffer, *The Life of Enoch Powell* (Faber & Faber, 1998).

and authenticity; Powell argued that beyond Parliamentary sovereignty there was no political reality only “despotisms and republics”.⁵¹ Socialism, trade unionism, corporatism could not be allowed to alter the natural institutions of liberty and freedom for the English working classes; “the public interest” could not be represented through artificial interference, “socially and economically, is one and indivisible”.⁵² Powell was to influence a form of conservative liberalism, a search for historic individual freedoms, bound within a natural sovereignty. Liberalism, and economic liberalism, fit this grander theoretical narrative well.

Mark Garnett and Kevin Hickson analyse in *Conservative Thinkers: The key contributors to the political thought of the modern Conservative Party*⁵³ the influence of the “twin ideological traditions that John Enoch Powell attempted to integrate” being “economic liberalism and traditional Toryism”.⁵⁴ The former represented, argue Garnett and Hickson, “freedom from coercion and best protected through the extension of the market as a mechanism through which decisions should be taken” and the latter emphasised “social order, the authority of the state and the defence of the nation”. Powell was the first intellectual Conservative to challenge the nature of

⁵¹ Ibid, p.198.

⁵² Ibid, p.198

⁵³ M. Garnett and K. Hickson, *Conservative Thinkers The key contributors to the political thought of the modern Conservative Party* (Manchester University Press, 2009).

⁵⁴ Ibid, p.57

the post-war agreement, and the first to challenge the “paradigm of progressive conservatism”. He would start the germination of a New Right – of a thought process that would alter the fabric of what conservatism is; a clear definition of Conservative as an alternative to the suffrage and bondage of socialism and those who are part and parcel of the socialist political agenda. Economic liberalism is freedom for the individual by “limiting the scope of government intervention and maximising the role of the markets”.⁵⁵ For Powell, the intricacies and delicacies of English sovereignty and English individual freedom were challenged through socialism, economic liberalism, through capitalism offered a means of individual freedom. Therefore, through economics, and primarily through monetarism; economic control would allow decisions “that were left to the individual”.⁵⁶ Money supply was key; the emphasis was therefore to prioritise the control of inflation over the pursuit of full employment – a rejection of Keynes. Trade unions, though not directly responsible for inflation, did “cause unemployment” and challenged the natural flow of the market through incomes policies. Trade unions “undermined economic efficiency” through reduced competitiveness and secondly challenged the “rule of law” through the “coercive” nature of the closed shop;⁵⁷ “trade unions had not achieved positive outcomes”.

⁵⁵ Ibid, p.59

⁵⁶ M. Garnett and K. Hickson, *Conservative Thinkers The key contributors to the political thought of the modern Conservative Party* (Manchester University Press, 2009), p.60.

⁵⁷ Ibid, p.61

Powellism would construct a theoretical foundation for a New Right within the Conservative Party. In terms of implementation of this theoretical design, E.H.H. Green, in *Thatcherism: An Historical Perspective*⁵⁸ argues that between 1975 and 1979 both Margaret Thatcher and Keith Joseph “outlined in keynote speeches many of the broad objectives of what came to be known as Thatcherism”.⁵⁹ Green poses the question “What do I mean when I speak of Thatcherite political economy?”⁶⁰ and he answers by claiming, “they”, Thatcher and Joseph, “saw their main aim as being to “roll back the frontiers of the state”. This was to be achieved by “replacing the mixed economy with a private sector dominated market economy” a “reform and reduction of the welfare state” and challenging “institutions which hampered the operation of the market, trade unions” who were to “have their powers and legal privileges curbed”.⁶¹ Green interprets Thatcherism as a search for the embourgeoisement of the working classes – a Victorian value of self-sacrifice, dedication and pursuit of individual excellence. It is a direct challenge to the post-war consensus, a critique

⁵⁸ Ibid, p.62

⁵⁹ Green, E.H.H. *Thatcherism: A Historical Perspective*. Transactions of the Royal Historical Society Vol. 9 (1999), pp. 17-42 (26 pages) Published by: Cambridge University Press on behalf of the Royal Historical Society.

⁶¹ Green, E.H.H. *Thatcherism: A Historical Perspective*. Transactions of the Royal Historical Society Vol. 9 (1999), pp. 17-42 (26 pages) Published by: Cambridge University Press on behalf of the Royal Historical Society.

of, not just Atlee and socialism, but one of a failure of the Conservative Party “having taken a wrong turning in and after 1945 as a consequence of misreading the 1930s”.⁶²

Thatcherism was to be an extension of Powellism, and it was Margaret Thatcher, who was to forge a New Right within the Conservative Party, but its true definition is still contestable; Ivor Crewe and Donald Searing, state that they “Address both a puzzle and a theory. The puzzle is posed by the emergence of Thatcherism,” an un-conservative ideology”.⁶³ In *Ideological Change in the British Conservative Party* Crewe and Searing, analyse the nature of the “un- Conservative” nature of Thatcherite New Right politics; Thatcherism is not conservatism. They document the concerns of “the Conservative party at prayer”, the traditional One Nation heartlands and institutions – religious, social and political – that did not “particularly care for Thatcherism”. The party, “they say is in the grips of a heresy. The new leadership, they say, “worships at the shrine of Hayek” has become the “prisoner of Chicago” prefers conflict to practical reform and is not really Conservative at all”.⁶⁴ Crewe and Searing look at the relationship between “Thatcherism and conservatism” and argue that although Lord Alport argues that “Thatcherism is not conservatism” this

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ I. Crewe & D. Searing *Ideological Change in the British Conservative Party*. The American Political Science Review Vol. 82, No. 2 (Jun. 1988), pp. 361-384 (24 pages)

⁶⁴ Ibid.

is misleading; they argue that a “silent majority thesis” were outside the “magic circle” of established Conservative thinking. The values of Thatcherism are the “principle interests of Whigs” those of “capitalism, free enterprise and property” – these are values of enterprise and wealth through the efficiency of the economy. Therefore, Thatcherism, it can be argued is not “un-Conservative” yet returns Conservative Party theoretical roots to the its pre 20th Century identity of “a firm commitment to statecraft and free enterprise”.⁶⁵ The nature of “progressive Toryism” argue Crewe and Searing reflects “paternalistic roots” that arose post-1945 and the “devastating defeat” to the Labour Party; and therefore, an adoption of the welfare state. The “Whiggish” conservatism of Thatcherism, is therefore not a new phenomenon within the Conservative Party, and a consistent historic in that the “heavy hand of government distorts the marketplace and undermines economic growth”.⁶⁶ This reflects a contemporary interpretation of Hayek, Friedman, Joseph and Alan Walters. For One Nation Conservatives such as Ian Gilmour and Francis Pym who embrace a new form of neoliberalism, monetarist driven conservatism was an anathema; but as Crewe and Searing suggested, this regression to “Whiggery” reflected a form of politics that was engaged with economic and social freedom. This research will engage with this debate; the embracing of economic policy within the Conservative Party

⁶⁵ I. Crewe & D. Searing *Ideological Change in the British Conservative Party*. The American Political Science Review Vol. 82, No. 2 (Jun. 1988), pp. 361-384.

⁶⁶Ibid.

led by Margaret Thatcher was considered a new interpretation of conservatism; a rejection of Macmillan and Butler, and an overt and aggressive rejection of socialism and consensus politics.

For Nigel Lawson, who argues in *The View from No.11 Memoirs of a Tory Radical* there is a new form of conservatism, indeed a “New Conservatism” designed to regain “the initiative from collectivism” and challenge to the “evils of socialism”.⁶⁷ A more robust form of Conservative thought that would be prepared to tackle the “British economy trapped in a cycle of low growth and high inflation”.⁶⁸ The “evils” of socialism and central planning described by Lawson had been advanced by Friedrich Hayek in *The Road to Serfdom*.⁶⁹ Hayek expresses his fears for “Individualism” that is being challenged from both the left and the right. Individual liberty and freedom, argues Hayek, was “first fully developed during the Renaissance” to construct the foundation of Western European civilisation. Hayek looks back to the England of 1870, that was to be the exporter of “English ideas” of liberalism and “the rule of freedom”. The England of the 19th Century was to lose “its intellectual leadership” and import the ideas formed in Germany by Hegel and Marx; liberty, liberalism, freedom and individualism would be shelved for socialism and collectivism; of

⁶⁷ N. Lawson, *The View from No.11 memoirs of a Tory Radical* (Bantam Press, London), p.14

⁶⁸ Ibid, p.29

⁶⁹ F. Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom* (Routledge, London).

“planning” and “organisation” as Hayek argued “socialism has displaced liberalism”.⁷⁰ Hayek’s central areas of interest were not simply economic but “political and legal theory, as well as political economy”. A.J. Tebble, argues in *F.A. Hayek: Major Conservative and Libertarian Thinkers*⁷¹ that we saw his “highpoint” of influence in the 1970s. Hayek’s “ideals” were to be “adopted by Margaret Thatcher” and his political economic philosophy would be the “source of many of the adopted by her as Prime Minister”.⁷² Political and individual freedoms against the “tyranny” of socialism require economic freedom, as Milton Friedman argues in *Capitalism and Freedom*⁷³ and “economic arrangements are important because of their effect on the concentration or dispersion of power”.⁷⁴ Friedman correlates the historical freedom of the individual to periods in history of economic liberalism and freedom of the market; historically the “typical state of mankind is tyranny, servitude and misery” and yet Friedman argues that in the Western World the 19th and 20th centuries “stand out as striking exceptions of to the general trend of historical development”. Therefore, argues Friedman, “capitalism is a necessary condition for the political arena” – capitalism and political freedoms are intrinsically linked, “private enterprise” ensuring political freedoms. Friedman argues that the financial system –

⁷⁰ Ibid, p.21

⁷¹ A.J. Tebble, *F.A. Hayek Major Conservative and Libertarian Thinkers* (Bloomsbury, London), p.12

⁷² Ibid, p.12

⁷³ M. Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom* (The University of Chicago Press, 1982)

⁷⁴ Ibid, p.9

capitalism – only fails through crisis “produced by government”. In *Why Government is the Problem*⁷⁵ Friedman explains that the Great Depression was “produced by government” and that the issues facing the modern United States in education, homelessness, crime, education, welfare, housing and medical care, are due to “the problem is not that government is spending too little but it is spending too much” a “reverse invisible hand” where the “people effectively have no choice”.⁷⁶

A New Right within the Conservative Party looked to both Hayek and Friedman for inspiration, and it was Keith Joseph who would take up arms in “dismantling the corporate state between 1979 and 1981”. Morrison Halcrow in *Keith Joseph: A Single Mind*⁷⁷ states that “The year 1974 was a year when political goalposts were visibly shifting” and when a “single Conservative deciding that he had never really been a Conservative might have seemed a fairly small earthquake”.⁷⁸ That Conservative was Keith Joseph. Joseph’s moment of epiphany was in April 1974 when he converted to a form of conservatism where “his loyalties lay firmly in a new faith; in the free market”. This sentence encapsulates his, and indeed the New Right of the Conservative Party’s thought – faith and economics. The connection between a morality and a religious zealotry to embolden Britain through an economic renaissance

⁷⁵ M. Friedman, *Why Government is the Problem* (Hoover institution press Publication, 1993), p.5.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, p.11

⁷⁷ M. Halcrow, *Keith Joseph, A Single Mind* (Macmillan, London).

⁷⁸ M. Halcrow, *Keith Joseph, A Single Mind* (Macmillan, London), p.56

that would sustain personal freedom and liberty of the individual; theoretical political economy that was to be made relevant and real to the masses. Halcrow describes how Joseph, with the “passion which matched that of a converted Marxist” proclaimed that, “You don’t understand, Keynes is dead, Dead”.⁷⁹ Therefore, Keith Joseph’s “career” argues Halcrow, has to be judged “in terms of what is called Thatcherism” – a political and moral force, of which Joseph, inspired by Hayek, Powell and Friedman, would help “define and refine it” as he “helped to defend and sustain it through dark days” and as a “phenomenon” rather than a “political philosophy” would shape. It would incorporate a faith in sound money, a form of simple patriotism, a moral code that “implies working with the grain of human nature”, a preference for making decisions, a distrust of all groups “claiming a stake” in resources that have not been earned, and a sense of anger at British people being cheated out of their just rewards.⁸⁰ Ultimately Thatcherism, argues Halcrow was more akin to “winning a psychological battle in a society where governments had largely lost credibility” yet “the paradoxes and puzzles remain”.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Ibid, p.62

⁸⁰ Ibid, p.189

⁸¹ Halcrow, M. *Keith Joseph: A Single Mind* (Macmillan, 1989), p.191

And these paradoxes of Thatcherism reflect a theme of this research. The challenge to the trade union movement, through a construct of a New Right, was to be motivated through ideology or statecraft. Was Thatcherism a pragmatic, efficient, politically motivated force or an ideological construct, reaching for a level of hegemony and power within UK society? Daniel Wincott argues in *Thatcher: Ideological or Pragmatic?* That “Interpretations of Thatcher’s governments are conventionally divided into two groups. The literature on “Thatcherism” suggests that Thatcher has led a new ideological offensive”, yet for Peter Riddell, “Thatcher has been a pragmatic leader”.⁸² Wincott looks to the inconsistencies of the definition of Thatcherism, in that many writers “have failed adequately to define what they mean by ideology or pragmatism”.⁸³ Wincott argues that the debate itself is too inconsistent, that the debate cannot and does not reflect any concrete solutions and Thatcherism is “ideological and pragmatic”. Wincott’s observations reveal the complexities of the debate regarding the true theoretical background to a New Right. Yet there are interpretations that offer greater clarity.

Stuart Hall, in *Thatcherism: A New Stage*⁸⁴ offers a bold analysis of a “radical Right” that “‘Thatcherism’ is the global character — the hegemonic thrust — of its intervention. Nothing short of a counter-hegemonic strategy of resistance is capable of

⁸² D. Wincott, *Thatcher: Ideological or Pragmatic* Contemporary British History Volume 4, 1990 – Issue 2

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ *Marxism Today* S. Hall, Thatcherism: A New Stage. 2nd February 1980.

matching it on the terrain of struggle which it is day-by-day beginning to map out”, and that it presented a “radical political force, capable of setting new terms to the political struggle, and effectively condensing a wide range of social and political issues and themes under the social market philosophy and banner of the radical Right *is* a qualitatively new political event. We must take account of the *radicalism* of this intervention”.⁸⁵ Hall equates Thatcherism as nothing less than a hegemonic power grab, a radical force that was to challenge the political, cultural and societal forces as “it has a 'philosophy' as well as a programme. This hegemonic character to its intervention is something profoundly new, in terms of the radical breaks which it is prepared to make with the whole inherited baggage of assumptions and attitudes”. This is not politics of the pragmatist, but of the radical and the pursuit of power; a popular authoritarian phenomenon. Andrew Gamble argued that “Thatcher’s pronounced ideological stance was unusual for a Conservative Party leader”. In *Privatization, Thatcherism, and the British State* Gamble argues that the change in style and direction that Thatcherism offers is enough to pronounce a “Thatcher revolution”⁸⁶ a new “redefinition of the relationship between the state and the economy”. Through this, Thatcherism represents an attempt to restore the “conditions of Conservative hegemony” to “restore the Conservative Party to electoral dominance”, the

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ A. Gamble, *Privatization, Thatcherism, and the British State* Journal of Law and Society Vol. 16, No. 1, Thatcher's Law (Spring, 1988), pp. 1-20 (20 pages)

revival of “market liberalism as the dominant public philosophy” and to rejuvenate the state to free the economy.⁸⁷

The critique of Thatcherism, as a form of ideologically driven New Right project, stems not just from the left, but from the centre right, One Nation element within the Conservative Party. Ian Gilmour was a Conservative party MP who was arguably “one of the most left-wing figures in British politics: a feat he has achieved by not moving”⁸⁸ – the act of not moving, was objectively staying within the middle ground of politics and staying a One Nation Tory. Gilmour explains, in *Whatever Happened to the Tories: The Conservatives since 1945*⁸⁹ that “Margaret Thatcher had recently affirmed her intention of having a “conviction government” composed only of people who wanted to go in the direction she wanted” – Gilmour critiqued monetarism as “totally divorced from reality”⁹⁰ and he was to lament that the “course of the conservatism of the eighties and nineties had borne no relation to One Nation Toryism”. Jim Prior, in *A Balance of Power*,⁹¹ critiqued Thatcher ideology, in that it was wholly a “very simplistic approach” to politics, based on “a combination of her own instincts founded in the corner shop at Grantham, laid over by a veneer by Hayek and Friedman”⁹² and in *The Politics of Consent* Francis Pym wrote that though Margaret

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ I. Gilmour, *Whatever Happened to the Tories: The Conservatives since 1945* (Fourth Estate, 1998).

⁹⁰ Ibid, p.310

⁹¹ J. Prior, *A Balance of Power* (Hamish Hamilton, 1986)

⁹² Ibid, p.118

Thatcher was a “political operator of considerable skill” dogmatic decision making and “her success in making a virtue of unpopular measures has had the side effect of branding anyone who disagrees with her as a spineless creature” – in essence, the “wets”.⁹³

Eric J. Evans counters this idea. In *Thatcher and Thatcherism*⁹⁴, Evans argues that Thatcherism is “markedly different” from liberalism, Marxism or even conservatism, as it “offers no new insights” and is “better seen as a series of non-negotiable precepts than a consistent body of thought”.⁹⁵ Thatcherism is a continuation of the Conservative Party’s “preoccupation with statecraft” argues Jim Bulpitt⁹⁶, and Sheila Letwin views Margaret Thatcher, not as an ideology, but as a political actor, with “individualism as the key attribute”.⁹⁷ Evans does not discount the “importance of Thatcherism” but suggests that the success of her administration was due to her possessing “political skill of a very high order”. She offered a “battered” electorate, not an ideological vision but a series of coherent policies of economic growth, individual opportunity and “a new beginning based on old truths”.⁹⁸ Peter Riddell argues in *The Thatcher Government*, that ultimately it is all down to the efficiency of polit-

⁹³ F. Pym. *The Politics of Consent* (Hamish Hamilton, 1984), p.15

⁹⁴ E.J. Evans, *Thatcher and Thatcherism* (Routledge, 1997).

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, p.2

⁹⁶ *Ibid*.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, p.4

ical decision making; he returns to the Labour government of 1976 and sees “sympathy with the necessity for the broad change of direction in economic policy which began in the mid-1970s under Labour and has been sustained and extended by the Thatcher administration”.⁹⁹ The continuation of Labour economic policy would simply have been “economic suicide” and there was necessity for change. Riddell argues that politically, things could have been handled somewhat more sympathetically and “differently” regarding unemployment and deindustrialisation, as monetary policy and monetarism became an obsessive distraction, but both political and economic change was required; Thatcherism was pragmatic decision making.

The 1984 Miners’ Strike.

The research concludes with the 1984 Miners’ Strike. A central premise of this research is an analysis, through primary research, of the lengths that a New Right were prepared to take regarding conflict with the NUM in 1984. This primary research is to be undertaken at Kew Records Office, including PREM and CAB notes, that will offer new information, perspective and detail to the proposed premise including planning and preparation for industrial action with the NUM, the internal debates

⁹⁹ P. Riddell, *The Thatcher Government* (Oxford, Martin Robertson).

and decision-making process within the Conservative Party regarding industrial conflict and the evidence of a predetermined, ideologically driven economic and political agenda, aimed at dismantling trade union legitimacy and authority. Primary research, in the form of internal documentation, letters, memos, correspondence and minutes, will demonstrate this proposed theoretical and eventual physical implementation of dogma; secondary source material will create a template for primary source evidence.

In *The Miners' Strike 1984 - 5 Loss Without Limit*, Adeney and Lloyd, offer a first-hand experience of the miners' strike, through archive and interview, and a picture is assembled of the damage, the "loss" to society and community that the strike caused, "The government's blank cheque to the electricity generating boards; the huge bills for the policing; the damage to the fabric of society from the scenes witnessed by the dispute; the cost to the pits; the limitless antipathy that developed between working and striking miners; above all the bitter financial and personal suffering of miners and their families".¹⁰⁰ Huw Benyon, in *Digging Deeper: Issues in the Miners' Strike*,¹⁰¹ argues that the aftermath of the conflict demonstrates the "Role of the state in British society has been clearly revealed. The state apparatus, the police, the law, the judges, the Civil Service and the media have all been used against

¹⁰⁰ M. Adeney & J. Lloyd *The Miners' Strike 1984 - 5 Loss Without Limit* (Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1986), preface.

¹⁰¹ H. Benyon, *Digging Deeper: Issues in the Miners' Strike* (verso, 1985), p.6

the workers”¹⁰² and amongst this Benyon “argues the case for coal. It also argues the case for the miners”. Benyon looks to the “absence of a national ballot” – an issue of relevance to this research and the lack of clarity regarding pit closures – and he looks to the “Breaking” of the miners as political and ideological necessity.

Francis Beckett and David Hencke, in *Marching to the Fault Line: The Miners’ Strike and the Battle for Industrial Britain*,¹⁰³ take a contemporary view, from a journalistic viewpoint to “offer an historical view” that was balanced in the appraisal that “Neither Thatcher nor Scargill paid the price for their war. Neither has ever acknowledged even the smallest error”.¹⁰⁴ Seamus Milne, in *The Enemy Within: The Secret War Against the Miners*, looks to the “hostile propaganda and fantasy” in the British media and security services that it “felt necessary to paint the strike as a dismal morality and its leadership as the epitome of megalomaniacal self-delusion”.¹⁰⁵ Both *Coal Not Dole: memories of the 1984/85 Miners’ Strike* by Guthrie Hutton¹⁰⁶ and *Miners’ Strike People Versus the State*¹⁰⁷ by David Reed and Olivia Adamson, take an intimate, interview related format using those associated in the conflict –

¹⁰² Ibid, p.51

¹⁰³ F. Beckett & D. Hencke, in *Marching to the Fault Line: The Miners’ Strike and the Battle for Industrial Britain* (Constable, London, 2009).

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, p.272

¹⁰⁵ S. Milne, *The Enemy Within: The Secret war Against the Miners* (Verso, 1994).

¹⁰⁶ G. Hutton, *Coal Not Dole memories of the 1985/85 Miners’ Strike* (Stenlake Publishing, 2005).

¹⁰⁷ D. Reed & O. Adamson *Miners’ Strike 1984 – 1985 People Versus the State* (Larkin Publications, 1985).

miners, their wives and families, all expressing their emotions and thoughts on the strike, the violence, the tensions and hardships, and its aftermath and defeat.

Conclusion

The above literature reflects the construct of this thesis. The research entails an analysis of two areas in relation to the development of a New Right within the Conservative Party; firstly, its relationship with the traditions of conservatism and One Nation thought, and secondly the relationship with the UK trade union movement. I intend through this research, to construct a foundation of secondary analysis to contextualise this historical – political debate regarding the development of a new phenomenon within conservatism, and secondly, the use of primary source material to evidence the construct of an ideological agenda to confront the National Union of Mineworkers. Therefore, the literature used will reflect theoretical analysis, historical investigation and primary source materials in order to contextualise the research findings and then to formulate and evidence the core ontological position.

Preparation to “provoke a battle”: New Right Conservatism, the Trade Unions and the Conservative Party 1974 – 1984

Chapter 1 – Ideology, Statecraft and the Conservative Party

1.0 Introduction

It was all to do with Thatcher getting rid of trade unions if you can hammer the NUM, nobody else will stand up to you.¹⁰⁸

David McArthur, Fife miner.

Between 1974 and 1984 a group within the Conservative Party, a New Right, was to design, plan and engage in industrial confrontation with the National Union of Miners (NUM). The crushing industrial dispute in 1984 epitomised by the state’s victory at the ‘Battle of Orgreave’ – a violent confrontation between police and miners at the South Yorkshire Orgreave Coking Plant – was a construct of this New Right, a rejection of statecraft, a rejection of One Nation conservatism and an embracing of policy designed through the pursuit of economic dogma.

This research counters Jim Bulpitt’s assertion that between 1975 and 1983 the Conservative Party used the “art of statecraft” to pursue an “elite operation in

¹⁰⁸ G. Hutton, *Coal Not Dole: Memories of the 1984/85 Miners’ Strike*, (Stenlake Publishing Ltd, 2005), p7

damage control”.¹⁰⁹ Bulpitt argues that Thatcherism represents a political ability to “to understand and work with the limitations placed on elite activity”.¹¹⁰ I argue, that Bulpitt’s analysis of Margaret Thatcher’s economic and industrial response to the defeat of Edward Heath in 1974, which can be found “in the realm of party statecraft”¹¹¹ is insufficient. Though compelling in that it offers political clarity and answers, Bulpitt’s analysis of Thatcherism through the prism of effective statecraft, does not provide the answers to primary evidence I demonstrate in this thesis. The New Right was a construct within the Conservative Party that, I argue, was not prepared to work within the limitations that were a legacy of Edward Heath, as there was a grander ideological agenda. A New Right would push beyond these limited boundaries of One Nation politics, and construct a form of hegemony, a neoliberal agenda, that has socio-political consequences to this day in Brexit and the rise of populism. The miners’ strike of 1984 was the fulfilment of a political agenda; the social breakdown in community, unemployment and the violence of the conflict, does not demonstrate good politics in a difficult and demanding political arena – it was a greater socio-political, and ultimately neoliberal agenda – as Bulpitt critiques “a grand purpose”.

¹⁰⁹ J. Bulpitt, *The Discipline of New Democracy: Mrs Thatcher’s Domestic Statecraft*. Political Studies, Vol.XXXIV, No.1 ,1985, pp 19-39

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ J. Bulpitt, *The Discipline of New Democracy: Mrs Thatcher’s Domestic Statecraft*. Political Studies, Vol.XXXIV, No.1 ,1985, pp 19-39

This research demonstrates a New Right that would formulate a theoretical set of ideals, it would construct this “grand purpose”. These ideals, inspired through Powellism, Hayek and Friedman, and instigated through Lawson, Minford, Hoskyns, Howe and Joseph, were not limited through day to day politics; there was a bolder vision beyond existing political parameters. This New Right agenda would advocate monetarism, the pursuit of economic and personal freedoms, construct a template for deindustrialisation and ultimately engage in trade union conflict. This “fragmentation” of industry and trade unions, as I evidence, does not constitute statecraft’s governing competence or the avocation of violence against the largest democratically mandated trade union in Western Europe, the National Union of Mineworkers. The secrecy of planning and preparation for an industrial conflict, the scenes of intense violence at picket line, in particular at Orgreave, the deceit regarding an existing “Hit List” of viable coal mines that were earmarked to be closed yet denied to parliamentary, media, cabinet scrutiny and public scrutiny, the direct influence of policing matters by government and the eventual levels of unemployment, levels of social discontent and lack of community cohesion, drug addiction, levels of crime and under achievement academically in post-industrial mining communities, does not demonstrate Bulpitt’s “characteristics” of “competence in office” – it demonstrates a strategy that was designed to counter the

threat of the NUM, and to formulate strategy that was to finally end the legacy of the defeat of Heath in 1974.

The trade union movement, most notably demonstrated through the NUM, was an obstacle to neoliberal economic reform; it was an obstacle to denationalisation, deindustrialisation, privatisation, globalisation and economic monetary reform. Trade unionism, through corporatism, was the stumbling block to roll back the frontiers of Atlee's socialism, of Macmillan's consensual *Middle Way* and Heath's regression. Trade unions were a unique apparatus in a complex dynamic of corporate power sharing, and in order to implement a cultural and economic hegemony, a neoliberal new order, they would have to be defeated as a viable political force. This research demonstrates that the consensual overtones of Heath were not to be replicated – there could be no dialogue or discussion with trade unions to impose reform; there was only one alternative – conflict. This research demonstrates this is no hyperbole, but a realistic pattern of behaviour undertaken by a New Right whose long-term vision was a nation that would aspire to a neoliberal agenda. I evidence a concerted plan to undermine the trade union movement in the UK by a New Right within the Conservative Party; the “Hit List” I reveal through new primary source documentation, demonstrates the lengths to which government would go to conceal a transformative industrial agenda. A list of pit closures, not disclosed for

over thirty years, identifies a pivotal moment in British 20th century industrial relations; a predetermined and planned assault on a British trade union.

And the consequences of New Right industrial reform were immense. The defeat of the trade union movement would ultimately redesign corporatism and the post-war Keynesian legacy of demand driven macroeconomics – Keynes, arguably until post-2008, would be marginalised, as the pursuit of full employment would be usurped by the conditions sought for low inflation and market liberalisation. These conditions and deflationary measures could not accept wage demands by trade unions, or the apathy of the One Nation Conservatives who accepted these demands; the priority was not full employment, was not corporatism, was not the continuation of industrial community, but neoliberal economic reform.

The defeat of Scargill, the NUM, and the demise of the British Steel Corporation, all analysed in this research, demonstrate not statecraft's sound political boundaries of good party management and electoral viability, but so much more. They demonstrate a change in hegemony, a change in a political mindset of what is vital to a society and a community; gone were the ideals of a humane form of politics, eschewed by consecutive post-war governments, on both the left and the right, and gone was an industrial Britain, a Britain, where, as Orwell describes, "The liberty of the individual is still believed in, almost as in the nineteenth century. But this has

nothing to do with economic liberty”.¹¹² The liberty of the New Right counters Orwell’s claim; liberty is inextricably bound within the political economy; liberty was not to be associated with freedom of association and expression through collective identity, but liberty of the market place, the liberty of global forces to re-engineer British society to that of the neoliberal; to break the post-war consensus.

Therefore, with new primary evidence from The National Archives, I demonstrate a covert strategy, whose aim was not to implement coherent energy or industrial policy, but to prioritise industrial confrontation with the NUM, which was seen as the ‘enemy within’. Evidence of an industrial “Hit List” of pit closures, government interference of police operations at Orgreave, and the planned destruction of the UK mining industry, used in this research, are not consistent with a policy of statecraft; the series of measures do not equate to good party-political management as they did not pass through collective Cabinet responsibility or Parliamentary scrutiny.

This covert nature of the “Hit List” of pit closures demonstrates an agenda that was dedicated not to long-term industrial strategy but covert targeting of an industrial base by a New Right. The dedicated build up and importing of coke stock in preparation for industrial conflict and the politicisation of policing of the strike, notably, as revealed, at Orgreave, all reflect a lack of government transparency and

¹¹² G. Orwell, *The Lion and the Unicorn: Socialism and the English Genius* (Secker & Warburg, 1941).

Cabinet scrutiny. The documentation I present for the first time academically, is designed not for the full scrutiny of cabinet, it is notably “secret” and bypasses political party and governmental protocols. The secrecy of policy reflects a determination to impose a solution that was to be controversial, to dare and think the unthinkable, to challenge a previous scared cow – the trade union movement.

The post-war world was designed through, and by a form of collective identity and spirit that was legitimised by conflict; the hegemony of this period, forged through war, was a mindset of corporatism, trade unionism and collective ideals. These ideals had infused a nation, and the idea of challenging these was controversial – as reflected in the secrecy of documentation, the lack of transparency regarding the preparation for the 1984 conflict, the existence of a “Hit List” of working coal mines, the importation of foreign coke stock and the government influence on policing the miners’ strike. The word “secret” highlighted on the top of primary documentation, I reveal, demonstrates the lengths to which a New Right were prepared to go; to challenge corporatism, to challenge One Nation conservatism, to challenge the NUM and trade union movement, in order to construct a neoliberal agenda; an agenda, and an economic and social philosophy that prevails today. The year-long dispute with miners was planned and conducted not to gain electoral success, maintain political party unity or administrative credibility, but was part of a grander hegemonic strategy of implementation neoliberal economic policy on a national scale. The

dispute was designed and instigated to implement an ideologically driven agenda – one constructed by a New Conservatism – a New Right – whose intention was to impose a new economic order through industrial and trade union confrontation. This research shows the change of dynamic within the Conservative Party towards a rejection of statecraft in favour of ideologically driven trade union reform, leading to industrial confrontation in 1984.

This chapter sets out the main research questions. It also provides some context for the in-depth analysis later, exploring tensions between different interpretations of Thatcherism, including statecraft and ideologically driven views. Finally, it provides an overview of the main research.

1.1 Key research questions

This research addresses the following key questions in relation to Conservative Party trade union reform post 1974:

How and why did the Conservative Party change?

This research reveals a process of change within the Conservative Party. I argue that there was to be a repositioning of the Conservative Party from 1974 to 1984, and the marginalising of Conservative statecraft policy, leading to imposition of

ideologically driven internal party change. Using primary source evidence, I examine:

- *The process of ideological change.* To contextualise the evidence produced, this research examines the theoretical foundations of a New Right. I examine the inspiration of Enoch Powell and Friedrich Hayek, who provided the intellectual stimulus and legitimacy to calls for economic freedom, the rejection of socialism and a challenge to the trade union movement.
- *The implementation of New Right ideology.* I examine the adaptation of an agenda inspired by the New Right and adopted amongst notable Conservatives; analysing the work of Nigel Lawson and Keith Joseph.
- *The targeting and political elimination of the “wets”.* I argue that One Nation Conservative MP’s were deemed to be surplus to ideological requirements and removed from Cabinet positions of influence.

Why did the Conservative Party prepare and plan for industrial confrontation with the NUM in 1984?

The period in question is bookended by two key events – electoral defeat for the Conservative Party and the defeat of the National Union of Mineworkers. The question of “Who governs” posed by Edward Heath in February of 1974, was

designed to “strengthen”¹¹³ the Conservative Party’s hand against the trade union movement; after having “surrendered abjectly after the first battle with the miners”¹¹⁴ in 1972. The bargaining position of the NUM “had been immeasurably strengthened” due to the “cartel of oil producing countries”, which had demonstrated the UK’s dependence on coal.¹¹⁵ The subsequent decision of Heath to go to the country in 1974 was a disaster leading to humiliating defeat for the Conservatives; the “Government could never withstand the monopoly powers of unions”.¹¹⁶ Heath’s defeat was to feed “myths about the industrial and potential political strength of the miners”¹¹⁷ – and it is from this point that this research offers an analysis of the subsequent change of ideological framework. Conservative Party statecraft in 1974 had failed – “In a statecraft context the Heath–led Conservative Party represented a total failure on all dimensions”.¹¹⁸

To Heath, Conservative statecraft had failed due to trade union militancy. I argue this “failure” to sustain credibility, the necessary attributes associated with Conservative Party electoral efficiency, party management and electoral credibility, led to the rejection of Conservative statecraft. This failure was to offer opportunity

¹¹³ H. Young, *One of Us* (Macmillan, 1989), p.78

¹¹⁴ P. Ziegler, *Edward Heath* (Harper Press, 2011), p.416 The "Battle of Saltley Gate", in January of 1972 was a “decisive moment” in Edward Heath’s losing battle regarding pay restraint with Arthur Scargill.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*, p.415

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*, p.421

¹¹⁷ B. Jackson & R. Saunders, *Making Thatcher’s Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), p.148

¹¹⁸ M. Burch & M. Moran, *British Politics, A Reader* (Manchester University Press, 1987), p.173

and momentum to an emerging new form of conservatism – a New Right. I have evidenced a point in post-war UK political history, from 1974 - 1984, when both individual political actors and ideology within the Conservative Party would construct a template that was to view the trade union reform as a means of reclaiming political and economic authority. Therefore, this research evidences this process; the defeat of Conservative statecraft at the hands of the trade union movement and the subsequent ideologically driven process of planning and instigation, of confrontation with the NUM in 1984.

This research demonstrates the construction of this industrial conflict. How did a Conservative party legislate for the intensity of industrial confrontation? How would statecraft policy view damage to community and wholesale damage to a viable industry? I argue and evidence a process of an ideological change that would lead to the 1984 conflict; one of internal rejuvenation that was to take place within the Conservative Party to ultimately enable the defeat of “the enemy within”.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ M. Thatcher, Speech, *The Enemy Within*, 19th July 1984, 1922 Committee. Available at: Margaret Thatcher Foundation. <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/105563>

The phrase was used by Thatcher in 1984, “The Prime Minister last night drew a parallel between the Falklands War and the dispute in the mining industry. Speaking at a private meeting of the 1922 Committee of Conservative backbench MPs at Westminster, Mrs. Thatcher said that at the time of the conflict they had had to fight the enemy without; but the enemy within, much more difficult to fight, was just as dangerous to liberty”.¹¹⁹

Did government industrial strategy and eventual confrontation with the NUM in 1984 demonstrate Statecraft or Ideology?

This introduction will examine both Thatcherism as statecraft and as an ideological construct. Statecraft theory will be examined in the context of Jim Bulpitt's re-examination of Thatcherism as a means of resolving the "electoral and governing problems facing a party at any particular time".¹²⁰ To Bulpitt, Thatcherism was not an ideological adherence to Hayek or Friedman, or an implementation of a bold, grand strategy; it was solving problems posed by governance and the winning of elections.

This research counters this position. The period in question, I demonstrate through primary evidence, does present an ideological template for internal party change and confrontation with the NUM. I argue that the statecraft associated and identified with Heath's term in office was rejected, as were the actors who represented One Nation conservatism.

Ideology is demonstrated through the Conservative Party's changing dynamic with the trade union movement. The visceral scenes of violence between the state and trade union on British soil – at picket lines and at Orgreave – demonstrates this

¹²⁰ B. Jackson & R. Saunders, *Making Thatcher's Britain* (Cambridge, 2012), p.68

changing dynamic – a rejection of conciliation and dialogue, of the maintenance of administrative efficiency, towards a greater emphasis on confrontation and conflict, to impose ideology.

1.2 Methodological approach

Using an interpretive approach this research uses existing and new primary evidence in relation to Conservative Party policy towards the trade union movement, allowing for interpretation and understanding of political decision making. Regarding evidence collated in this research, there are, as argued by Bevir and Rhodes, multiple narratives and interpretations to be considered as the “The heritage of 'Thatcherism' lies in the dilemmas it helped to make”.¹²¹ This research interprets existing evidence and offers new primary sources, to add to the “multiplicity of stories about 'Thatcherism'”. Therefore, to construct a critique of the Conservative Party and the trade union since 1974, it is necessary, as Bevir and Rhodes argue, to trace “the appropriate historical connections back through time” – to examine and research the relevant theories and “narratives structures” that “relate people and events to one another”.¹²² These “historical connections” are therefore demonstrated in this research. They are

¹²¹ M. Bevir & R. A. W. Rhodes *Narratives of 'Thatcherism'*. West European Politics, Volume 21, 1998 - Issue 1: *Britain in the Nineties the Politics of Paradox*, p.97

¹²² Ibid.

demonstrated in the analysis of conservatism through both Thatcherism and Powellism, using both secondary and primary sources, to demonstrate the economic and political reinterpretation of conservatism and the Conservative Party through ideology. Secondly, these historical connections are set out using archival research, through primary source material and literature. Evidence of the introduction of ideologically motivated policy is presented through primary sources; PREM (Prime Minister's Office records) and CAB (Cabinet Papers) demonstrate policy, planning and actors, motivated to conduct a predetermined industrial policy that was to conceive, plan and ultimately implement industrial conflict with the NUM in 1984.

Of importance to this research is the presentation of new primary evidence in two key areas. Firstly, the recording in Cabinet Record MISC57 of the construction of a secret Whitehall working group established to develop the necessary response to industrial conflict with the NUM. Secondly, the revelation, through primary evidence, of the existence of a "Hit List" of mining collieries to be closed; Arthur Scargill had claimed the existence of a "secret hit list" of more than 70 working pits that were earmarked for closure. Both the government and National Coal Board said in 1984 that they intended to close 20 pits. Evidence produced in this research from The National Archives, through Cabinet Record MISC57, reveal the plan to close 75 mines over a three-year period; this was denied by the government and the National

Coal Board (NCB), and was not presented to the NUM or its membership prior to a proposed ballot on strike action and did not receive full Cabinet scrutiny or approval.

1.3 Trade Unions and Conservatism in the post-war period

To demonstrate successfully the change in dynamic between the Conservative Party and the trade union movement, there is a need to examine the historical context. This section offers a brief historic account of British post-war trade unionism's relationship with and to the Conservative Party.

The post-war relationship between Conservative Party and trade unions demonstrated a “unique set of circumstances”.¹²³ Peter Dorey argues that conciliatory tendencies within the Conservative Party were to expand into mainstream policies. The effect of the “people’s war” of 1939-1945 and periods of opposition for the Conservative Party were to determine an acceptance of policy born out of “persuasion and education”.¹²⁴ The outcome of shadow cabinet debate regarding trade union policy was the publication in May 1947 of *The Industrial Charter* which was to promote an objective of bringing “government, capital, and labour together in common partnership”¹²⁵ and as Peter Dorey argues, *The Industrial*

¹²³ P. Dorey, *British Conservatism and Trade Unionism*, (Ashgate, 2009), p.184

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid, p.28

Charter demonstrated “that the official policy of the Conservative Party was in favour of trade unions”. It was to acknowledge the pursuit of human relations within industrial policy, a rejection of the “us and them” culture of worker and management and that “Government policy would ensure a development of dialogue between employers and employees”.¹²⁶

Yet by 1971 a critique of accepted trade union practice was emerging. Speaking to Finchley Conservatives, Margaret Thatcher was to acknowledge, “the right to join a trade union was fundamental” but there was a new sense of caution as she noted that in regarding strike action, there were “always two sides to a question... There has to be increased productivity as well as increased wages.”¹²⁷ By October 1977 Thatcher’s considered reappraisal was to turn to outright hostility. Keith Joseph, in a speech entitled, *Eroding Freedoms and Impoverishing Britain* proclaimed, that the trade union movement was “preaching and practising a one-sided civil war which is wrecking the economy”.¹²⁸ Joseph’s attack demonstrates a reinterpretation of the trade union movement – a journey that would reconstruct a perception of trade

¹²⁶ P. Dorey, *British Conservatism and Trade Unionism*, (Ashgate, 2009), p.184

¹²⁷ M. Thatcher, Speech, 4th February 1971, Finchley Conservatives. Available at: Margaret Thatcher Foundation <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/101006>

¹²⁸ K. Joseph, Speech, *Trade Unions” Eroding Freedoms & Impoverishing Britain*, Birmingham, 24th October 1977. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2013/aug/01/margaret-thatcher-trade-union-reform-national-archives>

unions as a legitimate force for good, to a “trade union problem” and ultimately a “visceral loathing of organised labour”.¹²⁹

This new approach shows a fundamental change in dynamic. Keith Joseph’s interpretation reframes a once consensual political alliance. Historically post-war relations between the Conservative Party and the trade union movement do not reflect Joseph’s view. In 1958, for example, the Conservative Home Secretary, R. A. Butler, envisaged a society composed of a “fully employed community”. Butler argued for an acceptance of the Keynesian pursuit for full employment, noting that “those who talked about creating pools of unemployment should be thrown into them and made to swim”¹³⁰ – full employment would ultimately ensure a limiting of state intervention, thus allowing for a greater “freedom of the individual”.¹³¹ This definition of freedom was to be redesigned post-1979, yet under a paternalistic form of conservatism freedom was to be associated with a “healthy society” where institutions such as “trade unions, limited companies, co-operatives, literary societies”¹³² enhanced the cause of liberty.

Albeit with obvious historical and social differences, conservatism and trade unionism could co-exist. Peter Dorey looks to a “post-war settlement” when the trade

¹²⁹ E.H.H. Green, *Ideologies of Conservatism: Conservative Political Ideas in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford University Press, 2002), p.272

¹³⁰ T. Heppell, *The Tories from Winston Churchill to David Cameron* (Bloomsbury, 2014), p.22

¹³¹ E.H.H. Green, *Ideologies of Conservatism: Conservative Political Ideas in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford University Press, 2002), p.269

¹³² *Ibid.*

union movement was fully associated with a Conservative Party, committed to “an increase in the number of Conservative trade unionists” to “counter the influence of the left within the union movement”.¹³³ It was perfectly feasible for conservatism to engage with trade unionism, to counter a radical left and to pursue a balanced and pragmatic approach to collective representation. Conservative candidates were actively encouraged to engage and field in the trade union electoral process to ensure “better behaviour by management and employees alike” as “taking workers into the confidence of management would, it was believed, lead to fewer strikes”.¹³⁴

Therefore, trade unionism was “vital to the post-war settlement.”¹³⁵ Working class affluence and purchasing power acted as effective driving agents of economic revival. Trade unions were to become a part of the establishment; John McIlroy argues that by the 1970s they were to enjoy the position of “the fifth estate” with a mandate for “rectifying” an inequality of establishment power. They were to have left “Trafalgar Square a long time ago” to transfer influence and representation amongst the “corridors of power”.¹³⁶ Under Edward Heath, regular meetings were held at both No. 10 and his Albany residence, with Jack Jones, leader of the Transport and General Workers’ Union reflecting that, “There is no doubting Ted

¹³³ P. Dorey, *The Conservative Party and the Trade Unions 1945/1964 and 1975/1990 - From Conciliation to Confrontation*, History & Policy Trade Union Forum 12 March 2011 Available at:

<http://www.historyandpolicy.org/trade-union-forum/meeting/the-conservative-party-and-the-trade-unions>

¹³⁴ Ibid

¹³⁵ J. McIlroy, *Trade Unions in Britain Today* (Manchester University Press, 1988), p.186

¹³⁶ Ibid, p.187

Heath's sympathy for people and we quickly established a feeling of camaraderie".¹³⁷

Yet the dynamic between the Conservative Party and trade unions was to change as Peter Dorey argues, from one of "conciliation to confrontation."¹³⁸ The post-war cordiality of "quasi-corporatism" made way for the "bargained corporatism" of the 1970's, leading to wage restraint and ultimately the "Winter of Discontent".¹³⁹ The corporate "politicisation" of the trade union movement, once seen as beneficial in reining in the excess of trade union militancy, the relationships that Conservative figures such as Walter Monckton "once boasted"¹⁴⁰ were to be "seen as an object of shame" by Thatcher.¹⁴¹ The positive symbolism of power sharing was now a "Negative rather than a positive order" – trade union, the state and management, all "muddling through" with compromise and stalemate. The passivity and incapacity of the state, in face of the renewed "economic difficulties" of the 1970's, would be challenged to break the deadlock of inertia between capital, labour and the state – "Mrs Thatcher sought to change all this".¹⁴²

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ P. Dorey, *The Conservative Party and the Trade Unions 1945/1964 and 1975/1990 - From Conciliation to Confrontation*, History & Policy Trade Union Forum 12 March 2011 Available at:

<http://www.historyandpolicy.org/trade-union-forum/meeting/the-conservative-party-and-the-trade-unions>

¹³⁹ B. Blyton and P. Turnbull, *The Dynamics of Employee Relations* (Palgrave Macmillan, 1994), p.184

¹⁴⁰ Minister of Labour in Churchill's final government 1951-1955; Walter Monckton was reluctant to confront the trade union militancy arguing "I am a firm believer in government by consultation and consent" and was to avert several disputes, notably aligning themselves with TGWU during the dock strike of 1954.

¹⁴¹ B. Blyton and P. Turnbull, *The Dynamics of Employee Relations* (Palgrave Macmillan, 1994), p.184

¹⁴² Ibid

There was a need for government to break the impasse of who was governing the nation – trade unionism needed to be made accountable. Historically the trade union movement had received, from successive governments, “immunities” from common law.¹⁴³ Trade union legislation had traditionally offered a basic protection against the vagaries of competition and the market place, and a degree of stability and employment rights. Patrick Minford challenges this assumption. As one of “Thatcher’s most trusted academic advisors”¹⁴⁴ Minford was “illustrative” in his theories relating to the deregulation of the UK labour market. Minford argued that trade unions used “monopoly power” to drive wages beyond the market rate, ensuring wage costs and ultimately inflation. The agreed perception of the trade union as a public good was wrong; “In short, trade unions are ‘public bad’”¹⁴⁵ in that they artificially affect the redistribution of wages through society and essentially enforce the opposite of their modus operandi – they cause unemployment.

Minford challenges the orthodoxy of trade unions. He questions the accepted wisdom of the benefits of job security through a collective organisation, looking to the economy as two distinct entities; “the union sector and the competitive sector.”¹⁴⁶

At a micro level, the workforce has a “stark choice” – firstly those who are fortunate

¹⁴³ Trade union immunity from common law dates to legislation passed in 1906.

¹⁴⁴ E.J. Evans, *Thatcher and Thatcherism* (Routledge, 1997), p.29

¹⁴⁵ P. Blyton & P. Turnbull, *The Dynamics of Employee Relations* (Palgrave, 2004), p.164

¹⁴⁶ S.J. Nickell, A Review of *Unemployment: Cause and Cure*, by Patrick Minford with David Davies, Michael Peel and Alison Sprague, *The Economic Journal*, Vol. 94, No. 376 (Dec. 1984), pp. 946-953

to be a part of a trade union – a group who prosper through the security of an organisation pursuing a negotiated rate of pay, a wage settlement, on behalf of the individual trade union member. These workers are protected and are therefore protective of their role. Counter to this is the non-union member; those not fortunate to work within the trade union sector who are prepared to, and indeed should, accept a “going rate” for non-unionised labour. This elastic, flexible, non-unionised workforce does not have the benefits of negotiation, closed shop or collective action or indeed the same choices; the reality is adaptation to this competitive, insecure sector or accept unemployment.

Therefore, trade unions argue Minford were to realign as a “key determinant of unemployment”. The reality of this “stark choice” was either work for a non-union, low wage sector of the economy or due to the trade union closed shop and Labour Monopolies Commission “remain unemployed”.¹⁴⁷ It was the very success of trade unions in sustaining unrealistic wage demands, against the true reality of the market place that was counterproductive on two fronts; it falsified the correct levels of real wages in the labour market and thereby caused unemployment. Trade unionism, once an emblem of the representation of those in the work place, was now an

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

institution which created through their “protected legal position” unemployment.¹⁴⁸

The answer to this was to “make the labour market work better”.¹⁴⁹

The symbolism and perception of trade unions would begin to change. Counter to their origins, they would now be labelled a cause; a symptom of unemployment. The clarity of Minford’s argument, the union sector against the competitive sector, was to deliver a new agenda, a clear line of distinction – of the “insider” and the “outsider”. During the “1980s there was a subtle change in the way unemployment was discussed”¹⁵⁰ – of a “hysteresis”. This was a self-perpetuating level of unemployment driven by trade unions; unemployment was a construct of those who sought the security of a represented collective workforce at the expense of the “marginal” or “discouraged worker”¹⁵¹ who would leave an industry disillusioned and seek non-represented employment or become unemployed.¹⁵² Those who are inside the trade union movement – those protected “insiders” enjoy more favourable job security, financial reward and stability than those who are “outsiders”.¹⁵³ Businesses are aware of labour costs of hiring, training and firing staff – insiders,

¹⁴⁸ S.J. Nickell, A Review of Unemployment: Cause and Cure, by Patrick Minford with David Davies, Michael Peel and Alison Sprague, *The Economic Journal*, Vol. 94, No. 376 (Dec. 1984), pp. 946-953

¹⁴⁹ A.J. Britton, *Macroeconomic Policy in Britain 1974 – 1987* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), p.113

¹⁵⁰ A. J. C. Britton, *Macroeconomic Policy in Britain 1947 – 1987* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), p.113.

¹⁵¹ P. Garonne, P. Angelo Mori, P & Tedeschi, *Economic Models of Trade Unions* (Chapman and Hall, 1992), p.296

¹⁵² Ibid

¹⁵³ A. Lindbeck and D.J. Snower, *Insiders versus Outsiders*. The Journal of Economic Perspectives Vol. 15, No. 1 (Winter, 2001), pp. 165-188

aware of this are prepared to push their wage demands above the market rate, knowing the security of the “insider” position.

Trade unionism acted as a fire blanket for the insider. Due to their levels of protectionism and regulation, trade unions were a “key determinant in unemployment” as they were only interested in the role of their “insiders”, with little or no concern for the “outsiders” – the unemployed. If the long-term unemployed were no longer able to join a union, to be part of a “supply chain” they were to become, as Milton Friedman argues, a part of a “natural” cycle of unemployment – and this cycle needed to be challenged.¹⁵⁴

This challenge was to be taken up by a New Right.¹⁵⁵ New Right think tanks came to prominence in the 1970s in recognition of a “perceived crisis” of economic liberalism. Successive UK administrations, both Conservative and Labour, had not proved “sympathetic” to challenging the failed Keynesian orthodoxy. Britain’s economic decline had failed to be arrested and the “pursuit of influence” within government circles was still not apparent; it was at this point that “advocacy tanks” sought recognition in their pursuit of freedom. Richard Cockett argues that the construct of “free market groups” such as the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS 1974)

¹⁵⁴ Ibid

¹⁵⁵ An origin of a New Right can be seen in the works of the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) who proposed arguments first advanced in Hayek’s *Road to Serfdom*. This was help develop the key economic and ideological thinking of Keith Joseph and a development of what was to be termed Thatcherism.

did “as much intellectually to convert a generation of opinion formers”¹⁵⁶ – “opinion formers” whose ideas were influential for key figures in the Conservative Party. A notable example was Keith Joseph, whose role “as a conduit for the IEA¹⁵⁷ was essential in introducing the new right ideas into the Conservative Party”¹⁵⁸ – a process of economic, ideological transformation based upon “the German social market philosophy”.¹⁵⁹ There were “obvious connections” between New Right think tanks and “the main protagonists” within the Conservative Party: Keith Joseph, Nigel Lawson, Cecil Parkinson, Kenneth Baker and Norman Fowler; those who actively engaged with an economic agenda.

For Keith Joseph, it would become an economic “crusade”. In a record of a conversation held with Sir Keith Joseph in March of 1974, Ralph Harris discussed a need to “seek advice about individuals and published sources that could help him develop a new “crusade” for private enterprise”.¹⁶⁰ Joseph was to emphasise the need for economics and economic liberty to transcend its traditional boundaries of simply a “creed of growth” and to enhance a new “ethical and social case”¹⁶¹ – an enhanced pursuit of freedom of opportunity – to be a cause for the “outsider”. A new language

¹⁵⁶ M. David & A. Selsdon, *Ideas and Think Tanks in Contemporary Britain, Volume 2* (Routledge, 1996), p.82

¹⁵⁷ Institute of Economic Affairs

¹⁵⁸ M. David & A. Selsdon, *Ideas and Think Tanks in Contemporary Britain, Volume 2* (Routledge, 1996), p.82

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.84

¹⁶⁰ R. Harris, (1974). Record of conversation with Sir Keith Joseph, “*plans for a new crusade*”. Available at: Margaret Thatcher Foundation <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/101006>

¹⁶⁰ M. Halcrow, *Keith Joseph, A Single Mind* (Morrison Halcrow, 1989), p.138

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

of willingness to confront the trade union movement emerged; in a speech to The Bow Group in February of 1979, Joseph again discussed this “crusade” of a New Right that would effectively confront the “ancient ideology of the Labour Movement” to challenge the “raison d’être of the trade union, the free collective bargaining process... riddled with confusion and contradiction” – of a new form of conservatism that would dare to “say that union power should be reduced”.¹⁶² The trade union movement had become a “problem” in need of “solving” – a cause of unemployment instead of the cure.

Joseph argued that the “accepted wisdom in high places was to give in”¹⁶³ once confronted by nationalised industries. This would no longer be tolerated. There would be debate, there would be challenge and there would be analysis of the role the trade unions had played in the decline of Britain economically and industrially. Trade unionism would no longer be sacrosanct – no longer a “sacred cow” – academically and politically it could be challenged and seen to have failed. The 1970s and “the events of that decade”¹⁶⁴ as argued by John McIlroy, had demonstrated that trade unions had indeed failed – corporatism had failed. Joseph argued in 1979 that “trade unions have albeit unwittingly – tried, too often, to do the

¹⁶² K. Joseph, (1979). A Talk to the Bow Group, House of Commons, *Solving the Union problem is Key to Britain's Recovery*, 5th February 1979, Centre for Policy Studies. Available at: <http://www.cps.org.uk/>

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ J. McIlroy, *Trade Unions in Britain Today* (Manchester University Press, 1995), p.247

wrong things, and they *have* succeeded”.¹⁶⁵ There would be no more “coming together over beer and sandwiches at Number 10.”¹⁶⁶ McIlroy identifies that post-1979 a New Right emerged with ideas “lubricated by the strategic thinking about the confrontations demanded by radical change, and about precisely how to devastate trade unionism”¹⁶⁷, and as Chris Wrigley argues, the point of change was to be “from 1979 the trade unions were no longer consulted as contributors to gaining higher productivity”.¹⁶⁸

Trade unionism was now to be associated with an organisation that had to be overcome and to be defeated – not worked with or consulted. There was to be “no question” argues Chris Howell that “taming the trade unions” was a core goal of Thatcherite conservatism.”¹⁶⁹ Margaret Thatcher’s successive administrations were to enjoy “mixed results” in both economic and social policy, yet Howell argues it was to be “strikingly successful in the realm of industrial relations” as a once powerful labour movement was to be driven “into what may well be terminal decline”.¹⁷⁰ Howell looks to the priority placed upon industrial policy, and considers the “puzzle” of why the British labour movement was to “succumb so quickly to the

¹⁶⁵ K. Joseph, (1979). A Talk to the Bow Group, House of Commons, *Solving the Union problem is Key to Britain’s Recovery*, 5th February 1979, Centre for Policy Studies. Available at: <http://www.cps.org.uk/>

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid

¹⁶⁸ C. Wrigley, *British Trade Unions 1945 – 1995* (Manchester University Press, 1997), p.159

¹⁶⁹ C. Howell, *Trade Unions and the State: The Construction of Industrial Relations Institutions in Britain, 1890-2000* (Princeton University Press, 2005)

¹⁷⁰ Ibid

radical reforming efforts of Conservative governments elected after 1979?”¹⁷¹ Howell argues that the answer lies in the power of the state, “the driving force of the erosion of trade union power and influence was a British state that acted much more like an architect in shaping labour’s relations.”¹⁷² The Conservative Party actively managed a “state response” to the labour movement and was to become the “driving force in the erosion of trade unionism”¹⁷³ – the state, far from being “abstentionist, played a crucial role in the construction of new institutions to manage, or regulate, class relations.”¹⁷⁴

This was to be in marked contrast to Edward Heath’s premiership of 1970 to 1974. Initially forged in a pursuit of the “quiet revolution” of modernisation and labour market reform, Heath was to confide in President Nixon, that the British public, were “punch drunk with taxation”.¹⁷⁵ There was a need to challenge the lack of “self-confidence” in British society; it was to be his mantra to “Set my people free”.¹⁷⁶ Yet he was not ready to “put his foot flat down on the economic accelerator” as Heath “despised and detested” the toleration of unemployment.¹⁷⁷ Though professing a need to stabilise both prices and incomes, Ian Gilmour argues, that

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² S. Allen, Review: *Trade Unions and the State: The Construction of Industrial Relations in Britain* by Chris Howell Review by: The Journal of Politics, Vol. 68, No. 1 (Feb. 2006), pp. 226-227

¹⁷³ Ibid

¹⁷⁴ Ibid

¹⁷⁵ P. Ziegler, *Edward Heath, The Authorised Biography* (Harper Press, 2011), p.346

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, p.347

¹⁷⁷ I. Gilmour, *Whatever Happened to The Tories The Conservatives Since 1945* (Fourth Estate Limited, 1997), p.249

“Heath’s apparently abrasive radicalism was firmly rooted in One Nation convictions” his true political ambition was to “create unity”.¹⁷⁸ This was to ensure that the “Government was lamentably ill prepared for a strike” which was duly to materialise in January 1972. Flying pickets of the NUM amassed at Saltley Coke Depot which would lead to “spectacular U-turn” in industrial policy and Arthur Scargill proclaiming, “we wished to paralyse the nation’s economy”.¹⁷⁹

The bitter industrial conflicts and conciliatory incomes policies would lead to election defeat in 1974. The defeat of Heath was to play an important role in “colouring the assessments” of future administrations, a moment of clarity to a party who had seemingly lost “their reputation as the party of competent government”¹⁸⁰ a perception “severely shaken, not at least among Conservatives themselves.”¹⁸¹ Though Geoffrey Howe argued that, “We had lost, certainly. But disaster had been averted”¹⁸² Heath was depicted as a leader of a rudderless and broken government; scathingly *The Spectator* was to describe him as a “broken figure, he clung with grubby fingers to the crumbling precipice of his power. The spectacle was ludicrous; it was pathetic; it was contemptible”¹⁸³ and though “unfair” in that the reality of

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, p.267

¹⁷⁹ Ibid

¹⁸⁰ D. Kavanagh, *Thatcherism and British Politics; The End of Consensus?* (Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 194

¹⁸¹ Ibid, p.196

¹⁸² G. Howe, *Conflict of Loyalty* (Macmillan, 1994), p.89 Howe argues that the 1974 election was “much less of a disaster for the Tories than it might have been” in that with the factoring of the Nationalists and Ulsterman to Tory support the overall majority for Labour “was no more than three”. The reality was that “We had lost, certainly. But disaster had been averted”.

¹⁸³ P. Ziegler, *Edward Heath; The Authorised Biography* (Harper Press, 2011), p.441

defeat was not at all a disaster¹⁸⁴, it was to leave a “sour memory in the minds of many Tories”.¹⁸⁵

Therefore, conciliation and cooperation between government and trade union, was now depicted as political weakness. Yet the disaster of 1974, would also offer opportunity to rejuvenate and change. Heath had lost three out of his four contested elections and along the way, the party had arguably lost “its way on managing the economy”¹⁸⁶ – they were to lose credibility as a governing party, and ultimately this would lead to challenge from within; a change of leader and the pathway to construct a new form of conservatism, denoted by the left as “Thatcherism”¹⁸⁷. The defeat would offer opportunity to evaluate the necessary development of policy to win the 1979 election, and to instigate change to reassume the mantle of effective government.

1.4 Conservative Party change – Ideology or Statecraft?

There are perhaps two main interpretations of Thatcherism. For some thinkers, the advent of Thatcherism marked an ideological battle, a form of dogmatic project against an establishment that had failed. Ideologically driven policy, enthused in

¹⁸⁴ By October of 1974 the three-seat majority held by Labour had been reversed.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid

¹⁸⁶ D. Kavanagh, *Thatcherism and British Politics; The End of Consensus?* (Oxford University Press, 1990), p.196

economic liberalism was to enforce hegemonic change – within industry, the trade union movement and beyond, through to education and commerce; a grand strategy that would halt decline and revive the nation.

For others, Thatcherism was merely a pragmatic response to changing times. It was more a demonstration of “statecraft”, which explains the electoral success of the party after 1979. It was the implementation of a winning strategy within the political party, of confident party management and a demonstration from party actors and policy that grew from a reasoned response to events.

These two interpretations will be examined in the context of a change in policy between government and the trade union movement post-1974.

1.5 Ideology and the Conservative Party

This research demonstrates change in a political party. It shows a change of relationship and interpretation between government and trade union movement – from a “non-interventionist line”¹⁸⁸ to one of a perception of trade union activity as “bringing the country to its knees”.¹⁸⁹ This section demonstrates how, as in the words of Stuart Hall, change “does not appear out of thin air”¹⁹⁰ it evolves and develops as

¹⁸⁸ P. Dorey, *The Conservative Party and the Trade Unions* (Routledge, 1995), p.37

¹⁸⁹ I. MacGregor, *The Enemies Within; The Story of the Miners’ Strike 1984 – 5* (Collins, 1986), p.171

¹⁹⁰ S. Hall, *The Great Moving Right Show*, Marxism Today, January 1979.

Available at: http://banmarchive.org.uk/collections/mt/pdf/79_01_hall.pdf

actors and events determine change within a political organisation. The development of policy towards trade unionism was a response by a party to a series of events prior to 1974 – there was a change of policy from acceptance and dialogue to confrontation. This reflected an intrinsic, historic precedent of the Conservative Party – an ability to adapt in its ambitions of gaining, developing and sustaining power.

The Conservative Party historically offers an ideological set of contradictions. The search for the “real Tory tradition”¹⁹¹ amongst a “babel of conflicting voices” argues Andrew Gamble, will not be found in the philosophising principles of the organic nation or “ideas”. The party and its history do not reflect any coherent set of beliefs or a unified movement, but a “ragbag drawn from every conceivable position” – what it does is to “reconcile the politics of support and the politics of power”.¹⁹² This ideal of power, of the “activity of governing and the instruments of government”¹⁹³ has certainly been historically prevalent within the Conservative Party even before the advent of a New Right, albeit a power that is constructed in deference to the nation state – a power with limitation. Therefore, for conservatism and the Conservative Party the historical pursuit of the “politics of power”¹⁹⁴ requires an

¹⁹¹ A. Gamble, *The Conservative Nation* (Routledge, 1974), p.2

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, p.5

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.15

ability to embrace change, to reaffirm the relations between government, state and the nation. David Seawright argues that this constant reaffirmation acts as a “secret weapon”¹⁹⁵ for a party which changes more rapidly than is projected. The perpetual rate of change within the party is a symptom of an ingrained determination to succeed in governing the nation – as is proved historically. Seawright demonstrates the need for the One Nation label to act as a symbolic totem to underpin constant revisionism and change of what conservatism is and represents. The vague neutrality of conservatism, the debate over a lack of dogma, allows that “competing debates over doctrinal trajectories are facilitated within such an ethos.”¹⁹⁶ Therefore change in the Conservative Party is not the enemy of perpetual success – it enables political dominance.

Michael Freeden argues that conservatism is aware of its ability to engineer identity to formulate a foundation for power. It is not so much that the Conservative Party is averse to change; it is a case of how this change is controlled and delivered. Freeden argues that the change within conservatism is a natural defence mechanism, a “morphological trait.”¹⁹⁷ This trait, argues Freeden, constructs a perception of consistency and continuity, whilst allowing for change within the party – the key is

¹⁹⁵ D, Seawright, *The British Conservative Party and One Nation Politics* (Continuum International Publishing, 2010), p.3

¹⁹⁶ D, Seawright, *The British Conservative Party and One Nation Politics* (Continuum International Publishing, 2010), p.8

¹⁹⁷ Ibid

management and control. Therefore, an adherence to a Conservative ideology is far more complex than simply a pursuit of a status quo. Conservatism and the Conservative Party demonstrates a history of “various interconnected developments.”¹⁹⁸ The post-war challenges to conservatism were not simplistic; old certainties of British dominance were ebbing away in the face of national decline, as was a Conservative Party which was “aghast” to “theoretical politics”.¹⁹⁹ Up until the 1970s there existed a set of political and voting certainties as “rates of class and partisan alignment were relatively stable”²⁰⁰ – two party dominance of electoral power, was to create policy based on core, class based electoral trends and “sectoral strategies”. The “bi-partisan” nature of consensual politics offered a convenient structure and foundation, from which to examine an accepted “established narrative” of party-political realignment.²⁰¹ The economic and social disruption of the 1970’s, was to challenge this “established narrative” and disrupt Conservative Party administrative predominance.

The “Tory tradition therefore is not best understood as a tradition of ideas.”²⁰² The Conservative Party is the party of “political practice in the modern era”²⁰³ – the party of governance of the 20th Century; demonstrating a politics of power and of

¹⁹⁸ Ibid,

¹⁹⁹ J. Prior, *A Balance of Power* (Hamish Hamilton, 1986), p.22

²⁰⁰ Ibid, p.39

²⁰¹ P. Kerr, *Post-war British Politics; From Conflict to Consensus* (Routledge, 2005), p.40

²⁰² A. Gamble, *The Conservative Nation* (Routledge, 1974), p.6

²⁰³ Ibid.

administration, with the ability to prioritise these agendas and a willingness to adapt to maintain these goals. I argue, to restore this political predominance post-1974, to continue the politics of power, it would reinvigorate its “morphological trait” and reinvent itself once again.

1.6 Thatcherism as Statecraft

In this section, I examine the interpretation of Thatcherism as a form of statecraft. Statecraft argues Jim Bulpitt, “crudely” is the “art of winning elections” in that the “how” of politics is as important as the “why”.²⁰⁴ It offers a series of solutions to political questions: how to win elections; how to form an efficient administration; how to maintain power. Statecraft is the maintenance of a “winning electoral strategy” – a gaining of a hegemonic, dominant position through “political argument.”²⁰⁵ Paradoxically, Bulpitt argues, therefore statecraft is the art of “depoliticising” politics to maintain pragmatism in high office – a clarity of political argument; the rejection of dogma and ideology.²⁰⁶ The ability to govern, to form a united and efficient governing body and to maintain a working majority in Parliament is paramount; it requires a set of political skills which may not resonate with mass movement, but demonstrates ability in the pragmatic art of running a nation. Statecraft theory looks

²⁰⁴ Ibid, p.21

²⁰⁵ M. Burch & M. Moran, *British Politics; A Reader* (Manchester University Press, 1967), p.169

²⁰⁶ B. Jackson & R. Saunders, *Making Thatcher's Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), p.15

to the advent of policy in the context of how effectively a political party tackles the routine – the challenge of governing a nation.

This necessity to do what is right for a nation resonates with statecraft theory. The apathy of post-war consensus was to lead to indecision and lack of national direction on all levels. Thatcherism is a rejection of this confusion, it reflects an ability to govern well, to utilise power effectively and efficiently. Jim Bulpitt identified this use of power, as part of a far greater historical precedent set by the Conservative Party – the art of winning, of gaining the mandate to govern and to govern well. Bulpitt challenged the notion of a “New Right” or “Thatcherism” as these were only a temporary political order. Within an historical context, they were to be seen as gatekeepers of an effective political party, and the contemporary nature of the new, “must be related to its past practices”.²⁰⁷ The historical precedent of the Conservative Party is to “gain office and govern satisfactorily” and Bulpitt argues, that this practical philosophy, overrides the multitude of perspectives, assertions and ideological posturing which have been associated with Thatcherism – at its core is a political party that will pursue statecraft in order to govern well.

²⁰⁷ J. Bulpitt, *The discipline of the new democracy; Mrs Thatcher's domestic statecraft*, *Political Studies*, vol. xxxiv, No.1,1985. pp.19 - 39

Ideology cannot minimize political and economic risk; it cannot “service the continuation of power”.²⁰⁸ The success of the Conservative Party, from the “era of Salisbury onwards”,²⁰⁹ has been a demonstration of continued statecraft and an ability to adopt economic and political strategy to conduct good government. The Heath administration and its pursuit of corporate statecraft rendered a party out of power, unable to regain the initiative of competent governance – this is where Heath failed. The outset of his regime had demonstrated defiance to the unions “the hard face of the Tory Party”²¹⁰ which ultimately was to lead to conciliation and defeat. Trade unionism and the economy had been his downfall – practical measures were required to ensure the exorcism of the Heath U-turn and “tough economic medicine was required”.²¹¹

A statecraft approach would reveal itself in the practicalities of economic control; efficient and effective economic monetary and fiscal policy would be the government's number one priority; through monetarism. Monetarism – practical government control of monetary supply, offering a solution to the “miseries of inflation” and a rejection of a “churning out of too much money.”²¹² This was not an ideolog-

²⁰⁸ T. Heppell, *The Tories from Winston Churchill to David Cameron* (Bloomsbury, 2014), p.6

²⁰⁹ B. Jackson & R. Saunders, *Making Thatcher's Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), p.13

²¹⁰ P. Ziegler, *Edward Heath* (Harper – Press, 2010), p.363

²¹¹ B. Jackson & R. Saunders, *Making Thatcher's Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), p.6

²¹² M. Halcrow, *Keith Joseph, A Single Man* (Macmillan, 1989), p.74

ically driven agenda, it was a case of gaining control – control of inflation and control of spending. Ultimately this would lead to a construction of the “enterprise society”.²¹³

Conservatism, through economic competency and effective governance, would reverse the malaise of the 1970’s. The Keynesian “ascendancy” and construction of tripartism had challenged both the historical ascendancy of Conservative One Nation politics and the legitimacy of a governing party – the undermining of democratically elected administration. Practical and effective economic, energy and industrial policy was required to reverse decline and reassert government and state authority. And economic policy would offer a practical set of tools to reassert a status quo; a prioritising of fiscal policy, and control of inflation, government expenditure and monetary efficiency, through the implementation of monetarism, would allow for the pendulum of power to swing back to a governing party to enforce political reform. These were practical fiscal tools to construct a coherent and efficient platform for national change.

Monetarism presented the requisite practical application of economic statecraft; as an economic tool, it was to neutralise the ideological debate. Bulpitt acknowledges the argument that the application of monetarism can be seen in terms of ideology, but he argues that it also transcended political boundaries, the Labour government

²¹³ Ibid, p.113

post-1975 had adopted monetarism under Denis Healey.²¹⁴ Essentially it was a technique for taking “certain decisions out of politics” and for this it was a “superb (or lethal) piece of statecraft”.²¹⁵ Bulpitt saw monetarism and the prioritising of inflationary control, not as a signifier of ideology, “in many ways” he argues, monetarism “was, and in many ways still is, a modest little economic theory.”²¹⁶ What it was to offer was a practical application that could be absorbed by the whole of the party and understood by an electorate – and in many ways, it was a practical move to access the “intellectual resources of the new right”.²¹⁷ This pursuit of economic credibility was a return to the traditions of conservatism – sound government based on economic credibility allowing for the winning of elections.

Therefore, Bulpitt looks at political success in a rational and pragmatic fashion. Thatcherism achieved political success and created a government of authority through the, “Art of winning elections and achieving some necessary degree of governing competence in office”.²¹⁸ The prioritising of economic credibility, the targeting of low inflation, were political tools. Policy was designed to lie hand in glove with the movement of autonomy back into the hands of government and the state

²¹⁴ I. Adam, *Ideology and Politics in Britain Today* (Manchester University Press, 1998), p.29

²¹⁵ J. Bulpitt, *The Discipline of the New Democracy; Mrs Thatcher's domestic statecraft*, *Political Studies*, vol. xxxiv, No.1,1985. pp.19 - 39

²¹⁶ J. Bulpitt, *The Discipline of the New Democracy; Mrs Thatcher's domestic statecraft*, *Political Studies*, vol. xxxiv, No.1,1985. pp.19 - 39

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Ibid

mechanism. Bulpitt argues that for all perceived radicalism of Thatcherism or a New Right or neoliberal agenda, these terms do not reflect the pragmatism and reflection of historicism which it conveyed – the “statecraft of monetarism must be viewed as less a radical break from the past and more an attempt to reconstruct it”.²¹⁹ The competency of Thatcherism, the winning of elections, the control of party management and the evolving of economic fiscal measures fits with Conservative historicism.

The emphasis is not entirely on the economic principles or process – it is based on outcome. What achieves power? What enables a Conservative victory? It is the use of a principle to formulate an outcome – that of a Conservative administration and continuation of administrative power. Economic control and competency was not achieved through ideology, but through an adherence to the notion of the continuity of pursuit of a central position in British politics – indeed, Bulpitt argues that in “statecraft terms there is are precious little difference between the monetarism and the politics of Keynes.”²²⁰ It is the practical implementation of these policies that is important.

Bulpitt argues against a “perceived ideological phenomenon”²²¹ associated with Thatcherism or a New Right. Through an association with the practicalities of government and achieving power, he argues, ideology was, “not, and never have

²¹⁹ D. Kavanagh, *Thatcherism and British Politics; The End of Consensus?* (Oxford University Press, 1990), p.284

²²⁰ B. Jackson & R. Saunders, *Making Thatcher's Britain* (Cambridge University Pres,2012). p,72

²²¹ M. Burch & M. Moran, *British Politics; A Reader: J Bulpitt, Thatcherism as Statecraft* (Manchester University Press, 1987), p.167

been the party's main bias.”²²² Bulpitt was to associate Thatcherism with a return to a tradition of conservatism that was to understand the constraints of government and was perfectly capable of displacing them for others to fight, while they continued in office and did what they have always done best – govern. Though critique of Thatcherism has suggested a burning of the established Tory old guard, statecraft was to “reassert that tradition” of politics being a tribal art of wielding power and reasserting time and again the historical competence of the Conservative Party in office; if ideology can help determine this outcome, then so be it, but within a broader context of an historical continuation of conservatism.

Statecraft theory can offer explanation and clarity of policy. In the murky world of politics, statecraft is a means to erase the confusion of dogma and ideology and construct a “competent rule, rather than ideological crusade.”²²³ Yet it's potential is limited; actors – politicians – crave the limelight of political power and success. Statecraft's practical implications act as a powerful tool in suppressing thoughtful debate and intellectual curiosity as “intelligence is naturally subordinate to the active parts of statecraft”.²²⁴ Politicians can leave natural scepticism and “part of their cognitive function”²²⁵ to the pursuit of practical political power – statecraft can offer

²²² J. Bulpitt, *Territory and Power in the United Kingdom* (Manchester University Press, 1983), p.202

²²³ B. Williams, *The Evolution of Conservative Party Social Policy* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015)

²²⁴ A. Code villa, *Understanding Statecraft* (Maxwell/Macmillan, 1992), p.448

²²⁵ Ibid.

answers, but are they the correct ones? Statecraft theory can achieve clarity – it offers explanation to an electorate who cannot associate ideological interpretative policies within their everyday lives. The interpretations of Thatcherism, as demonstrated are many; the clarity of what Thatcherism represents is still not conclusively articulated through ideology. Statecraft offers pragmatism for the nature of governing; it will comprise an understanding of and indeed the imposition at times of ideology, as ultimately all political decision making in government is scrutinised within an ideological framework, but it works on a principle of delivering practical explanation to the art of winning elections, managing a political administration and ultimately governing a nation.

Therefore, the importance of statecraft theory to this research is that it counters the ideological narrative; it offers a perspective that sees Thatcherism not as a grand strategy or hegemonic project, but just as Macmillan and Churchill demonstrated, it reveals a Conservative Party ability to reject ideology and to win elections and to govern. Margaret Thatcher demonstrated a winning mentality and the political vigour that enabled her to rise to the “high politics” of government.

1.7 Thatcherism as Ideology

Rejecting statecraft interpretation, however, this research shows that the change within the Conservative Party was largely driven through an ideological agenda. In

this respect, this research reveals through evidence the construct of industrial policy that would go beyond the practicalities of statecraft theory. The policy, actor and thought process that were to construct the confrontation in 1984, I argue were driven by a mindset constructed by a grandeur of vision and goal – national regeneration and an ending of decline. It would require more than statecraft can offer to realise this vision – it would require an ideological template.

In this section, I present the case for Thatcherism as a form of ideology. There are no concrete definitions of Thatcherism. Various interpretations reflect it as embracing national leadership, an expression of personal beliefs and moral guidance, a challenge to the state, a promotion of a free economy and individual liberty – all of these enshrined in a doctrine of low inflation and anti-trade unionism. Thatcherism can be witnessed through either the prism of “monstrous invention” or a “monstrous monolith.”²²⁶ The change within the Conservative Party, the rise of Thatcherism from the defeat of 1974, like the complexities of conservatism as an historical ideology, is not of one discourse, but a “field of discourses”.²²⁷

The first contemporary discussion of Thatcherism was found in the pages of *Marxism Today*. It was to define Thatcherism within a grander narrative – a

²²⁶ R. Vinen, *Thatcher's Britain; The Politics and Social Upheaval in the 1980s* (Pocket Books, 2009), p.6

²²⁷ B. Jackson & R. Saunders, *Making Thatcher's Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), p.98

development of no less than an “ideological reconfiguration” of British politics.²²⁸ Stuart Hall described Thatcherism as a “new political event” whose intent was not “tinkering with this or that mechanism, but to change the terms of the struggle”.²²⁹ There was to be no evolution of Conservative policy, no grey areas of historic non-ideological posturing – power could not be established through deference to tripartite corporatism, but by the means of confrontation and dissimulation of an established protocol of the Conservative Party and its relationship with organised labour; “Thatcherism's project was to transform the state in order to restructure society”.²³⁰ Hall argues that Thatcherism confronts that challenge that “things cannot go on in the old way.”²³¹ It was a “radical” break from a whole set of “baggage and assumptions” which had formulated consecutive post-war administrations, both Conservative and Labour, and both susceptible to the challenge and power of trade union demands. A “profoundly new” strategy was required, one aimed at reinterpreting the relationship between government and the British working classes, by gaining an effective “penetration into the very heartland of Labour's support: in the unions, the working class and other social strata”.²³²

²²⁸ Ibid, p.13

²²⁹ S. Hall, *Thatcherism – A new stage?* Marxism Today, February 1980. Available at: http://banmar-chive.org.uk/collections/mt/pdf/80_02_26.pdf

²³⁰ S. Hall, *Gramsci and Us*, Marxism Today, June 1987. Available at: <http://www.hegemonics.co.uk/docs/Gramsci-and-us.pdf>

²³¹ Ibid

²³² S. Hall, *Thatcherism – A new stage?* Marxism Today, February 1980. Available at: http://banmar-chive.org.uk/collections/mt/pdf/80_02_26.pdf

It was no simple task demanding a “construction of a new agenda in British politics”.²³³ Hall looks to Gramsci’s “concept of hegemony”²³⁴ and the construct of power in political terms. Gramsci looked at the gaining and maintaining of “hegemony” in terms of a ruling party’s need for the “consent” of the public. This consent is not finite and not definable through class – this “movement of power” is constantly changing, evolving and more importantly challenging. The post-war corporate agenda, the consensus of a bloated state, trade union and public sector, presented the necessary obstacles. Hegemony is not a position of security – it needs constant “resistance” to be maintained.²³⁵

Therefore, politics would no longer to be fought along narrow party lines – it was to become “a much-expanded field.”²³⁶ The pursuit of hegemony does not lie in one class, it is a “lived reality” evolving constantly and thereby bypassing the static position of political tradition. Multiple layers of society, “the economy, in society, in culture” would have to be targeted and “actively worked on to produce particular forms of power, forms of domination”.²³⁷ Historical fault-lines within the electorate and class would not be taken for granted, there was a need for a “production of

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ H. Davies, *Understanding Stuart Hall* (SAGE Publications, 2004), p.45

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ S. Hall, *Gramsci and Us*, *Marxism Today*, June 1987. Available at: <http://www.hegemonics.co.uk/docs/Gramsci-and-us.pdf>

²³⁷ Ibid

politics” that would aim to be both politically and “ideologically constructed” through “restoration, by reconstruction”.²³⁸

This was an ideological construct that was to go beyond a Conservative tradition – a grand formative plan. The foundation of this policy would be a pursuit of reigniting British values, of ending decline, of finding a position which lay at a moral, racial and spiritual crossroads, of which the pursuit of economic liberalism was infused with an emotive self-determination and patriotism. The aim was to lie beyond a Conservative Party of the One Nation hue, as Hall was to proclaim that by 1987,

We are living through the transformation of British conservatism – its partial adaptation to the modern world, via the neo-liberal and monetarist 'revolutions'. Thatcherism has reconstructed conservatism and the Conservative Party. The hard faced, utilitarian, petty-bourgeois businessmen are now in charge, not the grouse-shooting, hunting and fishing classes.²³⁹

For Hall, change within the Conservative Party was not a temporary “swing in the political fortunes”, but something far greater. Change post-1975, was “dynamic and momentum appears to be sustained”²⁴⁰ – it was to be no more and no less than a prolonged construction of a “new agenda” in British politics – a shift of politics,

²³⁸ Ibid

²³⁹ S. Hall, *Gramsci and Us*, Marxism Today, June 1987. Available at: <http://www.hegemonics.co.uk/docs/Gramsci-and-us.pdf>

²⁴⁰ Ibid

culture, mind set and policing to the right. No longer was the primary function of the Conservative Party to simply occupy or to command “the apparatuses of the state” but to mould and sustain a mindset to shift a generation away from the conventions of party politics and away from the tribal certainties of Labour against Conservatives. Its aim was to create a new template for British life, of how we live, work and behave; a change of the “ideas of the people who simply, in ordinary everyday life, have to calculate how to survive, how to look after those closest to them”.²⁴¹ Thatcherism therefore does not offer bland rhetoric, it offers strategy to revolutionise and to change – a direct challenge to “the old solutions and positions.”²⁴²

Andrew Gamble argues that, “In one sense Thatcherism is very alien to Conservative traditions.”²⁴³ There lies a fundamental fault-line in that there is an innate “hostility of conservatism and individualism” which is at “variance with traditional Conservative ideology”.²⁴⁴ As demonstrated in this introduction, historically the Conservative tradition can redesign itself to restore autonomy of Parliamentary representation, but this abides within a convention of stability and harmony. The state is designed to coerce and restore, not through the pursuit of equality, but harmoniously through an

²⁴¹ Ibid

²⁴² S. Hall, *Thatcherism – A new stage?* Marxism Today, February 1980. Available at: http://banmar-chive.org.uk/collections/mt/pdf/80_02_26.pdf

²⁴³ A. Gamble, *Thatcher – Make or Break*, Marxism Today, 1980. Available at: http://banmarchive.org.uk/collections/mt/pdf/80_11_15.pdf

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

established structure – it does not propagate the variances of liberal self-determination. Yet, argues Gamble, Thatcherism needs to prioritise individualism to assert its political narrative of self-reliance and economic freedom, through the strength of a state mechanism – to maintain the semblance of a free, unfettered market place, all...

...versions of liberal political economy prescribe a strong state, able to establish the highly artificial conditions of a market order²⁴⁵

Gamble identifies a form of conservatism that embraces paradoxical ideological notions. An “artificial” process of installing liberal economic reform and individual freedom stems from the need for a contradictory set of criteria. Britain, Gamble argues, “has been moving both towards a freer, more competitive, more open economy and towards a more repressive, more authoritarian state”.²⁴⁶ The marketplace cannot work when there is compromise, when a humane challenge from a class and trade union challenges its autonomy and independence. Therefore, the delicacies of a “free economy” are such that any risk of challenge needs to be minimised. This allows for a mandate for radical reform of political and social conditioning, using the levers of the state to embolden this revolutionary reform.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Ibid

Sections of society previously deemed harmonious with its relationship with the state must now be challenged. Thatcherism was to be this catalyst; a movement to challenge these established codes of behaviour and create a new orthodoxy. It was certainly greater than a political party, certainly one not so defined by regression and inhibited by the concerns of a Conservative Party steeped in one nation apathy. Thatcherism would define a new form of conservatism, one which was to tear up the rule book by striving for “what is politically possible” – what can be achieved by the art of confrontation with the pillars of stable society which served previous Conservative governments so well. This New Right, argues Gamble has,

not hesitated to have rows with leaders of many public institutions, including the Church, the universities and the BBC – all once considered sound Conservative institutions”²⁴⁷

This demonstrates a renouncement of a post-war dynamic and an embracing of new ideology – rejection of the establishment and the state. It represents a bold renegotiation of what conservatism is.

Hall and Gamble were to interpret Conservative Party change in a context of macro ideological movement. A seismic change in the nature and role of the state, the cultural and moral direction of British politics and the Conservative Party, interpreted

²⁴⁷ A. Gamble, *Smashing the State, Thatcher's Radical Crusade*, Marxism Today, June 1985. Available at: <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0309816814532408>

as a vehicle for a transforming vigour of an ideological revolution to counteract British lethargy in a modern, transforming world. The Thatcherism which was analysed within the pages of *Marxism Today*, was one which was to become a process, to be aided by neoliberal ideals, espoused by Hayek and Friedman, and its aim was to “recast the electoral politics” of post-war Britain.²⁴⁸ An ideological “campaign” to reassert new forms of “political and cultural domination”.²⁴⁹ Hall and Gamble demonstrate the role ideology was to play in the formulation of the challenge to the post-war established narrative. An ideological agenda would allow for construction of policy and could challenge the apathy imposed by tripartism and British decline. It would allow for clarity of purpose and a template for success, one which could not deviate, could not U-turn or be easily disempowered. The need for government to obtain and to sustain the desired hegemonic position would require an acceptance of chaos and confrontation.

Therefore, I argue that ideology would elevate the challenge of the New Right. The challenge of trade union impasse and a rigid status quo within the Conservative Party required an energy and dynamism to be challenged and ultimately defeated; ideo-

²⁴⁸ B. Jackson & R. Saunders, *Making Thatcher's Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), p.13

²⁴⁹ E.J. Evans, *Thatcher and Thatcherism* (Routledge, 1997), p2

logically driven economic and social policy, would enable the embedding of a dogmatic theoretical position, one that would be required to fully embrace the challenge of confrontation within both the Conservative Party and the trade union movement.

1.8 Conclusion

In this research I argue that the weight of secondary and primary evidence demonstrates that change within the Conservative Party since 1974 was driven by an ideological agenda, to instigate, plan and ultimately confront the trade union movement and affect political and societal change.

Statecraft acted as a mechanism of change – a tool designed for the implementation of policy, of party control and electoral efficiency. The statecraft interpretation of British politics has made an “important contribution to our academic understanding of the twentieth century political development”²⁵⁰ as it offers clarity and a definition of British party politics in the areas of successful electoral strategy, political party management and governing competence. This allows for politics to be defined and made accessible, offering reasoning as to why policy is implemented, why decisions

²⁵⁰ J. Buller & T. James, *Statecraft and the Assessment of National Political Leaders: The Case of New Labour and Tony Blair* The British Journal of Politics & International Relations. Volume 14, Issue 4, pages 534–555, November 2012

are made, and a definition of the purpose of the Conservative Party and its pursuit of central autonomy in British politics.

Therefore, statecraft offers reason and it offers answers. It allows for rationality of economic and industrial policy; an understanding of why certain industrial and economic policies have been pursued in the face of such strength of criticism and social division. To Jim Bulpitt, Thatcherism as statecraft meant the ability to gain electoral credibility through the depoliticisation of “contentious issues” and the increasing perception of governing competence. Issues, such as trade union wage negotiations had become ideologically politicised – “ideologically loaded”²⁵¹ and government needed to be insulated from this ideological agenda. Therefore, Bulpitt argues that Thatcherism’s “primary driver” was never ideology but a need to construct and maintain an effective administration, and to win general elections.

This research counters this assertion. I demonstrate through primary evidence gained from The National Archives, a division within the Conservative Party; a preparation for and assault on the trade union movement, culminating in the miners’ conflict of 1984, that cannot be associated solely with policy which is designed to “insulate”²⁵² the party from a position of “high politics”.²⁵³ The role of statecraft is flexible, it can

²⁵¹ A.S. Crines, T. Heppell, P. Dorey *The Political Rhetoric and Oratory of Margaret Thatcher* (Palgrave Macmillan, 1988), p.7

²⁵² T. Heppell, *The Tories from Winston Churchill to David Cameron* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), p.8

²⁵³ *Ibid*, p.9

be associated with and through separate policy models – it does not have a coherent defined methodology. The role is to govern well, and this is an obvious legitimate target, but it cannot answer the questions of the extremes of internal change and external conflict associated with the Conservative administration post-1974 leading to the 1984 miners' strike and the Battle of Orgreave.

This research demonstrates preparation and implementation of confrontation with the NUM driven by an ideological agenda. Energy, industrial and labour relations policy after 1974 did not comply solely with statecraft theory of good governance. I propose the development of government policy towards the trade union movement was ideologically driven, that the trade union movement was highlighted, prior to 1979 in *Carrington*, *Ridley* and *Stepping Stones* documentation, as a target for reform and eventual conflict. I identify and reveal historical evidence that demonstrates industrial policy driven through an ideological agenda to redesign energy, industrial and labour relations policy, to prepare and plan for an assault on the trade union movement.

Therefore, the trade union movement would be challenged. The NUM and the renaissance of a new left, epitomised by Arthur Scargill, were to challenge the Conservative political administrative dominance. An ideologically driven agenda would ensure this challenge would be prepared for and met head on; this would entail the prioritising of a market based economic model for society, the implementation of

monetarism, allowing, as Stuart Hall argues the restructuring of the, “Political, moral and intellectual leadership” of the Conservative Party itself through an observance and priority of the economic. Hall observed that it was through this economic dominance where,

ideological shifts do take place, through “novel combinations of old and new” of “change in the relative weight possessed by the elements of an old ideology”²⁵⁴

The historic would not supersede or substitute the new Conservative ideology. But as demonstrated by history, Conservative ideology would transform, to adapt to gain a hegemonic position. Trade unionism through the post-war corporate relationship between organised labour, central government departments and the civil service, had constructed a functioning position of strength within corridors of British power. The Conservative Party, post-1974 would re-emerge, challenge and defeat this agenda – predominantly using predisposed ideology. This research details and evidences this

²⁵⁴ S. Hall, *Authoritarian Populism; A reply to Jessop et al*, New Left Review, 1985. Available at: <https://newleftreview.org/I/151/stuart-hall-authoritarian-populism-a-reply>

implementation of an ideological template that would ensure the revival of Conservative Party economic authority and ultimately “inflict massive wounds on the labour movement.”²⁵⁵

1.9 Outline & Structure of the Research

The period between 1974 and 1984 was chosen to examine and reveal the changes in the ideological dynamic within the Conservative Party and its relationship to British trade unionism. The starting point is one of defeat for the Conservative Party and how it was to act as the catalyst for a Thatcherite response to mould an ideological agenda within the Conservative Party; to firstly implement internal party change and secondly to challenge the post-war corporate hegemony of the trade union movement; with particular significance placed on a challenge to the National Union of Mineworkers.

The above chapter *Ideology, Statecraft and the Conservative Party* contextualises the research and the relationship between the Conservative Party and trade unions. I have set out an argument that this change of relationship was due to ideological transformation within a section of the Conservative Party.

In Chapter 2, *Thatcher’s Moral Crusade*, I analyse the transformation and process of change within the Conservative Party. I argue it ultimately represents a reaction

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

against the failure of Heath's statecraft in 1974, yet it was not solely reactionary in context; there is an ideological and historical background to the construct of change within elements of the Conservative Party. I address and present the core values of Thatcherism through a prism of Margaret Thatcher's personal values and system of beliefs – a resurrection of British values, of a moral code that was assimilated with economic freedoms, hard work and religious convictions. This construct of a core belief system would be ingrained in New Right thinking; a means to integrate political and economic ideals, inspired by a religious fervour, to install conviction politics to end Britain's decline as a nation. This chapter explores these foundations of this New Right thought; the priority it placed of its pursuit of the end of decline of Britain and the correlation between this decline, corporate tripartism and ultimately the construction of a required nemesis – the trade union movement.

In Chapter 3, I reveal the economic and political inspiration that was leading this revival of a New Right thought process – Powellism. *Enoch Powell – Thatcher's Teacher* explores the influence of Powell and his legacy on Thatcherite ideology. As Chapter 2 details a rise of a New Right, chapter 3, details its political inspiration. Enoch Powell was ultimately to be alienated from the Conservative Party but fought determinedly for the ideals of which Thatcherism aspired to; freedom of economics through absolutism of British and Parliamentary sovereignty. Powell sets the foundations of a New Right, both politically and theoretically; Powellism was to

demonstrate the construct, albeit ultimately a maverick one, of an ideological agenda, of which there could be no deviance from – an anti-inflationary economic policy and a pursuit of individual freedom.

Chapter 4 examines the ideological conflict within the Conservative Party that was to prelude conflict. Chapter 4, *The Defeat of the “Wets”* documents, again through primary evidence, the internal conflicts that were to appear within the Conservative Party. Those who opposed ideology, the established One Nation politicians, notably Francis Pym, Ian Gilmour and Jim Prior amongst others, were to stand for and present an alternative to a New Right – an alternative to ideology and to dogma. This chapter examines how this opposition was to be diluted as the “wets” and how this epitaph represented a non-ideological political reasoning; a politics of One Nation conservatism. Attention is paid to the divisions within Cabinet and the challenge to the moderate One Nation representatives, who were to challenge monetarist economic policy, commonly known as “wets”.

Chapter 5, *From Ridley Report to “Hit List” – Implementation of Ideological Blueprint* evidences through primary sources, acquired from The National Archives, a development from theoretical stance of New Right thought, to a realistic road map to confrontation with the trade union movement; from New Right theory to a reality, of a construct of Conservative Party challenge to the trade union movement. I reveal and examine through *The Ridley Report* and *Stepping Stones* reports, a premeditated

plan for industrial deconstruction and analyse evidence of the planning and preparation for industrial conflict with the NUM; the deconstruction of British Steel Corporation as a prelude to the 1984 conflict, the prioritising of coke imports from abroad that was to undermine UK coal supply to power stations and the existence of a “Hit List” of viable, productive mines that were targeted for decommission. I have documented in this chapter new evidence and primary source archive material, gained from The National Archives, which demonstrates the claims of covert planning, preparation and instigation of industrial conflict with the NUM in 1984.

The final chapter evidences the culmination of the political, economic and ideological process – from *The Ridley Report* template, to writing of a “Hit List” through to the reality of industrial conflict not witnessed in the UK for generations. In Chapter 6, *The 1984 Miners’ Strike* there is an exploration of the conclusion of New Right trade union policy and industrial policy. The construct and undertaking of conflict; how the intensity of confrontation and violence was depicted, between striking miners and the police authorities at Orgreave coke works in 1984, completed the implementation of *The Ridley Reports* plans for industrial fragmentation. How the scenes of picket line violence and direct political interference with local police matters, demonstrates a rejection of statecraft policy and evidences clearly the implementation of an ideologically driven industrial agenda. I evidence an implementation of an ideological agenda through addressing the following; the

visceral imagery of conflict between striking miners and police authorities at Orgreave, the year long suffering of mining community, the violence aimed towards and from police, demonstrates the rejection of One Nation conservatism, an end of statecraft and therefore, an implementation of ideological agenda.

In the conclusion, I summarise the findings and set out what they are. I reveal the processes, actors and events that are evidenced to form a conclusion of ideologically formed industrial policy. Firstly, that Conservative statecraft theory, demonstrated prior to 1974 was to be challenged and reversed. Secondly, that this reversal would entail the development of a New Right, an ascension to power within the Conservative Party of actors and policy that would implement an ideological industrial and economic agenda. Thirdly, that the process of implementation of this New Right agenda through the construction of an industrial template to enforce confrontation with the NUM in 1984.

Chapter 2 – Thatcher’s Moral Crusade

2.0 Introduction

This chapter will examine two key areas;

- The development of this new form of conservatism - a New Right. What did this represent and what was it prepared to challenge?
- How this was policy was to be implemented – an acceptance of the role of confrontation and an interpretation of a required “creative destruction”.

Thatcherism was to elevate economics to a “moral level”.²⁵⁶ This would require transference of the efficiency of the good household to a national scale. Fiscal control would be elevated from its natural environment of No.11 Downing Street, to sustain a new, ideologically driven political force to engineer national revival; a New Right “appeal to righteousness”²⁵⁷ through economic individualism and liberty.

Margaret Thatcher reflected in 1975 upon the “death of our national spirit.”²⁵⁸ The challenge facing the nation was greater than merely political or cultural, it was a “moral struggle and the morality of work, of self-sacrifice, of trying to do the right thing” – this was the “the morality of capitalism.”²⁵⁹ Thatcherism’s emotive plea was

²⁵⁶ S.R. Letwin, *The Anatomy of Thatcherism* (Harper Collins Publishing, 2002), p.22

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ M. Thatcher, Speech to the National Press Club, Washington DC, 19th Sep 1975. Available at: Margaret Thatcher Foundation <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/102770>

²⁵⁹ Ibid

to challenge the nation to reverse a post-industrial malaise, to cast aside “living in the nostalgic glories of a previous industrial revolution.”²⁶⁰ A New Right would challenge the “climate of permissiveness” – to adhere to family values of thrift, hard work and an “unfettered pursuit of wealth”. I argue that to challenge the hegemony of trade unionism and corporate Britain, a new form of conservatism was established. Emboldened by a mantra of moral fortitude, it would overcome the reticence of One Nation conservatism, and impose economic freedom. The fervour of a moral crusade to save an ailing nation liberated Thatcherism from the straightjacket of conservatism, of establishment and conformity, to one that was to consummately embrace ideology. An acceptance, and promotion of policy, akin to a form of salvation, enabled the rejection of “political elites”²⁶¹ from an establishment who employed procedure of governance and followed the “standard rules of statecraft”.²⁶² In comparison to 21st Century political challenge to mainstream political agendas, Thatcherism’s emotive fusion of emancipation, liberty and patriotic fervour, could form a dynamic that would challenge the duopoly of corporatism and the established internal mechanisms of the Conservative Party. These established political elites would face, as Stuart Hall argued, “The moral

²⁶⁰ R. Samuel, *Mrs. Thatcher’s Return to Victorian Values*, in T. C. Smout (ed.), *Victorian Values* (Oxford, 1992), p.9 – 29.

²⁶¹ P. Strangio, P. Hart & J. Walter, *Understanding Prime-Ministerial Performance: Comparative Perspective* (Oxford University Press, 2013), p.328

²⁶² *Ibid.*

discourses of Thatcherism” a “mobilisation of social identities”²⁶³ which had lain dormant through consensus and trade union hegemony.

2.1 The “New Conservatism”

Francis Pym argued that to view politics in simple cases of black and white “is both false and dangerous”.²⁶⁴ Complementing life, politics cannot be viewed within “polarising contradictions” but within a complex moral, economic and social maze – no “conclusions are the truth”. Yet, he was to conclude, that the “spirit of the age encourages us to be absolutist”. Thatcherism does not fit into easy analysis, it is multi-faceted, but it does demonstrate, in its myriad of interpretations, a search for clarity and absolutism. Pym argues that Thatcher would ask, “Are you with us?” by which she means, “Are you completely free of any doubts as to the utter righteousness of everything we are doing?”²⁶⁵

The rhetorical question is revealing. Conservatism would emerge post-1974 as a tool to combat a form of disease that had affected Britain, “A severe inflation is the worst kind of revolution... only the most powerful, the most resourceful and unscrupulous, the hyenas of economic life, can come through unscathed”²⁶⁶ – this argued Thatcher, was the reality of what Britain was facing post-1974. The politics of consent could

²⁶³ S. Hall, *The Hard Road to Renewal* (Verso, 1988), p.91

²⁶⁴ F. Pym, *The Politics of Consent* (Hamish Hamilton, 1984), p.2

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ HC Deb 22nd May 1975 vol 892 M. Thatcher, *Speech The Economy*. Available at: <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1975/may/22/>

no longer suffice, as morality, economics and politics were now needed to “converge”.²⁶⁷ Morality argued Thatcher, “has a great deal to do with society,” arguing that “The real causes of inflation are not economic. They are social, and they are political”.²⁶⁸ A New Conservatism understood this need for change. In a speech to the Bow Group in 1980, Nigel Lawson argued,

The Conservative party had been swept into office on a programme which seemed to mark a conscious change of direction, not merely from that charted by its political opponents, but from that followed by all British Governments since the war, including its own Conservative predecessors. Hence the seemingly self-contradictory notion of ‘The New Conservatism’.²⁶⁹

Conservatism, argued Lawson, could not stand still. It was not to retreat and to tread the same old “false trails”, and lessons would have to be “painfully relearned”²⁷⁰ for conservatism to re-emerge from the shadow of social democracy. The challenge to the Conservative Party in 1979 was a perception of a country in decline, the “climate of defeatism” of an ungovernable nation. The means to excerpt authority, to distance itself from post-war malaise, was to commit itself to the pursuit of “sound money, a

²⁶⁷ M. Thatcher, (1975). Interview with *Daily Mirror*, House of Commons. Available at: Margaret Thatcher Foundation <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/102554>

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ N. Lawson, Speech to The Bow Group, *The New Conservatism*, 4th August 1980. Available at: Margaret Thatcher Foundation <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/109505>

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

balanced budget and free markets”.²⁷¹ Jim Buller argues that economic “neutrality and automatism” would allow for a dispassionate dismantling of the post-war consensus. Economic management and competence presented a party in control, at complete odds with the debacle of the 1970s and trade union tripartite governance, which chipped away at the responsibility and empowerment of the individual.²⁷² Buller’s interpretation is appealing as it offers a diagnosis and a remedy to a post-war malaise – a need to take hard, often dispassionate decisions in the face of social and political uncertainty. Monetarism would be the tool to forestall greater social change – to transcend statecraft’s practicality. Economic transformation of the economy was not merely pragmatic, it was “cultural” as “social engineering of an unusual sort was high on the Thatcherite agenda”.²⁷³

Lawson argued for a conservatism which challenged the traditions of post-war government. This pursuit of “sound money” of fiscal control of monetary supply, monetarism, would allow for, and formulate a foundation for greater control of the state mechanism, beyond simply an economic competence deemed necessary through statecraft. Fiscal prudence would transcend into areas of social and moral agendas of the nation; Lawson was to argue that,

²⁷¹ J. Buller, *National Statecraft and European Integration: The Conservative Government and the European Union 1979 – 1997* (Pinter, 2000), p.48

²⁷² *Ibid*, p.49

²⁷³ I. Gilmour, *Dancing with Dogma: Britain under Thatcherism* (Simon & Schuster, 1992), p.107

To describe the new Conservatism purely in terms of an approach to economic policy would be manifestly inadequate—it goes a great deal wider than that ²⁷⁴

Lawson idealised a degree of social order through an economic order. He was to describe the “economic sickness we were to cure”²⁷⁵ and a need to aspire to an historical “reversion to an older tradition”²⁷⁶ of a pre-Keynesian world of “restraint”. The 1970s he argued was the “decade of intervention – and the decade of inflation”, an increasing “interference by Government in all aspects of economic life.”²⁷⁷ Trade unionism had ensured the term “profit had become a dirty word” and “capitalist” a term of abuse²⁷⁸ – conservatism needed to reverse this symbolic decline. It was socialism that had transferred and mobilised its ideology through the trade union movement – it had formulated an overt collective ideological stance. Lawson argued that when “we first took office in 1979, at the heart of the problem of Britain’s malfunctioning labour market – and a number of other ills besides – clearly lay the much-discussed trade union question”.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁴ N. Lawson, Speech to The Bow Group, *The New Conservatism*, 4th August 1980. Available at: Margaret Thatcher Foundation <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/109505>

²⁷⁵ Ibid

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ N. Lawson, *The View from No.11 Memoirs of a Tory Radical* (Bantam Press, 1992), p.436

²⁷⁸ Ibid, p.30

²⁷⁹ N. Lawson, *The View from No.11 Memoirs of a Tory Radical* (Bantam Press, 1992), p.436

Conservatism therefore required economic and ideological mantra to ensure clarity of purpose. Lawson acknowledged this ideological battleground – to resist the “rise of social democracy” there was to be a need to pursue and to win the “battle of the ideas”.²⁸⁰ Traditional conservatism was now redundant. An “efficacy of government action” and the “deep commitment to the notion of ‘equality’ with the Conservative Party having problematically “embraced both these delusions.”²⁸¹ These are important political acknowledgements. Lawson’s identified the nature of this New Conservatism – one which was to reject the established status quo, to challenge the orthodoxies of government and established principles, drafted through consensus. The pursuit of equality, embraced as delusional and reductive, was now to be an enemy of economic change and modernisation, a hindrance to the pursuit of fiscal management, tight control of budgetary levers and above all else, the control of inflation.

Monetary policy, not human policy, was to be the overriding ideological concern. A “New Conservative” mantra demonstrated an overt acceptance and resignation of this “inflation/ unemployment “trade-off” of “a painful transitional cost in reducing inflation.”²⁸² Lawson argued that the “unspoken assumptions” of the post-war world

²⁸⁰ Ibid

²⁸¹ Ibid

²⁸² N. Lawson, Speech to Institute for Fiscal Studies, 1981. Available at: Margaret Thatcher Foundation https://www.margaretthatcher.org/archive/1981_budget.asp

of economic co-operation and a prioritising of a labour market was “economic nonsense”. In a changing world there is an implicit need to change, of “adjusting to changing conditions”²⁸³ to remove the acceptance of Keynesian macroeconomics and pursuit of full employment. Speaking to the Institute of Fiscal Studies in 1981, Lawson argued,

a lasting fall in the rate of inflation of about 1 percent per annum can be achieved at a cost of 650,000 man years²⁸⁴

This presents a radical shift in mind set within the Conservative hierarchy. Up to 1974 successive administrations, Conservative and Labour, prioritised efforts to “maintain national cohesion”²⁸⁵ through the pursuit of full employment. Lawson’s comments challenge Conservative Party adherence to an acceptance of “Keynesianism and the goal of full employment”²⁸⁶ – New Conservatism was to challenge these conventions of previous economic protocol. The acceptance of a degree of “cost” of “man years” reveals this fundamental shift; a pursuit of inflationary control, an ideological swing to accept that “full employment became utterly unimportant”.²⁸⁷

²⁸³ Ibid

²⁸⁴ Ibid

²⁸⁵ I. Gilmour, *Dancing with Dogma: Britain under Thatcherism* (Simon & Schuster, 1992), p.107

²⁸⁶ D. Kavanagh, *Thatcherism and British Politics; The End of Consensus?* (Oxford University Press, 1992), p.196

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

This was to represent in the words of Arthur Seldon a “revolution in political attitudes”.²⁸⁸ The term “revolution” does not fit easily with the history of Conservative thought; the Conservative is “sceptical” – he “may be nostalgic for the past, but he will not parade it as a declared ideal”²⁸⁹ but rather as a fondness and eternal longing for a “Golden age”. It does not deal in the realities of the modern life of the individual but the abstract pursuit of a harmonious relationship with a “political vision” without a finite result; all defined within a paradoxical “refined lack of purpose”.²⁹⁰ This traditional form of conservatism does not equate to a fixed ideology or direction – it resonates and flows with an establishment that will support in an indecipherable manner this opaque vision – and historically it has succeeded.

Its critiques though observe a theory without substance. The governing establishment without a direction – or indeed ideology. Friedrich Hayek argues in his challenge to conservatism,²⁹¹ *Why I am not a Conservative*, that as an ideology it is tied to convention and is fearful, obtrusive and regressive; “personally” Hayek argued, “I find that the most objectionable feature of the Conservative attitude is its propensity to reject well-substantiated new knowledge because it dislikes some of the consequences which seem to follow from it – or, to put it bluntly, its

²⁸⁸ Arthur Seldon letter to Friedrich Hayek, *Hobart Paper, Trade Unions Cause the Unemployment of the 1980's*, 9th October 1980. Available at: Margaret Thatcher Foundation <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/archive/1978hayek>

²⁸⁹ R. Scruton, *The Meaning of Conservatism* (Penguin Books, 1980), p.121

²⁹⁰ Ibid

²⁹¹ F.A. Hayek, *Why I am not a Conservative: In The Constitution of Liberty* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960)

obscurantism”.²⁹² Conservatism demonstrates a “fondness for authority” and a “failure to acquaint oneself with new ideas”. It has “no real argument” barring its rejection of change and “the growth of ideas” and demonstrates a fear of manmade consequences; and these consequences? Unemployment.

Nigel Lawson, an economic disciple of Hayek,²⁹³ was to define New Conservatism. Continuing this train of thought, man’s imperfections lead to consequences of actions which are inevitable. There is a tacit acknowledgement of the inevitability of unemployment because of the imperfections of the state. New Conservatism would not accept the limitations of the state and its imperfections, it would not be constrained by its fear of consequences. Lawson argued that,

Conservatism is the creed of original sin and the politics of imperfection—that the bad in society is so intimately and unknowably linked with the rest that an intention to deal with one specific and agreed evil may well do more harm than good.²⁹⁴

The pursuit of these “politics of imperfection” is futile – state intervention can only have consequences. Lawson’s correlates the inevitability of man’s imperfection with

²⁹² F. Hayek, *Why I Am Not a Conservative, In the Constitution of Liberty* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 7

²⁹³ Lawson, N. (1978). Letter to Friedrich Hayek. Available at: Margaret Thatcher Foundation <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/archive/1978hayek>

Nigel Lawson wrote to Hayek, thanking him for correspondence regarding an article written for *The Times*, adding, “There is no – one from whom such a letter could have been more welcome”.

²⁹⁴ N. Lawson, Speech to The Bow Group, *The New Conservatism* 4th August 1980. Available at: Margaret Thatcher Foundation <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/109505>

his/ her will to intervene in the form of the state. As the nature of the individual is inherently flawed, how can the state hope to counter these imperfections? Lawson notes that in 1979, the new Conservative Government would need to be bold, to accept a bitter pill to cure the “economic sickness” and “all pervasive defeatism” that Britain was suffering from at the hands of stagflation and union power.²⁹⁵ This scenario had been wrought by the “confusion and disarray”²⁹⁶ of the social democrat; the pursuit of wage control, price control, of state intervention and of industrialists who were to “tramp the corridors of Whitehall in search of subsidies”.²⁹⁷ Lawson dared to ask “had Britain become ungovernable?” and the road to recovery could not be without a need for “obstinacy and bare knuckles”²⁹⁸ to “change a whole culture of a nation”.

New Conservatism was to create a “healthy humility” regarding the scope for state activity. For some within the Conservative Party this represented the strains of “neo liberal dogma” from “more distant ideological shores”.²⁹⁹ Lawson was to acknowledge this scepticism, “is it some alien creed masquerading as Conservative?” he was to ask – his retort — “I can only say that, as a Conservative,

²⁹⁵ N. Lawson, *The View from No.11 Memoirs of a Tory Radical* (Bantam Press, 1992), p30

²⁹⁶ N. Lawson, Speech to The Bow Group, *The New Conservatism*, 4th August 1980. Available at: Margaret Thatcher Foundation <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/109505>

²⁹⁷ Ibid

²⁹⁸ N. Lawson, *The View from No.11 Memoirs of a Tory Radical* (Bantam Press, 1992), p65

²⁹⁹ I. Gilmour, *Dancing with Dogma: Britain under Thatcherism* (Simon & Schuster, 1992), p.2

it feels pretty Conservative to me”.³⁰⁰ Yet this is debatable; a new form of conservatism would accentuate the drive to challenge an unmanageable perception of Britain – for the pursuit of strong government to halt regression. Lawson’s proclamation of his definition of conservatism does coincide with historic reinterpretation of the role that a Conservative government would play in the modernisation of a nation. But for some, a Rubicon had been passed. Lawson’s defiant definition of conservatism now represented a “particular constellation of policies and values” – of free markets, financial discipline, a firm control of public expenditure, tax cuts and “nationalism” and “Victorian values”.³⁰¹ The New Conservatism would entail both the ideology of the economic and the moral; the rejection of the “dependency culture” to a rise of the “enterprise culture” – conservatism with direction, vigour and purpose. Jim Prior argues that a doctrine was being formulated, that One Nation conservatism was now marginalised and was demythologised as a politics of regression and apathy,

We didn’t appreciate the degree to which the Party was becoming more and more doctrinaire in its approach and less and less pragmatic... Even the era of Macmillan and Butler was talked about as a disaster.³⁰²

³⁰⁰ N. Lawson, *The View from No.11 Memoirs of a Tory Radical* (Bantam Press, 1992), p65

³⁰¹ *Ibid*, p.64

³⁰² J. Prior, *A Balance of Power* (Hamish Hamilton, 1986), p.118

2.2 Thatcherism's Moral Crusade

The aim of the New Conservatism was to create momentum and impetus. I argue that economic ideology was not simply to be viewed in the context of the fiscal policy but was to become a symbol of a greater good – of freedom; freedom of the economy from the restraint of wage demands, freedom for individuals to aspire. Most importantly, freedom to challenge the tyranny of the establishment, the corporate collective, the trade union movement and ultimately the decline of post-war Britain; in an internal memo from Henry Kissinger to President Ford in January 1975, Kissinger lamented,

Yes. The Brits need the money now. Britain is a tragedy it has sunk to begging, borrowing, stealing until North Sea oil comes in... That Britain has become such a scrounger is a disgrace³⁰³

Thatcherism was to emerge out of the “debates on national decline”³⁰⁴ – out of this disgrace. On coming to power in 1979, Margaret Thatcher was to witness a country which had succumbed to a three day week, inflation had topped 25%, Britain had required a bailout from the International Monetary Fund and experienced the “Winter of Discontent” – Britain had become “a miserable failure”.³⁰⁵ As a description for Britain, for a once great nation it is harsh, yet it reflected the shifting

³⁰³ Kissinger, H (1975). Internal memo to President Ford, The White House, Washington DC. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve12/ch3>

³⁰⁴ R. Vinen, *Thatcher's Britain: The Politics and Social Upheaval of the Thatcher Era* (Pocket Books, 2009), p.9

³⁰⁵ S. Jenkins, *Thatcher & Sons; A Revolution in Three Acts* (Penguin Books, 2006), p. 38

tides of globalisation and the reality that the old certainties of the post-war world were vanishing. There is no doubt that a series of administrations had grappled, some more successfully than other, to reinvent Britain internally and internationally. The Suez Crisis of 1956 and devaluation in 1967 had demonstrated the somewhat naïve posturing of British economic and diplomatic power; in an ever changing, globalised world, Britain's economic and indeed moral compass was crumbling. Margaret Thatcher argued that,

Our companies were impeded by militancy and restrictive practices, our management was complacent, our workforce unproductive. And state-owned firms ate up, through subsidies, what should have gone to schools and hospitals.

But the root of the approach we pursued in the 1980s lay deep in human nature, and more especially the nature of the British people. If you really believe, as a matter of passionate conviction, in the talents and character of your nation, of course you want to set it free. And we British have a true vocation for liberty – all our history proves it.³⁰⁶

Thatcher looked at the symptoms of the “British disease” as economic, yet their roots were cultural and moral. Governing Britain would be so much more than the

³⁰⁶ M. Thatcher, Speech to the International free Enterprise dinner, 20th April 1999. Available at: Margaret Thatcher Foundation <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/108381>

administration of policy; it was an issue of reinvigorating a national spirit of enterprise, of energy and self-awareness. And economic tools would be where the New Conservatism would turn to unlock the apathy constructed by unproductive forces, by the mass intransigence of a work force that had been brought up in a post-war world of “full employment” that was “artificially maintained by “state puffed inflation”³⁰⁷.

Decline of British fortunes was, and still is to this day, a complex issue. A whole genre of literature had developed though academic questioning and post-war statistics without offering a solution. For Thatcherism there was absolute clarity – British decline was economically and industrially wrapped within a greater question of identity, of morality and of belief – it was not solely a change of political direction, but the need to impose and to create the set of goals and doctrines which had to “flow from this belief”³⁰⁸ – an end to decline. And in Margaret Thatcher, the New Conservatives had a leader of charisma and purpose who was to bring a religious fervour to this task.³⁰⁹

This fervour sprang from an evangelical zeal to challenge decline. In a speech to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, also known as *The Sermon on the*

³⁰⁷ C. Barnett, C, *The Verdict of Peace; Britain between her Yesterday and the Future* (Macmillan, 2001). p,424

³⁰⁸ Ibid

³⁰⁹ Ibid

Mound, Thatcher stated that, “nowhere in the Bible is the word democracy mentioned”.³¹⁰ The speech is important; it demonstrates a new-found scepticism of the morality of British democracy, “Political structures, state institutions, collective ideals – these are not enough”.³¹¹ Thatcher’s critique is a stance of absolutism; of certainty in the face of democratic traditions – she was to acknowledge the demise of Britain and was to dissect the problem through the eyes of a religious zealot. Nothing such as a democratic tradition would come in the way of this destiny, “there is little hope” she lamented,

For democracy if the hearts of men and women in democratic societies cannot be touched by a call to something greater than themselves.³¹²

Thatcher’s words call for the intrinsic, natural development between economic and spiritual harmony. Said in 1988, by then both Galtieri and Scargill had been defeated, and the economic transformation of the nation was in its defining period, yet Thatcher’s rhetoric clarifies the reasoning behind the determined pursuit of confrontation with the “collective ideals” of the nation. What is apparent is the attachment of a moral agenda to the role of economic and social individualism – the notion of a collective good is marginalised and now seen as abhorrent and even evil;

³¹⁰ M. Thatcher, Speech to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Assembly Hall, The Mound, Edinburgh 21st May 1988. Available at: Margaret Thatcher Foundation <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/107246>

³¹¹ Ibid.

³¹² Ibid.

“The real case against socialism” Thatcher argued is “not its economic inefficiency. Much more fundamental is its basic immorality”.³¹³

It is the politics of association. As an attempt to realign politics, Thatcherite morality, was to embrace personal freedom and the ethics of individualism. Therefore, the targeting of the trade union movement was to be contextualised, through a debate on organic freedom, a natural order of liberty, confronted by a constructed mass. Corporatism and trade unionism, organisations created by and for working men and women, were not done so in harmony with the marketplace or designed to enhance the individual’s role amongst the collective. Trade unionism was presented not simply as a political and social contemporary to be debated and countered, as an equal, but as an interloper, an agent to undermine the freedom of the market-based economy. Indeed, in Thatcher’s overtly religious symbolism, any collective organisation, or indeed,

any set of social and economic arrangements which is not founded on the acceptance of individual responsibility will do nothing but harm.³¹⁴

There is a causal link – collective representation and the challenge to individual spiritual and economic freedoms. This interpretation, this conclusion, reflected

³¹³ Margaret Thatcher Foundation: M. Thatcher, Speech to Conservative Party Annual Conference, Winter Gardens, Blackpool 8th October 1976. Available at: Margaret Thatcher Foundation <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/103443>

³¹⁴ M. Thatcher, Speech to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 21st May 1988. Available at: Margaret Thatcher Foundation <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/107246>

policies of a “conviction politician”.³¹⁵ That is an interpretation of a politician on a mission whose identification of an enemy, lends them a sense of the required direction and impetus. And so, harm is caused by those institutions of the state which are designed to create apathy and personal indifference – the state which allows the individual to flounder under the “evil” pretence of socialism and the extension of the welfare state. The notion of good and evil, the absolutism in conviction is paramount in the challenge to the post-war orthodoxy. There was to be no blurred lines of consensus, but an alternative – an alternative to the acceptance of a consensual form of government or indeed the abhorrent evils of socialism. Speaking in 1975, Thatcher declared that socialists pursued,

Their evil objectives with a determination and a passion which we fail to match at our peril. Let us from today, and until socialism is finally defeated in this country, fight with the conviction that our cause deserves³¹⁶

The template of conservatism’s radical departure from the 20th Century consensus is clear. A robust association of religiously determined conviction politics, with that of a clear declaration of an enemy – socialism. Morality comes in many forms –

³¹⁵ M. Thatcher, Speech to the Bow Group, *The Ideals of an Open Society* 6th May, 1978 – Margate Thatcher stated that, “Most of us whether Christian or not are thus inspired directly or indirectly by the absolute value which Christianity—deriving in part from the Old Testament and Greek philosophy—gives to the individual soul, and hence to man’s innate responsibility for his own actions and omissions, and his duty to treat other men as he would have them treat him”.

³¹⁶ M. Thatcher, Speech to West Midlands Conservatives, 3Birmingham Club, Ethel Street, Birmingham 1st October 1975. Available at: Margaret Thatcher Foundation <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/102791>

socialism will dictate that the innate generosity of the human spirit, is predetermined to join within a collective, to shun the individual interpretation of freedom, eschewed by the liberal, and join in unison to forge a classless society. Socialism could not be allowed to dictate the moral high ground; its associations with the religious connotations of *The New Jerusalem* and the advent of the NHS and Welfare State, were necessarily to be tainted.

R.H. Tawney counters this association. The morality of a collective could challenge the orthodoxy of the development of “individualism in the sanctification of the inner self alone.”³¹⁷ The “doctrine of individualism”³¹⁸ Tawney argues, was to define the essence of society as a “moral community”,³¹⁹ one whose path is defined by the pursuit of morality and faith, rather than the spiritual purity of the individual, “faith albeit constrained and conditioned by material circumstances, had in case after case, critically altered the course of history”.³²⁰ Therefore Tawney argues that socialism has parallels with Christianity. Due to the rejection of the secular world of the individual’s pursuit of capital and wealth – socialism is endowed by the “necessary colliery” of Christian belief and human “equality”. This is the relationship of organised labour and the Christian tradition – it is not the pursuit of wealth which is

³¹⁷ R.H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1926), p.35

³¹⁸ *Ibid*, p.38

³¹⁹ *Ibid*, p.38

³²⁰ *Ibid*, p.39

paramount to the Christian tradition, it the challenge to the emphasis of the marketplace and market forces over the nature of humanity. There is demonstrably a “corrosive power of financial imperatives at the heart of market societies”³²¹ – a correlation between economic manipulation and social discontent and poverty. There could not be a direct relationship between the driven nature of market dominated societies and the Christian tradition. The moral prerogative and high ground cannot be claimed, politically, in isolation.

Thatcher though, was to counter Tawney directly. In an interview with *The Telegraph* in 1978, Thatcher argues that,

there have been writers like R. H. Tawney who have condemned "the acquisitive society" by arguments which plainly sprang from a Christian culture. I respect the integrity of such men, while disputing their conclusions, which seem to me to rest on a total misunderstanding of how the modern capitalist order works.³²²

Thatcher claims the association between “acquisitive society” and Christian morality – there is a parallel. Collective representation denies a moral basis of “personal choice” and individual freedom to observe a Christian tradition. Importantly,

³²¹ S. Collini, *For the Common Good*, Times Literary Supplement. Review of L. Goldman, *The Life of R. H. Tawney – Socialism and History* (Bloomsbury Academic Press, 2014).

³²² M. Thatcher, Speech The Moral Basis of a Free Society, *The Telegraph*, 16th May 1978. Available at: Margaret Thatcher Foundation <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/103687>

Thatcher argues that the importance of the, “Christian contribution to political thinking” is that the, “Individual is an end to himself, a responsible moral being with the ability to choose between good and evil”.³²³

Religiously, theoretically, morally, but most importantly politically, this statement is highly significant to Thatcherism. There is no doubting the moral stance the New Right was to take to undermine the lapse, inefficiency of the trade union movement. Christianity was not, as Tawney argued, directly associated with a greater good and a moral duty linked to the state, but it was designed for individual ethic and how the individual behaves, functions and interprets the world around themselves.

Therefore, fundamental Christian goodness was not associated, and never could be, with the masses, the populace or the union. This was ungodly and, as alluded to above, essentially evil. This was the challenge the trade union movement was facing in the aftermath of 1979 – economic liberal ideology enforced through an energy that had parallels with religious conviction; a greater calling. There was to be a direct correlation between liberalism of individual spirit, economics and spiritual goodness – liberal economic policy equated spiritual goodness against the determined deviant collective of trade unionism. Therefore, Thatcherism was a harnessing of vital factors – liberal individualism, economic prudence, spiritual conviction and moral

³²³ Ibid

certainty, into a force of nature – a movement which was to emerge, against type, against the consensual, clubbable nature of both the Conservative Party and the trade union movement. Thatcher's *Sermon on the Mound* decreed that,

There is little hope for democracy if the hearts of men and women in democratic societies cannot be touched by a call to something greater than themselves. Political structures, state institutions, collective ideals—these are not enough. / We Parliamentarians can legislate for the rule of law.

You, the Church, can teach the life of faith.³²⁴

The political and industrial establishment was not enough. Not enough to carry a nation out of the abyss of decline, not enough to transform the soul of a nation. The role of politics is to “safeguard the value of the individual” – to enhance our freedoms and to challenge the forces which were to restrict and to deny. The Christian and moral connotations of Thatcherism are clear; the political order had rejected this fundamental message; the politics of corporatism, of socialism, of trade unions and appeasing One Nation conservatism, had denied these spiritual values of individualism and liberty. The fervour that accompanied Thatcherism through the political challenges of social and industrial unrest, foreign junta and internal dissent, was one born not through economics but the spiritual. The trade union movement

³²⁴ M. Thatcher, Speech to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 21st May 1988. Available at: Margaret Thatcher Foundation <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/107246>

and the spectre of collective identity would challenge the very essence of a belief system based on faith and morality. This would propel a New Right to meet the challenge of 1984 and the conflict at Orgreave as the reconstruction of Britain had now transcended the political; there was now a moral agenda to be imposed. Thatcherism was infused with a belief system that would not curtail or U-turn: “I am in politics” argued Thatcher, “because of the conflict between good and evil, and I believe in the end good will triumph”.³²⁵

2.3 Thatcher’s Creative Destruction

Ideas in isolation remain simply rhetoric. For the New Right to succeed, for abstract theory to transform into economic doctrine, I argue, it would require the oxygen of confrontation. Thatcherite religious and moral zeal could not simply stand in isolation; it would serve as an energising platform for the pursuit of this revolutionary agenda; to implement this, there required a target, an enemy. From 1974 and the fall of Edward Heath, there could only be one target – the static nature of Britain’s dormant political and industrial class. Thatcherism’s “concern” argues Shirley Letwin “has been with action. Thatcherism has not got what it takes to be a theory”.³²⁶ It is this “action” that is important – the formulation and essentially the

³²⁵ H. Young, *One of Us* (Macmillan, 1989), p.352.

³²⁶ S.R. Letwin, *The Anatomy of Thatcherism* (Harper Collins, 1993), p.27.

implementation of an ideologically driven agenda to nullify the trade union movement through confrontation. Ultimately this could be packaged as a moral crusade, a quasi-religious adventure, a pursuit of industrial and economic redemption – yet gutturally, it required an agenda – a tool in which to confront. It is this agenda that I present in this research: an ideological, premeditated pursuit of confrontation.

The nature of this confrontation is complex. Letwin looks to describe Thatcherite conviction as a “metaphor of movement and direction”³²⁷ – it is one that offers purpose and hope. The impasse of post-war Britain needed to be resolved through a set of ideas and rationale that was aimed at creating tension from which this purpose could be resolved. There is positivity in this agenda, a rejection of regression, a vision of a future that was to recreate a template for British greatness; it presented a pursuit of vigorous virtues³²⁸ combining economic, moral and cultural certainties. Families, companies and individuals needed to be freed to pursue values to become, “upright, self-sufficient, energetic, adventurous, independent minded, loyal to friends and robust against their enemies”³²⁹.

There was to be a transcendence of the political post-war norm as Thatcherism offered purpose. Letwin looks to Thatcherism not as a definition – but as a path. It

³²⁷ S.R. Letwin, *The Anatomy of Thatcherism* (Harper Collins, 1993), p.29.

³²⁸ Ibid, 33

³²⁹ Ibid, 33

cannot be defined; it is a state of mind which is prepared to go beyond a consensus, to ensure a “paradigm shift” of changing both the reality and the perception of our relationship between “government and the governed”.³³⁰ What was once unthinkable was to become the reality.

This point is important. I argue that amongst the emotive rhetoric to freedom and morality, lies an agenda, one that does not fit easily with a moral or quasi-religious crusade. The implementation of an ideologically driven template would naturally create shockwaves of “counter inflationary measures”³³¹ – there would be repercussions. Thatcherism’s adherence to monetarism’s pursuit of “sound” money was acknowledged to lead to an unemployment rate “regarded by the Thatcherite as an acceptable price to pay for defeating inflation”.³³² A belief system was moulded, through a moral and religious agenda, to implement swift economic policies, designed to cause havoc in both industrial and importantly “Tory ranks” also.³³³ The moral consequences of implementation of an economic ideological agenda were to prove correct in the mass unemployment figures of the 1980’s.

Yet it is difficult to doubt the sincerity of Thatcher’s moral pursuit to end “stagflation” and a British malaise. Eliza Filby argues “Where critics go wrong with

³³⁰ Ibid

³³¹ R. Harris, *The Complete Life of Margaret Thatcher; Not for Turning* (Corgi Books, 1988), p.224

³³² P. Smith, *Thatcher and After*, Duke University Press, Social text, No.43 (Autumn, 1995), pp.221 - 228

³³³ Ibid.

Thatcherism is to assume that there was no moral thinking behind the economics”.³³⁴

The emphasis placed upon microeconomic policy, the battle against state intervention and regulation, can be justified by Thatcherite puritanical zeal. There is substance in the argument that through a pursuit of economic and personal independence from the state, Methodist zeal was transferred “from the circuit to the constituency.”³³⁵ Yet Filby concurs that, “Where admirers go wrong is to appreciate the moral underpinnings of Thatcherism without admitting that these often conflicted with its economic aims”.³³⁶

This reflects the paradox at the heart of Thatcher’s moral championing of freedom of economic opportunity – an acceptance of consequence. The nature of faith is one that is difficult to question, reflecting a personal set of beliefs and therefore there can be no definitive answer as to the legitimacy of a Thatcherite moral agenda. But there is evidence that demonstrates, as Filby argues, the conflict between an economic and industrial agenda, this sense of spiritual pursuit of individual liberty, and the social consequences caused through industrial policy – unemployment. For Thatcherism to exist in this vacuum, in the space between the construct of a moral, economic agenda and the consequences caused through attacking trade unionism and increased

³³⁴ E. Filby (2013). Margaret Thatcher: her unswerving faith shaped by her. *The Telegraph*. Available at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/margaret-thatcher/9992424/Margaret-Thatcher-her-unswerving-faith-shaped-by-her-father.html>

³³⁵ Ibid.

³³⁶ Ibid.

unemployment, there must be some form of legitimising process – and it is here that Norman Lamont’s assertion that Thatcher, “deals in creative destruction to make her point”³³⁷ becomes so relevant.

For Joseph Schumpeter capitalism is like “a force of nature.”³³⁸ The entrepreneur performs a restless, continuous search for inspiration, for ideals and opportunity; for a construction of a new economic dynamic “which does not rely on external factors” to propel society by those with “vision and technique”³³⁹ who will construct “revolutionary creativeness”. To get to this point, to “batter down the walls” of the certainty of historic, sustained national economies, you need destruction – “the destruction is part and parcel of creativity”.³⁴⁰ The nature of crisis sweeps away the assumption of stability, it forces politicians and economists to think, and for creativity to exist. Schumpeter’s concept of “pure capitalism” was not simply geared to a greater economic efficiency, but towards a “scheme of values, an attitude towards life, and a civilisation”.³⁴¹ An emphasis on private ownership, division of labour, limited state and government intervention, allowing freedom of market conditions – “the essence of capitalism was change”.³⁴²

³³⁷ J. Aitken, *Margaret Thatcher: Power and Personality* (Bloomsbury, 2013), p. 253

³³⁸ D. Marquand (2009). The Spectre at the Feast: Capitalist Crisis and the Politics of Recession, *The New Statesman*. Available at: <https://www.newstatesman.com/books/2009/06/crisis-gamble-capitalism>

³³⁹ J. A. Schumpeter, *Ten Great Economists; from Marx to Keynes* (Oxford University press, 1951), p.9

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

³⁴¹ D. Simpson, *Understanding Mrs Thatcher: Conservative Economic Policy 1979 – 1987*, The David Hume Institute, David Hume Paper, Hume Occasional Paper, No.8, 1988.

³⁴² Ibid.

Capitalism would adhere to a “transient existence”. There is need for constant renewal, a perpetual challenge to social, economic and industrial order; a need to reenergise and to reprioritise. With this opportunity would develop fresh seeds of change from the old, but this process, argues Schumpeter, does not come without consequence,

But pure capitalism carried within itself the seeds of its own destruction.

Change within the capitalist period would bring about 'an atmosphere of almost universal hostility to its own social order'³⁴³

For Schumpeter this panacea of “hostility” to the existent social order would be the ability of capitalism to innovate. There is an acceptance of a “stationary” level of unemployment which can be “absorbed at increasing real wage rates”, he argues,

I do not think that unemployment is among those evils which, like poverty, capitalist evolution could ever eliminate of itself. I also do not think that there is any tendency for the unemployment percentage to increase in the long run.³⁴⁴

The process of “liquidation and reorganisation” would come to be seen as “normal”.³⁴⁵ The process, or rejuvenation, of development of new technology, of

³⁴³ J. A. Schumpeter, 1951, *Capitalism. Essays of J.A. Schumpeter*, (Addison Weseley, 1946), p.120

³⁴⁴ J. A. Schumpeter, 1952, *Ten Great Economists – From Marx to Keynes* (Allen & Unwin, 1951), p.69

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

new economic and industrial mindsets, would lead to an inevitability of unemployment, but this is seen as a price worth paying, as “Only through a painful and usually protracted process of reconstruction, ideological and practical, can the crisis be resolved.”³⁴⁶ For Schumpeter though capitalism ultimately “grows into socialism” and these “steps would not be retraced”³⁴⁷ – once capitalism was consumed there was no returning as a “final destination has no need to evolve”.³⁴⁸

Thatcher would not accept this. Her form of creative destruction would have no U-turns, it would lance the boil of socialism. Most importantly the embrace of a creative challenge to an established economic and industrial establishment would allow for the change; not a harbouring back to a dialectic leading to socialism – this would not be allowed – even if the consequences were profound. Thatcherite ideology would offer the impetus, through conviction and moral fortitude, to replace socialism, to eradicate the trade union impasse against the energy of reform. Thatcher’s no U-turn policy was greater than mere soundbites; it was a philosophy that was to embrace and accept the consequences of creative destruction, to face down inevitable unemployment and to deviate from socialism. She demanded the necessity for

³⁴⁶ D. Marquand (2009). *The Spectre at the Feast: Capitalist Crisis and the Politics of Recession*, *The New Statesman*. Available at: <https://www.newstatesman.com/books/2009/06/crisis-gamble-capitalism>

³⁴⁷ D. Reisman, *Schumpeter’s Market; Enterprise and Evolution* (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2004), p.135

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

change, a challenge to embrace change that is, “as necessary to a successful industrial economy as oxygen is to the blood stream”.³⁴⁹

Thatcherism was to reject conservatism’s innate hostility to social discontent. Economic consequences could be transformative and there required a tacit understanding of the role played by unemployment in the long-term rejuvenation of British fortunes. In a speech to the Institute of Bankers in January of 1977, Thatcher argues,

trade unionists will come to lose their understandable anxiety about the short-term unemployment consequences of change, whilst seeing the greater long-term benefits which change brings. They will see that it makes good sense to thin out and prune yesterday's plants so that tomorrow's may flourish.³⁵⁰

The symbolism is agonisingly simplistic in the face of over three and half million unemployed by 1983. The pruning and thinning out of industry and workforce has a resonance that did not cater for community or family; but it did inspire a New Right to be bold; to reengage with a form of conservatism that did not aspire to the

³⁴⁹ M. Thatcher, Speech to Institute of Bankers, *The Future of the Mixed Economy*, 110 Lombard Street, City of London 9th January 1977. Available at: Margaret Thatcher Foundation <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/103303>

³⁵⁰ M. Thatcher, Speech to Institute of Bankers, *The Future of the Mixed Economy*, 110 Lombard Street, City of London 9th January 1977. Available at: Margaret Thatcher Foundation <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/103303>

corporate mass or to the defeat at Saltley Gate. It is a direct challenge to the ideals of Keynesian “long term” analogies of painful economic consequences and diametrically opposed to trade union employment security. There would be pain in the short term; in the long-term Britain’s decline would be abated and again a nation would stand proud on a world stage. Thatcher’s “creative destruction” would accept the imposition of unemployment, of industrial “fragmentation” for an ultimate greater good.

How was it to be possible to construct this most conflicting of social agendas? How to impose such a grand scheme? To implement this change, Milton Friedman, argued that “capitalism’s core tactical nostrum” was to challenge the “tyranny of the status quo.”³⁵¹ Consensus, corporate power sharing, trade unionism, these “vested groups that have an enormously strong self-interest in pushing toward still larger and more expensive government”.³⁵²

In response Naomi Klein argues a New Right requires disunity. Whether it is the 1982 Falklands War or the 1984 miners’ strike, neoliberalism and the New Right, view crisis as an opportunity, the confusion associated with “disorder” allowing for economic and social change.³⁵³ The social consequences related to economic

³⁵¹ Interview, with Milton Friedman, *Milton Friedman Says, 'Tyranny of Status Quo' Still Rules U.S. Economy*. *Rocky Mountain News*, 25th November 1990. Available at:

<https://www.genealogybank.com/explore/newspapers/all/usa/colorado/denver/denver-rocky-mountain-news>

³⁵² Ibid.

³⁵³ N. Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (Penguin, 2007) Introduction.

neoliberalism are not the “result of incompetence or mismanagement”.³⁵⁴ It is, argues Klein, a reflection of the moral crusade to which Thatcherism was to be attached; it is a “fundamentalist” doctrine, one “Rooted in biblical fantasies of great floods and great fires, it is a logic that leads ineluctably towards violence.”³⁵⁵ Relying on an economic system which “requires constant growth”, disaster and conflict is manufactured and nurtured – leading to an acceptance of a normality of this perpetual change and reinvention.

On a political level Thatcherite policy, I argue, would ultimately rely on this perpetuity of conflict. Her moral and religious conviction, “this great moral drama” a “moral vision” as Hugo Young describes it, was to lead to division between “One of us” or “One of them”.³⁵⁶ Hugo Young argues that Thatcherism presented a continual process, a constant series of internal and external challenges, of necessary victories and indeed defeats. What was required was an “irreversible shift of power away from the trade unions” to change a British mindset, a natural set of “assumptions” which British people, who occupied the post-war world, were content to accept. Trade unions were not seen as an unnecessary evil, but an important part of everyday life, a part of the furniture, of a fabric of social and political wellbeing.

³⁵⁴ J. Gray (2009). The End of the World as we Know It. J. Gray, Book Review, N. Klein, The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism. *The Guardian*. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/books>

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

³⁵⁶ H. Young, *One of Us* (Harper Collins, 1989), p.353.

These assumptions, this goodwill needed to be reversed indelibly for the New Right revolution to succeed, or as Young more eloquently subscribes, “an overturning was congenial to the Thatcher vision, according exactly with her need for the presence of good and evil.”³⁵⁷

This is important; a need to provide a nemesis for the establishment to fight. For good to prevail, there needs to be evil – thereby to prosper one must strive and prevail. In a speech to the Carlton Club in 1984, Thatcher certainly outlined this vision with ferocious intent,

At one end of the spectrum are the terrorist gangs within our borders, and the terrorist states which finance and arm them. At the other end of the hard-left operating inside our system, conspiring to use union power and the apparatus of local government to break, defy and subvert the law.³⁵⁸

I argue that a New Right was constructed through a realisation of a need to embrace conflict – they required an enemy at the gate. An ultimate conclusion to the above quote was to be the labelling of the NUM an “enemy within” by a Conservative Party that was not prepared to “stoop to shabby compromise, pander to consensus”.³⁵⁹ The analogy of terrorist organisations sitting alongside trade unionism offers a clarity of

³⁵⁷ Ibid

³⁵⁸ M. Thatcher, Speech to The Carlton Club, The Second Carlton Lecture, *Why Democracy Will Last*, 26th November 1984. Available at: Margaret Thatcher Foundation <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/105799>

³⁵⁹ I. Gilmour, *Dancing with Dogma; Britain Under Thatcherism* (Simon & Schuster, 1992), p.2

symbolism that was to fit a moral, Methodist agenda propagated by Thatcherism. It offers opportunity to impose Thatcher's quasi-religious fervour, to justify dogmatic industrial and trade union policy – of good versus evil. Thatcher's interpretation of Schumpeter's creative destruction was justified through an acceptance and imposition of a moral stance; good versus evil, fitted well the methodology of Thatcherism. Just as Methodism was to thrive on the conquest of good versus evil, a pursuit of a moral agenda, would enhance political clarity. The notion of economic liberation, the unshackling of industrial Britain and the demonising of trade unionism, sat within a narrative that was played to sustain a perpetuity of change, firstly within the Conservative Party and secondly within the nation.

Andrew Gamble argues that “war and slumps are great catalyst for change; without them, effecting transformative change becomes that much harder”.³⁶⁰ The labelling of the miners as an “enemy” – the stockpiling and preparation for this “war” demonstrated a targeting of the NUM, that I argue, reflects Gamble's assertion of the need for this perpetual change – Thatcher's creative destruction.

³⁶⁰ A. Gamble, *Crisis without End? The Unravelling of Western Prosperity* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p.48

2.4 The Challenge to the “Tory Corporate State”

This chapter identifies a change in conservatism and the Conservative Party post-1974. I argue that a New Right, through an emotive, rhetorical crusade, was to target a post-war corporate establishment, which had allowed Britain to settle into the “rut of relative decline”.³⁶¹ It identifies with a section of the Conservative Party, or a New Conservatism, one constructed through a rejection of an established process of political protocol, actor and industrial relations, that was to challenge a “vanity of a governing elite”.³⁶² The development of this New Right would be achieved through the targeting of, as Middlemas describes, the “governing institutions”³⁶³ of the nation. Successive post-war governments would implement policy with recognition of civil service, business and trade unions. Dennis Kavanagh argues the role of government and political parties had declined, whilst the influence of these “interest groups crossed the political threshold and became part of an extended state”.³⁶⁴ This model had offered “political stability” as successive governments acknowledged the role and influence of both trade union and business that were to be gradually “sucked into Whitehall”.³⁶⁵ This produced a consensual political and socio-economic arena, as once conflicting interest groups now “crossed the political threshold”.³⁶⁶

³⁶¹ C. Barnett, *The Verdict of Peace: Britain Between her Yesterday and the Future* (Macmillan, 2001), p513

³⁶² Ibid.

³⁶³ K. Middlemas, *Politics in Industrial Society* (London, Andre Deutsch, 1979), p.309

³⁶⁴ D. Kavanagh, *Thatcherism and British Politics. The End of Consensus?* (Oxford University Press, 1990), p.29

³⁶⁵ Ibid

³⁶⁶ Ibid

Therefore the post-war period was to develop into a “world of consensus politics”.³⁶⁷

It was generally a conservative with small “c” world, a world of consultation, growth and a “stable, national two-party system”.³⁶⁸

The post-war era was one of Conservative Party success. Harold Macmillan, who “regarded himself a practical person”³⁶⁹, had defined the form of conservatism of the post-war years and identified with a dedication to a mixed economy, conciliatory wage negotiation with trade unions and the priority of the “quandary of maintaining full employment.”³⁷⁰ By 1957 the “class war was obsolete”, with the Labour Party concerned that “The simple fact is that the Tories identified themselves with the working class rather better than we did”.³⁷¹

By 1960 Britain could boast of a confident mixed economy.³⁷² It was a time of expansion of output and exports, resulting with the return of the British economy to the black, the policy of full employment continued to succeed, and as the Conservative administration had won a third successive general election in 1959; “The Conservatives remained well satisfied throughout much of this period”.³⁷³

³⁶⁷ V. Bogdanor (1986). Harold Macmillan, Unflappable Master of the Middle Way. *The Guardian*. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/1986/dec/30/obituaries>

³⁶⁸ J. Denis Derbyshire & I. Derbyshire, *Politics in Britain; From Callaghan to Thatcher* (Sandpiper Publishing, 1990), p.26

³⁶⁹ P. Hennessy, *The Prime Minister; The Office and its Holders Since 1945*, (Penguin Books, 2000), p.265

³⁷⁰ T. Heppell. *The Tories; From Winston Churchill to David Cameron* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), p.168

³⁷¹ A. Sampson, *Macmillan: A Study in Ambiguity* (Penguin Books, 1967), p.166

³⁷² K. O’Morgan, *The People’s Peace British History Since 1945 – 1990* (Oxford University Press, 1999), p.119

³⁷³ Ibid.

Corporatism and centrality had produced a perception of a productive nation, clambering from the embers of the Second World War, the welfare state was intact and relations with the trade union, though at times strained, were manageable and constructive – a country of whom the “general tone was one of buoyancy”.³⁷⁴

Capitalism was to be re-engineered and modified. A tightening and interlocking of state, industry and trade unions into a “symbiosis of mutual accommodation” demonstrating an “articulation between the state and the functional interests in civil society.”³⁷⁵ The rigours of war had ensured a degree of solidarity that would enable a bypassing of traditional class and industrial economic division, demonstrating a “collective participatory basis for the organisation of production.”³⁷⁶ A socio-political construct for an industrial age to forge a new form of democratic representation; a legitimate, inclusive attempt to cement industrial representation and institutional legitimacy – running parallel with democratic institutions of government and Parliamentary representation. Keith Middlemas argues that this “triangular pattern of co-operation” paved the way for the trade union movement to be an accepted arm of government and elevated,

³⁷⁴ Ibid, p.94

³⁷⁵ A. Cawson, *Corporatism and Welfare: Social Policy and State Intervention in Britain* (London, 1982), p.145.

³⁷⁶ Ibid

trades unions and employers' associations to a new sort of status; from interest groups they became "governing institutions" ... they became "partners" of government with permanent rights of access and accorded devolved powers by the state.³⁷⁷

Corporatism propelled the representatives of working classes to the heart of the Executive. It would reflect the "highest form of social democracy" one which was born from the post-war Keynesian economic drive for a mixed economy and welfare state. Yet a key theme that would emerge through corporatism was the challenge presented to a liberal democracy "marginalised by the progressive expansion of a tripartite process of decision making".³⁷⁸

This presented a certain challenge to New Right ideology – a series of collective, corporate decision-making organisations, elevating Britain from the economic post-war crisis, to a position of influence in Europe, through tripartite policy making. The corporatist agenda aided the cause of the trade union movement, instilling an "emollient approach to trade unions"³⁷⁹ entailing the avoidance of confrontation and the extension of influence and indeed power. As Middlemas argues, by the 1960s

³⁷⁷ K. Middlemas, *Politics in Industrial Society; The Experience of the British System Since 1911* (London, Methuen, 1979), p.20.

³⁷⁸ F. Burger & H. Compton, *Policy Conservation & Social partnership In Western Europe* (Bergman Books, 2002), p.51.

³⁷⁹ C. Wrigley, *British Trade Unions, 1945 – 1995* (Manchester University Press, 1997), p.6

the trade union movement in Britain had become the “country’s most powerful pressure group”³⁸⁰ – government and the state were to be driven by a system of alliances, with a vested interest in secrecy undermining the clarity and accountability of Parliament. The role of the trade union, argues Middlemas, turned from pressure groups or special interest groups into “governing institutions” with an indirect mandate to cajole and persuade government policy. Though Middlemas argues that due to the “complexities of the British political system” corporatism itself could not be defined, a “corporate bias” was to reflect an “acceptance of the common national interest” enabling a “uniquely low level of class conflict”.³⁸¹

This “bias” though “had ramifications”.³⁸² The fusion of Parliamentary democracy and corporatism, argues Jessop, was a “contradictory unit”.³⁸³ Corporatism was to be “destabilised, apparently deliberately, by parties trying to regain their lost dominance”³⁸⁴ as ultimately it was to prove that “Thatcherism and corporatism proved to be incompatible”.³⁸⁵ The recognition of the limitations of corporatism lay

³⁸⁰ K. Middlemas, *Politics in Industrial Society; The Experience of the British System Since 1911* (London, Andre Deutsch, 1979), p.309.

³⁸¹ R. Whiting (1980). *Politics in Industrialised Society*. *History Today*. Available at: <https://www.historytoday.com/richard-whiting/politics-industrial-society>

³⁸² D. Judge, *Representation: Theory and Practice in Britain* (Routledge, 1999), p.131

³⁸³ *Ibid*, p.132

³⁸⁴ K. Middlemas, *Politics in Industrial Society; The Experience of the British System Since 1911* (London, Andre Deutsch, 1979), p.309.

³⁸⁵ D. Judge, *Representation: Theory and Practice in Britain* (Routledge, 1999), p.132

with Edward Heath's corporatist period 1972 - 1974, an "aberration" argues Arthur Seldon "in the history of the twentieth-century history of the Conservative Party".³⁸⁶ Heath had U-turned in his challenge to tripartite governance. In 1973 *The Selsdon Manifesto* proclaimed, "Britain is today approaching a state of crisis".³⁸⁷ The Selsdon programme, originally upon which Edward Heath "had been elected"³⁸⁸ Norman Tebbit argues, was to be rejected amidst a "retreat into corporatism".³⁸⁹ Originally planned by Heath as a conference in January of 1970 to provide a "fairly assertive restatement of the virtues of capitalism"³⁹⁰ it marked, argued Norman Tebbit, "the Tory Party's first repudiation of the post-war Butskellite consensus".³⁹¹ Douglas Hurd considered the gathering at Selsdon as "frivolous"³⁹² - but, I argue, the consequences were symbolic.

Heath's initial agenda, as demonstrated through Selsdon, was one of modernisation, a demonstration of "modern technocratic conservatism".³⁹³ The pursuit of excellence, modernity, pragmatism and expertise had a "modernising zeal".³⁹⁴ This was reflected at Selsdon as the "strident communiqué" of selectivity of social

³⁸⁶ S. Ball and A. Seldon, *The Heath Government 1970-74: A Reappraisal* (Routledge, 1996), p.377

³⁸⁷ *The Selsdon Manifesto*, 19th September 1973, Selsdon Group. Available at:

<http://www.selsdongroup.co.uk/manifesto.pdf>

³⁸⁸ N. Tebbit, *Upwardly Mobile – An Autobiography* (George Weidenfield & Nicolson Limited, 1988), p.105

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁰ P. Ziegler, *Edward Heath: The Authorised Biography* (Harper Press, 2011), p.215

³⁹¹ N. Tebbit, *Upwardly Mobile – An Autobiography* (George Weidenfield & Nicolson Limited, 1988), p.105

³⁹² *Ibid*

³⁹³ D. Judge, *Representation: Theory and Practice in Britain* (Routledge, 1999), p.131

³⁹⁴ *Ibid*

services and tax cuts, amidst a vigorous pursuit of law and order.³⁹⁵ Yet Heath was to retreat from the optimism and energy of Selsdon's reformist agenda of free enterprise and economic empowerment. Instead he was to revert to the comfort of a new "Tory Corporate State"³⁹⁶ of industrial and economic policy granting "de facto established powers"³⁹⁷ to non-accountable or representational bodies. The creation of "super ministries" and a concession of power and influence on the TUC³⁹⁸, these were to present a "mish-mash of ill-considered centralist and socialist hand to mouth devices".³⁹⁹ The ambitions of a "clear mandate"⁴⁰⁰ for industrial reform in 1970 were to dissipate in the "pitched battles for pay in the public sector".⁴⁰¹ Heath's defeat in 1974 was to become a symbol for One Nation conservatism – weakness at the hands of corporate power sharing. It represented not simply a case of failed implementation of industrial policy, but a failure in the key areas of both "political argument hegemony" and any form of "future governing competence".⁴⁰²

Heath's "disassociation"⁴⁰³ with Selsdon had proved symbolic. The "Selsdon Agenda", the pursuit of "Quiet Revolution" with its associated "doctrinal

³⁹⁵ H. Young, *One of Us* (Macmillan, 1989), p.59

³⁹⁶ P. Ziegler, *Edward Heath: The Authorised Biography* (Harper Press, 2011), p.215

³⁹⁷ R. Scruton, *The Meaning of Conservatism* (Penguin Books, 1980), p.176

³⁹⁸ Trade Union Congress

³⁹⁹ N. Tebbit, *Upwardly Mobile – An Autobiography* (George Weidenfield & Nicolson Limited, 1988), p.105

⁴⁰⁰ S. Ball & A. Selsdon, *The Heath Government 1970-74: A Reappraisal* (Routledge, 1996), p. 169

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid*, p.170

⁴⁰² M. Burch & M. Moran, *British Politics: A Reader* (Manchester University Press, 1987), p.173

⁴⁰³ T. Heppell, *Choosing the Tory Leader; Conservative Party Leadership Elections from Heath* (Tauris Academic Studies, 2008), p.52

considerations”⁴⁰⁴ was rejected with a return to a “Keynesian demand boost” and the pretences of Macmillan. Conservatism had failed both on a macro and theoretical level to embrace or enforce coherent economic strategy and “in a statecraft context the Heath led Conservative Party represented a total failure on all levels”. The Conservative Party’s position in 1974 “looked extremely grim”.⁴⁰⁵ A point had been reached when Heath’s interpretation of a Tory statecraft and British corporatism had failed. A “new Toryism”⁴⁰⁶ was to question,

what is of far greater moment is that the Government’s apparent abandonment of its previous electoral commitment to the free economy invites the question ‘whether the Conservative Party is at present fulfilling any meaningful function in British politics.’⁴⁰⁷

This is a highly significant development. Conservatism has always wanted to portray to an electorate the ability to “govern effectively” using various “dimensions of statecraft”.⁴⁰⁸ Within these, a perception of competence cannot be understated.⁴⁰⁹ Yet argues E.H.H. Green, “As the Conservative Century came to an end, and it seemed

⁴⁰⁴ M. Burch & M. Moran, *British Politics: A Reader* (Manchester University Press, 1987), p.174

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁶ *The Spectator*, (1973). Enoch Powell and the Liberal Revival. Available at: <http://archive.spectator.co.uk/page/11th-august-1973/3>

⁴⁰⁷ *The Selsdon Manifesto*, 19th September 1973, Selsdon Group. Available at: <http://www.selsdongroup.co.uk/manifesto.pdf>

⁴⁰⁸ T. Heppell, *The Tories: From Winston Churchill to David Cameron* (Bloomsbury, 2012), p.173

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid

that even if the Conservative Party had survived, conservatism had not”.⁴¹⁰ Heath’s administration had reflected weakness; Selsdon’s agenda was to exploit this watershed moment – the weakness in the way that conservatism was perceived. When Selsdon’s inquisitors question the “meaningful nature” of the Conservative Party, it is questioning the core ability of the party to govern. This cuts to the core of Conservative Party statecraft. The Selsdon group responded, that “It is not our intention either to initiate or to engage in any struggle with the Conservative leadership as such”, yet it then retorts,

We merely wish to start a serious discussion within the Party about its goals and the direction in which we want to see it move.⁴¹¹

To those of us who believe that genuine choice between the Parties gives politics its meaning and dignity, this state of affairs is intolerable and must be changed: hence the formation of the Selsdon⁴¹²

This intolerability reflects the shift in perception in direction the Conservative Party was to take. Organised labour would need to be exorcised from the corridors of power – and, as Andrew Gamble argues, the consensual approach of the tripartite system would be challenged to, “Restore both the effectiveness and legitimacy of

⁴¹⁰ E.H.H. Green, *Ideologies of Conservatism: Conservative Political Ideas in the 20th Century* (Oxford University Press, 2002), p.320.

⁴¹¹ *The Selsdon Manifesto*, 19th September 1973, Selsdon Group. Available at: <http://www.selsdongroup.co.uk/manifesto.pdf>

⁴¹² *Ibid*

government”.⁴¹³ This legitimacy lies in the principles of the pursuit of capital hegemony – the restoration of the economic pursuit of power as the central plank of society. Thatcherism and the New Right’s crusade intended to liberate the market from the shackles of this Heath’s Tory corporatism. To replace the post-war consensus with a march of privatisation and the private sector; as Gamble argues, the New Right would strip “from the state the extended roles”⁴¹⁴ to “dismantle corporatism”⁴¹⁵ to maintain the strength of the state to perform neoliberal economic reform.

The Selsdon Group would not deviate from its manifesto for change and of the pursuit of “economic freedom”. It would challenge the Conservative government to “abandon its present ragbag of authoritarian collectivist policies”⁴¹⁶ that the corporate experiment had delivered. A rallying call for a New Right, Selsdon was to reflect a shift in the dynamic of the Conservative Party – one from an extension of the post-war agenda of conciliation to one that was to question the nature of its own party’s direction. Gone was the fudge of corporatism and instead, a rallying call for clarity.

⁴¹³ Ibid

⁴¹⁴ A. Gamble, *Privatisation, Thatcherism, and the British State*, Journal of Law and Society, Vol.16. No.1

⁴¹⁵ Ibid

⁴¹⁶ *The Selsdon Manifesto*, 19th September 1973, Selsdon Group. Available at: <http://www.selsdongroup.co.uk/manifesto.pdf>

By 1973 the direction of a Conservative Party administration was challenged publically. It lamented the “the continuing failure of the Government’s counter inflation strategy” and “The Government’s about turns in economic policy are, alas, bringing this situation about”. Indeed, so dire was the scenario of corporate mismanagement that the Selsdon Group, once a reformist platform for Heathite modernisation, was to declare that “Britain is today approaching a state of crisis”⁴¹⁷ – “If the present trends continue, the electorate will only have a choice between two brands of collectivism at the next General Election: Socialism V. The Tory Corporate State”. It presented a “profoundly un-Conservative nostrum”.⁴¹⁸

The consensus could not hold. Muddling through pragmatically in the face of ever stronger trade union militancy, siphoning the authority of Parliamentary democracy, extending the role of the state – none of this could any longer be tolerated. Corporate Britain, the acceptance of industrial representation within the corridors of power, could not be sustained. There needed a “Conservative counter revolution”⁴¹⁹ to restore the “intolerable” developments within the Conservative Party. There required a clarity of vision, a realignment of Tory values that were “instinctively repelled by the extent of central direction” required by the corporate experiment. A Conservative Party should not be required to operate incomes policy, to be always outbid by the

⁴¹⁷ Ibid

⁴¹⁸ S. Ball & A. Selsdon, *The Heath Government 1970 – 1974* (Routledge, 1996)

⁴¹⁹ Ibid

trade unions in “Britain’s adversarial political system”.⁴²⁰ There required change; this was to come in the form of Thatcherism.

2.5 Conclusions

A New Conservatism was to re-design itself as a New Right and began to assert its influence and authority post-1974. This was a form of conservatism, I argue, that was prepared to challenge the predetermined post-war position of One Nation conservatism – a rejection of One Nation politics and the Tory “minimalist statecraft” of Harold Macmillan.⁴²¹ Lawson’s “conscious change of direction”⁴²² as he himself describes, was to challenge the rationale of post-war government. I argue that this perception or construction of a “New Conservatism” was a paradox; of a new institution challenging its own meaning as bastion of status quo conservatism. To gain the momentum necessary for a national and moral recovery, I argue that there required a form of creative destruction – this in contrast to both Conservative values and the fudge of corporatism, was designed through a combative rhetoric. It was restless and relentless and no more so than in the 1982 Falkland’s war. The conflict was to see the use of language which “evoked a sense of Britishness as a libertarian refusal to surrender interest or power to any version of collectivism.”⁴²³

⁴²⁰ Ibid

⁴²¹ S. Mitchell, *The Brief and Turbulent Life of Modernising Conservatism* (Cambridge Scholars Press, 2006), p.38

⁴²² N. Lawson, Speech to The Bow Group, *The New Conservatism*, 4th August 1980. Available at: Margaret Thatcher Foundation <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/109505>

⁴²³ J, Martin, *Politics and Rhetoric – A Critical Introduction* (Routledge, 2014), p.164

And it is this symbolism, these analogies, that were to be transposed to the domestic, home front. Thatcher was to proclaim that the “competent, courageous and resolute” military qualities, were, “A lesson we must apply to peace just as we have learned in war.”⁴²⁴ It is these lessons, indeed a template for conflict, resonating as an international victory that would ultimately return in a war footing in the 1984 miners’ conflict.

War would accompany Thatcher’s implementation of her moral crusade. The language of war, the rhetoric of external military conflict, transferred to an industrial battlefield. I argue that this confirms the implementation of her creative destruction agenda. The use of military language in the same breath as the working classes was to be unique – the perception of an “enemy within” an enemy amongst us, was an absolute fault-line with the traditions of One Nation rhetoric. The symbolism of industrial representation would alter. There was now a link between domestic, industrial representation and aggression and confrontation. It is this perception, and

⁴²⁴ Ibid

the ability to manipulate it,⁴²⁵ which allowed Thatcherism to attack the “authoritative working-class leadership in the trade unions”.⁴²⁶

This chapter reveals that the introduction to this narrative would culminate in 1984 – a change in party political identity, the implementation of a moral fervour, the acceptance of a need to break free from consensus and ultimately the designating of a necessary target – by defeating the trade union movement. The rhetoric used against organised labour reflects the change in conservatism and within sections of The Conservative Party itself. Trade unionism was to have now been perceived as responsible for a country that was in a “grave position, of crisis proportion.”⁴²⁷ Trade unionism was not a rallying call for positive action and association but increasing militancy and threat to democracy. In a speech to the House of Common in 1979, Thatcher decreed that, “Some unions are so powerful that they are able to deprive the community of the essentials of life”.⁴²⁸ In January 1979 Jim Callaghan was to offer the Leader of the Opposition some words of wisdom regarding relations between government and the trade union movement. Callaghan warned,

⁴²⁵ The role of the media in the presentation of the trade union movement leading up to the industrial conflicts of the 1980’s, argues Granville Williams, “remains a critical issue”. Ian Gilmour, argues, that the relationship between government and the national media, dictated by liberal usage of the honours system, lead to the new Thatcher government, “spurred on by a right wing popular press which could hardly have been more fawning if it had been state controlled” ...”set out to solve the problems that had defied all predecessors since 1945”.

G. Williams, *Shafted – The Media, the Miners’ Strike & the Aftermath* (Campaign for Press Broadcasting Freedom, 2009), p.38.

⁴²⁶ P. Wilson *Margaret Thatcher’s Revolution* (Continuum, 2005), preface.

⁴²⁷ HC Deb 16th January 1979 vol 960 M. Thatcher, Speech *The Economy*. Available at: <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1975/may/22/>

⁴²⁸ Ibid.

that anger and indignation are emotions that it is right to display... But I would seriously and earnestly beg the right hon. Lady not to give way to overmuch indignation when she is negotiating on these issues. We have found by a long experience of history that it is not sufficient to refer to a large number of one's fellow citizens, as one of the Sunday newspapers did, as enemies within the gate.⁴²⁹

History demonstrates that Callaghan's words were not adhered to. The perception of "enemies" was embraced to offer clarity and purpose to the New Conservatives. The fudge of corporatism and consensus, the lack of clarity of government – this required the enemy that was the trade union movement to offer purpose to install a new form of politics. Politics of the moral, the driven and the pursuit of individual freedom. Corporatism was to be associated with the demise of the human spirit, the lack of drive from industry, the lack of creativity in commerce and a fundamental malaise of the British spirit. Here we can associate Thatcherism's link between the emotive, socio-religious pursuit of individual autonomous harmony with, what would be associated as the evils of the post-war world – co-operation, demarcation and representation of the mass, through a legitimate diffusion of power to representative bodies associated with both the traditions of classical conservatism and trades

⁴²⁹ HC Deb 16th January 1979 vol 960 Mr James Callaghan. Available at: <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1975/may/22/>

unionism. The demise, the decline of Britain, a was debate so vast, that in the Thatcherite, New Conservative perception there was one answer and one cure – the defeat of the regressive tactics of industrial Britain, the challenge to the hegemony of corporatism and the cure of purity of freedom and individualism.

The evidence presented in this chapter reveals the development of a path to this confrontation through a rejection of One Nation politics. I have demonstrated a change in the perception of conservatism; from an associate of corporatism, to an advocate of conflict. This was a design to construct a new form of conservatism. One that was to be based on doctrine and based upon faith – faith in the market driven, neo-liberal policies of individualism, faith in the pursuit of the halt in decline of Britain and faith in adhering to a challenge to the traditions of One Nation conservatism and the post-war political consensus. Ultimately this chapter has identified a formulation of a theoretical framework, one that was to construct an agenda that was to rearrange the dynamic between government and corporatism; a shift in a perception of trade unionism and its role within a tripartite, consensual, governing structure. I have analysed in this chapter a challenge to corporatism, a rejection of conciliatory principles and the development of a new socio-political agenda; one driven by a desire for both internal and external conflict, bound by the new ethos of moral economic doctrine; one that ultimately, was bound to a need for confrontation with the trade union movement.

Chapter 3 – Enoch Powell – Thatcher’s Teacher

3.0 Introduction

“There is no “doubt that Powellism helped to produce Thatcherism”⁴³⁰

In this chapter I argue that Powellism acted as the template for ideological reform within the Conservative Party; a prioritising of economic freedom and British Parliamentary sovereignty. To understand the construct and rise of a New Right, it is necessary to understand the nature and influence of Powellism. As a loose set of political theories, thoughts, speeches and political actions, Powellism offers context to the construct of a new form of conservatism post-1974. To understand the significance of Thatcher and ultimately Thatcherism, of Keith Joseph and the ideals of freedom, economics, sovereignty and individual liberty, Enoch Powell offers clarity of thought, a clarity of purpose and a theoretical road map of New Right politics. Powellism offers inspiration to a new form of politics; he would dare to discuss issues that were “outside the mainstream of British politics”⁴³¹ clearing a controversial pathway for Thatcherism to tread. In discussing “Britain’s existential crisis”⁴³² born from the haemorrhaging of sovereign power, the challenge to the “fragile entity” of British identity and the desire for freedom, Powell could accept

⁴³⁰ B. Jackson & R. Saunders, *Making Thatcher’s Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), p.95

⁴³¹ D. Schoen, *Enoch Powell and the Powellites* (Macmillan, 1977), p.240

⁴³² B. Jackson & R. Saunders, *Making Thatcher’s Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), p.98

the slings and arrows that the establishment would throw; he was a maverick who could countenance of controversy. His contentious and highly flammable protestations, the issues and debates he was to discuss, however broad and articulately presented, were to see him sacked; yet he was to lay the foundations for Thatcherism.

Powellism offers an absolutism that allowed the development of policy that was rhetorically, economically and politically combative; he would inspire through saying the unsayable, breaking post-war consensual political taboos. Though Powell was to fail in the context of statecraft political legitimacy and efficiency - he was to be removed from government by Heath - his determined challenge to these political orthodoxies predetermined the eventual ideologically driven challenge to consensus. Therefore, Powellism, I argue, offers legitimacy to sustain Thatcherism's reinterpretation of conservatism and the challenge to the trade union movement.

3.1 Powellism & Ideology

It is "impossible" to understand the development of a New Right within the Conservative Party without acknowledging the "ideology of Powellism."⁴³³ Prior to the development of Powellism, within the Conservative Party, there was no

⁴³³ R. Vinen, *Thatcher's Britain: The Politics and Social Upheaval of the 1980's* (Pocket Books, 1988), p.45

alternative to “the system of hegemony”⁴³⁴ of consensus. It would become apparent that a “new course” was available to conservatism and through the vocal and intellectual challenge, “a conscious change of ideological direction in the Conservative Party”⁴³⁵ would emerge.

Powellism would demonstrate clearly this ideological vision. Andrew Gamble argues that it would be his “ideological offensive” that would offer a “new national strategy to the Tories”. It would be one that ultimately he, individually, would not follow, as he would have to accept his “political isolationism” that his “clear cut” alternative would offer.⁴³⁶ Yet economically, morally and politically for the New Right, Powell’s “constant ideological pressure”⁴³⁷ would inject a dynamism and an intellectualism, one that the Conservative Party would find “hard to resist”.⁴³⁸ Powell’s self-destruction – his “monstrous reputation”⁴³⁹ that has emerged post-1968 – would in many ways be his national epitaph, his name a metaphor for paranoid fear of immigration; yet his abstract conceptualism, his political boldness and oratorical bravery, were to eventually see his interpretation of the roles and functions of government “became commonplace”⁴⁴⁰ in the march of New Right “Conservative

⁴³⁴ A. Gamble, *The Free economy and the Strong State; The Politics of Thatcherism* (Macmillan Education, 1988), p.73

⁴³⁵ R. S. Turner, *Neo-liberal Ideology: History, Concepts and Policies* (Edinburg University Press, 2008), p95

⁴³⁶ A. Gamble, *The Conservative Nation* (Routledge, 2014)

⁴³⁷ R. S. Turner, *Neo-liberal Ideology: History, Concepts and Policies* (Edinburg University Press, 2008), p95

⁴³⁸ A. Gamble, *The Conservative Nation* (Routledge, 2014)

⁴³⁹ Hannan, D (2014). Enoch Powell's monstrous reputation hides the real man, *The Telegraph*.

⁴⁴⁰ W.H. Greenleaf, *The British Political Tradition: Volume Two the Ideological Heritage* (Methuen, 1983), p.317

populism”. In understanding Powellism, I argue, one can identify the route that Thatcherism took towards industrial conflict in 1984.

His theories were to “float into the mainstream Thatcher age”:⁴⁴¹ fierce nationalism, economic policy designed upon the purity of the market place, the attack on socialism and suspiciousness of the state. Though personally distanced from her “intellectual mentor”⁴⁴² Thatcher was to adopt the mantra of a challenge to the unnatural enforcement of consensus and the “abolishing of man-made obstacles”.⁴⁴³ These obstacles were for Powell the “collectivist illusion.”⁴⁴⁴ The conceit of government who formulated and imposed ideas of whose origins were wholly unnatural – what is paramount for government is a pursuit of the “natural necessity of things”.⁴⁴⁵ This necessity extends to a notion of the “unlimited supremacy of Crown in Parliament” – allegiances, created and sustained through history, that were, for English subjects “effortless and unconstrained”.⁴⁴⁶ The British constitution is an “abstraction” that reflects “living reality of Parliament” – the embodiment of the political will of the nation and of “the people themselves”. The legislature to Powell was sacrosanct – it was and is, a symbol of the freedom and birth right of the British

⁴⁴¹ H. Young, *One of Us* (Macmillan, London), p.61

⁴⁴² Ibid, p.62

⁴⁴³ W.H. Greenleaf, *The British Political Tradition: Volume Two the Ideological Heritage* (Methuen, 1983), p.320

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁶ D. Marquand, *Britain since 1918: The Strange Career of British Democracy* (Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London).

people, a demonstration of the “consent of the people”.⁴⁴⁷ To meddle, to alter or distort, to add new born organisations within these corridors of power, was to challenge the “integrity of the nation”.⁴⁴⁸

The British, argued Powell, “are creatures of precedent”.⁴⁴⁹ There is no “document or treaty” to formulate British law, but the “omnipotence of Parliamentary procedure” is born through “precedent authority” of the will of the British people.⁴⁵⁰ Willingness to accord with an historical “evolutionary” mandate that evolves and changes over time, yet is still “not incompatible with the strongest emotional attachment to precedent”.⁴⁵¹ This unwritten agreement, has organically offered stability and harmony; alter this precedent, tamper with the delicate eco-structure of Englishness and its dedicated pursuit of freedom, would be the “quickest way to ensure a rebellion”.⁴⁵²

And for Powell this moment of rebellion was to come in the form of consensus and corporatism. The “effortless” sources of Englishness, the natural, libertarian ethos found within the English soul, would be diluted through consensus, the media, the European Community and the trade union movement. The working man and woman

⁴⁴⁷ C. Stephens, *A Study in Legal History Volume II; The Last of England: Lord, Volume 2* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), p.169

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁹ E. Powell, Speech - *British Parliamentary Institutions*, 8th May 1990, British Council, Oporto, Portugal. Available at: <http://enochpowell.info/Resources/>

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid.

⁴⁵² Ibid.

would no “longer dare trust their own wits” due to a supposed domination “by their betters”. Individual virtues of independence of mind and spirit were now “trapped or imprisoned” and for Powell, this entrapment of the people to the “benign” dictatorship of the bureaucrat was never “racial or religious discrimination: it is communalism”.⁴⁵³

Therefore, corporatism’s agenda challenges the very fabric of Parliamentary sovereignty and British identity. Consensus politics lacked a purity of conviction, it represented a challenge against an established order and ultimately the rule of law. The role of government is to govern, not to cooperate and to conciliate; Powell argued that, “Government by request has an engaging appearance, but it conceals the germs of tyranny and is inconsistent in principle with the rule of law”.⁴⁵⁴ An extension to the parameters of non-legislative power, an acceptance of a differing form of social contract or construct, whether it be the trade union movement or an acceptance of a multicultural, multinational society, diffuses and weakens the existing and historic moral, political and social boundaries of society.

There is no negotiating the role of Parliament as “No treaty binds, or can bind, what Parliament does”.⁴⁵⁵ The nation prospers through a delicate, historical precedent – a

⁴⁵³ E. Powell, Speech, *We live in an age of conspiracies*, 11th May 1968, Chippenham Girls School. Available at: <http://enochpowell.info/Resources/>

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁵ E. Powell, Speech, *British Parliamentary Institutions*, 8th May 1990, British Council, Oporto, Portugal. Available at: <http://enochpowell.info/Resources/>

balance which needs to hold in deference the past and its values. The rise of collectivism and the trade union movement was to present a challenge and a constraint to this delicate relationship. The retreat from empire and Britain's contribution to the victory over fascism, had offered opportunity to readdress and tamper with the "omnipotent" values of Parliamentary democracy. The development of consensus and corporatism were to offer "inconsistent compromise"⁴⁵⁶ which was to "constrain the nation's resources and talents".⁴⁵⁷ Powell argued in a speech in Wolverhampton in 1963,

The ultimate degradation in politics is to try to cling to power by borrowing your opponents' policies: nothing destroys a party so surely. What we stand for is neither socialism nor an inconsistent compromise with socialism, but the direct opposite... We offer neither servitude, nor the safety, ease and irresponsibility of servitude – we offer freedom.⁴⁵⁸

Powell was to look to the principle of freedom as the "highest political good."⁴⁵⁹ It was for men to make their choice to be "right or wrong, wise or foolish" and most importantly to "obey their own consciences, to follow their own initiatives".⁴⁶⁰ There

⁴⁵⁶ E. Powell, Speech, Friday 13th December 1963. Wolverhampton West Conservative Association. Available at: <http://enochpowell.info/Resources/>

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁹ E. Powell, Speech, 6th July 1963. Bromsgrove Unionist Club, Wolverhampton. Available at: <http://enochpowell.info/Resources/>

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid

is no “superior wisdom” of government that “serves but does not aspire to dominate”.⁴⁶¹ Yet he was to speak of a post-war world, in which he saw a challenge to this very primary vestige of British political values. And it was a challenge orchestrated by an establishment determined to challenge the very fabric of British political discourse. Collective forces were to conspire against the elemental nature of Englishness – “We live in an age of conspiracies” he argues and “The politics of the last few years have been little more than a series of conspiracies conducted by the politicians and the press”.⁴⁶² These presented an elite, a “dictatorship, benign, bureaucratic, even parliamentary, but still a dictatorship.”⁴⁶³

And it was this establishment that required challenging. Thatcherism, as Stuart Hall argues, thrives on the art of the construction of a protagonist. Hall argues, that Thatcherism was to succeed “by directly engaging the ‘creeping socialism’ and apologetic state collectivism’ of the Conservative ‘wets’”. It strikes at the “very nerve centre of consensus politics”.⁴⁶⁴ The “strength” of Thatcherism is in its “commitment to break the mould” to forge an identity and to challenge a prevailing consensus. This Thatcher was to achieve through her “peasants’ revolt”⁴⁶⁵ and it stems directly

⁴⁶¹ Ibid.

⁴⁶² E. Powell, Speech, *We live in an age of conspiracies*, 11th May 1968, Chippenham Girls School. Available at: <http://enochpowell.info/Resources/>

⁴⁶³ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁴ Hall, S. (1984). *The Great Moving Right Show, Marxism Today*. Available at: <http://www.hegemonics.co.uk/docs/Great-Moving-Right-Show.pdf>

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid

from Powellism. Powell understood and advocated the need to confront this established “dictatorship” those who thrive on an “increase in the power and expenditure of governments”.⁴⁶⁶

Powellism challenged the “functions of government”. It was to challenge how the state had foregone its “elementary duty” of deference to the protection of freedom of its citizens,⁴⁶⁷ and how government had become “engrossed with the functions of government” while interfering with individuals and “rearranging society” without performing the most basic duty of protecting individual liberty.⁴⁶⁸ Therefore Powell was to challenge and ultimately “exclude himself from the political elite.”⁴⁶⁹ He was to be sacked for proclaiming the darker side of English nationalism in his “rivers of blood speech”⁴⁷⁰ and was to take refuge in Ulster unionism. Yet his legacy to Thatcherism is that of defiance, a regression to an England that had returned from the wilderness of post-imperialism and sought a form of salvation. Powell would tap into a discontent with the established political classes and above all seek to shake up

⁴⁶⁶ E. Powell, Speech, *We live in an age of conspiracies*, 11th May 1968, Chippenham Girls School. Available at: <http://enochpowell.info/Resources/>

⁴⁶⁷ E. Powell, Speech, *Government (violence in the media)* 27th August 1969, Bridgnorth, Salop. Available at: <http://enochpowell.info/Resources/>

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁹ D. Marquand, *Britain since 1918: The Strange Career of British Democracy* (Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London).

⁴⁷⁰ E. Powell, Speech, 20th April 1968, General Meeting of the West Midlands Area Conservative Political Centre. Available at: <http://enochpowell.info/Resources/>

a political elite who he accused of foregoing the “people themselves” who had “been cowed into a condition of passive acquiescence.”⁴⁷¹

This is in many respects, I argue, is Powell’s greatest legacy to Thatcherism – the annulment of class in search of the dismantling of established, consensual, post-war elites. The purity of Powell’s vision, his oratorical brilliance, clearly defines an establishment oppressing the working classes; an elite that had established a dominance over the working man, whose subordination to class, political party and trade union, had deemed the struggle for their individual rights and responsibilities, within an ancient, sovereign nation sacrificed to “deliver themselves passively to the guidance and domination of their betters”.⁴⁷²

Powellism is a cry against creeping globalisation and a changing modern world. His interpretation of post-war Britain was to be controversial and divisive, but never simplistic. Powell argued that the British people had “been abandoned to those who hated her”.⁴⁷³ And, who were these people? A political elite, manifesting itself within the media and civil rights movements, the intelligentsia, the universities, rioting students – the symbolism of a “moral ascendancy”.⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁷¹ E. Powell, Speech, *We live in an age of conspiracies*, 11th May 1968, Chippenham Girls School. Available at: <http://enochpowell.info/Resources/>

⁴⁷² Rutherford, J. (2008). The Spectre of Powellism, *The Guardian*. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2008/feb/25/thespectreofpowellism>

⁴⁷³ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁴ E. Powell, 13th June 1970, Northfield, Birmingham. Available at: <http://enochpowell.info/Resources/>

Powell saw a natural legitimacy in Parliament and government. His concern was that the historical precedent of sovereign and parliamentary authority was being undermined – by unelected, unaccountable and undemocratic bodies. And in this there was a challenge to the very heart and soul of national sovereignty – a challenge to the “authority of civil government.” Powell spoke at Northfield, Birmingham in 1970 proclaiming that “Britain at this moment is under attack.” The enemy was “invisible or disguised”, one that did not manifest in an “external enemy” or the “shape of armoured divisions.”⁴⁷⁵ Powell saw race not as a cause, but a symbol – “the real enemy were not immigrants” he argued, the enemy were those in the establishment who had forgotten their duty to England’s “moral sphere” and the “integrity” of the nation.⁴⁷⁶ Those in power, those establishment figures were to be his “enemy within” and he would “attack them head on”.⁴⁷⁷

3.2 Powellism, Trade Unions and the “Fascist, corporate state”

Powellism is a means of uniting two “twin ideological traditions”⁴⁷⁸ – economic liberalism and traditional Toryism. One places an emphasis on the allowance for, and liberation of, the freedom of the market – of government understanding the role

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁶ Rutherford, J. (2008). The Spectre of Powellism, *The Guardian*. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2008/feb/25/thespectreofpowellism>

⁴⁷⁷ D. Marquand, *Britain since 1918: The Strange Career of British Democracy* (Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London).

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid, p.59

of the marketplace in its decision making and of governments ability to self-impose “strict limits” of control. The other acknowledges the sanctity of a sovereign Parliament, social order and cohesion and the state’s obligation to protect its citizens and its authority to do so.⁴⁷⁹ These seemingly diametrically opposed mantra sought the freedom of economic and labour movement, promoted through the use of state strength and legitimacy. In many ways, this reflects Powell’s broad and changing intellectual and ideological mindsets, but it also identifies an individual, and an ideological “strand of English conservatism”⁴⁸⁰ that was to challenge the post-war corporate orthodoxy.

Powell was to deny that trade unionism “had produced any real benefits for their members”.⁴⁸¹ Trade unions presented the “type of absurdity which people only entertain when they are desperately determined to do so”⁴⁸² – the logic and the evidence, argued Powell, did not suggest that the “remuneration” of the working man and woman had been greatly affected by the imposition of the “restraint of trade” or “restriction of competition”.⁴⁸³ The post-war improvement in standards of living had been maintained through the rise in technological innovation – indeed the role of the trade union movement had polarised the working classes. Trade

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁰ A. Denham & K. O’Hara, *Conservative Thinkers: The Key Contributors to the Political Thought of the Modern Conservative Party* (Manchester University Press, 2009), p59

⁴⁸¹ P. Foot, *The Rise of Enoch Powell* (Penguin Books, 1969), p.129

⁴⁸² S. Letwin, *The Anatomy of Thatcherism* (Harper Collins Publishers), p.140

⁴⁸³ Ibid.

unionism's reliance on collective bargaining had in effect not resulted in a collective result for working people – there had been a “hoodwinking” of the “vast majority of their fellow citizens”. Trade unions, affected “divide and rule” – those in unionised industries, through union coercion, would challenge the true nature of supply and demand, driving up wage costs, thereby distorting the natural equilibrium.⁴⁸⁴

In contrast, for Powell capitalism presented a form of “supernatural providence”.⁴⁸⁵ It was a system that, if allowed, was capable of defeating “human evils”. Indeed, Powell in *The Times* in 1964, was to present the free market as an “enemy of discrimination between individuals, classes and races”.⁴⁸⁶ Preceding Powell's rhetoric of 1968 this important – a liberated and unfettered free market was an “immortal wonder”⁴⁸⁷ providing maximum benefit for all concerned, regardless of background – for government or political ideology, socialism or state planning to interfere was no less than a “tilt at providence”.⁴⁸⁸ For Powell, there was only one way to enforce the freedom of individual access to the benefits of the unfettered marketplace – restrict and defeat socialism; “There is an essential and an

⁴⁸⁴ S. Letwin, *The Anatomy of Thatcherism* (Harper Collins Publishers), p.140

⁴⁸⁵ P. Foot, *The Rise of Enoch Powell* (Penguin Books, 1969), p.129

⁴⁸⁶ C. Schofield, *Enoch Powell and the Making of Postcolonial Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 2013). p.166

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁸ P. Foot, *The Rise of Enoch Powell* (Penguin Books, 1969), p.129

ineradicable conflict between socialism itself and the freedom of the individual under the law”.⁴⁸⁹

The “vocal organs”⁴⁹⁰ for socialism were the trade union movement. Trade unions were designed to enslave the individual economically and morally – to make ordinary working people the “scapegoat for evils” as their liberty was deprived. The closed shop, endured due to the freedom of association, did so due to the impingement of right of “non-association” of an individual. Indeed, the whole emphasis of the trade union movement was one built upon the degradation of the British working man being responsible for the failure of collective government responsibility; “the sermons and threats, the controls and boards, the prices and incomes acts, the dreary apparatus of punitive Budgets”.⁴⁹¹ These have disempowered the individual to such an extent that, as to;

carry us far down the road to the fascist, corporate state, where the economic life and decisions of the individual are regulated by corporations of employers and trade unions.⁴⁹²

⁴⁸⁹ A. Denham & K. O’Hara, *Conservative Thinkers: The Key Contributors to the Political Thought of the Modern Conservative Party* (Manchester University Press, 2009), p.61

⁴⁹⁰ E. Powell, Speech, *We live in an age of conspiracies*, 11th May 1968, Chippenham Girls School. Available at: <http://enochpowell.info/Resources/>

⁴⁹¹ Ibid.

⁴⁹² Ibid.

The language of Powell is stark – the association of fascism to the post-war world is obvious and emotive. Yet for Powell there is relevance to the analogy, however stark, as the trade union movement challenged what was at the very essence of Powellism – national identity. The nation is the “key form of community” – it is multifaceted, multi-dimensional, delicate and most importantly, organic. It is created through an evolutionary process of the definition of core values and principles – it is not constructed or built – it evolves. And of importance, the notion of identity, of Englishness, is an emotion; Powell argued that “a nation is not a rational thing and there is no construction or a rational base for nationhood. What a nation is, is what it feels to be, instinctively and emotionally”.⁴⁹³ A nation would be constructed and live “by its myths” – of which there is good or indeed bad, of which needed to be replaced. The myth of Empire, of lingering post-war supremacy, accentuated racism, superiority and division – “Empire was built on political mythology” was designed to mask our weaknesses as a nation. The legacy of British imperialism, argues Powell, was to allow for the “durability of policies”⁴⁹⁴ post-empire and the sustainability of the establishment and rigidity of the class system.

This is reflected in the trade union movement. The myth of British industrial dominance, of being the “workshop of the world” and engine of industrialisation

⁴⁹³ C. Schofield, *Enoch Powell and the Making of Postcolonial Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 2013). p,166

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid.

inflicted a form of “social imperialism” that was not detached from the fading of empire. The British working man, toiling in the factory, mine or field, represented by the collective spirit of the union and yet unrewarded. This “myth” of a paternalistic “coercive state” blinded people to the necessity of allowing the instinctive nature of the markets to flourish. Money for Powell was “colour blind” as the market place created a “moral community” and morality could not exist outside this community.⁴⁹⁵ An “organic” and “evolutionary entity” the market cannot be tampered with, distorted, “planned, controlled or universalised”.⁴⁹⁶

Government and trade union attempt to do just that – with consequences. Inflation, “with all its attendant evils”, Powell argued at a speech in Chippenham in 1968, comes about, “for one reason and one reason only; the Government causes it”.⁴⁹⁷ Weak government holding, “a sort of emotional feeling about high unemployment”⁴⁹⁸ was to pander to trade union power and artificially design and control wage increase. The “battle for freedom is on,” Powell rallied, “nor is the enemy only outside the gates; he is inside as well, a fifth column wearing sometimes the most disarming and unsuspected of disguises”⁴⁹⁹. The trade union, not for the last time, was deemed as an enemy inside the establishment: a mythologised

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid, p.167

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁸ D. S. Jones, *Masters of the Universe - Hayek, Friedman and the Birth of neo-Liberal Policies*, (Princeton University press, 2012), p.192

⁴⁹⁹ S. Heffer, *Like the Roman; The Life of Enoch Powell* (Faber & Faber Limited, 2012), p.40

organisation that was guilty for abandoning the natural order of government; “The trade unions have clapped the handcuffs on to their own wrists, gone into the dock, and pleaded guilty to causing inflation”.⁵⁰⁰

The unnatural pursuit of full employment must not hinder the development of a free market. Peter Dorey argues that Powell saw the whole “concept of incomes policy as a fraud”⁵⁰¹ – inflation caused through political decision making. Wage negotiation and the artificiality of government incomes policy was a, “Nonsense, a silly nonsense, a transparent nonsense. What is more it is dangerous nonsense”.⁵⁰² A memorandum by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Peter Thorneycroft, presented to the cabinet in July 1957, noted that this disease of inflation must be made clear to the public, “the source of our inflationary disease is wages increasing out of proportion to increases in production”.⁵⁰³ Inflationary measures were not determined by the Treasury but by the TUC with ultimately “corporatist implications”. The TUC and the movement it represented would be seen by the public to be holding sway on government economic progress – ultimately, again facing the symbolic implications of a fascist state and rejection of Parliamentary sanctity. Powell warned that Britain, through inflationary measures controlled through trade union influence, was in

⁵⁰⁰ E. Powell, Speech, *We live in an age of conspiracies*, 11th May 1968, Chippenham Girls School. Available at: <http://enochpowell.info/Resources/>

⁵⁰¹ P. Dorey, *The Conservative Party and the Trade Unions* (Routledge, 1995), p.55

⁵⁰² J. Wood, *A Nation Not Afraid; The Thinking of Enoch Powell* (London, Botsford, 1965), p. 72.

⁵⁰³ Thorneycroft, P. (1957). *Cabinet Memorandum.; Inflation. Memorandum by the Chancellor of the Exchequer.* CAB 129/88. Available at: The National Archives UK (TNA)

“Imminent danger of slipping unawares into that form of State socialism which is known as fascism”.⁵⁰⁴

Again, the symbolic reflection of trade unionism with fascist ideology – and as per 1939, this would have to be defeated. Peter Thorneycroft would go on to outline the importance of defeating the “disease” of inflation, insofar as he argues that as a nation we would have to,

consider measures which may be economically undesirable or politically difficult, if they show any reasonable chance of securing stability in costs or prices.⁵⁰⁵

The quote is important. This research demonstrates the linear change in Conservative Party policy towards industrial relations – the deconstruction of internal Cabinet consent amid the introduction of ideologically driven industrial policy. The analogies of fascism and disease predetermine a newly sought mindset, one that was to transcend the notions of accountable statecraft, and to employ policy based upon ideological assumptions, that was once deemed unacceptable.

And this, I argue, demonstrates a formulation of a vision; for Powell, an historic moment had come. Characters who were driven by their passions, not always

⁵⁰⁴ P. Dorey, *The Conservative Party and the Trade Unions* (Routledge, 1995), p.53

⁵⁰⁵ Thorneycroft, P. (1957). *Cabinet Memorandum.; Inflation. Memorandum by the Chancellor of the Exchequer.* CAB 129/88. Available at: The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

“happy” or indeed good, but those who were prepared challenge the cynicism of the existing established order through the driven pursuit of a single goal.⁵⁰⁶ Powell constituted an “historical individual” as he was to deny the traits of popularity for one of purpose and principle; at a rally in Shipley in 1974, after criticising the Heath government, a member of the audience yelled, “Judas” – Powell retorted, “Judas was paid! Judas was paid! I am making a sacrifice!”⁵⁰⁷ And there is no “doubt that Powellism helped to produce Thatcherism.”⁵⁰⁸ It did so through a dedication to an ideological stance of the absolutism of certainty; indeed, it was a “state of certainty”⁵⁰⁹ that both Powellism and Thatcherism possessed, that was to prove the fuel to propel ideologically based change upon the Conservative Party and its relationship with the trade union movement. It showed the fallacy of wage negotiation and industrial planning, of poor leadership, party management and clouded vision, formulated through consensus and corporatism and that there was a need to “abolish and remove these “man-made obstacles.”⁵¹⁰ Powellism challenges the planned, collective economy, the “dreams and fallacies” that have thwarted productivity, post-imperial revival and national unity; and above all the ability for government to “tell us the truth”.⁵¹¹ This purity of spirit, of sovereignty, of

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid

⁵⁰⁷ S. Heffer, *Like the Roman; The Life of Enoch Powell* (Faber & Faber Limited, 2012), p.137

⁵⁰⁸ C. Schofield, *Enoch Powell and the Making of Postcolonial Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 2013). p.330

⁵⁰⁹ B. Jackson & R. Saunders, *Making Thatcher's Britain* (Cambridge, 2012), p.95

⁵¹⁰ W. H. Greenleaf, *The Ideological Heritage, The British Political Tradition* (Routledge, 1983), p.323

⁵¹¹ Ibid.

economics and of Parliamentary protocol, drove Powellism to be able to challenge and to confront. Ultimately, he was to lose out to the establishment; but he was to pass the baton to another to forge an ideological legacy of freedom.

Powell “for better or worse” was a teacher rather than a legislator”⁵¹². He argued that the role of an MP “is to provide people with words and ideas which will fit their predicament better than the words and ideas they are using at the present”. This was to be his legacy; it was not one of legislative gravitas, but theoretical influence. Powell’s independence and defiance, his desire to challenge established post-war protocols and steadfastness in thought, would inspire Thatcherism, indeed, “he was a precursor of Margaret Thatcher’s views”.⁵¹³

3.3 Keith Joseph and “Man-made chaos”

Keith Joseph was converted in 1974 from classical conservatism of a “government of all the talents” to a “real Conservative.”⁵¹⁴ The notion of this “real Conservative” argued Ian Gilmour, in reality, entailed a belief in monetarism to control inflation and the rejection of “traditional Tory principles”.⁵¹⁵ Joseph had been “born again”

⁵¹² V. Bogdanor, Speech, *Enoch Powell and the Sovereignty of Parliament*, 12th March 2013, Gresham College. <https://www.gresham.ac.uk/lectures-and-events/enoch-powell-and-the-sovereignty-of-parliament>

⁵¹³ Ibid.

⁵¹⁴ M. Halcrow, *Keith Joseph, A Single Mind* (Macmillan, 1989), p.56

⁵¹⁵ I. Gilmour, *Dancing with Dogma: Britain Under Thatcherism* (Simon & Schuster, 1992), p.2

politically and economically, yet argues Gilmour, it was to a dogma formulated in “distant ideological shores”.⁵¹⁶ His new “Conservatism” had been located and sharpened at the IEA⁵¹⁷ and refined at the CPS⁵¹⁸ – economic think tanks, designed predominantly to change the British culture. This is a pivotal step in the redesigning of both conservatism and its relationship to organised labour. Joseph’s willingness to convert from an established form of conservatism was due to the unwillingness, and ability, of the Conservative Party to change a culture. To enforce dramatic change, to reassert British interests and the revert decline, as it was,

useless to rely on the Tory Party machine to inspire that change – the party machine was designed to win elections, not change a culture, and tended to be in the business of pragmatism and consensus.⁵¹⁹

This was a direct challenge to the Conservative Party of pragmatism and consensus. Keith Joseph wanted, like Enoch Powell prior to him, a politics of conviction; politics, as seen by Margaret Thatcher that were to be “closely associated with the rethinking of Conservative principles.”⁵²⁰ Joseph was prepared to question an established interpretation of conservatism, to reclaim post-1975, a “true meaning of

⁵¹⁶ Ibid.

⁵¹⁷ Institute of Economic Affairs

⁵¹⁸ Centre for Policy Studies.

⁵¹⁹ M. Halcrow, *Keith Joseph – A Single Mind* (Macmillan, 1989), p.69

⁵²⁰ E. H. H. Green, *Ideologies of Conservatism: Conservative Political Ideas in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford University Press, 2002), p.4

conservatism.”⁵²¹ Joseph and the “Conservative Party had found a doctrine”,⁵²² a doctrine founded on principles of sound money, the burning of bureaucratic control and, above all, the control of inflation. These ambitions were formulated, I argue, not through the collective Cabinet approved agenda of a control of public expenditure and the rejection of statutory control, but through adherence to dogma. As Jim Prior was to critique, the priority for a New Right,

was control of the money supply and that Professors Milton Friedman and Hayek, as the high priests of monetarism, stood above all others as our prophets and our gurus⁵²³

The “word that mattered most for economic debate” post-1974 was monetarism.⁵²⁴ Joseph was to aspire to Powellism’s remit of the winning the “battle of ideas”⁵²⁵ and it would be monetarism which would now prevail as the philosophy of choice. This presented the shift in ideological mindset within the Conservative Party as “inflation had become a bigger enemy than unemployment”.⁵²⁶ Monetarism’s virtue is governmental control of monetary supply. By “turning off the tap” of the supply of money there is a degree of control for government of the rate of inflation – as argued

⁵²¹ Ibid.

⁵²² J. Prior, *A Balance of Power* (Hamish Hamilton, 1986), p.104

⁵²³ J. Prior, *A Balance of Power* (Hamish Hamilton, 1986), p.104

⁵²⁴ R. Vinen, *Thatcher’s Britain: The Politics and Social Upheaval of the 1980’s* (Pocket Books, 2009), p.108

⁵²⁵ M. Halcrow, *Keith Joseph – A Single Mind* (Macmillan, 1989), p.57

⁵²⁶ J. Prior, *A Balance of Power* (Hamish Hamilton, 1986), p.104

Nigel Lawson, “changes in the quantity of money determine, at the end of the day, changes in the general price level”.⁵²⁷ There is an indelible link between inflation and the supply of money. Too much money ensured the “miseries of inflation” as demonstrated by the Heath government who, Friedman argued, simply “churned out too much money”.⁵²⁸

As an economic doctrine, it had no history within modern conservatism. Heralding predominantly from the American economist Milton Friedman, yet as Nigel Lawson acknowledged, David Hume was its “true founder”, it advocates that it is the role of government to determine the quantity and supply of money in society. It had a variety of definitions; for Enoch Powell, it alleviated government “tinkering”, for Denis Healey, it was a term of abuse in the form of “sado monetarists”.⁵²⁹ For Joseph and his vision of conservatism, it would be utilised as a mechanism of control – a tool, enabling the construction of a greater agenda of societal control. Indeed monetarism, for Joseph, though essential in formulating a Conservative identity, alone was “not enough”. In April 1976, three years prior to the party’s *Right Approach* manifesto, Joseph offered a glimpse of this new economic and moral agenda – indeed a warning that,

⁵²⁷ N. Lawson, Speech to The Bow Group, *The New Conservatism*, 4th August 1980. Available at: Margaret Thatcher Foundation <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/109505>

⁵²⁸ R. Vinen, *Thatcher’s Britain: The Politics and Social Upheaval of the 1980’s* (Pocket Books, 2009), p.108

⁵²⁹ *Ibid*, p.110

Monetarism is not enough. This is not intended as a counsel of despair, but a warning note... We are over-governed, over-spent, over-taxed, over-borrowed and over-manned⁵³⁰

I argue that the use of the term “over-manned” is important in demonstrating an ideological agenda. Joseph’s rallying call would see him become the “obvious standard bearer of the free market Right”.⁵³¹ It was difficult argues Geoffrey Howe, to “exaggerate the importance of the continuing intellectual stimulus”⁵³² that Joseph provided. He was the first Conservative frontbench figure to look beyond the need to simply “get the flow of money spending right”⁵³³ as this was a mandatory requirement of any mandated government; what Joseph provided was the ideological framework upon which Thatcherism looked to extend law and services which “permit people to make maximum number of decisions for themselves”.⁵³⁴ Government should withdraw from making decisions based on a distortion of the working of the natural market economy – wage and price control. The state’s commitment to a “compulsory collectivism” maintenance of full employment⁵³⁵ ultimately would lead to dire consequences. Joseph was to release a torrent of accusatory rhetoric, referring to the savage repercussions of trade union

⁵³⁰ K. Joseph, Speech, *Reversing the Trend*, 22nd June 1974, Upminster. Available at: <http://enochpowell.info/Resources/>

⁵³¹ R. Vinen, *Thatcher’s Britain: The Politics and Social Upheaval of the 1980’s* (Pocket Books, 2009), p.62

⁵³² G. Howe, *Conflict of Loyalty* (Macmillan, 1994), p.98

⁵³³ D. Kavanagh, *Thatcherism and British Politics; The End of Consensus?* (Oxford University Press, 1987, p.115

⁵³⁴ *Ibid*, p.116

⁵³⁵ *Ibid*, p.137

representation and the evils of inflationary mismanagement. Strong trade unionism ultimately creating inflation through the driving up of unrealistic wages as inflation, Joseph argues,

Is threatening to destroy our society... The distress and unemployment that will follow unless the trend is stopped will be catastrophic ⁵³⁶

Therefore, for Joseph, monetarism presented a mechanism for a greater societal and political goal. Monetary control would be a piece in the jigsaw of “everything else we need and want to do; an opportunity to tackle the real problems.”⁵³⁷ These “real problems” were fears that had gripped the post-war world. A society that was,

haunted by the fear of long-term mass unemployment, the grim, hopeless dole queues and towns which died. So, we talked ourselves into believing that these gaunt, tight-lipped men in caps and mufflers were round the corner, and tailored our policy to match these imaginary conditions⁵³⁸

Through fear the trade union movement had caused this “state puffed inflation”.⁵³⁹

The post-war pursuit of full employment became a “sacred cow” – one that would dissuade successive government from tackling the ever “upward movement of money wages”.⁵⁴⁰ Joseph argued that there had never been “serious unemployment

⁵³⁶ K. Joseph, Speech - *Inflation is Caused by Government*, 5th September 1974, Preston. Conservative party Archive, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.

⁵³⁷ Ibid.

⁵³⁸ Ibid.

⁵³⁹ C. Barnett, *The Verdict of Peace: Britain Between her Yesterday and her Future* (Macmillan, 2001), p.419

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid, p.420

since the war” – indeed, the concept of “fuller than full employment” had been born⁵⁴¹ to maintain the sanctity of job security and full employment. The resultant “wage price spiral” simply exacerbated a seemingly never-ending cycle of union restrictive practices to ensure consistent wage increase, to the detriment to the reality of price.

Monetarism, as an economic tool, would assist government to challenge this man-made ideal. A bold change of national mindset was required, one that would need to adjust to a new set of moral and economic criteria – “with more rewards for success and with more bankruptcies for failure.”⁵⁴² Harsh lessons would have to be learned; a degree of unemployment would need to be accepted in the short term. In a Shadow Cabinet memo, dated 1st May 1974, Joseph argues,

But if the country is to return to sound money by gradual steps then consistent policies - involving some unemployment, some bankruptcies and very tight control on public spending will be needed for at least five years.⁵⁴³

This reflects Joseph’s acceptance that there was no “magic cure” to inflation.⁵⁴⁴ The “prescription” would not be palatable, as Britain was “over-manned”. The human

⁵⁴¹ M. Halcrow, *Keith Joseph: A Single Mind* (Macmillan, 1989), p.73

⁵⁴² M. Halcrow, *Keith Joseph: A Single Mind* (Macmillan, 1989), p.40

⁵⁴³ Joseph, K. (1974) Memorandum: Circulated Paper *Inflation*. Available at: Conservative party Archive, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford. <https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/cpa>

⁵⁴⁴ K. Joseph, Speech, *Inflation is caused by Government*, 5th September 1974, Preston.

element was perceived as uncontrollable, the creation of “unreal” jobs was only adding to a “money illusion”.⁵⁴⁵ Any pursuit of, or investment in, the creation of jobs was damaging – the marketplace would eventually regulate a natural level of employment only when the “real wage is right”.⁵⁴⁶ The importance here, is the word “real” – a “real” wage without interference or manipulation. The only way to provide full employment was to remove all “man-made” obstacles from the proper “functioning of market processes”. The failure of the British economy was “not the failings of the market, but government interference”.⁵⁴⁷ As a society, there was an overestimation in the ability of the state, of government, to the detriment of the “overburdened economy”.⁵⁴⁸ Joseph now referred to the fault-line between a functioning, free market and the restrictive practices of the post-war settlement, an “apocalyptic vision”⁵⁴⁹ of a “Battle that has been created due to man-made chaos”.⁵⁵⁰

The passivity of the economy was due to the negativity of human emotion and human needs. Corporatism and the democratisation of industrial representation, the challenge of working practice and its entrance into the political arena, all presented a stark, frightening challenge to individual liberty and freedom. Joseph envisioned

⁵⁴⁵ I. Gilmour & M. Garnett, *Whatever Happened to the Tories – The Conservatives Since 1945* (Fourth Estate, London), p.309

⁵⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.310

⁵⁴⁷ K. Joseph, *Reversing the Trend; Seven Speeches by Sir Keith Joseph* (Barry Allen, 1975), p.70

⁵⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴⁹ B. Jackson & R. Saunders, *Making Thatcher's Britain* (Cambridge, 2012), p.65

⁵⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

the issues that Britain was facing was akin to that of “Weimar” Germany, the shifting allegiances of the middle classes from conservatism to fascism, implying that high inflation was “threatening to destroy our society.”⁵⁵¹ He decreed at a Conservative Party meeting in Preston in 1974, that inflation,

is threatening to destroy not just the relative prosperity to which most of us have become accustomed... but... it will lead to catastrophe... and to the end of freedom.⁵⁵²

Enoch Powell in 1969 decreed that no less than “the structure of society itself” depended “Upon the sound working of the money system”.⁵⁵³ Five years later, Joseph, rather than state the consequences of mass immigration, would offer a “brutal challenge” in his onslaught against incomes policy.⁵⁵⁴ Inflation became the rhetorical theme for the Conservatives; the control of inflation was to become the mantra to sustain Britain’s economic and subsequent moral recovery. The challenge faced by Britain of stemming national decline could not be sustained by appeasement to institutions that denied the correct levels of inflation. Therefore, there was a moral and economic imperative to acknowledge and to challenge trade union activity that

⁵⁵¹ B. Jackson & R. Saunders, *Making Thatcher’s Britain* (Cambridge, 2012), p.65

⁵⁵² K. Joseph, Speech, *Inflation is caused by Governments*, 5th September 1974, Preston. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/110607>

⁵⁵³ H. Young, *One of Us* (Macmillan, 1989), p.61

⁵⁵⁴ *Ibid*, pg.88

enhanced inflationary levels. Joseph's rhetoric demanded hostility towards trade unionism;

unions do not cause inflation, inflation causes trade unions⁵⁵⁵

The trade union movement benefitted from the curse of inflation. It was their raison d'être to succeed in winning industrial wage claim disputes and placing the interests of their members firmly in the political arena. Therefore, government had to go further, to dare to challenge the historical precedent of union representation as they demonstrably prevented economic advancement. For Joseph, "economic policy was not enough" there had to be greater reforms; more social transformation, more determined and aggressive rhetoric to enable a distinct enemy of economic reform to be confronted; his mantra was not to be, "intended as a counsel of despair, but a warning note".⁵⁵⁶ So, the question must be – what is enough?

For Joseph, there was "no time to be mealy-mouthed"⁵⁵⁷ – difficult decisions and challenges needed to be faced. The "austere Powellism of Keith Joseph"⁵⁵⁸ would look beyond merely the economic to confront national decline; but to the heart of a new moral order. It was not enough, just to change economic policy, simply adhering

⁵⁵⁵ Joseph, K. (1979). Letter to Margaret Thatcher, *Draft Speech on Unions*, 27th January 1979. Available at: Conservative Party Archives, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford. <https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/cpa>

⁵⁵⁶ K. Joseph, Speech, *Monetarism Is Not Enough*, April 5th, 1976, Stockton Lecture. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margarethatthatcher.org/document/110796>

⁵⁵⁷ Joseph, K. Speech, *This is not the time to be mealy-mouthed: intervention is destroying us*. 22nd June 1974, Upminster. Centre For Policy studies. <http://www.cps.org.uk/files/reports/original/140627110416-Fourspeechesthatchangedtheworld.pdf>

⁵⁵⁸ M. Halcrow, *Keith Joseph: A Single Mind* (Macmillan, 1989), p.76

to a “false antithesis between monetarists and some so-called Keynesians”⁵⁵⁹ could not suffice; there were issues at play in Britain that were to have long lasting consequences; “the cost of freedoms”.⁵⁶⁰ An acceptance that the real issues of a stagnant economy and union obstruction can be overcome simply by an adherence to strict monetarism was a false dichotomy; a fundamental change of mindset was required. The corporate relationship in 1974 between the trade union movement and the Conservative Party was one of shared values of an established status quo. Therefore, the task facing economic reform, argues Joseph, was “not made easier by the unions and their members who were deeply conservative – with a small ‘c’”.⁵⁶¹ Conservatism needed to understand the deep seated, ingrained challenges that the trade union movement posed; it was “The reasons go back deep into social history. As Tories we must understand that we are dealing with real people with their own views, habits and prejudices”.⁵⁶² A “vendetta against profits” had been constructed through “anti-profit, anti-private industry” trade union practice, that Joseph argues,

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁰ K. Joseph, Speech, *Inflation caused by Governments* September 1974, Preston.

<http://www.cps.org.uk/files/reports/original/140627110416-Fourspeechesthatchangedtheworld.pdf>

⁵⁶⁰ R. Vinen, *Thatcher's Britain: The Politics and Social Upheaval of the 1980's* (Pocket Books, 2009), p.65

⁵⁶⁰ Denis Healey described Keith Joseph as a combination of “Hamlet, Rasputin and Tommy Cooper”. R. Vinen, *Thatcher's Britain: The Politics and Social Upheaval of the 1980's* (Pocket Books, 2009), p.62

⁵⁶⁰ M. Halcrow, *Keith Joseph: A Single Mind* (Macmillan, 1989), p.194

⁵⁶⁰ R. S. Turner, *Neo-liberal Ideology: History, Concepts and Policies* (Edinburgh University press, 2008)

⁵⁶¹ K. Joseph, Speech, *Monetarism Is Not Enough*, April 5th, 1976. Stockton Lecture. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/110796>

⁵⁶² Joseph, K. Speech, *This is not the time to be mealy-mouthed: intervention is destroying us*. 22nd June 1974, Upminster. Centre For Policy studies. <http://www.cps.org.uk/files/reports/original/140627110416-Fourspeechesthatchangedtheworld.pdf>

was a political animal that wanted “to fight capitalism, bash the bourgeoisie” – strikingly, there was a “haemorrhage” at the heart of British industry.⁵⁶³ Joseph looked to attack these ingrained prejudices, to revert the politicised nature of the economy and to find the “road to realism, stability and steady spontaneous progress”.⁵⁶⁴

The irony is potent. Enoch Powell was to describe Joseph, as a “butterfly, not a hawk”⁵⁶⁵ – his intellectual questioning always diverting him from the true course of power, but this was his strength. His economic, intellectual and ideological instinct though not overtly designed for the rough and tumble of the front benches,⁵⁶⁶ allowed conservatism to self-analyse, to search beyond the accepted post-war consensus. Margaret Thatcher argued that Joseph, reworked and reedited Powellism “creating a new Conservative Party” one that “gave us back our intellectual self-confidence”.⁵⁶⁷ Joseph’s reinterpretation of Powellism offered a new dynamic to the Conservative Party; a reworking of the ideological challenge between unemployment and inflation, and the sense that academic curiosity towards, and questioning of, both what conservatism stood for and the post-war consensus was legitimate. He accepted

⁵⁶³ K. Joseph, Speech, *Inflation caused by Governments* September 1974, Preston.

<http://www.cps.org.uk/files/reports/original/140627110416-Fourspeechesthatchangedtheworld.pdf>

⁵⁶⁴ K. Joseph, Speech, *Monetarism Is Not Enough*, April 5th, 1976, Stockton Lecture. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/110796>

⁵⁶⁵ R. Vinen, *Thatcher’s Britain: The Politics and Social Upheaval of the 1980’s* (Pocket Books, 2009), p.65

⁵⁶⁶ Denis Healey described Keith Joseph as a combination of “Hamlet, Rasputin and Tommy Cooper”. R. Vinen, *Thatcher’s Britain: The Politics and Social Upheaval of the 1980’s* (Pocket Books, 2009), p.62

⁵⁶⁷ M. Halcrow, *Keith Joseph: A Single Mind* (Macmillan, 1989), p.194

the mantle from Powell and intellectually devised the solution to both inflation and to individual freedoms; the answer? The need to challenge the UK trade union movement.

3.4 “The Case for Union Reform” – Stepping Stones

Keith Joseph’s intellectual interpretation of Powellism was to help create a platform for radical economic change; he “saw himself picking up the baton that Powell had dropped”.⁵⁶⁸ It was a need to sustain the anti-establishment post-war agenda and enforcement of economic purity; of monetarism, anti-inflationary measures, free trade and, I argue, most importantly, the notion of trade union culpability in British economic and moral decline.

There required an association between trade unionism and socio-economic decay. The challenge to government was not simply to restructure a set of representational bodies; that would entail the statecraft of dialogue, negotiation and efficient policy making. There was a need to “engage in a deeper level of understanding” to win Powell’s “battle of ideas”⁵⁶⁹ – to implement ideological transformation would entail a generational switch of mindset, an enforced change in a pattern of behaviour, of a way of life. The post-war “socialist experiment” was to install a set of “beliefs”

⁵⁶⁸ R. S. Turner, *Neo-liberal Ideology: History, Concepts and Policies* (Edinburgh University press, 2008), p.80

⁵⁶⁹ S. Letwin, *The Anatomy of Thatcherism* (Harper Collins, 1992), p.84

argued Joseph, which would be the “poison on our economic life”.⁵⁷⁰ With belief, not just policy, this could be altered.⁵⁷¹ To do so, the Conservative Party, argued John Casey in 1978, must take,

The largest imaginative leap in order to grasp the decay in custom and patterns of behaviour, in order to signal, a profound change in the consciousness of the age⁵⁷²

Casey, a part of the Conservative Philosophy Group with Roger Scruton, advanced the case of New Right economic liberalism. Anti-socialist and anti-corporatist he argued that the issues facing Britain in the 1970s were not necessarily a loss of individual freedoms but the loss of authority. To advance economically, there was a need to revert to older Tory values of social cohesion and hierarchy. And in many respects this authority of the state could be moulded in a productive mindset.⁵⁷³ The state would need to prioritise the “importance of regaining the commanding heights of the moral and intellectual economy”.⁵⁷⁴

Casey advocates the establishment of core beliefs as the state was overstretched and too weak. There is a need to recognise and prioritise a moral duty of the state and

⁵⁷⁰ Joseph, K. (1979). Internal memo to M. Thatcher, *Draft speech on unions*. Conservative Party Archive: Keith Joseph Papers, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford. <https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/cpa>

⁵⁷¹ B. Jackson & R. Saunders, *Making Thatcher's Britain* (Cambridge, 2012), p.102

⁵⁷² *Ibid*, p.103

⁵⁷³ J. Campbell, *Margaret Thatcher: Volume One: The Grocer's Daughter* (Vintage Books, 2007), p373

⁵⁷⁴ *Ibid*

the party system to challenge permissiveness and subsequent weakness of thought.⁵⁷⁵ Personal, sexual and class liberation in the 1960s had eroded the boundaries of how the state controls society, leading to the chaos of the 1970s – strikes, inflation, economic failure.⁵⁷⁶ Behaviourisms and thought processes of core groups, essentially the trade union movement, could be altered. Government could enhance a thought process, change or deliver a new moral order and to reinvent the post-war agenda subconsciously. Trade union hegemony could be defeated – yet it could only be done through a process of manipulation, control and ultimately confrontation. Trade unionism, as well as a physical construct to be deterred, was also ingrained in the mindset and identity of a nation. It was a symbol, not just of unity of the present, but of an historical precedent; through time it had expanded not simply physically, but psychologically and symbolically.

The intellectual and political perception of a trade union's position within a tripartite system of governance would be questioned. Peter Dorey argues that the language of the debate would change to frame a “trade union problem”⁵⁷⁷ – one that needed to be solved. In January of 1978 Nigel Lawson wrote to Margaret Thatcher where he argued that he strongly agreed with Chris Pattern's comment that “We should stop

⁵⁷⁵ R. Garner & R. Kelly, *British Political Parties Today* (Manchester University Press, 1993), p.54.

⁵⁷⁶ J. Hollowell, *Britain Since 1945* (Blackwell Publishing, 2003), p.49

⁵⁷⁷ Dorey, P. (2014). The Stepping Stones Programme: The Conservative Party's Struggle to Develop a Trade-Union Policy, 1975-79. *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations*. Issue 35. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3828/hsir.2014.35.4>

saying we can get on with the unions... this is too defensive”.⁵⁷⁸ Lawson’s comment, I argue, demonstrates quite dramatically, a change of mindset within the Conservative Party. The initiation, I argue, of a long-term process, one originating in Powellism, intellectually embraced by Joseph and documented in the autumn of 1977.

Ex-army officer and business man John Hoskyns and associate Norman Strauss prepared a Centre for Policy Studies document entitled *Stepping Stones*. This “now legendary”⁵⁷⁹ document was to form a strategy for “producing a new moral hegemony” and was to introduce the notion of “discontinuity” to fracture and sever the ties of the working man and woman from both community and trade union.⁵⁸⁰ It is the psychological template of how to deter the working classes from political and social representation and a “stunningly prescient blueprint for the Thatcher government”.⁵⁸¹ Keith Joseph had asked Hoskyns and Strauss to write a single document in search for an end to decline, and would lead to a “delighted” Thatcher declaring “the best thing we’ve had in years”.⁵⁸² It was a document to plan a “high risk” approach to the “negative role of the trades unions”.⁵⁸³ It was a document to

⁵⁷⁸ Dorey, P. (2014). The Stepping Stones Programme: The Conservative Party's Struggle to Develop a Trade-Union Policy, 1975-79. *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations*. Issue 35. Available at <https://doi.org/10.3828/hsir.2014.35.4>

⁵⁷⁹ C. Schofield, *Enoch Powell and the making of Postcolonial Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), p.336

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁸¹ D. Sandbrook, *Seasons in the Sun: The Battle for Britain, 1947 – 1979* (Penguin Books, 2012), p.176

⁵⁸² Ibid.

⁵⁸³ Hoskyns, J. (1977). *Stepping Stones Final Report* (Final Text). Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/>

set the agenda for Joseph's "true Conservatism"⁵⁸⁴ and a commitment to a market economy, individual responsibility and social morality; Peter Dorey argues, that to ensure "this reorientation, major curbs on the power on the unions were essential".⁵⁸⁵ Hoskyns, in a letter from Alfred Sherman to Keith Joseph, was to "devote himself to para-political activity".⁵⁸⁶ The mantra from this report was that government must go further than was conceivable in the past; conservatism must mask its concerns for social discontent and disunity and face the realities of the oppression of union activity and the dictatorship of the closed shop. Hoskyns's remit was to look at a strategy to defeat trade unionism but also to challenge the available mechanisms of government, to see if the traditional institutions of British government were capable of this challenge; "We are not talking about a planning gadget", he argues in a policy making document circulated to the Cabinet in 1975, "but about the fundamental approach of a government which is trying to save a socio-economic system which can no longer save itself".⁵⁸⁷

⁵⁸⁴ Dorey, P. (2014). The Stepping Stones Programme: The Conservative Party's Struggle to Develop a Trade-Union Policy, 1975-79. *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations*. Issue 35. Available at <https://doi.org/10.3828/hsir.2014.35.4>

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid,

⁵⁸⁶ A. Sherman. (1975) Letter to Peter Dale Scott. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/>

In the letter, Sherman describes Para politics as a, "system or practice of politics in which accountability is consciously diminished. It is generally covert politics, the conduct of public affairs not by rational debate and responsible decision making, but by indirection, collusion and deceit".

⁵⁸⁷ Hoskyns, J. (1975) Memorandum, *Policy – Making for The Next Conservative Government*. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/>

Hoskyns and Strauss were to target how people think “at the level of ideology”⁵⁸⁸ on a “fundamental” level. Hoskyns did not propose a series of neoliberal economic policies, but, instead set several challenges or questions which highlighted Britain’s adoption and acceptance of the “sick society”. What were the obstacles to success? How could the British malaise be reversed? The public needed to associate these questions with the apparent rise of the trade union movement – to equate the failure of Britain with the trade unionism. On a statecraft level, the report acknowledges that trade unions were not initially targeted due to them being “the sole cause of our problem” – “that” the report declares in brackets that “(Would be an absurd simplification)”.⁵⁸⁹

This brief sentence evidences the rejection of statecraft in the initial planning stages for industrial conflict in 1984. Trade unionism, as evidenced clearly, was not the sole arbiter of Britain’s moral and economic decline; and yet it was still to be targeted. Trade unionism therefore was to become a byword, a convenient symbol to engage in policy that enabled internal Conservative Party revolution – it would become the “starting point for everything”.⁵⁹⁰ With this, I argue, that an ideological agenda underpinned the promotion of *Stepping Stones*. The nature of the report was to

⁵⁸⁸ C. Payne, *The Consumer, Credit and Neoliberalism – Governing the Modern Economy* (Routledge, 2012), p.84

⁵⁸⁹ J. Cooper, *Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan: A Very Special Relationship* (Palgrave – Macmillan, 2012), p.123

⁵⁹⁰ Dorey, P. (2014). The Stepping Stones Programme: The Conservative Party's Struggle to Develop a Trade-Union Policy, 1975-79. *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations*. Issue 35.

Available at <https://doi.org/10.3828/hsir.2014.35.4>

challenge the traditional perceptions of British political representation; a “Tory landslide is not enough”⁵⁹¹ in that the mandate of the British population, would only reflect the

electorate's material dissatisfaction since 1974. A landslide is needed, but it must represent an explicit rejection of socialism and the Labour-Unions axis; and the demand for something morally and economically better⁵⁹²

Electoral victory, a prerequisite for statecraft efficiency, though “needed” was not the priority. Hoskyns and Strauss planned and documented “educating public opinion”⁵⁹³ in the need for radical reform – for a systematic change in the identity of the union movement. It was not good enough for the Conservative election machine “simply to persuade them to remember our arguments and slogans” – the narrative needed to be grander, more formidable as “family, individual freedom and the social market economy. All these are threatened by socialism and trades union power”.⁵⁹⁴ From a consensual relationship to one that required a need to “Drag every skeleton out of the union cupboard linking it to Labour”⁵⁹⁵ to “dare to do what has to be

⁵⁹¹ Hoskyns, J. (1977). *Stepping Stones Final Report* (Final Text). Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/111771>

⁵⁹² Ibid.

⁵⁹³ Dorey, P. (2014). The Stepping Stones Programme: The Conservative Party's Struggle to Develop a Trade-Union Policy, 1975-79. *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations*. Issue 35. Available at <https://doi.org/10.3828/hsir.2014.35.4>

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid

done”.⁵⁹⁶ This demonstrates policy based upon a need to deconstruct an existing political and industrial legitimacy – in the words of its author, “the ideologue John Hoskyns”, an intention to “give the country a real shock”⁵⁹⁷ to install a “mandate for change”.⁵⁹⁸ What *Stepping Stones* demonstrates, is the legitimising of policy that ultimately was unaccountable to Cabinet.

Strongly “opposed by Jim Prior”⁵⁹⁹ and a direct contrast to the politics of One Nation Conservative trade union policy, it demonstrates an ideological line that a form of conservatism was now prepared to cross. In becoming head of Thatcher’s policy Unit between 1979 to 1982, Hoskyns and his *Stepping Stones* gained credence and acceptability; “breaking constraints which we had assumed were unbreakable”⁶⁰⁰ was now a legitimate Conservative Party aim.⁶⁰¹ Prior to its existence there remained a tacit acknowledgement of a “softly softly approach”⁶⁰² to maintain an industrial status quo. It was deemed possible to maintain statecraft’s aim of the Conservative administration maintaining a semblance of a “sensible”⁶⁰³ industrial policy. This

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁷ I. Gilmour, *Whatever Happened to the Tories: The Conservatives Since 1945* (Fourth Estate Publishing, 1980), p.313

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid, p.302

⁵⁹⁹ B. Jackson & R. Saunders, *Making Thatcher’s Britain* (Cambridge, 2012), p.102

⁶⁰⁰ Hoskyns, J. (1977). *Stepping Stones Final Report* (Final Text). Margaret Thatcher Foundation.

<https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/111771>

⁶⁰¹ B. Jackson & R. Saunders, *Making Thatcher’s Britain* (Cambridge, 2012), p.102/103

⁶⁰² I. Gilmour, *Whatever Happened to the Tories: The Conservatives Since 1945* (Fourth Estate Publishing, 1980), p.302

⁶⁰³ Ibid.

changed post *Stepping Stones*. Conflict with trade unions would now replace the views of the “moderate”. Hoskyns argues,

If the electorate is offered conflict about the *status quo*, or alternatively the *status quo* without conflict, it will settle for the latter. What we have to show is that the real conflict, which is already happening, is the direct result of the union status quo.⁶⁰⁴

Therefore, the question was how to create an agenda for conflict – through fear. There was a need to instil fear in the working-class community, to challenge the “unalterable facts of life”⁶⁰⁵ and most alarmingly, instil insecurity and indeed formulate a fear within working class communities. The working man must be stripped down to “the terrors of being on his own away from “his tribe””⁶⁰⁶ to feel a:

sense of shame and disgust with the corrupting effects of socialism and union power – class war, dishonesty, tax fiddling, intimidation, and shoddy work, the sick society⁶⁰⁷

A sense of disappointment would be engineered within the working classes. The need was for the mindset of Britain to change, to challenge and ultimately destroy a

⁶⁰⁴ Hoskyns, J. (1977). *Stepping Stones Final Report* (Final Text). Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/111771>

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid.

feeling of dependency and need for the trade union movement. Union members must have their existing values and attitudes modified rather than challenged – and thus strengthened. It is therefore particularly important to understand those values – the union members’ “mental set” which does not aspire to the “healthy society” and the pursuit to an end of decline.⁶⁰⁸ What is more apparent is its abandonment of any form of political, Parliamentary protocol to extend these recommendations to a section of the British Isles. Working men and women of a trade union were to be beyond the social norms, reflecting a counter culture. The next passage reflects a language which denotes arguably a form of social conditioning;

The individual worker and his union are closely linked. It would never occur to most workers that it could be otherwise, even though he may be inactive and attend no meetings. Exile from the union would be like banishment to Siberia. Between him and the terrors of being on his own in a society which, as yet, offers fairly unequal opportunity, stands his union – that is, his tribe, his clan, his own small society. Inside it he is warm, and to a large extent, safe. Outside, he is nothing.⁶⁰⁹

⁶⁰⁸ Hoskyns, J. (1977). *Stepping Stones Final Report* (Final Text). Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/111771>

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid.

This is an extreme vision⁶¹⁰ of the life of the union member. He or she is nothing else when banished from an organisation that represents the legitimacy of their working life. Take away their life blood – the union – and they will find it hard to fathom a future, to raise a family or act beyond a community. Hoskyns’s reiteration that “outside he is nothing” was a clarion call of the utmost gravity, the humbling of working men and women and those who represent them – break the union, break the man and ultimately, as indicated by Norman Tebbit, “break the spell”.⁶¹¹

The report was “apocalyptic in its diagnosis”.⁶¹² It was a vindication of neo-liberalism; manipulation of a class, of a collective of men and women – destruction of “a clan”. This plan of action may or may not include direct action against the trade union movement – but it would essentially be the change of a collective mindset – a re-shifting of a mental association of how we perceive and connect with society. The trade union question is not just one that affects union business and industrial representation – it reflects so much more. It is an obstacle, a reference for determined defiance, a lazy means to defy modernisation and ultimately, an associate of Britain’s moral decline.

⁶¹⁰ B. Jackson & R. Saunders, *Making Thatcher’s Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), p.103.

⁶¹¹ PREM 19/265 Industrial Relations Legislation/The Employment Bill May 1979 – July 1980. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

⁶¹² G. Howe, *Conflict of Loyalty* (Macmillan, 1984), p.104.

In government committee meetings, there was disagreement and “argument over *Stepping Stones*”.⁶¹³ Sir Ian Gilmour argued that the report was “over-ambitious” citing it was “more like a war game than war”. Francis Pym, arguing that though the “union problem had to be grasped” and he was “fascinated by the paper... feared such proposals would require a substantial back-up team”.⁶¹⁴ Willie Whitelaw saw it as a demonstration of people “thinking about problems from outside of politics” and Lord Thorneycroft, “agreed with Mr Whitelaw: the *Stepping Stones* paper provided a valuable analysis”. John Davies, argued, that “if we told the truth about the unions, we should certainly lose the election”.⁶¹⁵ But its proposals were to be implemented; Chris Pattern drafted a strategy document in February of 1978, stating in regard to *Stepping Stones* implementation,

A successful strategy is like an artillery bombardment with half a dozen properly targeted heavy guns. The conclusion I have therefore reached is that the best way of using “Stepping Stones” retaining the intellectual rigour, coherence and sophistication of the exercise, is by seeing it as an up-market campaign directed towards heavy weight speeches.⁶¹⁶

⁶¹³ Nicholson, D. (1978). *Leader's Steering Committee*, Minutes of 51st Meeting of the Conservative Research Department. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

⁶¹⁴ R. Vinen, *Thatcher's Britain: The Politics and Social Upheaval of the Thatcher Era* (Pocket Books, 2009), p.89

⁶¹⁵ Nicholson, D. (1978). *Leader's Steering Committee*, Minutes of 51st Meeting of the Conservative Research Department. Margaret Thatcher Foundation.

⁶¹⁶ Patten, C. (1978). *Further Thoughts on Strategy (A note by the research department)* Circulated paper of the Steering Committee. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

And this would follow,

Already a fairly elaborate plan for carrying it through, it would not make much sense to try to re-design it.⁶¹⁷

The evidence presented in the *Stepping Stones* report demonstrates a government predisposed to confrontation with the trade union movement. Hoskyns and Strauss acknowledge the myth of trade unionism being the sole arbiter of British national decline yet present a series of proposals designed solely to antagonise and ultimately deconstruct it. I argue that the process of “carrying it through”, of embedding Hoskyns’s psychological remit of undermining an industrial mindset and class, does not equate to a political policy necessary to govern effectively. It is one piece within a jigsaw in pursuit of a grander agenda – of a new “moral hegemony” pursued within Thatcherism. The success of *Stepping Stones* lay within its challenge to the orthodoxy of political statecraft – the art of governing and the pragmatism of party management. It was prepared to accommodate the ideals of Powell and Joseph of “winning the battle of ideas” of daring to deconstruct the idealism of a Tory status quo and trade union intransigence. The unions argued Hoskyns in 1980, “can’t reform themselves, imprisoned as they are by their own spurious philosophy, rust rule roots and innate conservatism”.⁶¹⁸ The paradox is that it was conservatism that

⁶¹⁷ Ibid.

⁶¹⁸ PREM 19/265 Industrial Relations Legislation/The Employment Bill May 1979 – July 1980. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

would be revolutionised to finally implement an ideological blueprint. *Stepping Stones* would formulate a means to articulate this change – the deconstruction of the “trade’s union status quo”.⁶¹⁹

3.5 Conclusions

The challenge presented to the New Right post-1974 was to develop a coherent and successful strategy to counter the loss of Conservative Party hegemony. Edward Heath’s statecraft of U-turn and appeasement had failed; the politics of conciliation led a Conservative Party to defeat and enabled socialism to prevail. Powellism’s emergence as a credible critique of corporatism, does not convey a sense of conciliation. Prior to Thatcher’s rhetorical position of an “enemy within” was Powellism – a clinical dissection of the apathy and growing disenfranchisement of the British working classes, a cry against the inevitability of globalisation and the free movement of labour. But mostly a clarion call for freedom and of liberty; Powell would inspire Keith Joseph, Hoskyns and Strauss, and ultimately Thatcherism would follow; a reinterpretation of the nature of conservatism and the re-emergence of the trade union movement as a threat to economic and social freedoms.

⁶¹⁹ Ibid.

Enoch Powell did not lack for conviction, his was an “all or nothing approach” to politics and to national sovereignty. From the efficiency of the market and exchange, from “Little Neddies to nationalised industries”⁶²⁰, to the sovereignty of Parliamentary democracy; there would have to be clarity and purity. Powell and his disciple Joseph, David Marquand argues, take the roles of “pathfinder and peacemaker of the capitalist renaissance of our time”⁶²¹ the delivery of a form of politics, though inspired through a 19th Century agenda, did not flinch at the challenge that the 20th Century trade union problem posed. They were to present an economic and moral agenda, and it would prove a prelude to Thatcherism; a blueprint for the change of direction required within a Conservative Party that was content with the status quo of corporate Britain.

Both individuals were not designed to lead political parties of the establishment – both men were to fail in any capacity of leadership, of delegation, of calculated policy and statecraft. They were not elevated to positions of high cabinet responsibility and did not bend to established political wills. But I argue their influence is immense; they reinterpreted what conservatism is and its purpose, and in doing so, inspired a future political generation to break free from the shackles of

⁶²⁰ E. Powell, Speech, Government (*more or less*) 30th November 1970, South Kensington Conservatives, Kensington Town Hall. Available at: <http://enochpowell.info/Resources>

Powell argued against the need to place the state under “notice to quit”. For industrial and economic decision making to be removed from the “absurd spectacles” of “hand – outs from the state”.

⁶²¹ D. Marquand, *Britain Since 1918: The Strange career of British Democracy* (Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2012), preface.

appeasement to the trade union demands and their hold on society. They reinterpreted society's and the Conservative Party's priorities – one from solely the implementation of a winning electoral strategy, to one where the response to events, was not to U-turn and repel, but to revert to the foundations of political and ideological thought. Policy and procedure, though inevitable within democracy, would not and could not, supersede the greater goals of freedom and liberty, of economic purity and a sustained advancement of the individual within society. These were the historic credentials of English liberty and liberal thought, and the establishment of a corporate, post-war power sharing agenda, at the behest of a cross-party, manmade mandate were an anathema to these quintessential qualities. There was a need to disassociate the party with the bland utopianism of consensus politics. The ideological transformation of this new form of conservatism, I argue, had been conceived through Powellism, to be ordained intellectually through Joseph and implemented through Hoskyns and ultimately *The Ridley Report*.⁶²²

Powellism above all, I argue, dares to challenge the conventions of manmade interference; of the trade union, of socialism and corporatism. Prior to Friedman or Hayek, Thatcherism or Reaganomics, Powell understood, above all, society's need for sovereign freedom; for the undisputed sovereignty of Parliament, for the

⁶²² Economic Reconstruction Group (1977). Report Final of the Nationalised Industries Policy Group. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

rejection of interference with the organic political institutions of the nation. Powell, though undoubtedly maverick and controversial, recognised a post-war world that had rejected the attributes which had sustained it for so long. Though ultimately Powell's pursuit of liberty and a sense of natural justice for Englishness, were to be his undoing, his legacy, I argue is the tacit understanding of the threat with which the nation was blindly negotiating. Edward Heath's tenure as Prime Minister and the subsequent malaise of the Labour Party through its "Winter of Discontent" evidences the manmade consequences of organised labour.

Both Powell and Joseph recognised the historic, moral and economic threat posed by the trade union movement; *Stepping Stones* would enable the ideological formation of a process of reform. It was an ideological tool, it does not examine the need, in the mould of *In Place of Strife*⁶²³ to re-engineer a relationship from a place of political and industrial policy. It identifies not the reasoning behind the need for collective industrial action and the consequences of post-war poverty and class discontent, but the need to circumvent the democratic process to implement ideologically enhanced dogma. It revels in the physiology of the dependency of the working man and how this can be broken; it heralds a new dawn in rejecting a desire for communication, dialogue and ultimately common ground, but the need to crush,

⁶²³ Castle, B. (1969). *In Place of Strife: A Policy for Industrial Relations*. Department of Employment and Productivity UK Government white paper proposed by Secretary of State for Employment and Productivity, Barbara Castle in January of 1969.

destabilise and to defeat. This would be mirrored, on the practical level, by *The Ridley Report*,⁶²⁴ which I examine in this research, the ground level taking up of arms against the trade union movement that was demanded within *Stepping Stones*' psychological war cry against the trade union movement.

Therefore by 1982 a New Right had emerged to transform the Conservative Party's industrial and economic mindset. Primary evidence demonstrates that the internal thought and ideological mindset within the Conservative Party towards trade unions had altered indelibly; what was once unthinkable was now acceptable. Powell and Joseph were to win the "battle of ideas" within the Conservative Party, the pursuit of economic purity transposing the ideals of corporatism. The movement's symbolism was to be transformed as trade unionism was no longer to be viewed by those in power as a force for good. *Stepping Stones*' theoretical and psychological propositions would allow for a re-evaluation of government and trade union relations. Ferdinand Mount argued in Cabinet records that the position of trade unions was "confused, self-contradictory and obscure".⁶²⁵ From consensual dialogue between trade union and industry there was now an "undisputed widespread concern" regarding immunities and electoral clarity; a new rhetoric of having to

⁶²⁴ Economic Reconstruction Group (1977). Report Final of the Nationalised Industries Policy Group. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

⁶²⁵ PREM 19/1061 Industrial Relations Legislation. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

“stand firm and not to give in to the trade union bully boys”.⁶²⁶ Mount argues his concern was that deference to an established part of British social fabric, was a form of “perpetuating the legend of its invincibility.” This “raw, ugly power” of the trade unions needed to be brought within the, “ambit of ordinary civilised behaviour”.⁶²⁷ I argue this chapter demonstrates conflict directed towards the trade union movement was inevitable once the ideological propositions of Powell, Joseph, Hoskyns and Strauss had borne fruit within the New Right. As political theorists, their work, argued Mount, was to “soften up the ground”⁶²⁸ – the next phase, as I reveal, was to be the battle ground “ploughed and cultivated”⁶²⁹ to prepare for conflict.

⁶²⁶ Ibid

⁶²⁷ Ibid

⁶²⁸ PREM 19/1061. Mount, F. (1982). Letter to Alan Wells. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

⁶²⁹ Ibid.

Chapter 4 – The Defeat of the “Wets”

4.0 Introduction

Analysis in this chapter is contextualised around the overriding government priority for a New Right to prosper within the Conservative Party and the need to defeat internal political opposition; a defeat of moderate conservatism through a direct challenge to “the enduring balance of the centre”.⁶³⁰ Primary evidence from previously unexplored Cabinet papers I provide, demonstrates implementation of policy and actor designed to eliminate internal opposition within Cabinet to government policy related to the “economic and industrial fields and their social consequences”.⁶³¹ This would ensure a collective Cabinet unity and direction of industrial policy, and a challenge to trade union movement and the NUM.

Famously Margaret Thatcher quoted St. Francis of Assisi upon arrival at Downing Street, “Where there is discord, may we bring harmony”; Jim Prior was to describe this as “awful humbug” as it was “totally at odds with Margaret’s belief in conviction”.⁶³² For a certain section of the Cabinet who were to be associated with wetness and a weak ideological resolution, there would be little harmony. The “wets” were moderates, those who disagreed and “disliked her economic policy”.⁶³³

⁶³⁰ Ibid, p196

⁶³¹ Ibid, p.14

⁶³² J. Prior, *A Balance of Power* (Hamish Hamilton, 1986), p.113

⁶³³ I. Gilmour & M. Garnett, *Whatever Happened to the Tories; The Conservatives Since 1945* (Fourth Estate, 1997), p.316

By 1983 they would be side-lined allowing for the implementation of economic and industrial reform.

The epitaph of “wet” would symbolise a degree of moderate defiance; a politics “variously described as consensus or One Nation conservatism”.⁶³⁴ Francis Pym defines a form of “traditional conservatism”, whereby a government attempts to “win the consent of the nation as a whole” through tolerance, humour and a pursuit of harmony.⁶³⁵ Conservatism “precludes dogma, ideology and absolutism” – there are no absolute truths, merely fashions that have rejected the lessons of the past.⁶³⁶

The dogma of a New Right would come to challenge this one nation approach; an application of policy designed to challenge statecraft’s priority of Cabinet and political party unity. Margaret Thatcher’s plea for harmony to replace discord, would be put to the test within her own Cabinet, with a defeat of internal Cabinet dissent and opposition to ideological reform. The 1981 purge of internal opposition demonstrates the lengths to which an ideological agenda would bypass Cabinet Responsibility and collective decision making. Primary sources reveal the extent to which sections of Cabinet were to be marginalised to pursue an economic agenda at the expense of the “acute social and political problems” confronting the government. This chapter analyses these internal changes within Conservative Party Cabinet. To

⁶³⁴ F. Pym, *The Politics of Consent*, (Hamish Hamilton, 1984), intro x.

⁶³⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.193

defeat Arthur Scargill and the national Union of Mineworkers, Margaret Thatcher required the defeat of elements of the Conservative Party. She was to make it clear, that she “would not moderate her policies” and would insist on a no-compromise position “come hell or high water”.⁶³⁷ Those in Cabinet who challenged economic and employment policy, the “wets”, would be defeated.

4.1 Seeds of Division - “The theorists and the pragmatists”

The nature of Thatcherism, argued Ian Gilmour, lay within the “fog of economic theory”.⁶³⁸ A “New Right” agenda did not fit well with a centralist section of the Conservative Party which remained loyal to One Nation politics. An established core of MPs was distrustful of the rejection of policy that was historically “steeped in pragmatism”⁶³⁹ designed to “win elections and to be in power”.⁶⁴⁰ For the One Nation Conservative, an ability to gain power is balanced through a contract to maintain social improvement, cohesion and opportunity; a balanced approach, that lies within the structure of the “maintenance of order and the cause of good government”.⁶⁴¹ What is paramount in government is the pursuit and implementation

⁶³⁷ F. Pym, *The Politics of Consent*, (Hamish Hamilton, 1984), p7

⁶³⁸ I. Gilmour *Britain Can Work* (Oxford, Martin Robertson and Co. 1983), p.96

⁶³⁹ I. Gilmour, *The other side has got one -Ideologies of Conservatism*, London review of Books, 6th June 2002. Available at: <https://www.lrb.co.uk/search?q=ian+Gilmour>

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁴¹ R. Scruton, *The Meaning of Conservatism* (Pelican Books, 1980), p.15

of a manifesto – of a political policy, that is “compatible with the continued existence of a free society with institutions which command respect and allegiance”.⁶⁴²

A new form of conservatism would gain prominence within government. For Gilmour, and other prominent front bench Conservative ministers, their interpretation of conservatism, would be jettisoned for the adoption of an “extremist monetarist economic policy” and “rampant ideology” within the party.⁶⁴³ The advocates of moderation would be challenged. Gilmour argued that since the defeat of Heath, the Conservative Party had pursued a “false non-conservative trail” a sense of “Toryism betrayed”.⁶⁴⁴ This is a strong term, but the nature of his critique, captures the tone of concern within a section of the Conservative Party; a paternalistic form of conservatism committed to, and enshrined in a pragmatism to succeed electorally and govern prudently. These were politicians who demanded “sensible behaviour” regarding economic governance, who rejected “monetarist dogma” as an ideology that “would be socially divisive and it would not work”.⁶⁴⁵ These MPs’ were “moderates”.

A very public debate would rage in Cabinet as to the very nature of conservatism. One Nation conservatism and neoliberal conservatism – a “division” argued Francis

⁶⁴² A. Gamble, *The Free Economy and the Strong State: The Politics of Thatcherism* (Macmillan Education, 1988), p.153

⁶⁴³ I. Gilmour, *Dancing with Dogma – Britain Under Thatcherism* (Simon & Schuster, 1992), p.30

⁶⁴⁴ Gilmour, I (2002) The other side has got one - Ideologies of Conservatism, *London Review of Books*. Available at: <https://www.lrb.co.uk/search?q=ian+Gilmour>

⁶⁴⁵ I. Gilmour, *Dancing with Dogma – Britain Under Thatcherism* (Simon & Schuster, 1992), p.30

Pym “between what I would term the theorists and the pragmatists”⁶⁴⁶ – each side reaching for the moral, economic and therefore political high ground. There was to emerge an informal group of Cabinet ministers, who were to question the moral and economic crusade of Thatcherism; this evangelical politics argued John Biffen “could not last forever”⁶⁴⁷ as it ran against the grain of their established traditions. These moderates, men of experience and political understanding, would adhere to the continued pursuit of One Nation politics acting as an internal foil to the advance of “ideology and delusion”.⁶⁴⁸

And the internal “battle” lines were drawn within Cabinet as early as 1981. Implementation of monetarist economic policy would see unemployment rise to over three million, British cities suffer a succession of riots, and as Francis Pym explained, “Many Ministers were astonished by the rapid rise in unemployment and looked at the figures in disbelief”.⁶⁴⁹ Pym’s assertion that “common sense” dictated that monetarist policies would “result in soaring unemployment” was to prove correct. It was a display, Pym argues incredulously, of an economic policy of “tunnel vision” with “no sign of light at the end of it”.⁶⁵⁰ Yet for Margaret Thatcher, the concern at the alarming closure of industry and rising dissent within her own party,

⁶⁴⁶ F. Pym, *The Politics of Consent*, (Hamish Hamilton, 1984), p.6

⁶⁴⁷ R. Eccles Hall, *English Conservatism Since the Restoration: An Introduction and Anthology* (Routledge, 1989), p.220

⁶⁴⁸ I. Gilmour, *Dancing with Dogma – Britain Under Thatcherism* (Simon & Schuster, 1992), p.32

⁶⁴⁹ F. Pym, *The Politics of Consent*, (Hamish Hamilton, 1984), p.8

⁶⁵⁰ *Ibid*, p.8

was to be a “challenge to her resolve”, and subsequently she was not prepared to give an “inch on economic strategy”.⁶⁵¹ Thatcher argues,

However, I was utterly convinced of one thing: there was no chance of achieving that fundamental change of attitudes which was required to wrench Britain out of decline if people believed that we were prepared to alter course under pressure⁶⁵²

There was clear blue water between the ideologues and the moderates within Cabinet – none more so than over government policy on unemployment. Nigel Lawson argued that the “conquest of inflation, not the pursuit of growth and employment, which is or should be the objective”.⁶⁵³ The entire “lifetime of the Thatcher governments” was to be dominated by mass unemployment⁶⁵⁴ as unemployment would become a symbol of defiance; of defiance against the conventional wisdom of consensus and post-war priorities representing a “touch of the tribal war dance” in demonstrating ideological intransigence in its economic policy.⁶⁵⁵

Unemployment could “not be solved by government”.⁶⁵⁶ There would be a “realignment” of government policy regarding unemployment – a disassociation

⁶⁵¹ C. Beckett, *Thatcher* (Haus Publishing, 2006), p.70

⁶⁵² Ibid.

⁶⁵³ D. Kavanagh, *Thatcherism and British Politics. The End of Consensus?* (Oxford University Press, 1990), p.225

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid

⁶⁵⁵ R. Vinen, *Thatcher's Britain – The Politics and Social Upheaval of Britain* (Simon & Schuster Limited, 2009), p.118

⁶⁵⁶ B. Jackson & R. Saunders, *Making Thatcher's Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 2012). p72

with the responsibility of government over the increase in the unemployment figures. Inflation, yes, this would fall at the feet of the Chancellor of the Exchequer – unemployment – “from governments to trade unions”.⁶⁵⁷ This dramatic reinvention of social responsibility did not sit well with everyone in the Cabinet. *The Times* reported in an article in February 1980, that Sir Ian Gilmour, the “unimpeachable” One Nation Tory, was to come “out of his shell” to provide the “evidence of Cabinet disagreements”. What Gilmour demanded was a retreat from a policy that was to see Britain “divided at the roots” and once again intervene to ensure “economic and social equilibrium”. He was to declare that “All duty is on the government; none is on the people”.⁶⁵⁸ The article’s subheading was to be “Dispute between wets and dries”.

The subheading reflects the growing division within Cabinet on economic and social issues. On unemployment, though regrettable, there could be no alternative but for it to be “tackled at its roots”. In a letter to ISTC⁶⁵⁹ General Secretary, Bill Sirs, in June 1979, Thatcher prioritises the creation of a “thriving, efficient economy, which will enable employment to expand”.⁶⁶⁰ This would be a consistent mantra and in the face of overwhelming increases in unemployment. There could be no indulgence to

⁶⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁸ Wood, D. (1980) Interview with Sir Ian Gilmour, *The Times*. Available: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/>

⁶⁵⁹ The Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators.

⁶⁶⁰ Thatcher, M (1979). Letter to ISTC General Secretary Bill Sirs, *Long term unemployment and unemployment benefits*. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

wet theories of social cohesion; “if there was a way of beating inflation and unemployment by displeasing no one in the meantime I should take it like a shot”⁶⁶¹ she was to argue – but fundamentally, unemployment was caused by trade unions – “unemployment is due to enormous past wage increases unmatched by higher output, to union restrictive practices, to over manning, to strikes, to indifferent management”.⁶⁶² Gilmour’s fears had materialised; unemployment levels were at three million, yet annual wage claims were not being reduced – “Dogma prevented any arrangements for wage bargaining... shouting at the unions, instead of talking to them did not work”.⁶⁶³ Yet despite this, there were to be no government economic U-turns. As Gilmour intimated, those who were to prioritise moderation and unity, the “moderates” were to be re-named as the “wets”.

The term “wet” was to imply “ineffectuality”.⁶⁶⁴ It was a label of association, derogatory and generalised, though embraced by Jim Prior as a “badge of honour”⁶⁶⁵ representing a fault-line within the Cabinet and amongst Conservative ranks. The “wets” were a sub-section of the 1981 Cabinet and cohorts who were to present an obstacle to the implementation of change; a regressive group of men who stood for

⁶⁶¹ M. Thatcher, Speech at Conservative Party Conference, 16th October 1981, Blackpool. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

⁶⁶² Ibid.

⁶⁶³ I. Gilmour, *Dancing with Dogma – Britain Under Thatcherism* (Simon & Schuster, 1992), p.82

⁶⁶⁴ R. Vinen, *Thatcher’s Britain – The Politics and Social Upheaval of Britain* (Simon & Schuster Limited, 2009), p.118

⁶⁶⁵ J. Aitken, *Margaret Thatcher: Power and Personality* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013), p.308

a certain form of conservatism which would curtail radicalism, and as Chris Patten argued, had not “yet entirely lost its common-sense or its admirable instinct for self-preservation”.⁶⁶⁶

They were to position themselves as a loose coalition – a gentleman’s club of agitation. Thatcher’s “wets” was a term of “uncertain origin”⁶⁶⁷ – it seems that Jim Prior was accused of “wetness” in the summer of 1976 as “he did not want to reduce trade unions to impotence”.⁶⁶⁸ It was a caricature of a group of men, and the term was described by Michael Foot as “deeply offensive”, and by Ian Gilmour as an oddity to associate the “main Tory tradition “wet”; Baldwin, Churchill, Eden, Macmillan, Butler and Macleod were, in one sense or another “wets to a man”.⁶⁶⁹ In essence the term represents a certain Conservative Party tradition – an historical symbol of Establishment and status quo, an antiquated certainty of establishment thought.

Therefore, they would present “an obstacle to be surmounted”⁶⁷⁰ in Margaret Thatcher’s “struggle to regain the soul of the Party”.⁶⁷¹ They were men who were accustomed to the stymied traditions of political antiquity, cohesion and collective

⁶⁶⁶ Patten, C (1981). Tuesday 8th December 1981, *The Times*. Available: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/>

⁶⁶⁷ H. Young, *One of Us* (Macmillan, 1989), p.198

⁶⁶⁸ *Ibid*, p.199

⁶⁶⁹ I. Gilmour, *Dancing with Dogma; Britain Under Thatcherism* (Simon & Schuster, 1992), p.3

⁶⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p.5

⁶⁷¹ E.J. Evans, *Thatcher and Thatcherism; Making the Contemporary World* (Routledge, 1997), p.44

Cabinet unity and discussion, but more importantly they represented a form of authority and establishment power within the Conservative Party. These men were not simply antiquated marionettes of an elitist, historical establishment, but were politicians with real power and influence. Therefore Thatcher's "hostility" to these influential politicians was based upon their established "convictions". Though derogatory, wetness was associated with the traditional "dominant class" with "their paternalistic model of community".⁶⁷² Thatcher's radicalism would deviate from the "Tory norms of her times".⁶⁷³ She would argue that "I am the rebel head of an established government"⁶⁷⁴ and the "tensions" that were to develop between herself and the Tory "wets" were clear. In her words, she would be an "outsider" – her gender, her social class, her drive to succeed grated her "Conservative colleagues" who were to revile her economic agenda; "Of course" Thatcher argues in her memoirs,

In the eyes of the "wet" Tory establishment I was not only a woman, but "that woman", someone not just of a different sex, but of a different class.

A person of an alarming conviction that the values and virtues of Middle England should be brought to bear.⁶⁷⁵

⁶⁷² R. Collins, *Television, Policy and Culture* (Unwin Hyman, 1990), p.77

⁶⁷³ A. King, *The Outsider as Political Leader: The Case of Margaret Thatcher*. *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol.32, No.3 (Jul 2002), pp.4535 - 454

⁶⁷⁴ H. Young, *One of Us* (Macmillan, 1989), p.242

⁶⁷⁵ M. Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years* (Harper Collins, 1993), p.129 – 130.

Thatcher would challenge the “conventional”.⁶⁷⁶ Since the 1970s the “crucial levers of power”⁶⁷⁷ within the Conservative Party had been controlled by those who aspired to One Nation philosophical leanings. They represented a “sizeable section of the traditional Conservative vote” which was “instinctively centralist”⁶⁷⁸ – those of the shires, the suburbs, of the middle classes. Though sceptical of the nature of socialism and the trade union movement, they understood the dangers of radicalism and dogma. An emergence of militancy within the trade union movement in 1972 and 1975 had helped to bring down the Heath government, but a New Right with its youthful opportunism of a “nouveau riche” would present altogether another threat to “civilised governance”.⁶⁷⁹

The “wets” looked to Thatcher as a “gate crasher at a party”⁶⁸⁰ – and in return they were to represent the “insiders” she so distrusted. They were to be reinterpreted as an internal Conservative Party enemy to economic and industrial change. They were an “enemy within” of an established dynamic and an enemy to be defeated; Margaret Thatcher recounted in her memoirs that, “the wets had been defeated, but they did not fully realise it.”⁶⁸¹ The faces of an established order, notably Jim Prior, Peter

⁶⁷⁶A. King, *The Outsider as Political Leader: The Case of Margaret Thatcher*. British Journal of Political Science, Vol.32, No.3 (Jul 2002), pp.4535 - 454

⁶⁷⁷ Ibid

⁶⁷⁸ S. Hasler, *The Battle for Britain: Thatcher and the New Liberals* (IB Taurus and Co. Ltd, 1989), p.51

⁶⁷⁹ Ibid, p,51

⁶⁸⁰A. King, *The Outsider as Political Leader: The Case of Margaret Thatcher*. British Journal of Political Science, Vol.32, No.3 (Jul 2002), pp.4535 - 454

⁶⁸¹ S. Jenkins, *Thatcher & Sons: A Revolution in Three Acts* (Penguin Books, 2007), p.64

Walker, Ian Gilmour, Mark Carlisle, Lord Soames and Francis Pym, as politicians they were to present an obstacle to the “disestablishment” of the Conservative Party – “perhaps the most remarkable political development of the 1980s”.⁶⁸²

They were “John Bull’s” with a defeatist attitude to socialism’s “inevitable advance”. They were weak and yet colluding, bluff and obstinate to the necessary confrontation with the socialist “storm troopers” of the trade union movement.⁶⁸³

Thatcher argued that “retreat as a tactic is sometimes necessary; retreat as a settled policy eats at the soul”.⁶⁸⁴ Viewed by the New Right of the Conservative Party, as Thatcher recounts, the “wets” were blessed solely with a “vanity and an inability to make tough decisions”.⁶⁸⁵ The “wets” were prepared to retreat both in the face of trade union reform and internal Cabinet ideological transformation. Thatcher saw the “wets” as blinkered, set in their ways; she argued that their “Whole political life would, after all, be a gigantic mistake if a policy of positive Tory reform turned out to be both practical and popular”.⁶⁸⁶ There was a refusal to embrace change, to accept the difficult decisions that were required to forge a new national spirit.

⁶⁸² S. Hasler, *The Battle for Britain: Thatcher and the New Liberals* (IB Taurus and Co. Ltd, 1989), p.55

⁶⁸³ M. Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years* (Harper Collins, 1993), p.129

⁶⁸⁴ M. Thatcher, *Path to Power* (Harper Collins, 1996), p.285

⁶⁸⁵ Travis, A (2011). Thatcher battled cabinet “wets” over Howe austerity, *The Guardian*. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk>

⁶⁸⁶ *Ibid*, p.129

Therefore, the New Right would reconstruct the nature of conservatism through ideology and the rejection of statecraft. It had failed – “Conservative statecraft collapsed”⁶⁸⁷ amidst the ruins of stagflation. And yet the established cohort of One Nation Toryism of Gilmour, Prior and Pym amongst others, adhered to a policy of “pragmatism, flexibility, compromise and common sense”.⁶⁸⁸ Yet this form of politics had failed; the “path of consensus” as described by Keith Joseph had “reached the end of the road”.⁶⁸⁹

A new dynamic was required. This was demonstrated though the reorganisation of the Conservative Cabinet in 1981 – a purging of the “wets”. Internal documents, written by Derek Howe to the Prime Minister, revealed that the “principle topic among the backbenchers at present is a reshuffle and the urgent need for one”.⁶⁹⁰ Codenamed the “Fox and Goose” a critique was drawn up of moderate MP’s who would be side-lined; Howe described Lord Soames as,

Hardly the right image... Doubts about wholehearted support for
Government policies.

⁶⁸⁷K. Hickson, *The Political Thought of the Conservative Party Since 1945* (Palgrave, 2005), p.140

⁶⁸⁸ E.J. Evans, *Thatcher & Thatcherism* (Routledge, 1994), p.3

⁶⁸⁹ K. Hickson, *The Political Thought of the Conservative Party Since 1945* (Palgrave, 2005), p.140

⁶⁹⁰ Howe, D. (1981) Minute to M. Thatcher, *Fox and Goose, Backbenchers urgently want reshuffle*. Churchill Archive Centre

For David Howell there had been,

Widespread criticism... His department had failed to communicate our policy and explain it to the public.

and Ian Gilmour,

Would not be missed. Not known for his enthusiasm for Government policies.⁶⁹¹

To confront the trade union movement ultimately required the “sinking of the wets”.⁶⁹² The paradox is that the first real casualty of Thatcher’s quest to challenge the hegemony of the trade union movement was to be the Tory “paternalists”. Jim Prior was “out of sympathy with Margaret’s views”.⁶⁹³ He was playing on a “very difficult wicket” as they had “under estimated enormously her absolute determination” in pursuing “new right-wing policies”. Prior laments the rejection of the Tory paternalism of Macmillan and Butler, whom were now “talked about as a disaster” and he was never to truly “appreciate the degree to which the party was becoming more doctrinaire in its approach and less pragmatic”.⁶⁹⁴

⁶⁹¹ Howe, D. (1981) Minute to M. Thatcher, *Fox and Goose, Backbenchers urgently want reshuffle*. Churchill Archive Centre.

⁶⁹² Tweedie, N. (2011). 1981 files: Inside story of failed attempt to control Margaret Thatcher. *The Telegraph*. Available at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/>

⁶⁹³ J. Prior, *A Balance of Power* (Hamish Hamilton, 1986), p.118

⁶⁹⁴ Ibid.

The symbolism of the “wets” was one that reflects a greater ideological agenda. The symbolism predisposes weakness through the acceptance of social cohesion and scepticism of dogma. This, I argue, encompasses a greater picture than simply a rejection of Tory grandees, it presents the adoption of an ideological mindset; the advance of economic dogma, of “sound money” and of policy that was to be “so extreme”.⁶⁹⁵ Thatcherism has no time for platitudes to the establishment – “the established corporate institutions” the “practical dislike” of the Trades Union Congress as well as the circumvention of the “traditional rules of British Cabinet procedure.”⁶⁹⁶ The existing system of Cabinet protocol was to be thrown “overboard” – not because of incompetency or inefficiency, but because Thatcher had no time to “placate differing personal and political factions”.⁶⁹⁷ For togetherness, Thatcher argued there “must be a Cabinet that works on something much more than pragmatism or consensus. It must be conviction government”.⁶⁹⁸

The “defeat of the wets” is merely a passing of a political baton, a generational change of emphasis and direction. These were men belonging to an established order that was changing within a globalised world, where the economic challenges that the government faced could not be overcome by an established code of adherence to

⁶⁹⁵ J. Prior, *A Balance of Power* (Hamish Hamilton, 1986), p.126

⁶⁹⁶ A. King, *The Outsider as Political Leader: The Case of Margaret Thatcher*. *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol.32, No.3 (Jul 2002), pp.4535 - 454

⁶⁹⁷ P. Hennessey, *The Prime Minister: The Office and Its Holders Since 1945* (Penguin, 2000), p.401

⁶⁹⁸ *Ibid*

status quo. Yet there is evidence of a purge; not simply of conservative men, but of aspiration; of a change of ideals. There was to be a shifting of priority away from the traditions of conservatism that the “wets” were associated with – consensus, pragmatism and the overarching status quo – as Thatcher argues to “something much more”. The post-war consensus had failed, corporatism had shifted the political and economic agenda and resulted in the failure of 1970s Britain and stagflation. A new form of conservatism would challenge the conciliation of the establishment and change the ideological narrative from this point; a bold new conservatism driven by economics to provide freedom.

4.2 An Economic Call to Arms

As demonstrated, a new radicalism and thought had emerged within the Conservative Party. A new morality was not fashioned through One Nation politics, the desire to defeat unemployment or the “political hypocrisy” of socialism – it was to be “through the essence of a free economy”.⁶⁹⁹ Both the political and the moral challenge facing the nation would be overcome, not through the facile ideology of equality or a regression of the establishment, economics would smash this quagmire of apathy. Economics was the tool to enhance the moral Thatcherite agenda; for

⁶⁹⁹ M. Thatcher, Speech to the Conservative Party Conference, Friday 10th October 1975, Blackpool Winter Gardens. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

Thatcher, recovery lay not in the collective notion of trade unionism or the antipathy of the elitist “wets” – “the way to recovery is through profits.”⁷⁰⁰ Ian Gilmour saw a “rewriting of history” that was to be “was occasioned by the monetarist revolution which took place in the Conservative Party from 1974-5 onwards”.⁷⁰¹ Gilmour saw monetarism as the “ultimate triumph of ideology over common sense” making his “skin creep”⁷⁰² and Francis Pym observes that the split in Cabinet lay directly “between the wets and the ‘monetarists’ – and yet, the “monetarists won the day”.⁷⁰³ Although inflation would be curbed through monetary control, unemployment would eventually soar, companies crashed and the government, argues Pym, economically “developed tunnel vision”.⁷⁰⁴

Yet, for Jim Prior, the “Party was becoming more and more doctrinaire”.⁷⁰⁵ The task facing the New Right was not designed around the pursuit of low levels of unemployment, but low levels of inflation and “sound money”;⁷⁰⁶ the tool of choice for a “successful and stable nation” – it was a scalpel to cut away at the excess of a bloated society. The “vague and arbitrary” notions of social justice and collective representation had led to “vast bureaucracies” of nationalised industry. Political

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁰¹ I. Gilmour (1982). *Monetarism and History*. *London review of Books*, Vol. 4 No. 1 · 21 January 1982. Available at: <https://www.lrb.co.uk/v04/n01/ian-gilmour/monetarism-and-history>

⁷⁰² J. Evans, *Thatcher and Thatcherism* (Routledge, 2006). p. 16

⁷⁰³ F. Pym, *The Politics of Consent*, (Hamish Hamilton, 1984), p8

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁵ J. Prior, *A Balance of Power*, (Hamish Hamilton, 1986), p.118

⁷⁰⁶ Ibid, p.119

planning and the economics of demand had ensured the stifling of the marketplace and consumer confidence. Politics needed to liberate, not to stifle – to be removed when necessary to “make a break with what has gone immediately before”.⁷⁰⁷ Entrenched political ideals would no longer suffice – corporatism and collective bargaining – the politics of a failed political generation, would give way to the economic. Mrs. Thatcher made a speech to the Centre for Policy Studies, on 9th February 1981, where she recollected,

I remember hearing Milton Friedman in a lecture which was not concerned with economics at all. His theme was that any good economist should be a moral philosopher as well. He said that if you make political decisions absolutely every single thing and everything in the realm of politics that decisions made on a 51-49% basis and all the time you may very well have half the people dissatisfied. What you have to do is to limit the area of political decision making.⁷⁰⁸

Thatcher was searching for the tools of conflict. Ian Gilmour was to argue that “where others might see social conflict... she merely saw the benevolent working of an invisible economic providence”.⁷⁰⁹ These “instincts” led her therefore to be

⁷⁰⁷ Ibid, p.20

⁷⁰⁸ M. Thatcher, Speech to the Centre for Policy Studies, 9th February 1981. Available at: <http://www.cps.org.uk/>

⁷⁰⁹ I, Gilmour, *Dancing with Dogma: Britain Under Thatcherism* (Simon & Schuster, 1992), p.268

“keenly interested in the work of Milton Friedman.”⁷¹⁰ Friedman proposed the limitation of government and the control of the supply side of money. Monetarism was to adhere not simply to an ability to control levels of inflation, but inflation but reflected Thatcherite morality – a sense of a firm control of finance, of an elimination of waste and temperance. The success of economic liberation, the control of sound finance through monetarism, required political courage. In limiting the “political decision making” Friedman advocated a change in political and governmental values, to enhance economic values. Thatcher was to understand this; these values were “in harmony” with her “early experience”⁷¹¹ of economic prudence, a nod to the balance sheet, and ultimately a rolling back of the state. Politics and political decision making had interfered with an economic process; Friedman argued that, “Inflation is created by government and no one else”.⁷¹²

For Friedman “government is the problem”.⁷¹³ The notion of government was flawed in that “if a government enterprise fails, it is expanded”⁷¹⁴ and he would not refrain from a critique of UK government policy. *The Times* reported in 1981 that Friedman, having understood that government spending had increased and needed to be corrected, “blamed resistance from bureaucracy, the Civil Service and a Conservative

⁷¹⁰ J. Cooper, *Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan: A Very Political Special Relationship* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p.37

⁷¹¹ J. Cooper, *Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan: A Very Political Special Relationship* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p.37

⁷¹² M. Friedman, *Why Government is the Problem* (Hoover Institute Press Publication, 1993), p.7

⁷¹³ Ibid.

⁷¹⁴ Ibid.

Party “not truly united”, for the fact that many fine objectives were not being carried out”.⁷¹⁵ His observations would extend to a Cabinet reshuffle. In a letter to Ralph Harris, post the 1981 reshuffle, Milton Friedman notes that he was,

glad to see the changes which Mrs Thatcher made in her Cabinet; maybe that will do some good.⁷¹⁶

Monetarism prioritised a “nostrum of sound money.”⁷¹⁷ Crucially, the curse of inflation, and essentially not unemployment, was reinterpreted as a signifier of the “disease of money.”⁷¹⁸ The aim was to combat economic instability, not social inequality, by achieving and maintaining a firm control on the supply of money, thereby allowing an unfettered market to operate freely – this process was defined as monetarism. This control of monetary supply paradoxically offers an opportunity to exert governmental control – gain monetary control to enhance government’s ability to install economic, and ultimately social, economic liberalism and individual freedom. Therefore, it required a change of political mentality, the prioritising of inflationary control over the pursuit of full employment. Indeed, unemployment could be sustained as Friedman saw a “natural rate of unemployment” as “only if unemployment

⁷¹⁵ J. Cooper, *Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan: A Very Political Special Relationship* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p.37

⁷¹⁶ Friedman, M. (1981). Letter to R. Harris, *Concern about performance of Keith Joseph*. Margaret Thatcher Foundation.

⁷¹⁷ J. Prior, *A Balance of Power* (Hamish, 1986), p.104

⁷¹⁸ J. Blundell, *Margaret Thatcher; A Portrait of the Iron Lady* (Algor Publishing, 2008), p.86

is at a certain level (the natural rate of unemployment) will inflation remain stable”.⁷¹⁹

This “natural rate” is important. It counters a post-war agenda of a pursuit of full employment, of a humane political and economic agenda. Yet Friedman argues that full employment is not possible without inflationary increase; there was a happy medium, this “natural rate”. Therefore, government would do well to concentrate on what it does well; to “set an appropriate structure of rules”⁷²⁰ ostensibly the rule of law, national defence and the enforcement of contracts between individuals. All other pursuits of governmental “good intentions” of economic and industrial planning would lead to, “inefficiency, lack of motivation, and loss of freedom”.⁷²¹ Government should be the “referee, not an active player”⁷²² with a limited agenda to sustain civil order and protect individual liberty. Issues such as the pursuit of full employment, industrial and energy strategy were “excuses for widening the extent of government intervention in economic affairs”.⁷²³

Eschewing a “neutral” political stance will enable the correct level of governmental influence. This avocation of neutrality is, I argue, an important point. Friedman denies the capacity for monetarism in isolation reflects an ideological mandate. It is

⁷¹⁹ Neuburger, H (1981). Treasury Paper for Margaret Thatcher, *The Natural Rate of Unemployment*, Churchill Archive Centre.

⁷²⁰ J. Blundell, *Margaret Thatcher; A Portrait of the Iron Lady* (Algor Publishing, 2008), p.86

⁷²¹ M. Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom*, (University of Chicago Press, 1962)

⁷²² Ibid.

⁷²³ Ibid.

primarily an economic tool to liberate a marketplace to function within its natural parameters. Yet, I argue, the Conservative Party's adoption of this economic tool, was situated within a far greater ideological remit – a challenge to the British industrial establishment.

For Friedman, Keynes in his challenge to classical economics, had dared reinterpret the establishment. He had foreseen the post-war economic demand revolution, legitimising economic and social transformative policy. Though opposite in terms of economic ideology, Friedman believed Keynes had paved the way for economics, in this case monetarism, to transform political protocol. A revolution Friedman argued,

was made by Keynes in the 1930s... major reliance for economic stabilisation could not be on monetary policy... but must be on fiscal policy, that is, on varying the rate of government spending and taxing.⁷²⁴

Keynes had legitimised the use of economics as a governmental tool for societal change. Through macroeconomic policy, he had established the transformative platform for government to determine the nature of demand and prioritise full employment. Friedman in response called for a “counter revolution” a need to “curb the leviathan”⁷²⁵ of the state and government, challenging the role played by the established political paradigm arguing,

⁷²⁴ M. Friedman, *The Counter-Revolution in Monetary Theory*, IEA Occasional Paper, no. 33. Institute of Economic Affairs. First published by the Institute of Economic Affairs, London, 1970.

⁷²⁵ Ibid

Fundamental differences in basic values can seldom if ever be resolved at the ballot box... The wider the range of activities covered by the market, the fewer are the issues on which explicitly political decisions are required and hence on which it is necessary to achieve agreement⁷²⁶

Friedman did believe in a political process in that “there is an intimate connection between economic arrangements and political arrangements” yet, economic freedom is also an indispensable means toward the achievement of political freedom.⁷²⁷

Political values, moral judgements and decisions were not achievable without economic freedoms – the importance “of liberty through economics not the ‘ballot box’”.⁷²⁸ Thatcher eulogised Friedman. He was to her “an intellectual freedom fighter”,⁷²⁹ an “example of what one is trying to do. You must have limitation of government.”⁷³⁰ In a letter written to Friedman in 1979, Thatcher acknowledged the challenge ahead and the combative nature of the economist, “Thank you very much indeed for your kind telegram”, she wrote, “the battle has now begun. We must win”.⁷³¹ In a handwritten aside, Thatcher writes, “by implanting the things in which

⁷²⁶ Ibid, p.22

⁷²⁷ M. Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom* (University of Chicago Press, 1962), p 3-10

⁷²⁸ Ibid.

⁷²⁹ Jones, G. (2006) Thatcher praises Friedman, her freedom fighter, *The Telegraph*.

Available; <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews>

⁷³⁰ M. Thatcher, Speech, 9th February 1981, Centre for Policy Studies. Available at: <http://www.cps.org.uk/>

⁷³¹ Thatcher, M. (1979). Letter to Milton Friedman, *Transition to Power*. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

we believe”.⁷³² This New Right belief system ultimately “would transcend the political”⁷³³ through the economic tool of monetarism; it would allow for the rolling back of state, the reduction of public borrowing and spending, wage negotiation and ultimately a control of inflation.

Yet paradoxically Friedman would be side-lined by the New Right. Friedman did not agree with the scapegoating of the British trade union movement. He did not consider wage negotiation, pay bargaining and incomes policies as arbiters to either inflation or fiscal over-stimulation. For Friedman, trade union power was a “question of secondary importance”,⁷³⁴ a form of simplistic smokescreen politics – the trade union movement was not solely responsible for inflation. In a visit to Britain in 1970, Friedman was to argue that, “Everybody from left to right is making the trade unions the scapegoat.”⁷³⁵ In contrast to Edward Heath who argued that “there can be no doubt” that “wage increases are the cause of price increases”,⁷³⁶ Friedman countered,

I do not believe in Britain or in any other country wage inflation is an independent factor producing inflation of prices⁷³⁷

⁷³² Ibid

⁷³³ I. Gilmour, *Dancing with Dogma; Britain Under Thatcher* (Simon & Schuster, 1992), p107

⁷³⁴ Ibid, p.10

⁷³⁵ Friedman, M (1977). Gammon’s ‘Black Holes by Milton Friedman. *Newsweek*.

⁷³⁶ E. Heath, Speech to Conservative Party Conference, 9th March 1972, Blackpool. Conservative Party Archive, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.

⁷³⁷ Friedman, M. (1970). The Social Responsibility of Business Is to Increase Its Profits, *The New York Times*.
<https://www.nytimes.com/1970>

Again, in the *The Economist* in 1974, Friedman reiterated this. He argued that he had “been dismayed, even in my few days in London, at the widespread support of ‘union bashing’ to attack inflation.”⁷³⁸ In May of the same year, in an article in *The Birmingham Post*, entitled ‘High Priest of Inflation’, once again he reiterated, “Right now in Britain the trade unions are being blamed for inflation. I have been defending them from that charge”⁷³⁹ and on television he argued that,

In Britain, the explanation that everybody gives for inflation is that inflation is caused by trade unions, the greedy grasping labourers who force up the wages that cause inflation⁷⁴⁰

The trade union movement was not to blame for high inflation and unemployment but “political will”. British government, demonstrated initially by Edward Heath’s Industrial Act of 1972, had “moved away from free market policies” and was misinterpreting monetarism as a tool to attack industrial representation. But Friedman argues that the connection is tenuous as greater macroeconomic challenges were responsible for inflationary instability, “The great confusion in this area is to confuse particular prices with prices in general”.⁷⁴¹

⁷³⁸ M. Friedman (1974) *The Road to economic Freedom*, *The Economist*.

Available at: <https://www.economist.com/>

⁷³⁹ M. Friedman (1974). High Priest of Inflation, *The Birmingham Post*. Available at:

Available at: <https://www.birminghampost.co.uk/>

⁷⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁴¹ M. Friedman, *The Methodology of Positive Economics*. In *Essays in Positive Economics* (Chicago University Press, 1996), p.30 - 43

The only way to attack the “disease” of inflation was to “spend less and to create less money” by government.⁷⁴² This does not automatically relate to trade union responsibility, or a policy to curb wage negotiation. There could be no indiscriminate targeting of the trade union movement – wage negotiation may have an impact on inflation, but it was unproven, and part of a greater inflationary dynamic of “excessive tax and government intervention”. A “proper climate” for growth would require “investment, enterprise, the ability to borrow capital”. It is “simply not possible” argues Friedman,

For the trade unions to be so powerful as to cause prices to rise generally unless there is a concomitant increase in the money supply. No one has ever produced evidence to the contrary.⁷⁴³

Keith Joseph was to reject Friedman as “the evolution of my views owes little to him”.⁷⁴⁴ He would famously “advance from monetarism”⁷⁴⁵ in his Stockton lecture of 1976 arguing that there existed a “false antithesis between monetarists and some so-called Keynesians”.⁷⁴⁶ The framework offered by monetary stability was benefi-

⁷⁴² Ibid.

⁷⁴³ P. Jay, *Inflation; Causes, Consequences, Cures*, (Institute of Economic Affairs, 1974), p.27

⁷⁴⁴ Joseph, K. (1994). Power behind the phone, *The Guardian*. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk>

⁷⁴⁵ K. Joseph, Speech, *Stockton Lecture, Monetarism is Not enough*, Stockton, 5th April 1976. Churchill Archive Centre

⁷⁴⁶ Ibid

cial, but more was required to enhance liberty and to galvanise a nation; “Monetarism” argued Joseph “is not enough”.⁷⁴⁷ It was an easy option for government, offering a temptation to “buy peace” instead of slimming “down the costly giants so greedy of resources” – “of the “lame duck breeding measures”⁷⁴⁸ of nationalised industries and trade unions.

Economic policy had been misused. Monetarism had been used not to create opportunity but to challenge “union obstruction, lack of skills, over manning” as a “wonder drug” to cure unemployment. Joseph argued that when this drug is removed it “causes withdrawal symptoms”.⁷⁴⁹ This “façade” needed to stop, and the limitations of economic policy exposed – monetarism would not be enough in isolation; there needed to be an attack on regulation, state interference, high taxation, bureaucracy and as Friedman lamented, an attack on the trade union movement;

Unions have their share in responsibility by their short-sighted resistance to change, by the strike threat and by over manning. No one can measure the loss of wealth.⁷⁵⁰

The solution Joseph argued did not “finish at economics either”.⁷⁵¹ I argue that Joseph’s ultimate rejection of monetarism displays a greater ideological agenda, to

⁷⁴⁷ Ibid

⁷⁴⁸ K. Joseph, Speech, *Stockton Lecture, Monetarism is Not enough*, 5th April 1976, Stockton. Churchill Archive Centre. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

⁷⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁵¹ Ibid

end “the moral dilemmas” associated with decline, to challenge the “corrosive effects of inflation”⁷⁵² and a need to “remoralise whole groups and classes of people”.⁷⁵³ Joseph’s reinterpretation of the benefits of monetarism demonstrates the repositioning of economic policy and goals; monetarism, though a necessary tool of economic control, was not enough in isolation to revitalise the state. Economics was part of a grander narrative, a remodelling of British society. As Margaret Thatcher argued in 1975, “Economic problems never start with economics. They have deeper roots—in human nature and in politics. They don't finish at economics either”.⁷⁵⁴

The doctrine of monetarism argues Ian Gilmour, was in the opening years of the Thatcher government “its guiding doctrine and principle”.⁷⁵⁵ Though not reinforced through empirical evidence, it did offer “a simple solution” – a rapier to counter the bludgeon of wage negotiation and inflation, a means to “assault” the issues of the British economy; even though inflation peaked at 21% by the second quarter of 1981 and a fifth of manufacturing had been wiped out.⁷⁵⁶ But a Rubicon had been passed; conservatism would no longer be the preserve of the One Nation “wets”; it now lay in the hands of those who sought inspiration through the purity of the market.

⁷⁵² K. Joseph, Speech, *Our human stock is threatened*. 19th October 1974, Grand Hotel Birmingham, Edgbaston. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

⁷⁵³ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁴ M. Thatcher, Speech, *Conservative Party Conference*, Friday 10th October 1975 Blackpool Winter gardens. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

⁷⁵⁵ I. Gilmour, *Dancing with Dogma; Britain Under Thatcher* (Simon & Schuster, 1992), p15

⁷⁵⁶ Ibid, p,31

4.3 Hayek's Challenge to conservatism

Friedrich Hayek would assert political influence over the direction of Conservative Party industrial and economic policy post-1974. His concern lay with the erosion of “both individual liberty and economic efficiency”, and he was to become an “intellectual mentor” to British neoliberals and the New Right within the Conservative Party.⁷⁵⁷ Primary evidence demonstrates the challenge he would help to construct against the economic traditionalists within the party – notably the “wets”. Hayek was predominantly concerned with the defence of liberalism against “collectivism”⁷⁵⁸ and was prepared to indulge in the politics of administering economic affairs. In his work *The Intellectuals and Socialism*, Hayek argues,

The character of the process by which the views of the intellectuals influence the politics of tomorrow is therefore of much more than academic interest. Whether we merely wish to foresee or attempt to influence the course of events, it is a factor of much greater importance than is generally understood.⁷⁵⁹

Hayek believed that intellectuals were “second-hand dealers in ideas”.⁷⁶⁰ Intellectuals had to target elite policy makers to ensure that new philosophical and economic

⁷⁵⁷ B. Jackson & R. Saunders, *Making Thatcher's Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), p.50

⁷⁵⁸ In 1947 Hayek met with other sympathetic intellectuals forming a “disparate group” to face the challenges of both left and right, social democracy and socialism, fascism and totalitarian communism. It was to become known as the Mont Pelerin Society.

⁷⁵⁹ F.A. Hayek, *The Intellectuals and Socialism*, (Kissenger Legacy Reprints, 1949), p.2

⁷⁶⁰ B. Steadman Jones, *Masters of the Universe: Hayek, Friedman, and the Birth of Neoliberal Politics* (Princeton University Press, 2012), p.4

ideals – neoliberalism – would become reality. These elites would consist of a wide spectrum: the intelligentsia, experts, journalists, “ideological entrepreneurs” and politicians.⁷⁶¹ Hayek would have access to and influence on an internal core of Conservative, New Right politicians, using the media and a network of contacts to pursue the realisation of economic ideals. This is evidenced in a letter to William Rees Mogg, dated the 8th October 1977, in which Hayek directly challenged a Conservative Party Cabinet minister, the “wet” Jim Prior, to deal with the “fundamental issue” of the British trade union movement. This primary evidence shows Hayek being “disappointed” at the response he received regarding proposals he had set out on “trade unions” and conceded that there was “bound to be a division within the Conservative Party”⁷⁶² over electoral strategy. He argues,

I would readily concede to Mr Prior that the chances of the party of gaining a large majority would probably be considerably better if it avoided a direct clash with the trade union leaders. But to deal with the fundamental issue she would have no chance of successfully dealing with that issue and making the British economy viable again the Conservative Party would in office merely prove that it can do better than the Labour Party.⁷⁶³

⁷⁶¹ Ibid.

⁷⁶² Hayek, F. (1977). Letter to William Rees – Mogg. Conservative Party Archive, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford. Available at: <http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/dept/scwmss/wmss/online/modern/cpa/acp/acp.html>

⁷⁶³ Hayek, F. (1977). Letter to William Rees – Mogg. Conservative Party Archive, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford. <http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/dept/scwmss/wmss/online/modern/cpa/acp/acp.html>

This I argue is a highly important piece of primary evidence. Hayek questions the priorities of the Conservative Party in 1977, their will regarding a “fundamental issue” of trade unions and the economy. Here is a direct correlation between the viability of the British economy and trade union legitimacy. Hayek challenges Jim Prior’s commitment to change, prioritising the viability of the UK economy over electoral strategy. This encapsulates the battle developing within the Cabinet. The challenge to Conservative values, of winning and holding office, of sustaining a relationship with the trade union movement and avoiding a “direct clash” with organised labour, was challenged by new economic dogma. Friedrich Hayek directly influenced Thatcherism,⁷⁶⁴ but Prior was less convinced. Jim Prior, who in 1977 was Shadow Secretary of State, was a “wet”, a throwback to Heath’s advocacy of the pursuit to “Government of national unity”.⁷⁶⁵ He was in opposition to the “doctrine” of the New Right; what was to “stick in the gullet” for Prior were the economic “prophets and gurus” with their “dogmatic or simplistic answers” to national recovery and “deep seated problems”.⁷⁶⁶ His appraisal of Hayek was blunt, in him “The Conservative Party had found a doctrine”.⁷⁶⁷

⁷⁶⁴ Margaret Thatcher was deliver a robust avocation of Hayek’s *The Constitution of Liberty* to Cabinet Ministers stating, “This is what we believe” and “banged Hayek “down on the table”.

⁷⁶⁵ J. Prior, *A Balance of Power* (Hamish Hamilton, 1986), p.104

⁷⁶⁶J. Prior, *A Balance of Power* (Hamish Hamilton, 1986), p118

⁷⁶⁷ Ibid, p.104

Hayek refused the term “Conservative”.⁷⁶⁸ A “key figure” in the debate between conservatism and economic liberalism he was the “single most important intellectual figure” in the rise of the New Right.⁷⁶⁹ What lies at the heart of the challenge to the notion of conservatism argues Hayek, was its “complacency” and simplicity, in that the Conservative “believes that if government is in the hands of decent men, it ought not to be too much restricted by rigid rules”.⁷⁷⁰

Hayek argues that the nature of conservatism and the traditions of One Nation conservatism in particular, do not offer an alternative, a necessity of change, or of progression within “contemporary developments”.⁷⁷¹ To apply this in an historical context, the Conservative Party’s response to trade union hegemony of 1970s Britain was nothing more than being able “to apply the brake”.⁷⁷² This “brake” is Conservative One Nation politics – “the politics of consent”.⁷⁷³ Like the “socialist” the Conservative is not concerned with limiting the “powers of government”⁷⁷⁴ in that “he” tolerates “much that we dislike” in order to maintain an administration or a majority in the House of Commons. Hayek argues, that “I do not regard majority rule as an end but as merely a means” as “the least evil” form of government.⁷⁷⁵ The notion of

⁷⁶⁸A. Gamble. *Hayek: The Iron Cage of Liberty* (Polity Press, 1996), p.101

⁷⁶⁹ Ibid

⁷⁷⁰ F.A. Hayek, *Why I Am Not a Conservative*. In *The Constitution of Liberty* (The University of Chicago Press, 1960).

⁷⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷⁷² Ibid.

⁷⁷³ F. Pym, *The Politics of Consent* (Hamish Hamilton, 1984), p.195

⁷⁷⁴ F.A. Hayek, *Why I Am Not a Conservative*. In *The Constitution of Liberty* (The University of Chicago Press, 1960).

⁷⁷⁵ Ibid.

“party” lay in the “broken fragments of tradition” – to Hayek there are no “guiding principles” to conservatism but merely a “practical maxim” to reinstate a political structure. It was bereft of ideology or philosophy or indeed any “guiding principles” and therefore it presented a “political constraint” to progress.⁷⁷⁶

Hayek argued that New Right priorities were a pursuit of a “higher law above municipal codes”.⁷⁷⁷ Andrew Gamble argues, that at the heart of a New Conservatism lies a desire to govern a “society rather than managing an economy.”⁷⁷⁸ A control of monetary circulation would not simply be a means to an end – it was a beginning for a greater agenda. Revolutionary transformation, as acknowledged by Joseph, lay beyond this foundation of Friedman’s monetary control – the priority of liberty and freedom. Gamble argues that Friedrich Hayek despaired at the “Tory hostility to liberal political economy”⁷⁷⁹ – conservatism having accepted the “age of liberalism was over” in their unwillingness to defer from the structure and rigours of Parliamentary democracy. In his polemic against the notion of “Why I am not a Conservative”⁷⁸⁰ Hayek reflects that liberalism “wants to go elsewhere, not to stand still”⁷⁸¹ – this is

⁷⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁸ Gamble, A. (1990) Thatcher – make or break. *Marxism Today*.

Available at: <http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/serial?id=marxismtoday>

⁷⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁰ F.A. Hayek, *Why I Am Not a Conservative*. In *The Constitution of Liberty* (The University of Chicago Press, 1960).

⁷⁸¹ Ibid.

an important point. The Conservative offers compromise, a search between the extremes with “no goal of their own”. Ultimately this stagnation, this lack of identity would lead to impasse and malaise – “obstacles to free growth”.⁷⁸²

Therefore, the Conservative Party in its One Nation guise, presented an obstacle to radical change for Hayek. The pursuit of a sustained “political community”⁷⁸³ of conservatism enabled the “political and institutional constraints” that hindered the free market. There was a need for the “calling for their removal” which was now “absolutely imperative”.⁷⁸⁴ Conservatism was now being opened up to debate and to challenge. The rhetoric of the “wets” was now seen as an antiquated cry of a dying political breed amidst obvious “incompatibilities” between a New Right, inspired by Hayek, and British Conservatives.⁷⁸⁵ Conservatism underpinned a pursuit of full employment and sound relations with the trade union movement; within a new political and ideological era, this could not be sustained.

To a New Right this was paradoxical. Policy that may seem to be “wrong or unacceptable”⁷⁸⁶ to an electorate, may be necessary to achieve “sound money” and inflationary control. The priority was not electoral reform but to achieve what was “fun-

⁷⁸² Ibid.

⁷⁸³ K. Hickson, *The Political Thought of the Conservative Party Since 1945* (Palgrave, 2005), p.174

⁷⁸⁴ Ibid

⁷⁸⁵ B. Evans & A. Taylor, *From Salisbury to Major: Continuity and Change in Conservative Politics* (Manchester University Press, 1996), p.231

⁷⁸⁶ Ibid, p.104

damentally” right; this is important, as it legitimises a challenge to One Nation conservatism; the pursuit of a political settlement and its “accurate reflection of the popular will”⁷⁸⁷ could now be questioned.

Hayek questions the effectiveness of Parliamentary democracy in relation to a longer-term ideological agenda. In June 1978, Hayek forwarded correspondence to *The Times* where he set out an agenda for a challenge to the Labour Party and to the trade union movement prior to the next General Election of 1979. The letter reveals an interesting dynamic in the relationship between the economic and political agenda at the heart of the prospective administration. Hayek argues,

The majority of the prospective Tory candidates are naturally and understandably primarily concerned with winning a seat at the coming election and feel that their chances may be reduced by what I have seen described as Mrs. Thatcher’s “extremism”. There may be some foundation in this... But I still hope that the British people will honour Mrs. Thatcher for putting the long run interests of the nation above the short run prospects of her party... The country will not be saved by the Tories being elected⁷⁸⁸

Hayek demonstrates a rejection of statecraft policy and the priority placed upon electoral credibility and electoral success through party management. His acceptance of

⁷⁸⁷ F. Pym, *The Politics of Consent* (Hamish Hamilton, 1984), p.80

⁷⁸⁸ Hayek, F. (1978). Letter to *The Times*. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

a degree of “extremism” reveals an ideological mindset, one set to be so influential amongst the new Tory right,⁷⁸⁹ as it reflects an ambivalence to losing a general election, to prioritise an agenda of which ideology is paramount in its application; it superseded any notion of statecraft priorities. What Hayek denotes is the timidity of the British political system of government. It reflects a Conservative Party at odds with the intellectual imperative of economic “extremism” – it is an attack on conservatism, on the principle of moderation, consensus and balance.

Hayek “undoubtedly influenced” Thatcher “on policy level”.⁷⁹⁰ Arthur Seldon⁷⁹¹ corresponded with Hayek, “I am glad you were critical of the Conservatives. They need fortifying intellectually”⁷⁹² and Nigel Lawson, who upon receiving correspondence acknowledged that, “There is no one from whom such a letter could have been more welcome”.⁷⁹³ As for Margaret Thatcher, Hayek was careful to write letters to *The Times* “because he sought to influence debate as a private citizen”⁷⁹⁴ – he did not hold office in the Thatcher administration and felt the need to critique at a distance, yet she “quickly and comfortably fell into the habit of meeting him one-to-

⁷⁸⁹ Joseph, K. (1974). Letter to Ralph Harris in August 1974, stating, “I am steeping myself in Hayek and am ashamed not to”. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

⁷⁹⁰ A. J. Tebble, *F.A. Hayek; Major Conservatives and Libertarian Thinkers* (Bloomsbury, 2013), p.273

⁷⁹¹ Joint founder president with Ralph Harris of the Institute of Economic Affairs.

⁷⁹² Selsdon, A. (1978). Letter, Arthur Selsdon to Friedrich Hayek, *Hobhouse Lecture*. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

⁷⁹³ Lawson, N (1978). Letter to Friedrich Hayek, *There is no-one from whom such a letter could have been more welcome*. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

⁷⁹⁴ Margaret Thatcher Foundation, *Thatcher, Hayek & Friedman* www.margaretthatcher.org/archive

one, trusting his discretion”.⁷⁹⁵ Friedman was to influence from afar; Hayek had direct access to the corridors of British power and was only too keen to exert direct influence upon a new, economically driven regime. In May 1979, Thatcher wrote to Hayek,

I was very touched by your kind telegram. It has given me great pleasure and I am very proud to have learnt so much from you over the past few years. I hope that some of those ideas will be put into practice by my Government in the next few months. As one of your keenest supporters, I am determined that we should succeed. If we do so, your contribution to our ultimate victory will have been immense. With best wishes and renewed thanks.⁷⁹⁶

“Victory” I argue would consist of defeating both internal Tory opposition and trade union agitation. The “wets” lacked courage due to a distaste for change as Hayek alluded to their “moderation, caution and the middle-minded approach... to be paternalistic and speak the language of One Nation”.⁷⁹⁷ The term “wets” purportedly evolved from Jim Prior’s unwillingness to do battle with the trade unions in 1981, and was ultimately to evolve and to split the Cabinet along radical and establishment

⁷⁹⁵ Ibid

⁷⁹⁶ Thatcher, M. (1979). Letter to Friedrich Hayek, *thanks for congratulations*. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

⁷⁹⁷ Hayek, F. (1979). Letter to Margaret Thatcher, August 1979. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

lines. As Hayek had predicted in 1977, there was “bound to be division”⁷⁹⁸ and his statement was utterly justified; there was to be division. The division of the Cabinet was to be measured in extremes – those who were prepared to accept the fundamentals of the liberal economic mantra and those who were not.

And in contrast to Friedman, Hayek had no qualms in denouncing trade union corporatism. Hayek proposed confrontation to and the “revocation” of “special unique privileges the trade unions have enjoyed”.⁷⁹⁹ Trade unionism was to be associated with a malaise, one taking hold within the Conservative Party and subsequently the nation. Corporatism was a relationship with a body of working men and women who had become the “cancer of the British economy” an “incurable deadly disease” the “causes of the decline of the British economy”.⁸⁰⁰

This is incredibly incendiary language. Hayek’s bold language was a clarion call for the radical, for revolutionary change; the “world belongs to the courageous and not the timid”⁸⁰¹ – for a rejection of the statesman and diplomat and a call to “throw around the rudder of policy”.⁸⁰² A pursuit of the administrative obligation of government without ideologically driven economic intent was a facile attempt at consensus

⁷⁹⁸ Hayek, F. (1977). Letter to William Rees Mogg. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

⁷⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁰ Commentary (1977). Trade Union privileges. *The Times*. Available: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/>

⁸⁰¹ Hayek, F. (1978). Letter to William Rees Mogg. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

⁸⁰² Ibid

politics, a nod to an antiquated conservatism of Macmillan and Heath – of the Conservative. In July 1977, Hayek questioned the wisdom of planning to win an election if radicalism of union reform was not a key element of Parliamentary administrative success,

Mrs Thatcher might get the mandate without which she can do little. If I were in her position, I would rather lose the election than get into power without being able to take the essential step⁸⁰³

This “essential step” is an interesting quote. The fault-line had been constructed, between the dogmatists and the pragmatists, and the Conservative Party was to be used as a “flag of convenience”,⁸⁰⁴ a vehicle to propagate ideological reform. Once in power, Thatcher was to dismantle any abiding legacy of the paternalistic and consensual nature of conservatism. The battle was to instigate a counter revolution, to implement a socio-economic mandate in Britain and advanced through economic and fiscal purity. An ideological gauntlet had been laid. As unemployment became the “inescapable” casualty of economic war, economic policy was to be the key to transform British politics and the British political landscape. And with this, the inner sanctum of the Cabinet was kicking and screaming in discord; Alan Walters recalls in his diary of March 1981, “Budget speech – all hell breaks loose, the wets are up

⁸⁰³ Hayek, F. (1977). Letter to Arthur Selsdon, *Decides against “a declaration of open war” against The Economist*. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

⁸⁰⁴ Ibid.

in arms – we’ll have a hot summer!’”.⁸⁰⁵ And yet in a prelude to this, Margaret Thatcher had written to Hayek in the spring of 1980 stating that,

We are passing legislation this summer to reduce the privileges of the unions; but we may well need to do more⁸⁰⁶

The “more” I argue was the eventual conflict with the NUM in 1984. And this event supports the fears of Ian Gilmour. His concern was that this pursuit of ideology would lead to such an event as Orgreave; ideology argued Gilmour, defies the “laws of political gravity”.⁸⁰⁷ Hayek was not to physically enter the citadel of political power at No.10 – yet his influence, I argue, runs deeply through the veins of the New Right. Trade union legislation had been passed with his stamp of approval.

4.4 “The Purge of the Wets”

Margaret Thatcher, for all her hawkish devotion to economic dogma, was a shrewd politician.⁸⁰⁸ She was to appoint as Secretary of State for Employment in May 1979 a man who was the antithesis of her belief system – Jim Prior. Prior was a conciliatory politician; in 1975 he had acted as Opposition speaker on employment

⁸⁰⁵ J. Aitken, *Margaret Thatcher: Power and Personality* (Bloomsbury, 2013), p.311

⁸⁰⁶ Thatcher, M. (1980) Letter to Friedrich Hayek. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

⁸⁰⁷ Gilmour, I. (1981). How a move further right will sink the Tories, *The Times*. Available at: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/>

⁸⁰⁸ H. Young, *One of Us*, (Macmillan, 1989), p.109

and industrial relations. His first task, he recalls in his memoirs, was “to try and maintain an effective dialogue with the trade unions” as he had felt haunted by the inadequate response by the previous Heath government in 1974.⁸⁰⁹ He was mystified upon returning to government by how little “most Tories knew about trade unions and their affairs”⁸¹⁰ and he wanted to pursue legislation of union and industrial reform which was practical, could work, and could be seen to work. The importance was to avoid all-out war, to gain a permanent acceptance to end the continual dogma-driven feuding that had plagued both trade union and government since the beginning of the 1970s.⁸¹¹

There was no doubt that Prior was a genial, old fashioned Conservative. A Suffolk farmer and a member of the establishment, his ideals were forged by Macmillan and he held an abhorrence of high unemployment,⁸¹² an insistence on working with the grain of the people and an understanding of the “moods and strains of society”⁸¹³ Hoskyn’s *Stepping Stones* report had run into “predictably furious opposition”⁸¹⁴ from Prior and led to a protracted battle between the “wets” and those in Cabinet who supported the extension of union confrontation. The outcome was the bitterly fought argument over trade union policy in the 1979 Conservative Manifesto.

⁸⁰⁹ J. Prior, *A Balance of Power* (Hamish Hamilton, 1986), p.154

⁸¹⁰ H. Young, *One of Us* (Macmillan, 1989), p.113

⁸¹¹ I. Gilmour *Dancing with Dogma - Britain Under Thatcherism* (Simon & Schuster, 1992), p.80

⁸¹² J. Aitken, *Margaret Thatcher; Power and Personality* (Bloomsbury Press, 2013), p.404

⁸¹³ J. Prior, *A Balance of Power* (Hamish Hamilton, 1989), p.270.

⁸¹⁴ S. Jenkins, *Thatcher and Sons; A revolution in Three Acts* (Penguin, 2008), p.25

The message to the trade union movement of the 1979 manifesto was clear. The country could no longer be, “tearing ourselves apart in increasingly bitter and calamitous industrial disputes” amidst the “militant’s charter of trade union legislation”.⁸¹⁵ There would be an “immediate review” upon coming to power of trade union powers, and a reassessment of their “obligations”. The onus from 1979 onwards would be the promotion of laws which engaged directly at installing responsible wage negotiation and reducing, indeed ultimately outlawing, wage related disputes. Most importantly a sense of reality was to precede dogma from both left and the right, reflecting with honesty the situation the country had been brought to.

Prior did not shy from taking aim at who he thought was ultimately responsible for Britain’s malaise. Citing Labour’s inescapable, “ties of history, political dogma and financial dependence to a single powerful interest group” (the trade union movement), Britain was, “less efficient, less productive, less reliable and less competitive” meaning an “immediate review of the existing law on immunities in the light of recent decisions, followed by such amendment as may be appropriate of the 1976 legislation in this field.”⁸¹⁶

⁸¹⁵ The 1979 Conservative Party General Election Manifesto

⁸¹⁶ Ibid

Therefore, the challenge for Prior as Secretary of State for Employment was to balance the interests of the two sides. To a large degree Prior had a decent, respectful relationship with the TUC and union representatives.⁸¹⁷ He advocated the development of cordial negotiation, a “reasonable approach” with the policy of placating and the winning over of the union moderates – “we should wait and then act with caution in Government”. This ambition was to prove “an almost impossible task”. Prior was to be undermined; without consultation, in May of 1979 Geoffrey Howe disregarded Prior’s plea for caution at the TUC and made a speech of “unrelenting attack” upon the “dreamworld” of the unions⁸¹⁸ as “Margaret was still itching to take immediate steps to crack down on the unions”.⁸¹⁹

Prior was attacked from the right wing of the Conservative Party. John Hoskyns in private campaigned to get him “sacked from the Employment portfolio”,⁸²⁰ and John Gorst saw his “mild and minimal” policies to union reform as a “liability” – “we were elected to get trade union reform through on Conservative votes”, Gorst complained, “not to resist it on Labour votes.”⁸²¹ Gorst would eventually go so far as to accuse Prior of “cowardice”⁸²² as he had “tricked” the party over trade union

⁸¹⁷ Regarding the TUC General Secretary Len Murray, Prior, “Came to have great respect for him” and his development of a “tough but sensitive” leadership, indeed Prior had been “privileged” to have

⁸¹⁸ J. Prior, *A Balance of Power* (Hamish Hamilton, 1989), p.157

⁸¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.165

⁸²⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸²¹ P. Dorey, *The Conservative Party and the Trade Unions* (Routledge, 1995), p.153

⁸²² *Ibid.*

reform. Prior angrily retorted that he was doing what he thought right, saying. “I sometimes believe there is courage in standing against the stream”.⁸²³ When Gorst moved an amendment to abolish the closed shop, Prior said this would simply drive such agreements underground, and conceded the challenge he and other One Nation Conservatives were facing from the dissenters on the New Right, “we also underestimated enormously the change in the whole philosophy of the right and the changes in the Conservative Party taking place” – it was “more doctrinaire in its approach and less and less pragmatic”.⁸²⁴

Prior found the extremes of the first budget under Geoffrey Howe in 1979 difficult to digest. Howe’s budget had, in Prior’s words, indicated the “bit between the teeth” of the trio of power brokers of Thatcher, Joseph and Howe, as they developed a practical strategy to counter trade union power in contrast to previous economic rhetoric. The “extreme” nature of the policies based around the pursuit of “sound money” highlighted Hayek’s protestations that market forces would reduce unemployment, which to Prior was an “anathema”. What Prior pursued was a degree of balance. His chief interest was attracting rank and file trade union members of a moderate persuasion to cross the bridge from socialism. In this, Prior wanted to challenge the union movement to adapt and reform, yet to stay within the traditions

⁸²³ Emery, F. (1980). Mr Prior defends his “middle way”. *The Times*. Available: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/>

⁸²⁴ J. Prior, *A Balance of Power* (Hamish Hamilton, 1989), 118.

of what trade unions offered – “the strength that comes from unity, the warmth and understanding that is the basis of a caring society”.⁸²⁵ The trade union excesses needed to be curbed, but in an atmosphere of persuasion and dialogue – he inclined significantly towards voluntarism.⁸²⁶ Indeed it is with some irony that Prior’s approach was a “cautious step by step approach”,⁸²⁷ yet with an emphasis placed on the internal mechanisms of the trade union movement to reform; “My main purpose was to put the onus on the trade unions”⁸²⁸ – and it was this onus on cooperation and conciliation which led to collision with Margaret Thatcher and Hoskyns over the development and implementation of the Employment Bill of 1980. The Employment Bill was introduced in December 1979 – Prior’s purpose was,

to bring a lasting change in attitude by changing the law gradually, with little resistance, and therefore as much by stealth, as possible... It was therefore all the more important not to push our reforms too far.⁸²⁹

Yet this “steady as she sinks”⁸³⁰ approach was certainly not to the liking of Hoskyns or indeed Geoffrey Howe. The steel strike of 1980 demonstrated that the “limitless” funds of the Exchequer could not sustain the demands of militant unionists

⁸²⁵ Ibid, p.154

⁸²⁶ P. Dorey, *The Conservative Party and the Trade Unions* (Routledge, 1995), p.159.

⁸²⁷ C. Wrigley, *British Trade Unions 1945 – 1995* (Manchester University Press, 1997), Introduction.

⁸²⁸ Ibid, p.158

⁸²⁹ J. Prior, *A Balance of Power* (Hamish Hamilton, 1986), p.158.

⁸³⁰ J. Aitken, *Margaret Thatcher – Power and Personality* (Bloomsbury Press, 2013), p.40

indefinitely. The strike was to “reopen questions about the adequacy or pace of Jim Prior’s Employment Bill”.⁸³¹ Prior’s bill was to deny the trade unions liability for the excesses of individual members who may or may not be militant – a reversal of the 1971 Industrial Relations Act which had ensured union liability, thus consolidating union resistance. Howe claims that, “Jim’s opinion was in fact wholly perverse”⁸³² in that individual action should not allow immunity for trade unions against the consequences of damaging industrial action.

For Howe, the lack of wholesale reform was frustrating. He argued that “Jim had rallied enough of the traditionalist old guard to uphold his more cautious approach”⁸³³ and it was time to challenge the status quo. The steel strike, described by Alfred Sherman at the CPS as “nothing short of insurrection”⁸³⁴ was an opportunity for hardliners to force the issue of consistent reform, contrary to Prior’s mandate for evolution. Cabinet records from the National Archives indicate consistent debate on the subject raged internally from 1979. John Hoskyns detailed that the,

⁸³¹ G. Howe, *Conflict of Loyalty* (Pan Books, 1994), p.164

⁸³² Ibid

⁸³³ Ibid, p.165

⁸³⁴ In 1974 Alfred Sherman co-founded, with Sir Keith Joseph and Mrs. Thatcher, the conservative think-tank, the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) and became its first director.

Unions cannot reform themselves imprisoned as they are by their spurious philosophy, rusty rule books and innate conservatism.⁸³⁵

Hoskyns goes on,

The idea that we can stabilise the economy and then build a prosperous future without first disturbing the TU status quo is an illusion – adding that if the status quo as of present was accepted it would be a sion for surrender.⁸³⁶

In the same tone, Norman Tebbit challenged Prior's green paper, its speed of reform and its lack of ambition in changing the role of trade unions. In a challenge to Prior he criticises the robustness of intent towards trade union reform,

It makes heavy weather of the deep attachment that the TU's have to the status quo.

If Jim Prior invites comments by end June 1981 how quickly could he put proposals to colleagues? There are several places where the draft is too studiously neutral... it appears indifferent.⁸³⁷

Tebbit seems to critique the timidity of the proposed Employment Bill, its lack of ambition and its regard for the historical legacy of the trade union movement. He noted that the draft paper makes "heavy weather of the deep attachment the trade

⁸³⁵ PREM 19/265 Green Paper on Trade Union Immunities. The national Archives of the UK(TNA)

⁸³⁶ Ibid.

⁸³⁷ Ibid.

unions have to the status quo” and, “references to a system having been in operation for 70 years seems to imply it should continue. The whole point is that the system worked badly for 70 years”.⁸³⁸ This line of attack continues with Hoskyns lamenting the failure in progressing with trade union reform as, “Jim has obstructed everything from trade union reform to abolition of wage councils”.⁸³⁹ Both Hoskyn’s and Tebbit’s critique of “innate conservatism” was played out against the backdrop of a deepening recession and higher unemployment.

The division between “wets” and “dries” extended through to 1981 and there were “deep divisions over the 1981 budget”.⁸⁴⁰ The Cabinet was split, with the impression of collective unity abandoned as internal briefings reveal that the “Government is divided and seen to be divided”.⁸⁴¹ Secret Cabinet minutes showed division and “profound disagreement”⁸⁴² amongst colleagues; Robert Armstrong calls for the “Home Secretary and the Chancellor of the Exchequer privately to make sure that as much business as possible is done in the Home Secretary’s small group” as there is a need to,

Minimise the amount of the business which has come to the full Cabinet⁸⁴³

⁸³⁸ PREM19/265 Green paper on Trade Union Immunities. The national Archives of the UK(TNA)

⁸³⁹ PREM 19/165 Strategy Meeting Chequers, July 1981. The national Archives of the UK(TNA)

⁸⁴⁰ J. Prior, *A Balance of Power* (Hamish Hamilton, 1986), p.130

⁸⁴¹ PREM 19/424 Margaret Thatcher summary of debates. The national Archives of the UK(TNA)

⁸⁴² PREM 19/595 Secret & Confidential; Public Expenditure leak, 20th October 1981. The national Archives of the UK(TNA)

⁸⁴³ Ibid

In September 1981, Jim Prior, along with the “hostile Sir Ian Gilmour”⁸⁴⁴ were removed and side-lined from the Cabinet to remodel it in line with Thatcher’s economic thinking. From this point, opposition to wholesale, aggressive union reform was diminished as the “wets” in Cabinet lost their voice. In January of that year Francis Pym, upon becoming leader of the House of Common, asked Keith Joseph for a brief on his industrial strategy, “only to be told that there was none”.⁸⁴⁵ There was to be no public, long term industrial policy. Indeed, politics, dialogue, industrial planning would take a back seat; dogma would transcend Cabinet unity. Ironically, Jim Prior’s gradualist and prudent industrial policies worked in mitigating the more aggressive trade union practices of the closed shop and secondary picketing. The 1980 Employment Act demonstrated that a piecemeal approach and negotiation could reduce stoppages due to industrial action. Between 1979 and 1983 the number of working days lost due to industrial action dropped from 4.6 million to 574,000 – “Jim Prior’s union reforms benefited the country but did not reconcile the Prime Minister”.⁸⁴⁶ This reflects Prior’s position, which was inherited from Heath and Macmillan – the pragmatism of traditional Conservative Party relations with the trade union movement. Prior was interested in policies which worked – not dogmatic statements of intent.

⁸⁴⁴ Commentary (1981). Three Cabinet ministers sacked. *The Times*. Available: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/>

⁸⁴⁵ F. Pym, *The Politics of Consent* (Hamish Hamilton, 1984), p.145.

⁸⁴⁶ I. Gilmour, *Whatever happened To the Tories - The Conservative Since 1945* (Fourth Estate, 1998), p.316

Post- “wets”, I argue that ideology would ultimately transcend statecraft. The post-war political consensus, though creaking and needing of reform, was removed by dogma driven by non-inflationary policies. Government abandoned partnership and instead receded to threats of fines or imprisonment.⁸⁴⁷ The road ahead was one of confrontation; an ideological construct of power to liberalise an economy which was not accountable to wage restriction and negotiation with the “disease” of the trade union movement. The optimism of the post-war period was replaced by pessimism, the pursuit, argues Ian Gilmour, “of the lowest common denominator of human conduct” – an acceptable level of unemployment, a reversal of corporate trade unionism, leading ultimately to industrial confrontation.⁸⁴⁸

4.5 Conclusions

This chapter has demonstrated the insertion of the theoretical into the practical, and the active challenge to the political establishment. I have proven a procedure that was to distance the Conservative Party from One Nation politics. This process, as demonstrated through primary sources, was constructed through an understanding that the nuances of conservatism, with a small ‘c’, were now defunct. Therefore, this research demonstrates the shifting priorities within the Conservative Party. I have

⁸⁴⁷ J. Prior, *A Balance of Power* (Hamish Hamilton, 1986), p.254.

⁸⁴⁸ I. Gilmour, *Dancing with Dogma – Britain Under Thatcherism* (Simon & Schuster, 1992), p.274.

demonstrated in this chapter the realignment of these priorities, not within the confines of New Right thinktanks, or the multifaceted influence of Powellism upon Thatcher's mortal crusade; it demonstrates the shift of dynamic within Cabinet. The active and historical advent of a process of the deconstruction of a political order designed to impose ideological dogma. Government was now a mechanism for economic reform, adherence to the rationale of inflationary control and the utter rejection of conciliation, consensus, corporate unity, and ultimately it was Margaret Thatcher's long-held ambitions to crush the power of Britain's trade unions.

Internal opposition to this grandest of economic objectives was now clear. The ideological path, formulated through both *The Ridley Report* and *Stepping Stones*, honed and fashioned through the economic rhetoric of Friedman and most significantly Hayek, had been laid and now it was time to prepare for industrial battle with the NUM. The ideologically driven agenda to dismantle a trade union movement was part and parcel of an economic agenda that was inspired by the Hayekian pursuit of market purity. The trade unions were to be an obstacle to economic reform – the “wets” in Cabinet were the obstacle to reforming the trade union movement. Formulating a challenge to the NUM and the advent of policy to ensure market liberation, ultimately lay in the defeat of internal opposition; the “wets” and the NUM were part and parcel of a corporate quagmire of self-indulgent apathy that was an obstacle to reform and rejuvenation. Thatcherism represents anti-

establishment values – she was the antithesis of the “wets” in her desire for radicalism. And the process of change did not discriminate; those who were targeted, those who were labelled a disease or apathetic, were from differing social and cultural backgrounds, but their similarity was one of defiance to ideological deconstruction of both a political and industrial way of life. Ian Gilmour did not suffer through the was to understand the ramifications of unadulterated dogma; “social engineering of an unusual sort was high on the Thatcherite agenda. Few, if any, were to be permitted to escape the ideological footprints of Thatcherism”.⁸⁴⁹

Social, political and economic policy of Thatcherism is indelibly linked. I argue that there were consequences to for the Conservative Party and the trade union movement. Each was to implode post-1979; the “wets” were to present the last clarion call of a form of conservatism that, though sporadically redefined and repackaged, has been swept away through the agenda of economic revival and deindustrialisation; this is mirrored by the trade union movement and most significantly the NUM. Both One Nation conservatism and trade unionism would suffer under Thatcherism and dogma. Though diametrically and socially opposite, they were both unique political forces that were to challenge Thatcherite dogma and

⁸⁴⁹ I. Gilmour, *Dancing with Dogma; Britain Under Thatcherism* (Simon & Schuster, 1992), p.107

lose. The consequences of this loss, for both Conservative One Nation politics and the NUM was terminal decline.

Chapter 5 – From *The Ridley Report* to “Hit List” – Implementation of Ideological Blueprint

5.0 Introduction

This chapter looks at the implementation of an industrial and energy policy, which was designed to prepare, plan and enact industrial conflict with British nationalised industries culminating with the miners’ conflict of 1984. In this chapter I identify and reveal a premeditated and “secret” New Right template to implement industrial reconstruction in the UK.

Analysis of Cabinet Papers at the national Archives in Kew led to two main findings. Through existing and newly released archive documentation I argue the following: Firstly, the *Final Report of the Nationalised Industries Policy Group* – commonly known as *The Ridley Report*, details a planned, systematic “fragmentation”⁸⁵⁰ of selected industries; this was to include the UK coal industry. The report confirms policy of deindustrialisation through, when necessary, conflict with targeted UK trade unions; it would therefore act as a template to conflict with the National Union of Mineworkers.

⁸⁵⁰ Economic Reconstruction Group (1977). Report Final of the Nationalised Industries Policy Group. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

Secondly, this chapter provides detailed archival evidence of a planned, yet denied, “secret coal pits closure plan”.⁸⁵¹ The chapter builds upon and provides detailed evidence to the revelation of this “hit list” of government driven pit closures. I reveal documentation from The National Archives that evidences conversation and planning that counters official, public government policy regarding the pit closure scheme. Therefore, I reinforce the argument through this research, initially proposed by NUM leader Arthur Scargill, of a “secret hit-list” of more than 70 pits marked for closure prior to the 1984 industrial conflict. The research counters government and National Coal Board claims of a proposed limit of 20 pit closures; documentation presented in this research reveals a plan to shut 75 working mines, denied in 1984 to the NUM and Arthur Scargill. The importance of this primary source material, is that, it clarifies and legitimises Scargill’s rebuffed accusation of “the seeds of the dispute had been sown long before” the 1984 conflict; indeed, evidence presented in this chapter advances Scargill’s claims that, “The Tories had been preparing for a showdown with the NUM since before the 1979 general election”.⁸⁵² This chapter evidences this assertion.

⁸⁵¹ Higham, M. (2014). *Cabinet papers Reveal “Secret coal pits closure plan”*. BBC News Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-25549596>

⁸⁵² Scargill, A. Speech, *Address to the Special Conference of the NUM*. North west Socialist Labour Party, 1984. Available at: <http://www.socialist-labour-party.org.uk/Scargill>

5.1 The Ridley Report – “The chosen battle ground”

The conflict with the NUM was predetermined and constructed on both an ideological and practical level. This section examines the development of the practical administration of an ideological mandate as demonstrated through the *Final Report of the Nationalised Industries Policy Group* – commonly known as *The Ridley Report*.

In October 1984, Margaret Thatcher gave a speech to the Conservative Party, where she stated that, “Let me make it absolutely clear the miners' strike was neither of this Government's seeking nor of its making.”⁸⁵³ Thatcher's declaration poses some questions. Her speech to the Party conference faithful reflects an impression of a government which had been faced with a threat in historic isolation – a trade union movement, and a NUM, which had sought a premeditated confrontation. Yet evidence demonstrates a Conservative administration fully aware of the need for a “re-evaluation of contingency planning”.⁸⁵⁴ The 1974 miners' strike and the subsequent symbolism of the Conservative Party electoral defeat, was to vindicate Keith Joseph and Margaret Thatcher's preferred option in confronting the trade

⁸⁵³ Thatcher, M. (1984). Speech to Conservative Party Conference. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

⁸⁵⁴ J. Winterton & R. Winterton, *Coal, Crisis and Conflict: The 1984-85 Miners' Strike in Yorkshire* (Manchester University Press, 1989), p.145

union movement and to reject appeasement in industrial relations.⁸⁵⁵ A readdressing of trade union policy was first considered as early as 1974. The *Carrington Report*, an evaluation of the 1974 election loss advocates that,

Strong unions and the advanced technology operated by their members, especially in fuel and power industries, had irrevocably shifted the balance of industrial power in their favour... higher priority should be given to contingency planning in periods of political and industrial quiet.⁸⁵⁶

This presents a shift of theoretical mindset regarding trade union policy. A move away from dialogue and conciliation and towards preparation and planning to confront “strong unions”. Lord Carrington’s report was secret as ministers were to be “banned from public comment”⁸⁵⁷ resulting in some “degree of consternation” at the leaking of the “top secret” party report to *The Times*.⁸⁵⁸ Denis Healey was to comment that the report was to represent “the most disturbing thing he had ever read” with intentions to plan “revenge for the last Conservative Administration’s defeat by the miners.”⁸⁵⁹ In reality, argues Peter Hennessey, the report reflected a Conservative Party wholly underprepared to take on a trade union movement which

⁸⁵⁵ Ibid

⁸⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁵⁷ Emery, F. (1978). Tory consternation over leak of party report on unions. *The Times*. Available at: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/#section-news>

⁸⁵⁸ Ibid

⁸⁵⁹ Ibid.

had the “ability to throttle the physical life of the country... should they be confronted”.⁸⁶⁰

Carrington’s report though, was a prelude to a more militant stance within the Conservative Party. It had the effect of opening the “eyes of some of the more hawkish Tories”⁸⁶¹ whose “principle map maker”⁸⁶² was to be Nicholas Ridley, who “burned with zeal for the free market... and would set to work on some unthinkable thoughts about tackling the nationalised industries”.⁸⁶³ In May 1978 *The Times* reported that a paper was circulated within backbench groups including content on “how a Conservative government should counter any “political” threat from its enemies”.⁸⁶⁴ Commonly known as *The Ridley Report*, it was to provide a “framework for the government during the coal strike of 1984”⁸⁶⁵ – with an emphasis placed on the preparation and planning for confrontation “on the chosen ground of the Tories”.⁸⁶⁶ What the document provides is a practical framework from which to hang the ideological thought processes of the New Right – a clear and practical advent of dogma moving into reality – a guide on how to challenge a British

⁸⁶⁰ Hennessey, P. (1978). Mrs. Thatcher warned in secret report of defeat in confrontation with unions *The Times*. Available at: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/#section-news>

⁸⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶² H. Young, *One of Us*, (Macmillan, London), p.358

⁸⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶⁵ H. Benyon, *Digging Deeper - Issues in the Miners’ Strike* (Verso, 1985), p.55

⁸⁶⁶ Economic Reconstruction Group (1977). Report Final of the Nationalised Industries Policy Group. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

industrial community. The document was circulated in an edited fashion to the Shadow Cabinet, as evidenced by a leak to *The Times*, which reported,

Shadow ministers said last night that although they had received the report the annex was not included. They suggested that it would never be accepted by the Shadow Cabinet.⁸⁶⁷

The report represented the most radical of Conservative policy. The missing annex was to detail how a battle with the trade union movement “should be on ground chosen by the Tories”.⁸⁶⁸ It reflects a form of positive deconstruction, a will to dismantle and to disarm industrial political influence by advocating targeted confrontation with trade unions. Industrial and energy policy was to be designed to destabilise and fragment, indeed, it was a case of the pursuit of a non-policy. An emphasis was placed not on the construction of long-term management and development but on implementation of “totally inflexible” targets and a gradual reduction in the financing of investment programmes. Government would step away from involvement in industry, its “monolithic structures” split and subsidies reduced to allow a leaner, stripped down industry to be accountable to the rigours of the marketplace. This process of the weeding out of “uneconomic activities” would

⁸⁶⁷ Hatfield, M. (1978). Tory views on unions embarrass leaders *The Times*. Available at: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/#section-news>

⁸⁶⁸ Ibid.

eventually lead to privatisation.⁸⁶⁹ The report was prepared to say and think the “unthinkable”⁸⁷⁰ to take a “long hard look at nationalised industries”, and controversially look beyond the boardroom to the industrial battlefield. It was expected that on publication it was to create, in the words of *The Economist*, a “humdinger of a row”.⁸⁷¹

The plan would take time to implement. It was considered too early in 1981 to confront the NUM, yet *The Ridley Report* “provided the framework” of which “almost every detail of its recommendations has been followed in the legislation of the past five years”.⁸⁷² Industries were to be either “vulnerable” or “non-vulnerable”, coal being vulnerable and the railways, civil service and steel, to be non-vulnerable. Government should be prepared to,

Try and provoke a battle in a non-vulnerable industry, where we can win... A victory on ground of our choosing would discourage an attack on more vulnerable ground of which the most likely area is coal⁸⁷³

Viewing this disclosure in context it is startling in its ferocity. The language demonstrates an acceptance of the need for provocation, of winning and of vulnerability – a message of government advocating a war footing with British

⁸⁶⁹ P. Wilsher, D. Macintyre & M. Jones, *Strike: Thatcher, Scargill and the Miners* (Andre Deutsch, 1985), p.16

⁸⁷⁰ M. Adeney & J. Lloyd, *The Miners' Strike 1984 – 85 Loss Without Limit* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), p.74/75

⁸⁷¹ H. Benyon, *Digging Deeper - Issues in the Miners' Strike* (Verso, 1985), p.54

⁸⁷² J. Saville, *An Open Conspiracy Conservative Politics and the Miners' Strike 1984-5* *The Socialist Register* 1985/6, pp.295-329.

⁸⁷³ M. Adeney & J. Lloyd, *The Miners' Strike 1984 – 85 Loss Without Limit* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), p.74/75

industry. There is a consistent theme of confrontation, to “break up” and to confront “the enemies of the next Tory Government” to “provoke” and to “defeat”.⁸⁷⁴ The emphasis was on the breaking down “The utilities” to “sell whole units to private buyers direct”. In the case of the NCB it was “big and unlikely to be saleable” and so therefore “should be broken down into basic units”. It was recommended, and underlined, that the, “N.C.B. break down into pits and seek to form worker co-operative”, as,

More and more of the nationalised industries are run for the benefit of those who work for them. The pressures are far more jobs for the boys and more money for each boy.⁸⁷⁵

Reward for “uneconomic” activity would stop. The implication is that the comfort of coal mining, the “carrots in the public sector” had constructed an unrealistic mentality in face of the realities of the marketplace. A breaking up of working collieries into co-operatives would allow for the necessary engagement with market forces to reconnect with the reality of “earning their required rate of return” and not being rewarded for uneconomic “activities”.⁸⁷⁶ The “jobs for the boys’ analogy, reflects a challenge not just to statistics or productivity, but to a mindset and a way

⁸⁷⁴ Economic Reconstruction Group (1977). Report Final of the Nationalised Industries Policy Group. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

⁸⁷⁵ Economic Reconstruction Group (1977). Report Final of the Nationalised Industries Policy Group. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>.

⁸⁷⁶ Ibid.

of life. The consistency, community and family ties of working within the coal mining industry – there had been too much carrot and not enough of the stick, as the “sanction of bankruptcy” had not been applied.

The report evidences an ideological drive for deindustrialisation. Denationalisation would become a political tool, a means, not to develop industrial strategy, but to assert authority by “moving nationalised industries out of the public sector once they had been reconstructed and the battle against the workforce won”.⁸⁷⁷ Deconstruct nationalised industry and a path would be made to privatise on a national scale. This process would start with legislation, a “nasty little bill” to ensure eventual physical conflict with an aim to “fragment” and a process would unravel; the,

First problem to deal with is to end statutory monopolies in the public sector. It is no good selling pits or steel mills etc. if it is illegal to operate them.... To do this will require legislation

After which,

It will be very much easier to attempt a permanent form of denationalisation after we have achieved a certain degree of fragmentation... There are a number of industries which could be broken

⁸⁷⁷ A. Gamble, *Privatization, Thatcherism, and the British State*, Journal of Law and Society, Vol. 16, No. 1, Thatcher's Law (Spring, 1988)

up into separate companies, as many of which as possible should be sold to private buyers.⁸⁷⁸

The “fragmentation” of nationalised industries was not born out of fiscal or pragmatic imperative; neither was it to be democratically accountable. As Simon Jenkins argues, “The public never saw a white paper putting the public case for privatisation”⁸⁷⁹ – policy was designed to reenergise the individual “at the expense of social solidarities “and as Jenkins argues, “This was done intentionally”. Nigel Lawson argued in September 1982 that, “No industry should remain under state ownership unless there is a positive and overwhelming case for doing it”⁸⁸⁰ – the decimation of monopoly, the breaking physically and psychologically of British state-controlled industry, trade union and worker, would allow for, as Geoffrey Howe argued, state ownership to be “displaced or supplemented, wherever sensibly possible”.⁸⁸¹

The unique intensity of the report would reverberate through the Conservative Party. Senior shadow ministers were seen to be “embarrassed” on receipt of the report that represented “an influential view in the party”.⁸⁸² Post-war Conservative Party

⁸⁷⁸ Economic Reconstruction Group (1977). Report Final of the Nationalised Industries Policy Group. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>.

⁸⁷⁹ S. Jenkins, *Accountable to None; The Tory Nationalisation of Britain* (Hamish Hamilton, 1985), p.25

⁸⁸⁰ H. Young, *One of Us* (Macmillan, 1989), p.360

⁸⁸¹ S. Jenkins, *Accountable to None; The Tory Nationalisation of Britain* (Hamish Hamilton, 1985), p.67

⁸⁸² Hatfield, M. (1978). Tory views on unions embarrass leaders *The Times*. Available at: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/#section-news>

administrations have all “been committed to some degree of privatisation”,⁸⁸³ yet this was a call for wholesale dismantling of national industry and utilities, of proposals “for hiving off sections of the nationalised industries”.⁸⁸⁴ The greater goal was not simply to defeat the militancy of miners, dock workers or the postal union, this would present a means to an ultimate end – privatisation. Jenkins argues, the ultimate objective was to be “the systematic privatisation driven by an ideological compulsion to make what was public private.”⁸⁸⁵ And with this sole aim in mind, *The Ridley Report* is a template for proposed industrial confrontation, that reflects unnervingly the realities of the build-up to, and enactment of the 1984 strike. As an instruction manual on how to counter industrial action, it states categorically the need for,

- The government determining the timing of the confrontation.
- Coal stocks to be accumulated around power stations.
- Coal supplies arranged by non-union foreign ports.
- Non-union lorry drivers to be recruited.

⁸⁸³ H. Feigenbaum, J. R. Henig & C. Hammett, *Shrinking the State: The Political Underpinnings of Privatization* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.71

⁸⁸⁴ Hatfield, M. (1978). Tory views on unions embarrass leaders *The Times*. Available at: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/#section-news>

⁸⁸⁵ S. Jenkins, *Accountable to None; The Tory Nationalisation of Britain* (Hamish Hamilton, 1985), p.71

- The state to organise and to equip a flexible, para-military, mobile police force ready to use riot tactics.⁸⁸⁶

These recommendations were “an eerily prescient sketch of tactics”⁸⁸⁷ that were deployed during the strike. Huw Benyon argued that, “The extent to which this report has been followed as a blueprint by the Thatcher Government is vital to an understanding of the 1984 miners’ strike.”⁸⁸⁸ The report offers a plan on a practical level – a construct of a series of actions to gain success in countering trade unions – a pragmatic guide to “fragmentation” and policing. Yet it also reflected a psychological reinterpretation of the trade union, of how to counter a political threat, of the “communist disrupters” and the “enemies of the next Tory government”.⁸⁸⁹ The term “enemy” is highly significant. The development of post-war corporatism had offered a chance for industrial representation to forge a path within the establishment; the evidence produced through *The Ridley Report* demonstrates the wholesale reversal of this mindset – from a corporate entity to an enemy of the state. The report evidences that Thatcher had “plotted to destroy the union”.⁸⁹⁰ From 1978 onwards, a strategy was developed to counter the power of the NUM, in what Ridley

⁸⁸⁶ Economic Reconstruction Group (1977). Report Final of the Nationalised Industries Policy Group. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>.

⁸⁸⁷ P. Wilshere, D. Macintyre & M. Jones, *Strike: Thatcher, Scargill and the Miners* (Andre Deutsch, 1985), p.18

⁸⁸⁸ H. Benyon, *Digging Deeper – Issues in the Miners’ Strike* (Verso, 1985), p.36

⁸⁸⁹ P. Wilshere, D. Macintyre & M. Jones, *Strike: Thatcher, Scargill and the Miners* (Andre Deutsch, 1985), p.18

⁸⁹⁰ C. Bloom, *Thatcher’s Secret War: Subversion, Coercion, Secrecy and Government, 1974 – 90* (The History Press). p.123

would later assess, was “really closer to a revolution than a strike... it was very much in the nature of a peasant’s revolt”.⁸⁹¹ There was an acknowledgement of the challenge that this rhetoric would present, that the mandate given to Ridley’s report would allow for extreme scrutiny, but it “would be cardinal for the government to hold firm”.⁸⁹² His report would earn him notoriety and old dog-eared copies would be held by striking miners as a symbol of Thatcher’s determination to defeat them.⁸⁹³ Ridley understood the severity of what he was proposing, and expresses his concerns, “If there were to be weakness” in its application; “there is no point” he argues, “in undertaking it if we are not prepared to go through with it”.⁸⁹⁴

Thatcher had “pressed Nicholas Ridley to produce a further strategic document”.⁸⁹⁵ I argue that there was knowledge, awareness, preparation and an understanding of when there would be a conflict with the NUM – “There is no doubt” Ridley states, “the government would be challenged sooner or later”.⁸⁹⁶ To repeat Margaret Thatcher’s adamant response to the origins of the 1984 dispute that, “the miners’ strike was neither of this Government’s seeking nor of its making”⁸⁹⁷ needs to be

⁸⁹¹ Ibid.

⁸⁹² Economic Reconstruction Group (1977). Report Final of the Nationalised Industries Policy Group. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>.

⁸⁹³ P. Wilsher, D. Macintyre & M. Jones, *Strike: Thatcher, Scargill and the Miners* (Andre Deutsch, 1985), p.17

⁸⁹⁴ Economic Reconstruction Group (1977). Report Final of the Nationalised Industries Policy Group. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

⁸⁹⁵ H. Benyon, *Digging Deeper – Issues in the Miners’ Strike* (Verso, 1985), p.35

⁸⁹⁶ Economic Reconstruction Group (1977). Report Final of the Nationalised Industries Policy Group. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

⁸⁹⁷ M. Thatcher, Speech to Conservative Party, 1984, Conference Centre, Brighton. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>.

viewed through the context of *The Ridley Report*; it evidences the preparation for conflict in 1984.

5.2 Preparing for Battle – “Mobilising Against Scargill”

The Ridley Report was to formulate a vision for industrial confrontation. To implement this vision, time, preparation and an external coal supply was required. I argue that from 1981-1984 a Conservative government neglected the United Kingdom’s medium to long-term energy policy in order to plan, finance and implement industrial confrontation with the NUM.

For Margaret Thatcher, industrial unrest in the coal industry was “probably the greatest threat to her government”.⁸⁹⁸ Peter Walker notes that the Prime Minister was “properly nervous of the harm the miners’ dispute could do” as the 1974 defeat of Edward Heath had been “clearly scorched on her mind”.⁸⁹⁹ The threat posed by the NUM was to “crystallise the essence of the British disease” and, through Ridley, had been identified as an “immediate category of risk”.⁹⁰⁰ Therefore, the coal industry was to be targeted for wholesale pit closures – yet, this could not be known within the public realm. Parliamentary debate, dialogue and scrutiny of a pit closure scheme

⁸⁹⁸ P. Walker, *Staying Power; Peter walker An Autobiography* (Bloomsbury Publishing Ltd, 1991), p,166

⁸⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰⁰ H. Young, *One of Us* (Macmillan, 1989), p.368

would offer the perfect opportunity for the NUM and Arthur Scargill to galvanise his members in legitimising industrial action through a national ballot. But by January 1983, this research identifies, there were wholesale pit closure plans being implemented. Nigel Lawson reveals this in an internal memo to Margaret Thatcher in January 1983. With over a year to go before the start of strike action, Lawson identifies that Arthur Scargill, “no longer has the standing in the industry” and so,

The [Coal] Board are therefore convinced that the rate of closures should be speeded up.

To minimise the risk of immediate national strike action and to maximise the chances of closing uneconomic capacity the Board will want to take it step by step and play it by ear.

The Board plan in a reduction of manpower of some 15,000 in 1984

This strategy is but the first step in what will need to be a sustained programme lasting a number of years.⁹⁰¹

⁹⁰¹ PREM19/1092 N. Lawson minute to M. Thatcher. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

The context of this revelation in 1983 is important. This research demonstrates in this chapter a denial of an official, long-term pit closure programme to the NUM leader Arthur Scargill. In April 1984, Arthur Scargill made a speech at the NUM conference. He argued,

When I was elected President of this Union, by over 70 per cent of the votes cast, I was elected on a programme of total opposition to pit closures and reductions in manpower⁹⁰²

Scargill's argument was that his mandate for leadership was based upon an opposition to pit closures. I argue that the legitimacy of a national ballot of mineworkers for strike action was to be reliant on a true reflection of the number of proposed pit closures; this was never forthcoming until its release under the thirty-year rule. Understanding that a successful ballot "was the only hope of stopping the shambles affecting the union"⁹⁰³ Peter Walker noted in his autobiography⁹⁰⁴,

I decided that in order to defeat him I must see there was no possibility of him winning a vote for industrial action... He must never be given this case.⁹⁰⁵

⁹⁰² A. Scargill, Speech to NUM Conference, 19th April 1984. Available at: <http://www.ukpol.co.uk/arthur-scargill-1984-num-conference-speech/>

⁹⁰³ M. Adeney & J. Lloyd, *The Miners' Strike 1984 – 85 Loss Without Limit* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), p89

⁹⁰⁴ Peter Walker, Secretary State for Energy, 1983 – 87.

⁹⁰⁵ P. Walker, *Staying Power; Peter walker An Autobiography* (Bloomsbury Publishing Ltd, 1991), p,167

This is an important admission. Cabinet records, detailed in this chapter, reveal the existence of a denied “hit list”. Scargill had complained “again and again” of its existence which was never divulged⁹⁰⁶ as its existence would ensure an end to the “obviously fictional” agreed joint talks “with government on a future for Coal” and ensure a legitimate strike ballot, cementing Scargill’s authority.⁹⁰⁷ Walker was adamant; he was to be given “all the resources I needed to guarantee there would not be a successful ballot for industrial action”⁹⁰⁸ – there never was going to be a strike ballot and there was never to be transparency regarding the pit closure scheme. What was required now was time and preparation.

Nigel Lawson “implemented” Ridley’s plan.⁹⁰⁹ He was to stockpile coal up to fifty-eight million tonnes, gather reserves of vital chemicals and was even to “set up helicopter landing sites inside power stations”.⁹¹⁰ Therefore, all energy policy was “subordinated” in order to defeat Scargill.⁹¹¹ This was no more apparent than in the ambiguous nature and sustained, long-term political concealment of the intent to protect energy supplies for the inevitable conflict. UK energy policy was to be designed, not for the nation’s effective, medium to long-term needs, but primarily to serve as a political tool to defeat the NUM. The development of Conservative Party

⁹⁰⁶ M. Adeney & J. Lloyd, *The Miners’ Strike 1984 – 85 Loss Without Limit* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), p.84

⁹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, p.87

⁹⁰⁸ P. Routledge, *Scargill, The Unauthorized Biography* (Harper Collins, 1993), p.130

⁹⁰⁹ *Ibid*, p.132

⁹¹⁰ *Ibid*.

⁹¹¹ *Ibid*, p.131

preparation for the strike demonstrates an “interrelationship between an authoritarian state and the idea of individualism”.⁹¹² The power of monopolised industry, although ideologically rejected, offered a degree of centralised control; energy supplies were now weaponised. In 1983, 108 million tonnes of coal was required for electrical generation; this demand, though stockpiled domestically, was to be imported from amongst others, Australia.⁹¹³ The unofficial, proactive energy policy, was the prioritising of coke and coal supplies, while in public Lawson was proposing a hands-off approach to energy policy, arguing,

there were many energy policy issues with a small “e” to occupy my attention – uneconomic pits, energy prices... I was, however, frequently criticised at the time and since for not introducing an Energy Policy with a capital “E” and capital “P” ... Disappointing as this must have been to some people I did not – and still do not think – that it makes sense to have an “Energy Policy”.⁹¹⁴

Written in 1988, four years after the dispute, this is a paradoxical statement. Though the above quote points to a *laissez-faire* approach, there was a clear “objective” – a defeat of Scargill; described in Parliament by Lawson in July 1984, as “a worthwhile

⁹¹² H. Benyon, *Digging Deeper – Issues in the Miners’ Strike* (Verso, 1985), p.37

⁹¹³ CAB184/670. Memo 23/2/1983 Nigel Lawson to Leon Brittan – *Brittan’s response to Lawson.*, 14th Feb 1983. National Archives of the UK (TNA).

⁹¹⁴ N. Lawson, *The View from No.11 - Memoirs of a Tory Radical* (Bantam Press, 1988), p.163

investment by the nation”.⁹¹⁵ This “investment” was to cause outrage in Parliament on the Labour benches – the term “investment” seen as evidence of culpability in fomentation of the strike. Lawson retorted that, “if the defeat of the miners’ strike was *not* a worthwhile investment, why did we spend so much public money to win it”.⁹¹⁶

Government energy policy reflected a limited state intervention. Lawson argued that it was the market that was to be the “best tool for allocating supplies between present and future needs”⁹¹⁷ and “dubious long-range projections” were unrealistic. The priority was to reject subsidy, control labour costs and fix a realistic energy price; Lawson was “highly sceptical” regarding government intervention and “Energy Policy enthusiasts”.⁹¹⁸ So why the U-turn? Why did the government take an active interest post-1979 in maintaining and building coal reserves – an example of much derided long-term planning; in the words of Nigel Lawson, the “overriding need” to defeat the NUM,⁹¹⁹ - “I subordinated almost everything to the overriding need to prepare for and win a strike”.⁹²⁰

⁹¹⁵ Ibid, p.161

⁹¹⁶ Ibid, p.161

⁹¹⁷ N. Lawson, *The View from No.11 - Memoirs of a Tory Radical* (Bantam Press, 1988), p.164

⁹¹⁸ Ibid.

⁹¹⁹ P. Routledge, *Scargill, The Unauthorized Biography* (Harper Collins, 1993), p.131

⁹²⁰ N. Lawson, *The View from No.11 - Memoirs of a Tory Radical* (Bantam Press, 1988), p.143

The priority could not be clearer. In public, the government espoused small state rhetoric, in private, paradoxically, the power of this state would be fully utilised in the mass stockpiling of coal and coke reserves. Stocks of coal at power stations rose from 29.9 million tonnes in 1979 to 58 million tonnes in 1983. The government, who had retreated from a confrontation with the miners in 1981, could, “build up stocks without challenge”,⁹²¹ and evidence from Cabinet minutes in 1983 illustrate the coordinated approach to a “miners’ strike starting in May/June”.⁹²² Minutes of a meeting of the Official Group on Coal in 18th February 1983, almost a year prior to the dispute, details the period coal stocks would last in the event of a miners’ strike,

For the period to next autumn CEGB⁹²³ endurance builds up to a maximum of 27 weeks for a miners’ strike starting in May/ June and thereafter should not fall below 26 weeks... An additional 2-3mt of coal stocks would increase endurance of by about 3 weeks for a strike beginning in mid-November – i.e. to early June.⁹²⁴

The confrontation with the NUM was to override all other UK energy needs. The challenge to the NUM was pre-planned’ it was premeditated and countered the whole ethos of the public administration’s desire for fiscal control and limited state

⁹²¹ PREM19/1329 Official Group on Coal, 18th Feb 1983. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

⁹²² Ibid.

⁹²³ Central Electrical Generating Board

⁹²⁴ PREM19/1329 Official Group on Coal, 18th Feb 1983. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

involvement regarding energy policy. There were to be conflicting messages at the heart of government; in a document entitled *Public Expenditure – Hitting the Targets* dated 15th July 1983, Ferdinand Mount highlights the importance of setting targets for public expenditure, “of the anxiety and determination we call share” expressing requirements to “fulfil our aspirations to reduce Government borrowing” and secondly, “Hit those targets”.⁹²⁵ Keith Joseph, in July 1983, argued that it was “crucial that we should keep back for 1984/1985 the £3billion reserve which appeared in the last white paper” which was to mean “finding savings of some £2.5 billion in 1984-1985”.⁹²⁶ As Lawson recounts, all other priorities were subordinated to the defeat of the miners, whilst the public face of government was austerity and fiscal prudence.

Therefore, government policy was one geared to “extreme”⁹²⁷ budgetary control and this brought the inevitable departmental challenges. In a letter from Peter Rees, Chief Secretary to the Treasury to Nigel Lawson, Rees, outlines the difficulties and challenges of squeezed budgets and demanding financial targets,

⁹²⁵ PREM 19/985 Mount, F. (1983) Government document *Public expenditure – Hitting the Targets*. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

⁹²⁶ PREM 19/985 Joseph, K. (1983) Secretary of State, *Draft Cabinet Paper by the Chief Secretary*. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

⁹²⁷ PREM 19/985 Ingham, B (1983) *Public Expenditure Presentation*. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

I have with great difficulty identified the whole of the required savings in my cash limited programme in such a way to leave science unaffected. But I will have to find £20 million from the universities... This will sharply reduce the scope for rationalisation and new development.⁹²⁸

The government's political message was utterly contradictory. To the Nation it was of a need for economic prudence after the excess of the previous Labour administration. It was a message of cost-cutting and departmental soul searching at how to adjust the ever-tightening budget. In the 1983 Conservative Party General Election Manifesto, the message was for the control of state spending, "We shall maintain firm control of public spending and borrowing... We shall continue a responsible financial strategy"⁹²⁹ and Bernard Ingham declared at a Public Expenditure presentation in 1983, it was paramount that the government was seen to be "determined to keep on top of spending and exercise restraint as a way of life"⁹³⁰ – the fiscal message could not have been clearer.

Yet the Secretary of State for Energy, Peter Walker, in June 1983, was considering how far it was to be, "feasible and desirable to increase endurance of coal burning

⁹²⁸ PREM 19/985 P. Rees (1983). Letter to Nigel Lawson, *Public Expenditure Forecast*. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

⁹²⁹ The 1983 Conservative Party General Election Manifesto – *The Challenge of our Times*. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/110859>

⁹³⁰ PREM 19/985 B. Ingham (1983). *Public Expenditure Presentation*. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

industry”.⁹³¹ Walker outlines the various effects a miners’ strike would have on power station production of electricity and “certain customers who normally draw coal direct from the pits”, and was to outline in full the prospective costs to the taxpayer. Walker outlines the following costs in a context of providing support for those in industry, and the supply of energy for less than a two-month period “The NCB has in mind a total provision of perhaps 150,000 tonnes, which would provide an endurance of perhaps 7 - 8 weeks”.⁹³² Walker summarises the predicted short-term costs as,

Cement £1 - 1.2 million

Other large industries £2.2 million

Small Industries £0.9 million

Coal depots £0.6 million

Strategic Stocks £1.2 -1.5 million

Total £5.9 - 6.4 million

⁹³¹ PREM 19/1329 Report by the Official Group on Coal (MISC57). P. Walker (1983). Internal Memo to Prime Minister, *Power Station and Industrial Endurance*. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

⁹³¹ Ibid

⁹³² Ibid

The eventual strike would last for just under a year. Walker's forecast was for a seven to eight-week period, to simply "maximise stocks by November 1983".⁹³³ Yet the figures were to be a drop in the ocean considering the financial burden of defeating the miners over a twelve-month period from March 1984 to March 1985. The expectations were for a coal strike initially to last no longer than 15 - 20 weeks and was planned and prepared for as a part of overall governmental budgetary responsibility, whilst dictating to Cabinet the importance of fiscal responsibility. From 1981, as evidenced, a pit closure programme was in place; this was government priority regarding energy policy – all other concerns, as detailed by Nigel Lawson, were to take a backseat until the defeat of the NUM. Newly released documents, from Nigel Lawson written to the Prime Minister, argue that, "of course, a number of other decisions in the fields of public expenditure, coal price, and pay round, hinge on the approach we adopt".⁹³⁴ Lawson's internal memo to Margaret Thatcher in 1983 demonstrates a government fully committed to the inevitability of strike action. Nobody within Cabinet was more aware of the "overriding need to prepare for a coal strike" than Nigel Lawson; "The House," he declared in 1984 at

⁹³³ Ibid

⁹³⁴ PREM 19/1329 Report by the Official Group on Coal (MISC57). N. Lawson (1983). Letter to Prime Minister, *Power Station Endurance in the Medium Term*. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

the height of the strike, “Should be in no doubt whatever that the government are prepared to pay the cost of resisting this strike however long it lasts.”⁹³⁵

And the eventual financial cost was immense. The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Arts (The Earl of Gowrie) stated to the House of Lords,

My Lords, the strike is estimated to have reduced growth in the gross domestic product by between 1 and 1¼% in 1984, to 2½%.

Lord Diamond responded,

My Lords, I am grateful to the noble Earl for those figures. Do they add up to the estimate, which has been widely publicised, of a cost between £5 billion and £6 billion in total, whether it arises in this year or the following year? As those are the economic costs only, and in view of the enormous personal suffering caused by strikes to strikers, their families and their wives in particular (as well as the economic costs which are shared by all of us).⁹³⁶

⁹³⁵ HC Deb (30th October 1984) vol 65 cc1171-250 Available at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/>

⁹³⁶ HL Deb (19th February 1985) Vol 460 cc474-8 *Miners' Strike: Overall Cost*. Available at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/>

There is a conflict of ideologically driven agendas that the above has demonstrated. Nigel Lawson as both an Energy Secretary and Chancellor of the Exchequer, was “always a firm believer in the market economy and the enterprise culture... set within a firm framework of financial discipline”.⁹³⁷ There are so many contradictions to this statement when considering the overriding aim to defeat a trade union at almost any cost. As demonstrated, the desire to deconstruct the coal industry was confirmed in 1981, and yet billions of pounds of taxpayer funds would be ploughed in to the preparation and policing of the strike. The public utterances of fiscal responsibility do not reflect the mass investment, long-term planning and rejection of budgetary targets to defeat the NUM in a planned conflict. The cost to the taxpayer and effort to reconfigure wholesale government strategy does indeed evidence Lawson’s claim that he was to subordinate everything to “win a strike”⁹³⁸ and defeat the NUM. This I argue does not demonstrate statecraft policy.

5.4 The Legacy of British Steel Corporation

To help contextualise the eventual confrontation between the Conservative Party and NUM, the example of relations with British Steel Corporation demonstrates

⁹³⁷ N. Lawson, *The View from No.11 - Memoirs of a Tory Radical* (Bantam Press, 1988), p.8

⁹³⁸ *Ibid*, p.143

implementation of *The Ridley Report's* template as early as 1980. British Steel represented a bench mark for Tory interventionist industrial policy. It was a landmark industry, hugely significant in size, scale and symbolism – an industry which had a proud tradition, served and was served by working class communities, and yet in the early years of the Thatcher regime, it lay at a crossroads. From the 1970s through to the 1980s it struggled to be profitable and for orders in an increasingly competitive marketplace. The similarities with the mining industry and community are apparent – historic industrial British communities, proud tradition of service, yet commercially vulnerable to an ever changing, globalised market place.

This is an important point. I argue that imposition of policy directed towards the BSC⁹³⁹ was to mirror the later challenge against the NUM. Traditionally the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation (ISTC) had been “under the control of moderate, politically right wing leadership”⁹⁴⁰ who were not prone to strike and were “prepared to identify with the objectives of management”.⁹⁴¹ The steel industry was not militant, and as such Thatcher’s policies and stance towards the British Steel Corporation are significant; they firstly demonstrate an ever greater ideological approach to Britain’s nationalised industries and secondly, these policies represent a

⁹³⁹ British Steel Corporation

⁹⁴⁰ Y. Meny & V. Wright, *The Politics of Steel: Western Europe and the Steel Industry in the Crisis Years 1974 – 1984* (De Gruyter, 1986), p.353

⁹⁴¹ Ibid

signpost for the eventual larger conflict with the NUM in 1984. BSC was to be a testing ground for the advent of privatisation.

Therefore, government policy towards the coal industry was hidden by smoke and mirrors. In an interview in 1981, Margaret Thatcher was discussing the potential for a miners' dispute, and mineworkers' allegiances to Arthur Scargill. She argued, "I have a lot of faith in the miners, let me say... I don't think they would follow him in trying to have a row with government"⁹⁴² – her press secretary, Bernard Ingham, was to reiterate publicly media policy that, "Finally, I sought to get over the fact, that this Government – and in my experience all Governments I have served – did not want confrontation"⁹⁴³ Yet a die had been cast; the decision to "speed up the closure of uneconomic pits", was documented as early as January 1981,⁹⁴⁴ and the reality was, that by 1982, the Thatcher administration was not ready or able for a fight. Yet this was to change – and the appointment of Ian MacGregor from BSC was highly significant.

MacGregor's appointment was not one to be viewed as conciliatory. The BBC reported that on the appointment of the new chairman of the National Coal Board,

⁹⁴² PREM19/539 Thatcher, M (1981). Interview with Sunday Express, *Miners' are basically reasonable people*. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

⁹⁴³ PREM19/539 Ingham, B (1981). Minute to prime Minister *I am frankly concerned at the apparently relaxed approach of the Government to the threat*. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

⁹⁴⁴ PREM19/539 West, J M (1981) Internal memo: Prime Minister's Private Secretary meeting with Derek Ezra, *no alternative but to speed up the closure of the uneconomic pit*. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

John Smith, Shadow Energy Secretary, stated that “is an extraordinarily foolish appointment”⁹⁴⁵ and William Sirs, General Secretary of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation argued that, “He seems to have no social conscience whatsoever.”⁹⁴⁶ Nicknamed “Mac the knife”, MacGregor’s remit in 1983 was to streamline, cut costs and improve efficiency, with the majority of cost-cutting, as demonstrated at BSC, achieved through redundancies. Nigel Lawson would respond, illustrating the stark economic realities, that, “Mr. MacGregor’s objectives will be to focus the board’s efforts on the earliest practicable return to profitability costs.”⁹⁴⁷ There was to be no indication of any long-term industrial planning, or coherent incentives for workforce participation. Indeed, in his autobiography, Lawson details MacGregor’s successes at BSC being that of a, “ruthless American whose main achievement at British Steel had been to slash the workforce”.⁹⁴⁸

His appointment at NCB was controversial. He was to have the Tory party, “In a state of horror”⁹⁴⁹ as visions of 1974 came flooding back to backbenchers. MacGregor himself described how he sensed the challenge against the NUM and Scargill was to be “running on the ragged edge of acceptability or even into the area

⁹⁴⁵ BBC News, 28th March 1983; *Macgregor Named as Coal Boss*. Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk>.

⁹⁴⁶ Ibid

⁹⁴⁷ HC Deb 28th March 1983, Vol 40 cc19-28. *National Coal Board (Chairman)* Available at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/>

⁹⁴⁸ N. Lawson, *The View from No.11 - Memoirs of a Tory Radical* (Bantam Press, 1988), p157

⁹⁴⁹ I. Gilmour, *Dancing with Dogma: Britain under Thatcherism* (Simon & Schuster, 1992), p.82

of unacceptability”.⁹⁵⁰ What is abundantly clear is that the appointment was to be highly politicised and calculating – it was designed primarily to demonstrate the forthcoming confrontation and asset stripping with the mining industry. It was to be déjà vu – BSC had been driven into the ground. Michael Foot argued at the Labour Party Conference in 1983 that,

Under Ian MacGregor, Mrs Thatcher’s special miracle worker, British steel lost £2,393m in three years, more than twice as much as the total loss of the five years of the spendthrift Labour government⁹⁵¹

Foot’s argument was that MacGregor’s appointment again demonstrated a non-long-term strategy for British industry. It was ideological remit to slash and burn, of asset stripping and short-term financial targets to sustain the marketplace. Foot pleaded at the Labour Party Conference in 1982, that, “we must stop the wrecking of the steel industry now”.⁹⁵²

On his appointment at British Steel in 1980, MacGregor set out his stall emphatically. In an address to the Parliamentary Press Gallery, it was noted that, “His main message was that BSC was bankrupt and should be liquidated”⁹⁵³ – Britain

⁹⁵⁰ I. MacGregor, *The Enemies Within – The Story of the Miners’ Strike 1984 – 5* (Collins, London), p.114

⁹⁵¹ M. Foot, Speech, *Labour Party Leader’s Speech*, 1983, Brighton. <http://www.britishpoliticalspeech.org/speech-archive>.

⁹⁵² Ibid

⁹⁵³ PREM19/548 Gaffin, N (1980). Minute to Lankester, *Ian MacGregor of British Steel Corporation speaks to Parliamentary Press Gallery: His main message was that BSC is bankrupt and should be liquidated*. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

and its industry had fallen behind as an efficient, cost effective, profitable nation because the UK had been more concerned about “social stability and equality and not about producing wealth. Hence, despite an ability to deliver on educational standards, technical capacity and management skills, we have fallen behind”.⁹⁵⁴

This is obviously a revealing statement, neatly summarising the priorities of the new regime. Yet he was a popular choice within government inner circles – “Margaret had a high regard for Ian”⁹⁵⁵ recounted Nigel Lawson, and it was to reflect the dispassionate nature of MacGregor’s management formula. At BSC, MacGregor set out a “formidable job shedding programme.” By December of 1982, MacGregor’s proposal for the future of the nationalised industry had reached Keith Joseph. In a memo entitled “BSC’s Corporate plan; Closures” Keith Joseph details the need to implement MacGregor’s recommendations in haste,

I think there is no need for us to hold up... He intends to reduce the number of jobs by about 17,000 by a combination of closures and de-manning...

These reductions are the minimum necessary⁹⁵⁶

⁹⁵⁴ Ibid

⁹⁵⁵ N. Lawson, *The View from No.11 - Memoirs of a Tory Radical* (Bantam Press, 1988), p157

⁹⁵⁶ PREM19/548 Joseph, K. (1981). Minute to Margaret Thatcher, *British Steel Corporation: Corporate Plan*. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

Yet interestingly, the obvious draconian measures were to be questioned – did they go far enough? MacGregor was certainly no industrial sentimentalist, yet he was pragmatic in the pursuit of profit; he was no ideologue. Forwarding these proposals to Margaret Thatcher, Sir Tim Lankaster noted that,

Sir Keith feels it is necessary to give an immediate go-ahead so that BSC do not lose any momentum while the Plan is being considered by Government. The only issue for Ministers in Sir Keith's view, is whether the Plan is tough enough – i.e. there can be no question of fewer redundancies than 17,000 and fewer closures than those set out in the plan.⁹⁵⁷

In an ironic twist, Thatcher, in handwriting along the edge of the correspondence wrote, “This can't be done before Xmas. It would be a terrible Xmas present for many families”.⁹⁵⁸ This internal correspondence is revealing – MacGregor, as was his remit at BSC, to initially target wage costs as an immediate, short term strategy to stem the haemorrhage of large losses sustained by the industry. He was interested in the purity of the pursuit of profit – not power. His remit had always been to return “BSC to enduring profitability” – but BSC had obvious financial difficulties; by

⁹⁵⁷ PREM19/548 Lankaster, T. (1981) Memo to Margaret Thatcher. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

⁹⁵⁸ Ibid

1976 much “of the steel making in Europe had been loss making”⁹⁵⁹ and by 1981 BSC were to receive government subsidies of £400 million.

Though unpalatable and unsentimental, MacGregor made hard decisions, which eventually proved successful in returning BSC to profitability. But I provide evidence that the government wanted more than simply profitability – the ability to go further and faster in their quest to challenge British industry. In internal documents to the Prime Minister entitled, “Thinking the Unthinkable”. John Hoskyns, commenting on MacGregor’s review, demands “real decisions” on the future of BSC,

Action must be taken now to provide Cabinet with real decision points rather than phoney review – in July... All the excuses for delay instead of decisions are already there... there is a need to call for a proper cost/ benefit analysis of BSC run-down.⁹⁶⁰

Hoskyns had previously demonstrated draconian instincts upon the closing of British industrial giants. In January of 1981, Hoskyns demanded the immediate run down and closure of British Leyland, advocating in an internal memo to the Prime Minister, “our best opportunity of starting the closure of BL is now... If there are

⁹⁵⁹ S. Martin & D. Parker, *The Impact of Privatisation - Ownership and Corporate Performance in the UK* (Routledge, 1987), p.83

⁹⁶⁰ PREM19/548 Hoskyns, J (1981). Memo to Prime Minister, *Industrial Policy*. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

buyers for parts of BL they will come forward now... Closure would demonstrate the price of failure and show the country we really do mean business".⁹⁶¹ It is an interesting analogy – “mean business” was to be the shredding of British business interests at the earliest opportunity available – closure, fragmentation, fire sale.

Ian MacGregor recollects the “moment of truth”⁹⁶² at BSC came in December 1980, when “we had to decide what size of business we thought we were going to be able to sustain... This meant further slim-lining – 20,000 more jobs to go on top of the 50,000 we had already shed in the year.”⁹⁶³ After implementation of MacGregor’s “capacity rationalisation programme” BSC⁹⁶⁴ was back in profit by 1986, achieving commercial viability, but at the expense of 60% of the inherited workforce.⁹⁶⁵ Though having pumped in billions of pounds into BSC and though privatisation in 1979 would have been deemed “unthinkable” due to the perception of release of a Crown Jewel of British industry, its return to a degree of sustainability now placed the sale of BSC in a new light – if a “national champion” of industry could be sold,

⁹⁶¹ PREM19/492 Hoskyns, J (1981). Memo to Prime Minister, *British Leyland*. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

⁹⁶² I. MacGregor, *The Enemies Within – The Story of the Miners’ Strike 1984 – 5* (Collins, London), p.98.

⁹⁶³ Ibid

⁹⁶⁴ Ibid

⁹⁶⁵ S. Martin & D. Parker, *The Impact of Privatisation - Ownership and Corporate Performance in the UK* (Routledge, 1987), p.29

so could British Rail and British Coal. The mindset of Conservative Party policy had been re-engineered and the privatisation of BSC was to carry a “high symbolism”.⁹⁶⁶ As BSC returned to profit it was to be sold immediately. MacGregor’s “capacity rationalisation”⁹⁶⁷ programme had resulted in a half yearly profit in 1987/1988 of £190 million, immediately resulting in Ken Clarke announcing to Parliament the privatisation of British Steel, “as soon as possible, subject to market conditions... Making British Steel competitive and returning it to the market place is the best guarantee of the long-term future and success of the corporation.”⁹⁶⁸ The years immediately prior to privatisation demonstrated efficiency gains under state control – but as Nigel Lawson argues,

The prime motives for privatisation were not Exchequer gain, but an ideological belief in free markets and a wider distribution of private ownership of property⁹⁶⁹

This is a revealing quote, demonstrating clearly the contradictory views held within Cabinet. Patently it was nothing to do with “long term future” as argued by Clarke – it is an ideological default setting. It was never to be about the management of an

⁹⁶⁶ Ibid

⁹⁶⁷ D. Parker & H Liang Wul, *Privatisation and Performance: A Study of the British Steel Industry under Public and Private Ownership*, Economic Issues, Volume - 3, Part 2, September 1998

⁹⁶⁸ HC Deb (3rd December 1987) Vol 123 cc1123-34 *British Steel Corporation (Privatisation)* Available at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/>

⁹⁶⁹ Meek, J. (2014). Sale of the century: the privatisation scam, *The Guardian*. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/profile/jamesmeek>

industry or even the need to pursue profitability. Parker and Wul argue that regarding BSC, “the change in capital market did not lead to obvious performance gains.”⁹⁷⁰ Government policy at BSC was a premeditated attack on industrial job creation and state control – pursuit of profitability was an irrelevance, a mechanism simply to be able to shift state assets on to the private marketplace – and even this would not secure future British jobs and security.

MacGregor’s time at British Steel, “would deliver everything that Thatcher and Joseph wanted”.⁹⁷¹ In 1979 British Steel employed 166,000 staff – in 1983 there were 71,000 – these jobs were lost due to an underlying, ideological principle of the distrust of state-run industries. Thatcher argued,

Just as nationalisation was at the heart of the collectivist programme by which Labour governments sought to remodel British society, so privatisation is at the centre of any programme of reclaiming territory for freedom⁹⁷² The NUM and the mining community were to be the next great targets – ironically the chapters detailing MacGregor’s detailing his appointment at the NCB, is entitled, *Coal; War is Declared.*⁹⁷³

⁹⁷⁰ D. Parker & H Liang Wul, *Privatisation and Performance: A Study of the British Steel Industry under Public and Private Ownership*, Economic Issues, Vol- 3, Part 2, September 1998

⁹⁷¹ F. Beckett & D. Henke, *Marching to the Fault Line – The Miners’ Strike and the Battle for Industrial Britain* (Constable, 2009), p.30 - 31

⁹⁷² Osborne, A (2013). Margaret Thatcher: one policy that led to more than 50 companies being sold or privatised. *The Telegraph*. Available at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/>

⁹⁷³ I. MacGregor, *The Enemies Within the Story of the Miners’ Strike, 1984 – 5* (Collins, 1986), p.116

5.4 “There was no secret hit list of pits” – Ian MacGregor

On the 12th March 1984 tens of thousands of miners stopped work; more than half of Britain’s 187,000 mineworkers were to commence strike action and as “miners in Yorkshire and Kent were the first to down tools”⁹⁷⁴ they were joined by colleagues in South Wales and Scotland. The strike began due to the announcement of the closure of Cortonwood Colliery in Yorkshire by Coal Board Chairman Ian MacGregor. On the 6th March a “critical meeting” had been called by the Coal Industry National Consultative Council to “establish common ground between the Board and the unions”. It was “doomed to failure”.⁹⁷⁵ Ian MacGregor had stated categorically “I can’t wait for the unions. I work for the government”⁹⁷⁶ and was to press ahead with his proposed “restructuring plans”.

Arthur Scargill had pushed MacGregor ever harder on the existence of a “hit list” of pits “slated for closure”.⁹⁷⁷ Scargill had “done his sums again” – MacGregor and the NCB were planning for a far greater number of pit closures than the accepted twenty to twenty-one collieries with the resulting 21,000 job losses. The Board were planning an eight million tonne reduction in coal capacity with over seventy pit

⁹⁷⁴ BBC News, 12th March 1984 *Miners’ strike over threatened pit closures* Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/>

⁹⁷⁵ P. Routledge, *Scargill, The Unauthorized Biography* (Harper Collins, 1993), p.142

⁹⁷⁶ M. Adeney & J. Lloyd, *The Miners’ Strike 1984 – 5 Loss Without Limit*, (Routledge & Kagin Paul), p.16

⁹⁷⁷ P. Routledge, *Scargill, The Unauthorized Biography* (Harper Collins, 1993), p.142

closures and 70,000 job losses; a plan which was to be denied.⁹⁷⁸ Scargill had wanted strike action and the accompanying legitimacy of a national ballot of members, as had been established practice in the “successful conflicts of 1972 and 1974”. The legitimacy and result of a ballot would rest on the truth regarding the pit closure scheme and the correct numbers involved – what was the reality regarding the number of pit closures and the subsequent job losses? Ultimately, the truth behind Scargill’s purported “hit list” was not to be forthcoming; a national ballot would not be mandated on the official NCB pit closure proposals. The truth was to be withheld; therefore, it was time to support “the strikes already under way”.⁹⁷⁹

This research provides primary evidence for the existence of this “hit list” eluded to by Scargill. The pit closure scheme was in progress as early as 1983, as evidenced in correspondence between Leon Brittan and Nigel Lawson. Lawson questions Brittan’s commitment to coal imports from Australia to stock pile coal in preparation for industrial conflict. Nigel Lawson writes that,

We must not allow any misjudgement about coal imports to prejudice the strategy for pit closures that we agreed at the Prime Minister’s meeting on 27th January. The benefits from achieving the maximum feasible rate of closures far outweigh the costs of curtailing CEEB coal imports.

⁹⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁷⁹ Ibid, p.144

Moreover, the scale of closures necessary to return the NCB to commercial viability is such that we may well be approaching the brink for a number of years to come. I should add that the question on imports is not merely whether it creates sympathy for the miners but whether it stiffens their resolve to closures.⁹⁸⁰

In response, Leon Brittan, complained,

I am disturbed at the suggestion that we continue with import restrictions next year. It is debateable whether permission for the CEEC to import cheaper coal would really win sympathy for the miners.⁹⁸¹

There is the strongest case against such artificial distortion to the markets.

You suggest there might be a case for paying up to £25 million to reschedule the current Aus. Contract.⁹⁸²

Yet Brittan, like Lawson, concurs February 1983, over a year prior to beginning of strike action in March 1984, that,

Our priority aim must be to achieve a higher rate of pit closures.⁹⁸³

⁹⁸⁰CAB 184/670 Lawson, N. (1983). Memo to Leon Brittan. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

⁹⁸¹ Ibid.

⁹⁸² CAB 184/670 Brittan, L (1983). Memo to Nigel Lawson. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

⁹⁸³ Ibid.

The above demonstrates Nigel Lawson's understanding of the incendiary nature of both stockpiling coke reserves and a pit closure scheme; "achieving the maximum feasible rate of closures" and does not, I argue, relate solely to the official proposal of the closure of 20 to 21 unproductive pits. The maximum level of pit closures would only be possible by marginalising the support for any striking miners – to obstruct a mass strike in Britain by denying the correct level of closures. Government policy was closure, at great financial cost, of an industry without the need for confrontation – it was a waiting game for the government. If, as Lawson argues, coal imports for the meantime are not suspended from Australia,

Above all, it would give Scargill an issue over which he could almost certainly get a majority vote for a national strike, and on which, almost uniquely; the miners could count of substantial public support.⁹⁸⁴

This issue is vital to this research. It demonstrates energy and an industry policy designed to defeat the NUM and Arthur Scargill – not a coherent strategy to sustain UK energy needs; therefore, evidencing a dogmatic agenda. The priority clearly in this correspondence is the closure of mining pits, and this does vindicate Scargill. The principle controversy regarding Scargill's handling of the strike was the lack of

⁹⁸⁴ CAB 184/670 Lawson, N. (1983). Memo to Leon Brittan. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

a universal ballot and therefore the credibility of a mass strike; energy policy was designed around this criterion. Nigel Lawson understood this only too well, as evidenced in a letter to Ian Gow in January 1982,

The only way to defeat Scargill in the next round is the same way that proved successful this time; to create the conditions in which a majority of the miners refuse to follow him to a pit head ballot.⁹⁸⁵

This research has produced evidence that may point to a lack of transparency of government industrial policy – there was a “hit list” as this research evidences. In 1982, Arthur Scargill was sent an anonymous copy of a secret plan earmarking 75 pits for closure, with the loss of over 100,000 miners’ jobs – “its contents were not only denied by government and NCB chiefs, but were disbelieved by militant NUM leaders who had been assured that their pits had long-term futures”.⁹⁸⁶

This was evidently not the case and Scargill was to be vindicated, as demonstrated in this research. Archive material from the National Archives, released in January 2014, evidences a “secret” meeting, held at Downing Street on the 15th September 1983. There was to be no official documentation of the meeting; Michael Scholar,

⁹⁸⁵ CAB 184/670 Lawson, N (1982). Letter to Ian Gow. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

⁹⁸⁶ Scargill, A. (2009) We could surrender - or stand and fight *The Guardian*. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/>

Mrs Thatcher's Private Secretary, stated that there would be nothing in writing of the topic matter, which was deemed "clarifying the understandings between MacGregor and the ministers".⁹⁸⁷ Indeed, in handwriting scrawled at the top of the "secret" document was written, "subject (no master)" and "1 copy made and given to R Armstrong".⁹⁸⁸

During this meeting, ministers were told of the plans of newly appointed NCB Chairman, Ian MacGregor, to close an initial 64 pits, rising to 75 pits within three years. Note show an "accelerated rundown of coal capacity was accepted",⁹⁸⁹ and that the pit closure scheme having, "Gone better this year than planned: there had been one pit closed every three weeks".⁹⁹⁰ There was to be no official "closure list" but a "pit by pit procedure" and that,

Mr MacGregor had it in mind over the three years 1983/85 that a further 75 pits would be closed: first, 64 which would reduce the workforce by some 55,000 and reduce capacity by some 20 million tonnes: then a further 11 with manpower reductions of 9000.

Manpower at the end of that time in the industry would be down to 138,000 from its current level of 202,000.

⁹⁸⁷ PREM /19/1329 Secret CMO (1983). Record of A Meeting Held at No.10 Downing Street, *Ian MacGregor's strategy for coal, pit closures, redundancies, miners' pay*. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

⁹⁸⁸ Ibid

⁹⁸⁹ Ibid

⁹⁹⁰ Ibid

Each one per cent of miners' pay cost £20 million a year, so that closures produced considerably greater economies than the results of practicable pay moderation.⁹⁹¹

The reasoning for closure was “greater economies”.⁹⁹² The above demonstrates a rejection of “moderation” – a rejection of statecraft policy to impose deindustrialisation, based on an ideological remit in accord with *The Ridley Report*. If implemented, results of these projected closure plans would lead to two thirds of Welsh miners, a third in Scotland and half of those in North East England, South Yorkshire and the South Midlands would be made redundant. The entire coal industry in Kent would be closed.⁹⁹³ It was asked,

how to arrange these meetings so that as little as possible of the more sensitive aspects is committed to paper,

The final line of the document reads that,

It was agreed that no record of this meeting should be circulated...

Not to be photocopied or circulated outside the private office⁹⁹⁴

A “short oral briefing” would be sufficient regarding the plans to be discussed in the meetings. Those who were present at the meeting were the Prime Minister,

⁹⁹¹ Ibid

⁹⁹² PREM /19/1329 Secret CMO (1983). Record of A Meeting Held at No.10 Downing Street, *Ian MacGregor's strategy for coal, pit closures, redundancies, miners' pay*. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

⁹⁹³ Ibid

⁹⁹⁴ Ibid

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Secretary of State for Employment, Secretary of State for Energy, Sir Robert Armstrong, Sir Peter Gregson and Michael Scholar. The minutes of the meeting conflict with the official policy of the incumbent government, who consistently denied the existence of a “hit list” of pits.

To reinforce the undisclosed pit closure scheme, a meeting held in January 1984, two months prior to the start of the year-long strike, was to propose an acceleration of this closure and redundancy scheme; again, a secret document “copy No. 1” details that,

The Prime Minister held a meeting today to discuss proposals put forward by the Secretary of State for Industry for an enhanced redundancy scheme for miners under the age of 50.

Summing up the Prime Minister said that the objective of a more accelerated rundown of coal capacity was accepted.⁹⁹⁵

This proposed redundancy and pit closure scheme was not debated or disclosed to Parliamentary scrutiny, the media, the miners or the mining union. It was not discussed at full Cabinet level and it did not have collective Cabinet authority – questions from MPs would be rebuffed. In response to questions in the House of

⁹⁹⁵ PREM /19/1329 Secret CMO (1984). *COAL INDUSTRY* No.10 record of conversation; enhanced Redundant Mineworkers Payments Scheme. The National Archives of the UK (TNA).

Commons in June 1983, Margaret Thatcher denounced the existence of any closure plan, and made light of the hardship of unemployment. Mr Lyell, MP, asks,

Does my right hon. Friend deplore the deliberate scare tactics of Mr. Arthur Scargill in walking out of his very first meeting with the new National Coal Board chairman after only three and a half minutes and shouting about a hit list of pit closures?

The Prime Minister in response,

I agree very much with my hon. and learned Friend. I understand that the National Coal Board made it clear to the National Union of Mineworkers that there is no so-called hit-list of pits earmarked for closure.⁹⁹⁶

There was, critics argued, to be a cover up and a denial for thirty years.⁹⁹⁷ So effective was the cover up of the secret memo that, “MacGregor’s 75-pit closure list was never mentioned again in Cabinet papers”⁹⁹⁸ right through the duration of the strike to March 1985. Indeed, it had taken until March 2014 and the publication of documents under the thirty-year rule, for the true levels of the stockpiling of coal and the planned pit closures to be revealed. This research, through these primary

⁹⁹⁶ HC Deb (24th June 1983) Vol 123 cc1123-34 Available at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/>

⁹⁹⁷ HC Deb (28th October 2014) Vol 587 Labour MP, Michael Dugher (Barnsley East) stated, “the recent release of the relevant 1984 Cabinet papers showed that the Government at the time misled the public about the extent of its pit closure plans and sought to influence police tactics”. Available at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/>

⁹⁹⁸ PREM /19/1329 Secret CMO (1983). Record of A Meeting Held at No.10 Downing Street, *Ian MacGregor's strategy for coal, pit closures, redundancies, miners' pay*. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

sources, illustrates in full the denial of a pit closure scheme beyond the sanctioned 20 pits, and the covert government challenge to Arthur Scargill.

The importance of undermining Scargill was paramount. The incendiary nature of the pit closure scheme was such that, “Thatcher had no hesitation in authorising an advertising campaign to tell the country that Scargill was lying to his members”.⁹⁹⁹

The campaign was to include a letter, ironically entitled, “Your Future in Danger” addressed to all striking miners at the height of the industrial dispute, which stated in capital letters, the denunciation of alleged pit closures and job losses,

THESE THINGS ARE ABSOLUTELY UNTRUE. I STATE THAT
CATEGORICALLY AND SOLEMNLY. YOU HAVE BEEN
DELIBERATELY MISLED¹⁰⁰⁰

Ian MacGregor, in his autobiography, reiterated the denunciation of the NUM leader. Decreeing Scargill as “obsessed with his anti-government beliefs...There was no ‘secret hit list’ of pits”.¹⁰⁰¹ MacGregor condemned Scargill’s rhetoric of, “the Coal Board’s alleged bid to butcher the industry” as coming from a “Man bent on such a

⁹⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰⁰ PREM/19/1329 MacGregor, I (1984) Letter to striking miners, “*Your Future in Danger*”. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

¹⁰⁰¹ I. MacGregor, *The Enemies Within – The Story of the Miners’ Strike 1984 – 5* (Collins, 1986), p.117

romantic dream and a glorious place in history.”¹⁰⁰² Yet archival evidence, and this research, demonstrably proves the existence of this “hit list” of pits. Arthur Scargill was not prepared for his industry to be destroyed without a fight; he repeatedly demanded the existence of this pre-planned closure programme – and it was repeatedly denied to him. Scargill’s message on being appointed was that he believed there was a “hit list” of pits to be closed and that, “under no circumstances shall I countenance a pit closure programme... it would be suicidal of the Government or board to think otherwise”.¹⁰⁰³

Scargill had been clear. In 1982 he was to be voted President of the NUM with a majority figure of 70.3%. It represented a landslide victory in the most powerful union in Western Europe, and a campaign which was fought on the sole premise of the rejection of pit closures on economic grounds, and the consistent demand for the government’s and Coal Board’s policies to be transparent, clear and legitimate. Scargill’s preparation for battle coincided with a descent of political will and support from the true ally of the NUM – the Labour Party. Lawson’s rhetoric was accepted by Neil Kinnock, who lamented the “suicidal vanity” of Scargill, and used the analogy of lions being led by donkeys. Neil Kinnock and the leadership of the Labour Party did not support the actions of this legitimate trade union, commenting

¹⁰⁰² Ibid, p.119

¹⁰⁰³ A. Scargill, Speech, *NUM Presidential Address*, 1982. Available at: <https://www.google.co.uk/search/NUM>

that, “The people who need the support and safeguard of trade unionism and of public services, cannot afford to be part of any political ‘Charge of the Light Brigade.’ There is no glory in defeat for them”.¹⁰⁰⁴

The Labour Party and Neil Kinnock had been misled. The truth regarding the pit closure scheme was denied to them the official opposition, as it was denied to the NUM, the TUC and the British public until January 2014. Kinnock, who was to be so virulent an opponent of Scargill and the non-ballot, this documentation reveals, was made to believe that there was to be a closure programme of the acknowledged 20 to 21 pits, and therefore he was recommending that an ACAS drafted settlement be accepted. Peter Walker, Secretary of State for Energy, responded in bold fashion and denied even the existence of a pit closure programme of the 20 pits,

I have informed Mr Kinnock that he is clearly under a misunderstanding for there is no list of 20 pits... and since he has stated publicly that the ACAS formula provided a strong probability of settlement, I hope he will now use his influence to see that the National Union of Mineworkers accept this formula.¹⁰⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰⁴ N. Kinnock, Speech. *Labour Leader's Speech*, Blackpool, 1984. Available at: <http://www.britishpoliticalspeech.org/speech>

¹⁰⁰⁵ PREM 19/1334 Walker, P. (1984). Press statement in response to Neil Kinnock, *Walker's response to Kinnock's claims about NCB's '20 pit hit list'*. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

Negotiations broke down with ACAS by November 1984, and the closure of 20 pits proved to be the tip of the iceberg. Neil Kinnock was misled, and indeed the pit closure programme was never a minimum of 20 pits, the minimum was to be 75 – and yet he was to argue that a national ballot would have ensured, “active support from trade unions and trade unionists, which would have changed the whole environment of the strike”.¹⁰⁰⁶ The publication of a “hit list” would inevitably have meant victory for strike action and the cooperation of Nottinghamshire miners;¹⁰⁰⁷ therefore, the government would not allow that to happen – the “hit list” would remain secret. This research proposes that due to the non-disclosure of the true intentions of the government, the issue of the non-ballot and subsequent non-legitimacy of strike action is a smokescreen of the government’s making. There could be no legitimacy for strike action through a national ballot due to the non-disclosure of a pit “hit list”.

The government line would be consistent throughout the duration of the year-long strike. Symbolically, a response by Peter Walker in November 1984, to an enquiry from Stanley Orme, Shadow Energy Secretary, regarding Herrington Colliery in County Durham, highlighted the scale of government denial. To Orme’s question

¹⁰⁰⁶ Ibid

¹⁰⁰⁷ Nottinghamshire mineworkers constructed a breakaway Union of democratic Mineworkers that was to challenge the monopoly of the NUM. Nottinghamshire miners did not go on strike as there was not a national ballot and NUM rules stated that without a national ballot there could not be a national strike. Bentinck colliery in Nottingham was the only mine to operate throughout the whole of the strike.

regarding Herrington's long-term future, Walker responded in such strong and determined language, stating in no uncertain terms, "I must say Arthur Scargill is like a bus driver to the Labour Party. He takes you for a ride every day".¹⁰⁰⁸ Orme responded, arguing that he was "shocked and disheartened by the frivolous tone of your response" and that regarding his enquiry to the existence of "such projections" Walker's tone was one "that is neither constructive or helpful".¹⁰⁰⁹ Walker reiterated there was no "hit list" – there was simply an "engineer's assessment" and, "It is clear that no colliery will be closed unless it has gone through the colliery review procedure".¹⁰¹⁰ Herrington Colliery was closed in 1985.

To the public, the coal mining industry was in good hands. Walker argued that the government,

would continue a major investment far greater than that in the coal industries of the whole of the rest of the European community. An investment programme which will provide Britain with the most effective and efficient coal industry in Europe¹⁰¹¹

¹⁰⁰⁸ PREM 19/1335 Walker, P. (1984). Letter to Stan Orme MP, *Secret document on pit closures in the North East*. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

¹⁰⁰⁹ PREM 19/1335 Orme, S. (1984). Letter to Peter Walker, *Secret document on pit closures in the North East*. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

¹⁰¹⁰ Ibid

¹⁰¹¹ PREM19/1329 Walker, P. (1984). Letter to Conservative MP's, *Nine Point Programme*. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

The reality was somewhat different. The government closed 170 pits over the next decade, and in 1994 the last 15 pits were privatised. MacGregor's proposed job loss programme was in progress by January 1984. In a secret letter, David Pascall, a policy adviser to Mrs Thatcher, wrote,

The NCB's current strategy is to achieve financial viability by 1988. This requires manpower reductions of 64,000 (from 202,000 to 138,000) and the closure of 25 m.t of capacity between 1982 - 1988

Furthermore, we are already achieving a significantly faster rate of both manpower reductions and pit closures than anticipated.

The proposed scheme will cost £187 million.

The estimated cost of a strike, given as a £160 million per month.¹⁰¹²

The figures demonstrate conclusively adaptation of the deconstruction of the coal mining industry. Clearly there is a conflict between the official figures offered by Ian MacGregor and the reality as evidenced above. It shows MacGregor's proposed pit closure scheme – denied by the government, and an acceptance of mass fiscal stimulus in promotion of an industrial dispute. The financial cost to the taxpayer of

¹⁰¹² PREM19/1329 Pascall, D. (1984). Letter to Margaret Thatcher. *Redundant Mineworkers Payments Scheme*. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

the pit closure scheme and the year-long strike are completely at odds with the public utterances of governmental budgetary control.

Therefore, the secret documents I have revealed offer a glimpse at the lengths, economically and politically, that the Thatcher administration was prepared to go to challenge the NUM. This challenge was, I argue, constructed through a policy engineered through an ideological mindset and the formation of an internal Conservative Party committee, designed to prepare for and conduct a pit closure scheme that was not accountable to public and political scrutiny. The context to the secret nature of the “hit list” is important, as an announcement of such a scheme would legitimise Arthur Scargill’s demands for strike action. A full disclosure of the pit closure scheme would enhance the winning of a national ballot, thereby offering an opportunity for the disparate elements of the mining industry, notably the Nottinghamshire mineworkers, to join in strike action. Secondly, it would have let the Labour Party under Neil Kinnock reject neutrality and offer credible political and parliamentary support to a national strike. Therefore, the existence of a “hit list” was denied the the government.

This research has proven the existence this unofficial “hit list” of viable coal mines closures, thereby adding to academic study of the subject matter.

5.6 Conclusions

The Conservative government was ready for industrial conflict with the NUM by 1983. This process, from the proposed “hit list” to maximum endurance, had been organised, as revealed, through the “shadowy Whitehall committee codenamed “MISC 57”.¹⁰¹³ A “secret Cabinet committee” established in July 1981, its remit was “Withstanding a Coal Strike”.¹⁰¹⁴ Chaired by Sir Robert Wade Grey,¹⁰¹⁵ it was formed to plan for the closure of uneconomic pits and prepare for confrontation with the NUM. Its existence and details were denied to previous researchers under the Freedom of Information Act, but were released under the thirty-year rule in 2014.¹⁰¹⁶ The secret nature of the committee was reinforced by a codeword used by those who knew of its existence, “Endurance.”¹⁰¹⁷ In accordance with the template set by *The Ridley Report*, John Vereker¹⁰¹⁸ wrote;

MISC 57 has begun the next phase of its work i.e. preparing for possible industrial action in the New Year over pit closures.

¹⁰¹³ Marsden, S. (2013). Thatcher made secret plans to bring in the military during the miners' strike. *The Telegraph*. Available at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/margaret-thatcher/>

¹⁰¹⁴ PREM19/541 Whitelaw, W (1981) Minute to Margaret Thatcher, *Withstanding a Coal Strike: MISC 57 report on possibility of withstanding a coal strike, winter 1981-2*. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

¹⁰¹⁵ J. Campbell, *Margaret Thatcher: Volume Two: The Iron Lady* (Vintage Books, 2008), p.355

¹⁰¹⁶ F. Beckett & D. Hencke, *Marching to the Fault Line: The Miners' Strike and the Battle for Industrial Britain* (Constable, 2009), p. 57

¹⁰¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰¹⁸ John Vereker was a member of Margaret Thatcher's policy unit.

You know the general background to the closure issue, and the inevitability of some closures regardless of the existence or otherwise of a “hit list”.¹⁰¹⁹

By march of 1983 Vereker was positive in the assertion that,

I am happy to report that this morning we for the first time glimpsed on the horizon the prospect of indefinite endurance, albeit at a very considerable cost¹⁰²⁰

This chapter has evidenced the long-term planning for industrial conflict with the NUM, the investment of massive public expenditure at times of austerity and the development of a covert pit closure agenda; this evidence, I argue, demonstrates clearly a rejection of a statecraft interpretation of government policy. Though the Conservative government did continue to demonstrate electoral credibility and internal party control, the above revelations reveal an administration that was to pursue a premeditated ideological agenda based upon the recommendation of *The Ridley Report*, evidencing the “fragmentation” of UK industry, notably the targeting of the UK coal industry and the NUM. This research confirms Arthur Scargill’s consistent claims of the existence of a “hit list” and counters the government’s denials. I argue that this is an important addition to academic debate regarding the

¹⁰¹⁹ PREM19/1092/ COAL Vereker, J. (1982) Internal memo to Ferdinand Mount. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

¹⁰²⁰ PREM19/1092/COAL Vereker, J. (1983). Internal memo to Ferdinand, *Coal*. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

government's preparation and conduct during the 1984 miners' strike. I have analysed the ideological blueprint that would map out the government's response to the NUM and revealed a covert plan to stockpile coal reserves, plan wholesale pit closures and deny Arthur Scargill and the NUM a true reflection of government industrial policy towards the coal mining industry – this could be interpreted as a government cover up and political duplicity. Therefore, the above primary evidence accounts for a dedicated template for the dismantling of British nationalised industries, the adherence to an energy policy of vague non-accountability and a premeditated and pre-planned confrontation with a trade union movement. Statecraft is a demonstration of government controlling a central stage; the “Reconstruction of that traditional centre autonomy”¹⁰²¹ – not creating and escalating a regional dispute, “where a particular statecraft is wrecked by events or movements external to the governing”.¹⁰²² This is reflected through tangible evidence of smoke and mirrors tactics towards preparation and policing of the miners' strike dating back to 1984. I argue that evidence provided in this research reveals the departure of any form of Parliamentary, Cabinet, media or industrial relations scrutiny to this process and a

¹⁰²¹ J. Buller, *A Critical Appraisal of the Statecraft Interpretation*, Public Administration Winter 1999 Volume 77, Issue 4 Pages 691–949

¹⁰²² Ibid.

potential deceit towards the NUM, Arthur Scargill and the British public over New Right targets for pit closures.

Chapter 6 – The 1984 Miners’ Strike

6.0 Introduction

The 1984 miners’ strike, I argue, and demonstrate through this research, was a premeditated, planned and necessary conflict, that was to enable an established New Right in the Conservative Party to prosper and to enable neoliberal economic reform to be realised. The bitter conflict was the fulfilment of *The Ridley Report*; a realisation of an instruction “The government should, if possible, choose who and when to fight”¹⁰²³ and when “necessary to organise and equip a squad of mobile police, ready to use riot tactics to defeat pickets”. The process for industrial conflict had been set in motion; “Coal stocks were to be built up at the power stations” and additional “Coal supplies should be arranged via non-union foreign ports”. The template had been a success, the remaining stage was conflict itself; the process of the “need to fragment the industries as far as possible” – a need to confront.¹⁰²⁴

¹⁰²³ Economic Reconstruction Group (1977). Report Final of the Nationalised Industries Policy Group. Margaret Thatcher Foundation, Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

¹⁰²⁴ Ibid

This research reveals the totality of the preparation and eventual implementation of an industrial policy; a policy that was constructed to inflict the desired confrontation and fragmentation of a viable, productive and unionised industry. I evidence that the construction of this dispute was not designed to impose statecraft; but to impose industrial sabotage. I will demonstrate that the “enemy within” was a necessary construct; one that was to necessitate chaos to reinterpret the post-war order, to defeat the National Union of Mineworkers, to end corporatism and aid the implementation of neoliberal economic policy.

6.1 The Defeat of One Nation conservatism

The whole process of preparation for pit closures and confrontation with the NUM would take time and planning. It would take the contravening of the protocols of Cabinet responsibility and unity and would need the loyalty of those who were prepared to stand and fight to avoid, in the words of Peter Walker,¹⁰²⁵ “the triumph and violence of the mob”.¹⁰²⁶ Peter Walker “was the archetypal Edward Heath man”.¹⁰²⁷ Yet in 1983 he was summoned to see the Prime Minister to be offered the post of Energy Secretary, as she “believed the government was about to be

¹⁰²⁵ Secretary of State for Energy 1983 - 1987

¹⁰²⁶ P. Walker, Speech, *Orgreave, using mob violence*, 30th May 1984, The Oxford Union, Oxford University. Margaret Thatcher Foundation, Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

¹⁰²⁷ Aitken, I. (2010). Lord Walker of Worcester obituary. *The Guardian*. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/>

challenged in a major battle”.¹⁰²⁸ Walker was to describe the coal dispute in terms of the “greatest threat” to the Thatcher government, and essentially a “Fight to the Finish”¹⁰²⁹ and had been “softened up” to take the role; she required the requisite political and communicatory skills, and there would be no one in Cabinet capable of conducting a “battle with Arthur Scargill as well as I could”.¹⁰³⁰

Walker was a political survivor. A moderate who had been handed the mandate for defeating the insurrection of Scargill; he would be the “wet who beat the striking miners” – a man who was “patient, imperturbable and with a genius for press”.¹⁰³¹ He was a One Nation Conservative – one that was promoted to an ideologically driven Cabinet to “give a positive presentation to public opinion of the government's”¹⁰³² – his credentials allowing for a sense of calm amongst the declaration of ideological warfare. This entailed the creation of a moderate platform of legitimacy from where Cabinet unity could be projected by his “communications skill to explain the government case to the public”.¹⁰³³ The strike was deemed by Walker, who was always eager to proclaim his One Nation credentials, as a “correct

¹⁰²⁸ P. Walker, *Staying Power – Peter Walker an Autobiography* (Bloomsbury, 1991), p.166

¹⁰²⁹ P. Walker, *Staying Power – Peter Walker an Autobiography* (Bloomsbury, 1991), p.166

¹⁰³⁰ *Ibid*, p.166

¹⁰³¹ Aitken, I. (2010). Lord Walker of Worcester obituary. *The Guardian*. Available at:

<https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/>

¹⁰³² P. François Gouiffes, *Margaret Thatcher & The Miners 1972 – 1985 Thirteen years that changed Britain* (Privat: France, 2006), p.138

¹⁰³³ P. François Gouiffes, *Margaret Thatcher & The Miners 1972 – 1985 Thirteen years that changed Britain* (Privat: France, 2006), p.180

balance between efficiency and compassion” – a conflict against “a Marxist sympathiser” of “whom the ends justified the means”.¹⁰³⁴

Yet Walker’s rhetoric belies the true motivation of the conflict; to confront and destroy the power of the NUM. He was the government minister responsible for the management of the dispute, a politician held in high regard, yet his role in the 1984 conflict, demonstrates the decline and fall of a One Nation politician; indeed, I argue that the role Walker played symbolises the absorption of One Nation politics into the dogmatic fold. Walker may or may not have earnestly sought to implant a sense of consensual judgement, yet ultimately, he consistently toed the party line to “defeat him”¹⁰³⁵ – Arthur Scargill.

In public Walker would align himself with defeating Scargill. In his autobiography, he documented his struggle with the “Marxist”. Yet Walker could not hide his dismay towards the pit closure scheme; he had argued, prior to the dispute, that there “should be no closure list, but a pit by pit procedure”, as he was concerned that the, “Manpower reduction would bite heavily in particular areas”.¹⁰³⁶ Walker was criticised for this stance by Ian MacGregor, appointed chairman of the NCB in 1984, who described him as a man with no “backbone”.¹⁰³⁷ Yet though seen as a “wet” he

¹⁰³⁴ Ibid, p181

¹⁰³⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰³⁶ PREM 19/1329 Report by the Official Group on Coal (MISC57). N. Lawson (1983). Letter to Prime Minister, *Power Station Endurance in the Medium Term*. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

¹⁰³⁷ P. Walker, *Staying Power – Peter Walker an Autobiography* (Bloomsbury, 1991), p.179

was a minister prepared to circumnavigate the new protocols of Cabinet, of non-circulation of energy proposals and the construction of “private briefings”.¹⁰³⁸

I argue that Walker’s consensual overtones and statecraft credentials were smokescreens for ideological industrial policy. He was a politician, as Thatcher acknowledged, with “political knowhow and the communication skills”,¹⁰³⁹ a One Nation Tory loyalist, a convenient face to government policy – in a speech to the Scottish CBI¹⁰⁴⁰ Walker offered “A peaceful participation in success is on offer – conflict, violence and disaster would be a crazy alternative”.¹⁰⁴¹

Yet the rhetoric he supplied in September 1984 does not correlate to strategic aims discussed in January of that year. On 19th January, in his capacity as Secretary as State for Energy, Walker was a part of a secret meeting that proposed “reducing the number of miners from just under 200,000 to 140,000” and that the “process of run-down ought to be accelerated” and,

The Secretary of State for Energy said that from the point of view of the Coal Board, these proposals made a great deal of sense.

¹⁰³⁸ Ibid, p.166

¹⁰³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Confederation of British Industry

¹⁰⁴¹ PREM 19/1333 P. Walker (1984), Speech to Scottish CBI, *The Positive Plan for Coal or Conflict, Violence and Disaster*. The National Archives (TNA)

The Chancellor agreed the rate of closures should be accelerated and that these proposals were sensible.¹⁰⁴²

Indeed, as evidenced, a policy for the closure of pits had been formulated as early as July 1981. The newly formed MISC 57 was to be charged with commissioning a strategy of “how to withstand a coal strike”.¹⁰⁴³ It was noted that a strike of that year “could probably not be withstood for more than 13-14 weeks”. Therefore, the priority in 1981 was a “peaceful settlement” to cement a “plan of action for 1982”. This was to go so far as to propose the use of military intervention that “might be made a more realistic option in future”.¹⁰⁴⁴ The archives show that Peter Walker was privy to MISC 57.¹⁰⁴⁵

This primary evidence is highly significant. The documents support evidence, initially presented in chapter five of this research, detailing the planned and accelerated pit closure scheme from 1981 onwards. Peter Walker had been presented, in his own words, with a “dilemma” when appointed Energy Secretary in 1983, and he was to accept the Energy Secretary role with some “reluctance”.¹⁰⁴⁶ Ideologically he was distant from the New Right, he did not share the sense of

¹⁰⁴² PREM19/1329 Report by the Official Group on Coal (MISC57). M. Thatcher (1983). No.10 record of conversation “*Coal Policy*” The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

¹⁰⁴³ PREM 19/1329 Report by the Official Group on Coal (MISC57). N. Lawson (1983). Letter to Prime Minister, *Power Station Endurance in the Medium Term*. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

¹⁰⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴⁵ PREM19/1329 Report by the Official Group on Coal (MISC57) P. Walker (1983). Minute of conversation Peter Walker to Margaret Thatcher. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

¹⁰⁴⁶ P. Walker, *Staying Power – Peter Walker an Autobiography* (Bloomsbury, 1991), p.166

“drama and glamour of conviction politics” – yet he does admit his presence as a “wet” in an atmosphere of such dry ideological single mindedness, had a “fascination” to it.¹⁰⁴⁷ He said in a BBC interview in 2004, that

I went to cabinet suggesting a package for the miners which, if approved, I thought would mean there could be no way he could ever get a strike ballot. It included: no compulsory redundancies; early retirement if they wished it at the age of 50 on incredibly generous terms; expanded mobility allowances if they moved to another pit; a good pay increase; and an £800m capital investment programme for the coal industry¹⁰⁴⁸

This I argue demonstrates smokescreen politics. The reality is that the demise of Walker’s One Nation Conservative credentials mirrors the process implemented by the New Right – rejection of traditional Conservative values and an embrace of political revisionism. Walker argued at the height of the dispute in May 1984, that,

There can be no truth in the propaganda that says the Government and Mr Ian MacGregor of the Coal Board are out to butcher this country's coal industry. For the facts are there.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Ibid, p.1

¹⁰⁴⁸ Peter Walker, Interview BBC News Channel, *Head to head; The miners’ strike*, 10th March 2004. Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/>

And no other industry can look forward to such a massive capital investment programme for the years ahead. This is a strange way to butcher an industry.

Too many miners have been duped into a pointless and futile strike by propaganda with a political motive. That way lies the abyss for the industry.¹⁰⁴⁹

I argue that Walker's pliability, his acceptance of pit closures and rejection of his core beliefs of "government and industry working together" demonstrate the enforcement of ideology over statecraft. Walker had been a loyal Conservative since 1945; He states that from Butler, to Eden, Macmillan, Douglas Home and Heath – their views were "close to mine".¹⁰⁵⁰ Ultimately, his speech to the Scottish CBI and acceptance of covert pit closures demonstrates a point of political realisation; conservatism as a political tool had been transformed and with that its personnel. Walker's plea to peace and tranquillity, of consensus and negotiation was to be a sham; he was a fully aware of the secret meetings, of the cover up designed to hide the planned closure of up to 75 collieries and a manpower reduction of 64,000 jobs;

¹⁰⁴⁹ P. Walker, Speech, Coal Merchants Federation, *Too many miners have been duped into a pointless and futile strike by propaganda with a political motive*. 16th May 1984. Margaret Thatcher Foundation, Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

¹⁰⁵⁰ Ibid, p.2

and he was to deceive Parliament in this knowledge. In response to questions from MP Roy Mason, Walker argues,

Let me remind the Right Hon. Gentleman that in March there was no proposal for the closure of 20 pits and no lists of pits.¹⁰⁵¹

Walker argued that the NCB and government had handled closures with a “Sensible and civilised approach”¹⁰⁵² and in a further statement to the Commons in October 1984, he was to offer,

An undertaking that any miner who wishes to continue working in the industry will be able to do so¹⁰⁵³

Over 200 pits were closed. Walker had, inadvertently or not, deceived Parliament – there were no guarantees of work or indeed a viable industry to work in. Walker argued that he felt a “huge sense of relief” at the defeat of the “Marxist sympathiser” Scargill and the return to “comparative prosperity” of the mining communities. In March of 2016 the last deep coal mine in the UK, Kellingley Colliery in North Yorkshire, capable of transporting 900 tonnes an hour of coal to the surface was capped. There is now no discernible mining industry in the UK. The manipulation

¹⁰⁵¹ HC Deb 22nd October 1984 Vol 65 cc446-60 *Coal Industry Dispute* Available at: <https://parliament.uk/historic-Hansard/commons/1984/oct/22/coal-industry>

¹⁰⁵² Ibid.

¹⁰⁵³ HC Deb 22nd October 1984 Vol 65 cc446-60 *Coal Industry Dispute* Available at: <https://parliament.uk/historic-Hansard/commons/1984/oct/22/coal-industry>

of Walker mirrors a determination to eradicate statecraft, to alleviate opposition; the nuances of Parliamentary and Cabinet responsibility were jettisoned.¹⁰⁵⁴

And this would mean the targeting of the Left – the closure of productive coal mines and the instigation of a planned conflict with the NUM, and in Arthur Scargill there emerged the necessary opponent for confrontation. He was to represent, during the government's build up to the strike in October 1982, an obstacle to reform, and indeed an opportunity. Internal “wet” opposition was either jettisoned or brought in-house in order to confront Scargill. As Bernard Ingham wrote in a memo to the Prime Minister, “...seems to me we are letting Scargill get away with too much... the Scargill list of lies” – these lies would require as early as 1982 “a clearly understood strategy for the dispute as a whole”.¹⁰⁵⁵ In June 1983, after a crushing victory over Michael Foot, the ante was raised further – the left was to be targeted; “Election night” argued Alfred Sherman, was to be seen,

As the opportunity to bring about changes which will fundamentally alter the socio-political infrastructure, so that 1983 does not become another 1959. In the short term, we must prepare to meet the threat of violence, non-cooperation and sabotage which the Left has been brandishing and will certainly try on... Scargill and their like will not take Labour's election

¹⁰⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵⁵ PREM19/1092 Ingham, B. (1982) Internal Memo to Prime Minister. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

defeat lying down but will be spurred towards more violent and illegal confrontation.¹⁰⁵⁶

Sherman's advice demonstrates government policy designed to prepare and antagonise for a coal dispute with the NUM. This, I argue, was clearly mandated through MISC 57, and was a prerequisite for economic reform post-1985. There was not just the preparation and accumulation of coal stocks to sustain energy efficiency, but the necessary deliverance of pit closures and a desired national coal strike; conflict with the NUM – conflict with Arthur Scargill – was an ideological necessity. John Vereker confirms this; in secret memos to Alan Walters and Ferdinand Mount, he argues,

The Department of Energy and the Treasury now acknowledge what John Hoskyns (head of the policy unit) argued from the day he arrived here; that sooner or later the Government would have to face, and win, a major national coal strike

¹⁰⁵⁶ Sherman, A. (1983). Minute to Margaret Thatcher, *Early thoughts on post-election strategies*. Margaret Thatcher Foundation (Churchill Archive Centre) Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

It does seem considerably less likely that we could bring the Coal Board anywhere near breakeven without winning a strike, and that of course carries the major risk that embarking upon and then losing a strike is the most expensive option of all¹⁰⁵⁷

Breaking the miners held the key to the overall strategy of Thatcherism. Though a “skilled communicator” and a “clever choice” of Energy Secretary, Peter Walker’s innate “wetness” would ultimately see his strategy of communication bypassed for Ridley’s “large mobile squads” of police deployed throughout the country; there would be no time for wetness.¹⁰⁵⁸ Walker’s pursuit of “efficiency and compassion” – One Nation conservatism’s historic *raison d’être*, was to be jettisoned. The miners were now a legitimate target as evidenced in correspondence with Geoffrey Howe and Nigel Lawson. Lawson argued that the “problems of the coal industry could not be resolved without the decisive defeat of the militant arm of the NUM” as,

¹⁰⁵⁷ Vereker, J. (1985). Internal memo; Alan Waters & Ferdinand Mount. MISC57: PREM19/1092/COAL The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

¹⁰⁵⁸ Macintyre, D. (2014). How the miners’ strike of 1984-85 changed Britain for ever, *The New Statesman*, 16th June 2014 Available at: <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/2014/06/how-miners-strike-1984-85-changed-britain-ever>

Our original aim was to build a successful, profitable coal industry independent of government subsidies; to de-monopolise it and ultimately open it to private enterprise¹⁰⁵⁹

Economic viability was never an aim – it was wholesale deindustrialisation in accord with Ridley’s plan of 1978. Walker, though a sophisticated, shrewd, and ultimately a political survivor, owed little to his ideological mindset; he was a political animal and cut his cloth for the new regime – a regime that had targeted the NUM, had targeted pit closures as early as 1982, and had planned and prepared for industrial battle. And in March 1984, the planning would cease, and the inevitable conflict would begin. There would be no time for One Nation rhetoric or indeed statecraft party management; Walker would go on to argue that the future of the coal industry was to become a “net exporter of coal” and to “improve potentiality in the market place”.¹⁰⁶⁰ The die had been cast prior to his becoming Energy Secretary – the rhetoric of a “wet” within the confines of Thatcher’s inner circle would not help halt the inevitable confrontation.

¹⁰⁵⁹ N. Lawson, *The View from No.11: Memoirs of a Tory Radical* (Bantham Press, London), p. 142.

¹⁰⁶⁰ PREM19/1330 (1984). Coal Strike: Walker to not intervene *The Times*, The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

6.2 Why the NUM?

Industrial policy, as demonstrated through this research, was calculated to defeat the NUM as a credible representational force. The miners' strike was not simply about "uneconomic pits" – the defeat of the NUM was to "become an obsession" with government.¹⁰⁶¹ The process of denationalisation, "shifting of power from the government to free enterprise" was to be "the principal key to the whole rightward shift of the political spectrum" – a means, as Stuart Hall argued, of "effectively disorganising the Left and the working-class response".¹⁰⁶² Hall argues that to win the struggle, Thatcherism was "deploying the discourses of 'nation' and 'people' against 'class' and 'unions' with far greater vigour and popular appeal".¹⁰⁶³

The symbolism of the union and mining community would shift – from corporate colleague to internal enemy. Internal briefings to the Prime Minister would comment on mass ranked unions intent on "violence and intimidation which has scarred and wrecked the coal industry" the shadow growing "darker as influential men and women in our society question, even repudiate the ideas of Parliamentary democracy and the rule of law".¹⁰⁶⁴ Mining communities and working class communities, were to be depicted as a danger, as a force to challenge the foundations of law and order

¹⁰⁶¹ H. Benyon, *Digging Deeper: Issues in the Miners' Strike* (Verso, 1984), p.201

¹⁰⁶² Hall, S. (1979). The Great Moving Right Show, *Marxism Today*. Available at: <https://f-origin.hypotheses.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/744/files/2012/03/Great-Moving-Right-ShowHALL.pdf>

¹⁰⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶⁴ PREM19 /1330 Thatcher, M. (1984). COAL MISC 101 (84) The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

and democratic association; Thatcher would argue in an interview for *Der Spiegel* in 1985 that “It is both an irony and a tragedy that although members of one trade union can inflict great harm on others, they cannot protect themselves or their families from the damage that others cause”.¹⁰⁶⁵ The perception of the NUM was re-imagined – to one of hostility and conflict by a “New Radical Right and the class forces they now aspire to present”.¹⁰⁶⁶

Adeney and Lloyd argue that “Politicians were constantly reminded of the power and the problems of coal”.¹⁰⁶⁷ Labour Party roots were “entwined deeply with the miners and their struggles” and for the Conservative Party, coal and the miners “were a recurrent fixation”. On coming to power in 1979 Thatcher did not want or need a confrontation with the NUM – the legacy of 1972 was still vividly remembered. The smashing of government pay policy and the restoration of militancy – in February of that year the police notified Edward Heath, that miners were in control of Saltley coke works¹⁰⁶⁸ in the West Midlands.¹⁰⁶⁹ The forcing of an election in 1974 was to lead to a defeat to Labour and the introduction of tripartism through “A Plan for

¹⁰⁶⁵ Thatcher, M (1985). Interview for *Der Spiegel*, *Trade Union reform* Margaret Thatcher Foundation, Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

¹⁰⁶⁶ S. Hall, *The Great Moving Right Show*, Marxism Today, January 1979 Available at: http://banmarchive.org.uk/collections/mt/pdf/79_01_hall.pdf

¹⁰⁶⁷ M. Adeney & J. Lloyd, *The Miners' Strike 1984 Loss without Limit* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), p11

¹⁰⁶⁸ H. Benyon, *Digging Deeper; Issues in the Miners' Strike* (Verso, 1985), p.31

“The closure of Saltley coke depot – when massed pickets of fifteen thousand miners, engineering workers and their supporters outmanoeuvred less than a thousand police – sent shock waves through the Establishment”.

¹⁰⁶⁹ M. Adeney & J. Lloyd, *The Miners' Strike 1984 Loss without Limit* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), p11

Coal”¹⁰⁷⁰ and would see the NUM as Europe’s predominant trade union force. Joe Gormley at the NUM and Derek Ezra at the NCB would both drive a hard bargain for both miners and mining industry; yet as Ezra argues, this was constructed through the “maximum areas of agreement” – It “fitted” the “national mood”.¹⁰⁷¹ The NUM “delighted” in the ambitious targets of 200 million tonnes of coal production and new coal fields were opened, such as Selby in Yorkshire as “investment poured into the industry”.¹⁰⁷²

Yet this mood was to darken – a sense of conflict was to emerge. Gormley would be replaced by Scargill, Ezra would ultimately be replaced by MacGregor, and Heath’s defeat in the wake of militancy and Saltley Gate, would, argues Peter Dorey, “sound the death knell for the party’s neocorporatist approach to industrial relations and trade unions”.¹⁰⁷³ Electoral defeat would burn indelibly in the psyche of the Conservatives; there was no illusion that, “Breaking the miners holds a central place in the overall strategy of Thatcherism”¹⁰⁷⁴ – when this became a reality in 1984,

¹⁰⁷⁰ "The object of the national Plan for coal is to discover the most efficient size and shape of the industry —to find out how much of each kind of coal should be produced and where it should be produced to meet consumers' demands and make the best contribution to the nation's welfare." *The Spectator*, 17th November 1950. Available at: <http://archive.spectator.co.uk/article/17th-november-1950/4/the-coal-plan>

¹⁰⁷¹ M. Adeney & J. Lloyd, *The Miners' Strike 1984 Loss without Limit* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), p15

¹⁰⁷² F. Beckett & D. Hencke, *Marching to the Fault Line; The Miners' Strike and the Battle for Industrial Britain* (Constable, London), p.26

¹⁰⁷³ P. Dorey, *The Conservative Party and the Trade Unions* (Routledge, 1998), p89

¹⁰⁷⁴ H. Benyon, *Digging Deeper; Issues in the Miners' Strike* (Verso, 1985), p.34

Norman Tebbit was to argue that the defeating the NUM had “Broken not just a strike, but a spell”.¹⁰⁷⁵

This spell is one which has an historical resonance history. The miners’ union was one of the first to affiliate itself to the Labour party and therefore has always “been central to Labour politics”¹⁰⁷⁶ – it has always reflected a political as well as industrial agenda. Miners understand the nature of struggle, and the national implications this entails; in 1926, John Wheatley¹⁰⁷⁷ argued that the “Miners are fighting alone, but they are fighting the battle of the whole nation. If they lose, we lose”,¹⁰⁷⁸ and George Orwell was to eulogise on the importance of the coal miner to society, in that he provided “the absolutely necessary counterpart of our world above. Practically everything we do, from eating an ice to crossing the Atlantic, and from baking a loaf to writing a novel, involves the use of coal, directly or indirectly... it keeps us alive”.¹⁰⁷⁹ A.J. Cook argued that existence of mining communities had been one that “has been a long struggle” one between “profits and human life”, a battle of “which the miners are fighting and it is the battle on behalf of the whole working class”¹⁰⁸⁰

¹⁰⁷⁵ N. Tebbit, *Upwardly Mobile* (Weidenfeld & Nicholson, London, 1988), p. 302.

¹⁰⁷⁶ H. Benyon, *Digging Deeper – Issues in the Miners’ Strike* (Verso, London 1985), Preface.

¹⁰⁷⁷ “A few miles outside Glasgow, east along the A89, is Shettleston, an area of deprivation that boasts “Glasgow’s friendliest college”. This institution is named after the man who sat as Independent Labour MP for the district from 1922 to his death in 1930 – John Wheatley”. *The New Statesman*, Was John Wheatley really a working-class hero? 29th August 2012. Available at: <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/politics/2012/08/was-john-wheatley-really-working-class-hero>

¹⁰⁷⁸ H. Benyon, *Digging Deeper – Issues in the Miners’ Strike* (Verso, London 1985), Preface.

¹⁰⁷⁹ G. Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier: Down the Mine*, (Penguin, 1937), Part 1. Chapter 2.

¹⁰⁸⁰ P. Foot, (1986). An Agitator of the Worst Type; A Portrait of miners’ leader A.J. Cook, *Socialist Workers Pamphlet*.

and Labour MP, Eric Heffer, emphasised the dual nature of the miners' union, one where an "industrial struggle cannot be divorced from the political struggle".¹⁰⁸¹

Mining communities were to present a barometer of the nation's status quo.¹⁰⁸² And in many ways, this was the case in 1984; the New Right's fear of the NUM does not manifest simply from industrial representation but something even greater – the legitimacy of an historical set of class values. There was power in the mining community, reflected through and in Parliament; and no more eloquently presented than by Keir Hardie, who argued that, "There is nothing more desirable than the return of working men to Parliament."¹⁰⁸³ The pits of Ayrshire produced Hardie, who in turn helped to pioneer the Labour Movement. Working in the coal mines from the age of eight, Hardie was to energise a movement that was to challenge the nature of poverty in Britain and the suffering of the working classes. He was to be no revolutionary, preferring to declare war on "a system, not a class" – challenging the status quo and the working man to embrace social democracy and self-improvement through education and collective unionism.¹⁰⁸⁴ In essence the Labour movement grew from the coal fields – "No one" quoted William Thomas Stead in 1905, "should

¹⁰⁸¹ Ibid

¹⁰⁸² In 1919 strikes inspired more strikes in a ceaseless tide of militancy and solidarity. The key to the semi-revolutionary nature of the situation was the activity of the working class at the point of production. The Government's "panic measures" of that year, "had their root in fears from another quarter-- a national strike by the million miners". SOCIALIST REVIEW *From world war to class war* Published January 1999, Issue 226. Available at: socialistreviewindex.org.uk/

¹⁰⁸³ Ibid

¹⁰⁸⁴ Holman, B. (2008). *In Praise of Keir Hardy*. The Guardian.

ever look at Keir Hardie without remembering the pit from which he was digged”.¹⁰⁸⁵

In the general election of January of 1906, fifty-seven Labour representatives from three different wings of the party were elected to Parliament, “Fourteen were miners’ members what has now come to be known as the trade Union Group”.¹⁰⁸⁶ By 1908 the MFGB¹⁰⁸⁷ affiliated itself directly to the Labour Party, linking the miners to a broader political strategy¹⁰⁸⁸ and enabling the miners’ representative to gain a foothold in the political process. The mining industry and Labour Party policy towards it was now subsumed within Parliamentary socialism; Roy Gregory details that by 1910, miners “constituted a tenth of the electorate... This concentration added to their solidarity and long experience in politics made them a formidable force”¹⁰⁸⁹ – and this force was prepared to “raise a direct challenge to the established social and political order”.¹⁰⁹⁰ This is key to the Conservative historical stance to the miners and the mining community.

Therefore, there is a historical and political precedence to the 1984 dispute which is utterly unique. The isolation from mainstream society determined the mining communities’ identity and was to be expressed through a political struggle which cannot be over emphasised. M. Bulmer argues that the struggle of the mining

¹⁰⁸⁵ W. Stead, *Coming Men on Coming Questions* (Barnes & Noble, 1905), p.44- 48.

¹⁰⁸⁶ E. Porritt, *The British Socialist Labour Party*, *Political Science Quarterly* Vol.23. p.468.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Miners Federation of Great Britain

¹⁰⁸⁸ A. J. Taylor, *The Politics of the Yorkshire Miners* (Croom Helm Limited, Kent, England, 1954), p.72.

¹⁰⁸⁹ R. Gregory, *Miners and British Politics 1906 – 1914* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), p.1633.

¹⁰⁹⁰ S. Heywood, *Churchill* (Routledge, New York & London), p.41.

community is encapsulated through the trade union. Its existence and reliance on the union is paramount to its existence; “every institution in the village” was constructed through “Lodge office, the committee table, the pulpit and the craft of the pit”.¹⁰⁹¹ Personal ambition attached itself closely to the collective of the community, developed in a small, independent, work-based community whose history, community and future was dictated by an industrial and political consciousness.

The collective was their identity. History was to be its strength and the union its means of survival – indeed as the seminal work *Coal Is Our Life* details, the lives of miners inhabit, “communities of a different character from those industrial towns characterised by diversity of occupation, social class and varied social and cultural amenities”.¹⁰⁹² A mining town such as Ashton was defined by its work – its meaning and identity as much a part of the pit as the black seams of coal on which it was built. As John Rex argues, “community life for the miner is quite unlike that for men in other occupations”.¹⁰⁹³ Rex describes the mining community as one which lives in isolation, which looks to both the rural and the urban world as outsiders. Insularity of community is created because of the, “Shared common labour, because of the shared physical danger, or because of the social struggle by means of which they

¹⁰⁹¹ Ibid 26

¹⁰⁹² N. Dennis, *Coal is Our Life: Analysis of a Yorkshire Mining Community* (Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1956), p. 27.

¹⁰⁹³ J. Rex, *Race, Colonialism and the City* (Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd, 1973), p.54.

defend themselves against other human beings which threaten them”.¹⁰⁹⁴ Rex identifies the mining communities of Lancashire as autonomous. Comparing the industrial mining community to that of the feudal institutions of the agricultural community, whatever the bosses may feel or think, mining communities have their own way of creating cultural autonomy. Miners have their own unions and they have their own festivals creating a, “class homogeneity, independence and corporateness that finally sets the seal on the intensity of community life”.¹⁰⁹⁵

This intensity of community life is reflected by Warwick and Littlejohn. They examine the dual experience of the mining community and the creation of an “identities and consciousness, which can be markedly different from other parts of the same society”.¹⁰⁹⁶ The pit village inhabits an almost parallel society where the rigours and ugliness of hardship, death, fatigue and danger are mirrored by those of friendship and closeness and solidarity. Warwick and Littlejohn argue that the shared experiences create a sense of “shared glory and pride” in the community and the collective. The collective, they argue, is imperative to the survival and expansion of the community – life is made easier when facing the cutting edge of the dominant political economy, when resistance to the dangers and rigours of life are understood,

¹⁰⁹⁴ Ibid 56

¹⁰⁹⁵ Ibid 58

¹⁰⁹⁶ D Warwick & G Littlejohn, *Coal, Capital and Culture; a sociological analysis of mining communities in West Yorkshire* (Routledge, London, 1992), p.17.

accepted and shared by the community. Therefore, the natural harshness of the environment, the rigours of life in an industrialised community, creates identities and consciousness which are politicised and are seen through a political lens.

Therefore, political solidarity and awareness have direct consequences on each person's daily lives in the small community. And yet, this identity was to be the communal and industrial death knell. As Rory Turner argues, the social insularity and isolation associated with mining towns were to be their undoing. Mining villages were unable to develop or to regenerate as the pit was the be all and end all of the community. The pit represented salvation for the community and its limitation, as the villages existed solely because the coal industry developed. Grimethorpe, Turner argues, was almost totally reliant on the fate of coal – there was no other alternative. Small businesses were underdeveloped and neglected due to the overall, pervasive nature of the coal mine, creating, “communities that were steeped in mining, and which had very little need to develop the versatility necessary for other kinds of economic activity”.¹⁰⁹⁷ Over-reliance argues Turner, reduced social and political interaction with neighbouring communities and urban conurbations, compounding the sense of isolation and instability. Therefore, these industrial communities were a

¹⁰⁹⁷ R. Turner, *The British Economy in Transition; From the Old to the New?* (Routledge, 1995), p. 27.

unique brew. One of political sophistication yet innate localism – of an identity that was forged through industrial togetherness yet distant from established society.

The miners were likely to provide a damaging measure to the rest of the public sector.¹⁰⁹⁸ It is within this context of localism, political consciousness, pride of community, the sheer dominance of coal as a magnet of social cohesion, political awareness and the undeniably fierce loyalty that this industry engenders, that the Conservative Party's response to the 1984 industrial conflict must be considered; and yet at the height of the dispute there was little understanding of these dynamics. In a letter addressed to Anne Scargill and Betty Heathfield, of the group Women against Pit Closures,¹⁰⁹⁹ at the height of the dispute in November 1984, Peter Walker comments,

You have expressed concern at the plight of your children because of the deduction from social security of amounts deemed to be equivalent of strike pay. I hope you will both ask your husbands why it is that they have not paid strike pay to help the children concerned. Why have your husbands decided it is better to spend union funds on mob picketing is not

¹⁰⁹⁸ Hoskyns, J (1980). PREM19/539 COAL Minute; Margaret Thatcher Miners pay. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

¹⁰⁹⁹ When the Miners' Strike began in March 1984, a group of women formed Women Against Pit Closures. Soon after, individual groups of women all over the country set up their own spontaneous Women Against Pit Closures groups. The first of the groups started in Barnsley. Many of them were connected in some way to mining families (husbands, sons, brothers, fathers and so on). Available at:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/southyorkshire/content/articles/sheffield>.

only against TUC guidelines but also against traditional practice of the National Union of Mineworkers.

The actions of your husbands are certainly damaging mining communities... The year that your husbands have created has been a year of union funds being wasted, miners being plunged into debt, miners' children suffering, and mining communities being deeply divided.¹¹⁰⁰

The enormity of misunderstanding of the mining communities is revealing. Adeney and Lloyd describe how people managed during the strike. For example, striking Derbyshire miner, Stuart Asher – “His family was receiving £33.47 from social security plus some family allowance. They calculated they could spend 70p a head per day on food” and his “wife meanwhile was eating mostly bread” and “Many miners got by only with the assistance of their wives’ often part time jobs”.¹¹⁰¹ Women’s support groups epitomised the support for the strike; “the main drive was to provide welfare assistance for the communities, as well as giving women an active focus”.¹¹⁰² There was a difference between the New Right and the mining communities that could and would never be reconciled.

¹¹⁰⁰ PREM19/1335COAL Walker, P. (1984). Letter to Anne Scargill and Betty Heathfield. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

¹¹⁰¹ M. Adeney & J. Lloyd, *The Miners' Strike 1984 – 1985 Loss Without Limit* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), p.224

¹¹⁰² *Ibid*, p.225

6.3 Arthur Scargill – A Necessary Symbol of Defiance

In May 1960, at the age of 22, Arthur Scargill stood as the Communist candidate for the North Ward of Worsborough Urban District Council. He pledged to, “fight for the needs of the people both young and old, to make Worsborough a model mining village with all the social amenities for all the people.”¹¹⁰³ In February 1966 he would make his mark with his first speech to the NUM; in a “short three-minute speech” he would challenge the Labour Party on pit closures, demand extra payments for miners and attacked the Minister of Fuel and Power, Richard Marsh, for talking “flannel”.¹¹⁰⁴ He was “remarkably young” and with “burning ambition” he would rise, via Saltley Gate, to be the most powerful union leader in the country. Scargill was a Communist and a maverick; he was a loner, yet a self-publicist. A man who did not settle easily into the centre-left of traditional post-war trade unionism; and most of all he was charismatic. From that young age of 22, a political narrative would unwind until ultimately, he would lead the most powerful union in Western Europe into glorious defeat or the grandest of selfish follies.

¹¹⁰³ M. Crick, *Scargill and the Miners* (Penguin, 1985), 32A. Scargill, Election Manifesto, Worsborough Urban District Council elections, 14th May 1960

¹¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

Scargill was to be a “man apart”.¹¹⁰⁵ He believed vehemently in the class war, of “involving in mass struggle workers for an alternative economic policy”¹¹⁰⁶ to construct a “Socialist system of society” where a transference of economic policy, and the delivery of Communism, would come not from a political party, but the trade union movement.¹¹⁰⁷ This was his mantra – his ideological pursuit – of his rejection of conciliation, of diligent adherence to tactical acumen and the delivery of working people’s prosperity. And indeed, in many ways he mirrored Thatcher; he exhibited a puritanical work ethic, a phenomenal work rate and the ability to work long hours; “His work schedule would destroy most people”.¹¹⁰⁸ Scargill expected similar standards of work from colleagues; self-discipline, “deeply held convictions” – these would inspire loyalty from close colleagues, yet he was dictatorial and egocentric,¹¹⁰⁹ he invited enemies from both the left and right.

Like his nemesis Margaret Thatcher, Scargill was an outsider, who was to thrust himself onto an established organisation, and arguably, was either saviour or “the root of ills”. For Thatcher it was the establishment, the Conservative Party and the “country squires”, and for Scargill it was the “balance-sheet mentality of both Coal

¹¹⁰⁵ M. Adeney and J. Lloyd *The Miners’ Strike 1984 – 1985 Loss Without Limit* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London), p.35

¹¹⁰⁶ P. Routledge, *Scargill: The Unauthorized Biography* (Harper Collins Ltd, London), p.34

¹¹⁰⁷ M. Crick, *Scargill and the Miners* (Penguin, 1985), p.32

¹¹⁰⁸ M. Adeney and J. Lloyd *The Miners’ Strike 1984 – 1985 Loss Without Limit* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London), p.45

¹¹⁰⁹ M. Crick, *Scargill and the Miners* (Penguin, 1985), p.132

Board and Government” the “police, the judiciary, the social security system – whichever way seems possible, the full weight of the state”.¹¹¹⁰ As Thatcher’s “wets” succumbed to inertia, dismissal and derision, for Roy Lynk, Nottinghamshire NUM official, who was to become the general secretary of the Union of Democratic Mineworkers, Scargill had converted the “finest union in the world” to a dictatorship.¹¹¹¹ The combative and ideological comparisons run deep. In many ways, the ideological Scargill was to fan the New Right flames; indeed, I argue he was needed by Thatcher and in many ways, he needed her; as Jimmy Reid argues, “Scargalism and Thatcherism are political allies... They are philosophically blood brothers.”¹¹¹²

Both were politicians of conviction, of committed economic and social ideology; and both would engineer the conflict that the New Right desired. Scargill and Thatcher were on their own personal crusades, and Scargill, “thought he was the new Messiah” argued Emlyn Williams,¹¹¹³ and in many ways the religious pretext absorbed by Thatcherism, the conviction of the zealot, is mirrored in Scargalism. Although “they were both apparently poles apart politically, philosophically and

¹¹¹⁰ A. Scargill. Speech to NUM Conference, December 1984. Available at: <http://www.ukpol.co.uk/arthur-scargill-1984-num-conference-speech/>

¹¹¹¹ M. Adeney & J. Lloyd, *The Miners’ Strike 1984 - 5 – Loss Without Limit* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London), p.24.

¹¹¹² P. Routledge, *Scargill: The Unauthorized Biography* (Harper Collins Ltd, London), p.229

¹¹¹³ *Ibid*, p.132

ideologically, they are both dogmatists.”¹¹¹⁴ Scargill was the most “charismatic trade union leader to appear in Britain for a generation” he was “young, he is tough, and he is tireless. He is wily, he is articulate. He is a mob orator of genius. And he is completely unscrupulous. He is, in fact, in the mould of demagogues... Scargill must certainly be fought and defeated.”¹¹¹⁵

This is what Scargill offered – a means of conflict, the oxygen for battle, the means to impose an ideology. He was to be Thatcher’s secret weapon, and though they never met, Patrick Hannan, imagining their meeting of minds, in *When Arthur Met Maggie*, argued that their ideological imposition, their dogged resistance to statecraft meant that they were central to the “process of bringing traditional British politics to an end” it being a “monumental clash of ideology and temperament”.¹¹¹⁶ Scargill was to be the spark required to rejuvenate the tired notion of Tory conservatism – he was a political and ideological requirement; in her tribute to Nicholas Ridley, Thatcher wrote that,

He therefore produced a blueprint for defeating a political strike such as that organised by Arthur Scargill a decade later. Indeed, Nick was one of the most fruitful and clear-sighted of those Tories who used opposition to

¹¹¹⁴ Ibid, p.275

¹¹¹⁵ Stewart, M. (1984). London Review of Books, *The Miners’ Strike*, Vol.6 No.16.

¹¹¹⁶ P. Hannan, *When Arthur Met Maggie* (Seren Publishing, 2007), p.2

rethink Tory philosophy and to plan the programme for what became a great reforming Tory government.¹¹¹⁷

Scargill's inability to see beyond his own ideology, led him towards this dogma of the New Right. Yet of course, functionally and politically, Scargill defined the antithesis of the neoliberal crusade. He was not prepared to accept the sole ideological platform of compulsory redundancy through pit closures and the loss of jobs – of an imposition of an alternate ideology. Therefore, we have Scargill, a maverick, impassioned leader of men, determined to outwit the economic dogma of the New Right.

Scargill was eloquent, articulate and understood the role of the media in representing the Yorkshire miner – he was one of them. He had, “the punch of a knockout politician and the perkiness of a stand-up comedian”¹¹¹⁸ and it was an unswerving, dedicated loyalty to “his people”, to the young and disenfranchised of the mining communities who rose to his rhetoric of “stand on your feet – and behave like men”.¹¹¹⁹ Emotive, aggressive, determined, Scargill's words resonated with the human emotions of those who worked, lived, played and died in the mining community.

¹¹¹⁷ Thatcher, M. (1993). Tribute to Nicholas Ridley, Incomparable Nicholas, *The Times*. Margaret Thatcher Foundation, Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

¹¹¹⁸ A. Chakraborty, (2012) *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/dec/10/new-arthur-scargill-chic-nostalgia>

¹¹¹⁹ G. Goodman, *The Miners' Strike* (Pluto Press, 1985), p. 50.

His was an alternative vision to economic liberation and the liberty of freedom so espoused by Thatcherism. His was the calling for “a Socialist system of society in which the Communist party will play a major role.”¹¹²⁰ Scargill was never a member of the Communist Party, but he “regularly attended Communist Party Schools and education courses”¹¹²¹ – his drive was not just simply to advance the cause of his union, the NUM, but to actively pursue the implementation of socialism by replicating the success of the trade union movement with wage negotiation and working conditions on a national scale. In doing so, the key area of challenge and reform, argued Scargill, would be “an alternative economic policy”¹¹²² – highlighting the integral connection between economic and social reforms. This countered the premise of the NUM – one which the membership considered “an industrial union, not a political wing of some far-left political ideology”.¹¹²³ Scargill would, like Thatcher, through the construct of ideological transformation, divide and conquer the NUM and lead it into conflict.

On coming to power at the NUM many, like Joe Gormley, thought that Scargill would mellow and grow into the role, leaving the rhetoric and bombast to one side, “I had to learn my lessons as I went along, Arthur will also need to learn his”.¹¹²⁴ Yet

¹¹²⁰ A. Scargill, Election manifesto, Worsborough Urban District Council elections, 14th May 1960

¹¹²¹ M. Crick, *Scargill and the Miners* (Penguin, 1985), p.35

¹¹²² M. Adeney & J. Lloyd, *The Miners' Strike 1984 – 1985 Loss Without Limit* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), p.35

¹¹²³ D. Howell, *The Politics of the NUM: A Lancashire View* (Manchester University Press, 1989), p.75

¹¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

this mellowing in power was certainly not an option for Scargill. On a personal level he “was incapable of delegating responsibility”; he was “hypnotic” in his ability to gain support of the young and militant members of the NUM and this “ultra-left adventurer” who led the militants to defeat Heath was running the most powerful union in the world.¹¹²⁵ Like Thatcher, Scargill was messianic in his drive and would not be derailed in his beliefs. With Scargill the unions represented a socialist threat in that he did not “keep his Marxism separate from his union practise”.¹¹²⁶

The NUM now represented a whole new danger. Joe Gormley, though presiding over strikes in ‘72 and ‘74 “never admitted it publicly, but he was against both” as he “preferred the art of negotiation and compromise to a full-scale punch-up”. Nobody, Gormley argues, “in this union must be seen to be more militant than me. I do not want the Left to win anything.” Gormley said later of Scargill ‘I didn't realise it at the time, but I let a monster out of the bottle’.¹¹²⁷ And indeed, he was proved correct; Scargill would offer to the New Right the appropriate “monster”, the requisite pantomime villain – the communist agitator who defied the state – and in doing so, the mining community would be tarnished.

¹¹²⁵ F. Beckett & D. Henke, *Marching to the Fault Line: The Miners' Strike and the Battle for Industrial Britain* (Constable, London), p.42

¹¹²⁶ M. Adeney & J. Lloyd, *The Miners' Strike 1984 – 1985 Loss Without Limit* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), p.37

¹¹²⁷ Pattinson, T. (1993). Obituary; Lord Gormley, Obituary, *The Independent*. Available at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/obituary-lord-gormley>

In a letter to Margaret Thatcher, David Hart, “a shadowy financier who secretly helped the working miners to start crippling legal action against the National Union of Mineworkers”¹¹²⁸ observed from *Impressions from a Coalfield* that,

Sheffield was very different. Standing in a crowd of miners – not the seven thousand of the press reports, more likely three thousand – I could encounter thoughts of Nuremberg. Though they were better humoured there were elements there.

The stink of fascism. Admiration bordering on adoration for their leader. Scargill's address was appalling. Stilted, read from a prepared statement, utterly without inspiration. He is no orator. Still the young militants cheered and roared at almost every sentence. For they have found a Messiah who promises to lead them out of the dark valleys of decaying pits, declining industries, feelings of personal hopelessness, into a promised land which is still to be defined positively but which, negatively, will certainly not include such ‘luxuries’ as freedom and democracy.¹¹²⁹

The New Right had found their nemesis. The “stink of fascism” within, would like the fascism of Galtieri, offer the required momentum to cause destructive industrial

¹¹²⁸ N. Jones, *David Hart, Pit strike fixer whose access to Downing Street alarmed civil servants*. Nicholas Jones Archive and Blog, 14th December 2014. Available at: <https://www.bing.com/search>

¹¹²⁹ Hart, D (1984). Letter to Margaret Thatcher, *Impressions from the Coalfield*. Margaret Thatcher Foundation, Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

change. Scargill would lead, in his messianic fashion, not dissimilar in fervour to Thatcher, the advance of a union as a political animal – a man of dogma.¹¹³⁰ The inevitable miners' strike of 1984, would therefore call upon “her famous firmness, falling perfectly into the moral mould where good and evil could be identified without ambiguity”.¹¹³¹ The whole scenario of rabid Marxism challenging the state fitted within her narrative – the political gain of victory would be priceless. In a memo to Margaret Thatcher in 1982, Nigel Lawson details starkly the challenge that Scargill presented to the Tory party, “the political gain from inflicting a second defeat on Scargill would be of the first importance to the Government at a crucial stage of its life”.¹¹³²

Arthur Scargill was to become an ideological tool. Hugo Young's chapter on the miners' strike is entitled *Vanquishing Lucifer*¹¹³³ – Scargill fitted the evangelical crusade, and the enormity of the challenge he posed, fitted perfectly the scale required for Britain's transformation. No one argues Adeney and Lloyd, could approach, “the malignity and power of the NUM President”¹¹³⁴ and no one represented defiance and an ability, and more importantly a tangible power, to challenge and ultimately threaten the state. In 1981, the first attempt to close twenty-

¹¹³⁰ H. Benyon, *Issues in the Miners' Strike* (Verso, 1985), p. 40.

¹¹³¹ H. Young, *One of Us* (Macmillan, London), p.369

¹¹³² Lawson, N (1982). Letter to Margaret Thatcher, *The political case for developing Belvoir coalfield*. Margaret Thatcher Foundation, Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

¹¹³³ H. Young, *One of Us* (Macmillan, London), p.352

¹¹³⁴ M. Adeney & J. Lloyd, *The Miners' Strike 1984; Loss Without Limit* (Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1986), p.3.

three pits by Thatcher's administration was met with defiance and a backtracking of a fearful government whose memories of 1974 were resonating. Scargill boasted,

The very fact that miners, within thirty-six hours of 40,000 men coming out to strike, were able to change a government's course as far as pit closures were concerned is a clear demonstration that it can be done¹¹³⁵

And what could be done? Arthur Scargill's followers simply worshipped him¹¹³⁶ – he represented the challenge to the state, he represented defiance and lack of compromise, and he never became a part of the establishment. For those in power, for those who needed to establish a new Britain through the politics of conviction and the rejection of consensus and compromise, here was a man, and most importantly a leader of the most powerful union in Britain if not the “finest union in the world”¹¹³⁷ whose revolutionary zeal matched that of the neoliberals who were to challenge the inner sanctums of the Tory Party. It represented an irresistible force working against an immovable object and as demonstrated in documentation of the neoliberal converts – a man and a union who must be defeated for the new order to prevail.

¹¹³⁵ Arthur Scargill, Interview *Marxism Today*, April 1981. Available at: http://banmarchive.org.uk/collections/mt/index_frame.htm

¹¹³⁶ M. Crick, *Scargill and the Miners* (Penguin, 1985), p.125

¹¹³⁷ M. Adeney & J. Lloyd, *The Miners' Strike 1984-5 Loss without Limit* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), p.28.

There is great debate still on the merits of Scargill's defiance. His tactical and theoretical naivety: "lions led by donkeys" noted *The Guardian's* editorial.¹¹³⁸ The decision not to hold a national ballot to fully legitimise a strike, was described by Norman Tebbit as a, "war on democracy" and Neil Kinnock lamented that the strike's, "deciding factor was the suicidal vanity of Arthur Scargill".¹¹³⁹ There is no doubt that Scargill was divisive and controversial – but, as demonstrated in this research, he was eventually to be vindicated¹¹⁴⁰ in his assertion that a secret "hit list" of pit closures existed. Just as Thatcher sought to gain "moral strength to rebuild the fortunes of this free nation" to "resist the blandishments of the faint hearts" and "let us stand together and do our duty",¹¹⁴¹ it was Scargill who would call to defeat the "climate of helplessness, hopelessness and outright despair", it was the NUM's "responsibility as trade unionists to fight that despair and oppose the policies which created it".¹¹⁴² Both would deny the prudence of statecraft, for the nuanced debates orchestrated by either Heath or Gormley, both would strive for the assertion of

¹¹³⁸ Editorial (2009) *The Guardian*. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/series/from-the-archive>

¹¹³⁹ BBC News, 3rd Jan 2014 Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-25549596> Neil Kinnock criticised Arthur Scargill's politicisation of the conflict and his narcissist temperament which lead him to Margaret Thatcher's trap, "The miners didn't deserve him, they deserved much, much better. My view is Margaret Thatcher and Arthur Scargill deserved each other. But no-one else did."

¹¹⁴⁰ "Newly released cabinet papers from 1984 reveal mineworkers' union leader Arthur Scargill may have been right to claim there was a "secret hit-list" of more than 70 pits marked for closure."

¹¹⁴¹ M. Thatcher (1980). Speech to the Conservative Party Conference, *the lady's not for turning*, Brighton. Margaret Thatcher Foundation, Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

¹¹⁴² A. Scargill, Speech to NUM Conference, December 1984. Available at: <http://www.ukpol.co.uk/arthur-scargill-1984-num-conference-speech/>

dogma, of a construction of a New Britain, of the reversal of decline, but only one could succeed and post-1974, there could be only one victor.

6.4 The “Mob” of Orgreave

Thatcherism, like Scargalism, relished the “binary clarity of conflict” – the clarity of us against them, good against bad, the sense of righteousness “to cloud strategic judgment” – the need for clear and moral choices.¹¹⁴³ Throughout Thatcher’s administration the electorate would be presented with these choices of right and wrong, of immoral and moral, of liberty and equality, of nationalisation and privatisation, individualism and collectivism, wealth creation and bankruptcy, and most violently and vividly, trade unionism against the rule of law – of the mob against the state.¹¹⁴⁴ Through these “binary choices” Thatcher could construct “apocalyptic” visions of Britain’s industrial landscape which would provide “context and justification” for the enormity of the “Biblical notions of good versus evil”.¹¹⁴⁵ There would and could be “no alternative” or attempt to “substitute the rule of the mob for the rule of law, and it must not succeed... If they gave in to mob rule that would be the end of liberty

¹¹⁴³ R. Vinen, *Thatcher’s Britain The Politics and Social Upheaval of the 1980’s* (Simon & Schuster 2009), p.156

¹¹⁴⁴ R. Hayton & S. Crines, *Conservative Orators from Baldwin to Cameron* (Manchester University Press, 2015) P. Dorey, *The Oratory of Margaret Thatcher*, Ch.7.

¹¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

and democracy.”¹¹⁴⁶ The answers were to be “self-evident” – a choice between mob rule or the democratic rule of law? There was “no alternative” and the miners were to be portrayed, by Peter Walker, as Marxists calculating “whether or not the mob, using mob violence, can rule”.¹¹⁴⁷ This “antithesis” description of working miners allowed Thatcher to accentuate the “threat” of the mob – not miners, not men defending livelihoods and communities, but members of militant trade unions.

This fitted the narrative that was to be presented to the public. It was to be presented, as Peter Dorey explains, as much as “a law and order issue as an industrial relations one” with picket line violence acted out in the media spotlight. Those engaged on the picket lines could now be legitimately depicted as “thugs”, “bully boys” and “rent-a-mob extremists”.¹¹⁴⁸ This imagery fits within the dynamic set by *The Ridley Report*; as detailed in this research, the report recommended that, “we must be prepared to deal with the problem of violent picketing”, and the only,

way to do this is to have a large, mobile squad of police who are equipped and prepared to uphold the law against the likes of the Saltley Coke Works mob.¹¹⁴⁹

¹¹⁴⁶ HC Deb 08 June 1984 Vol 61 Available at: <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/written-answers/1984/jun/08/strikes>.

¹¹⁴⁷ P. Walker, Speech to Oxford University, 1984, University of Oxford. Conservative Party Archives, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford. Available at: <https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/cpa>

¹¹⁴⁸ P. Dorey, *The Conservative Party and the Trade Unions* (Routledge, 1995), p.132

¹¹⁴⁹ Economic Reconstruction Group (1977). Report Final of the Nationalised Industries Policy Group. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

And it was the labelling and imagery of perceived mob rule that would legitimise ideologically driven trade union policy. Again, as illustrated through primary source material in this research, the *Stepping Stones Report's* analysis and advice to government, this fits the template that was eventually witnessed in real life at Orgreave. The iconography of the mob, the association with intimidation and fear, reflects Hoskyns's assertions in 1977, that

In one sense the TUC are the new Lords. Warlords? This is damaging to democracy.

This is clearly a threat to free choice and thus to our democracy. In about fifteen years all that we might be left with could be union leaders in control.¹¹⁵⁰

Orgreave was the opportunity to stop this from happening – to counter the “warlords” of the TUC. The response of the state at Orgreave to the threat of the trade union movement had been constructed, I argue, through the ideological dictate of Ridley's and Hoskyns's seminal reports some seven years prior. The accepted protocols of industrial dispute, albeit with the caveats of pickets and entrenched dogma, were to re-emerge as a “war” or the “Battle of Orgreave”. A perception of miners was to be reconfigured as Norman Tebbit argued,

¹¹⁵⁰ Hoskyns, J (1977). *Stepping Stones Report*. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

They [the miners] think it was their right to use violence to stop people from going to work. It wasn't.

It's clear. What's the problem? The problem for them is they lost their battle – a violent battle – to overthrow the rule of law.¹¹⁵¹

Therefore, the conflict delivered to the New Right the appropriate clarity of conviction – the mob against the rule of law. It delivers the “problem” of the mob, of a threat, as Thatcher argued, to many people in this country who “are honourable, decent and law abiding and want the law to be upheld and will not be intimidated” – a battle that was to go to the “very heart of our society”; it would be necessary for, “The rule of law must prevail over the rule of the mob”.¹¹⁵²

Yet this narrative – this fault-line – counters the historical precedent of role of the mob in England. E.P. Thompson warned of the “loose employment of the term ‘mob’”¹¹⁵³ in the 18th Century, theorising that the English mob actually conducted itself within a “well understood framework of restraints and limits”.¹¹⁵⁴ Its intentions were not for anarchy and riot but for “collective action”. The “moral economy”¹¹⁵⁵

¹¹⁵¹ BBC News, “Battle of Orgreave” Police had been relishing clashes. Dan Johnson, 10th October 2016. Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-37609965>

¹¹⁵² Thatcher, M. (1984). Margaret Thatcher, *Remarks on Orgreave Picketing*, Banbury Cattle Market, Banbury, Oxfordshire. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

¹¹⁵³ E. P. Thompson, ‘*The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century*’, *Past & Present* 50 (1971), pp. 76–136, reprinted in *idem*, *Customs in Common* (Merlin: 1991).

¹¹⁵⁴ A. Hunt, *A Social History of Moral Regulation* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 54

¹¹⁵⁵ E. P. Thompson, ‘*The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century*’, *Past & Present* 50 (1971), pp. 76–136, reprinted in *idem*, *Customs in Common* (Merlin: 1991) EP Thompson argues, that “Spasmodic

of the coal mine was represented through this collective action and a “defence against profit seeking employers”. The morality of the collective did not lie in the faceless rule of the mob, but in the customs and traditions built from the “sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries”.¹¹⁵⁶ Thompson’s critique regarding the construct and motivation of a labelled “mob” reflects the 1984 conflict at Orgreave; “Too many of our growth historians are guilty of a crass economic reductionism, obliterating the complexities of motive, behaviour, and function”.¹¹⁵⁷

Therefore, the New Right strategy to depict a feckless mob, had disfigured and “transgressed the moral economy of the coalfields”.¹¹⁵⁸ Any form of legitimacy of protest, of unified picketing was transformed into, what George Rude argues, is the “other stereotype more fashionable among conservative” of the “mob” in question as “the instrument of outside agents – ‘demagogues’ or ‘foreigners’ – and as being prompted by motives of loot, lucre, free drinks, bloodlust”.¹¹⁵⁹ Therefore the mob presented a political tool – a spectre of anarchy, contorted and redesigned, not as a corporate, responsible trade union, but as a challenge to democracy and the rule of

risers in food prices provoked keel men on the Tyne to riot in 1709, tin miners to plunder granaries at Falmouth in 1727". One spasm led on to another: the outcome was "plunder". For decades, systematic social history has lagged in the rear of economic history”.

¹¹⁵⁶ E. P. Thompson, ‘*The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century*’, *Past & Present* 50 (1971), pp. 76–136, reprinted in *idem*, *Customs in Common* (Merlin: 1991).

¹¹⁵⁷ *Ibid*

¹¹⁵⁸ J. Phillips, *Containing, Isolating, and Defeating the Miners: The UK Cabinet Ministerial Group on Coal and the Three Phases of the 1984–85 Strike*; Liverpool University Press, 2014.

¹¹⁵⁹ G. Rude, *The Crowd in History; A Study of Popular Disturbances in France and England 1730 – 1848* (Lawrence and Wishart, London 1964), Introduction.

law. Thatcher remonstrated with Neil Kinnock in fiery debates in 1984 over the conduct of miners and pickets,

The gentleman referred to mob rule as political posturing. I can say to him only that whatever Government are answering from the Dispatch Box, if they gave in to mob rule, which would be the end of liberty and democracy.¹¹⁶⁰

Thatcher's remark that a mob of miners challenged democracy is obviously highly contentious. What was the reasoning in the cultivation of such imagery – was it really a true depiction of an “end of liberty and democracy”? I argue that the use of the term “mob” disengages politics, the media and the public from the reality of the 1984 conflict; as a collective noun, it depicts a homogenous group, a faceless term, an innate object that presented a threat to democracy. This symbolism could be manipulated; Thatcher arguing that “One really simply cannot be intimidated by mob violence”.¹¹⁶¹ There was a political and moral line which could not be crossed.

¹¹⁶⁰ HC Deb 08 June 1984 Vol 61. Available at: <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/written-answers/1984/jun/08/strikes>. PM Questions, House of Commons, 19th June 1984. Margaret Thatcher argues vociferously the role of violence that was associated with the miner and mining communities. In fiery exchanges with the Leader of the Opposition, Neil Kinnock, she reiterated the association of the mass picketing of the NUM as mob rule, “The fact is that these violent tactics have been used to try to impose the will of one faction of the NUM on the rest. Those people have tried, by those tactics, to destroy the steel industry. They have failed. They have tried, by those tactics, to disrupt the power stations. They have failed. They have tried, by those tactics, to destroy those who are still going into work in the many pits around the country. They have failed. In every single way, they have tried to use violence to impose their will. So far, they have failed. The lorries got through; the coal is getting through. I hope that that will continue, as I hope that most workers in this country will join all people of good will to see that mob violence does not prevail”.

¹¹⁶¹ HC Deb 08 June 1984 Vol 61. Available at: <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/written-answers/1984/jun/08/strikes>

As Ian Gilmour suggested, Arthur Scargill “would not have been able to retain the support he has if there was not hostility to a hard-line government?”. The mob was a prerequisite; it offered the appropriate degree of hostility to help redefine the morality of the right. Now, with pitched battles with mounted police there would be no U-turns or defeat; the narrative would be upheld and as Peter Walker argued, the “rule of law has been maintained and the mob has failed everywhere”.¹¹⁶²

And for the rule of law to be maintained, *The Battle of Orgreave* had to be policed. In June 1984 10,000 striking miners clashed with 5,000 members of the police force – it was massed industrial and political confrontation. Orgreave had intensified the miners’ dispute in that, as Adeney and Lloyd argue, a “Rubicon was crossed at Orgreave and there was no going back for the rest of the strike”.¹¹⁶³ Scargill had selected Orgreave, a coke supplier to the BSC steel plant in Scunthorpe, as a “potential Saltley”, but it was to become the “Waterloo” – a realisation that striking miners were “not going to win by mass picketing”. There are many conflicting images, accounts and reflections of Orgreave; policemen complained over the course of successive conflicts between 23rd May and 18th June 1984, that “bricks were coming over first as far as we were concerned” and that Orgreave was a “pickets’

¹¹⁶² P. Walker, Speech to Oxford University, 1984, University of Oxford. Conservative Party Archives, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford. Available at: <https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/cpa>

¹¹⁶³ M Adeney & J. Lloyd, *The Miners’ Strike 1984-5 Loss without Limit* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), p.118

death-trap, a mistake. We took a lot of casualties. It was terrible”.¹¹⁶⁴ Police horses were deployed and “truncheons were used far too liberally”, and BBC camera crews “were themselves hit by stones”.¹¹⁶⁵ Mass pickets had been maintained “despite police road blocks and sealing off the whole area”¹¹⁶⁶ and on 30th May barricades were “erected to the point the police had charged up to. The barricades consisted of telegraph poles, bricks, rocks, stones, and fencing. Barbed wire was added. More cheers”.¹¹⁶⁷ *The Guardian* reported on 18th June 1984, that

Frustration on both sides spilled over into sickening scenes of miners being batoned and of police being attacked with bricks, slivers of glass as well as the containers of fuel¹¹⁶⁸

It was “a picket and it was violent”.¹¹⁶⁹ The police “gave no quarter; just got laid into them”¹¹⁷⁰ and they were to be deployed as a “political weapon”.¹¹⁷¹ There is no doubt that there was violence from both striking miners and the police; it was confrontation not seen on the British mainland since the 19th Century. The BBC reported that a

¹¹⁶⁴ Ibid, p.113

¹¹⁶⁵ Ibid, p.117

¹¹⁶⁶ D. Reed & O. Adamson, *Miners' Strike 1984 – 16985 People Versus State* (Larkin Publishing, 1985), p.29

¹¹⁶⁷ D. Reed & O. Adamson, *Miners' Strike 1984 – 16985 People Versus State* (Larkin Publishing, 1985), p.34

¹¹⁶⁸ Pithers, M. (1984). The Battle of Orgreave. *The Guardian*. Available at:

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/1984/jun/18/past.features11>

¹¹⁶⁹ G. Hutton, *Coal Not Dole, Memories of the 1984 – 1985 Miners' Strike* (Stenlake Publishing, 2005), p. 26

¹¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹¹⁷¹ G. Hutton, Miner, *Neil Valentine, Miner, Ayrshire. Coal Not Dole, Memories of the 1984 – 1985 Miners' Strike* (Stenlake Publishing, 2005), p. 26

former police officer who had taken part in Orgreave had been told to use “as much force as possible” against striking miners,

I couldn't believe what I was seeing. I was just seeing police officers attack people. These were people on the ground and even if they weren't doing anything – just walking away – police officers had their batons and they were just hitting people.¹¹⁷²

The violence for Scargill was “something reminiscent of a Latin American state”.¹¹⁷³

There were 72 police officers injured at Orgreave and they were policing “under extreme provocation”.¹¹⁷⁴ Margaret Thatcher commented on the violence that, “This is not a dispute between miners and government. This is a dispute between miners and miners. It is the police who are in charge of upholding the law. They have been wonderful.”¹¹⁷⁵

The events at Orgreave polarised a nation and Parliament. There were to be acts of violence perpetrated on both sides; Andy Burnham asked the House that as “Orgreave is one of the most divisive events in British social history. Given that

¹¹⁷² BBC News, *Battle of Orgreave* “Police had been relishing clashes. Dan Johnson, 10th October 2016. Dan Johnson, 10th October 2016. Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-37609965>

¹¹⁷³ BBC News, *Miners and Police Clash at Orgreave, 29th May 1984*. Available at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/may/29/newsid_2494000/2494793.stm

¹¹⁷⁴ K. Perry (2014). The Battle of Orgreave: how events unfolded. *The Telegraph*. Available at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/margaret-thatcher/10608896/The-Battle-of-Orgreave-how-events-unfolded.html>

¹¹⁷⁵ HC Debate 16th November 2016, Vol. 616 *Orgreave*. Available at: <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/written-answers/1984/jun/08/strikes>.

there is evidence of unlawful conduct by the police in relation to it, is it not simply staggering that the Home Secretary has brushed aside an inquiry as not necessary?” and David Davies was to respond, “Does the Minister agree that far and away the worst atrocity in those terrible events was the murder of the taxi driver, David Wilkie? Is my right hon. Friend as amazed as I am that his death has not been mentioned once by Opposition Members”.¹¹⁷⁶ The scars and divisions still run deep after more than thirty years, through the ex-mining community and the police force. The policing of Orgreave was incendiary; “miners and their wives had by December grown to hate and fear the police”.¹¹⁷⁷ Answering questions at the Orgreave riot trial, Assistant Chief Constable Clements, the Senior Officer in Command on the day of 18th June 1984, argued that, if there was to be an industrial battlefield, he wanted it “on my own ground and on my own terms”¹¹⁷⁸ – his word was final. This was confirmed by his second-in-command, under questioning regarding use of truncheons and riot gear against miners, “he had no hesitation” stating “If there is a conflict between the standing orders and the manual, the chief constable is autonomous in his area.”¹¹⁷⁹ Though the line of questioning aimed at Chief Constable Clements was designed to challenge the operational integrity of the policing

¹¹⁷⁶ Ibid

¹¹⁷⁷ F. Beckett and D. Hencke, *Marching to the Fault Line: The Miners' Strike and the Battle for Industrial Britain* (Constable, London), p.182

¹¹⁷⁸ Peirce, G. (2014). Archive, 12 August 1985: How they rewrote the law at Orgreave *The Guardian*. Available; <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/from-the-archive-blog/2014/jun/17/orgreave-how-they-rewrote-the-law-1985>

¹¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

operation of the day, it does clarify the autonomy, good or bad, of the police authorities. The responsibility of policing mass picketing was a policing, and not a political issue.

Yet this research demonstrates this not to be the case. Policing fitted the ideologically driven strategy, the rejection of statecraft and public safety, as argued in this paper. Evidence has recently emerged of government manipulation and deployment of police services as an “instrument of the state”.¹¹⁸⁰ Dr Allan Billings, South Yorkshire’s newly re-elected police and crime commissioner admitted that the pitched battles three decades ago were the “nearest we have come to a politicised police force”,

Orgreave must be treated as a national as well as a South Yorkshire policing issue... modern-day officers were being “dragged down” by legacy issues which “they cannot escape”.¹¹⁸¹

The “legacy” is the manipulation of the police involved in the strike – “The government set the stage for the final Battle of Orgreave”.¹¹⁸² The police force was to become a part of the New Right’s weaponry – a tool of the state that was to be coerced to become a force, not simply to maintain law and order, but to rectify the

¹¹⁸⁰ Channel 4 News, Tuesday 10th May 2016. Available at: <http://www.channel4.com/4viewers/faq/name/>

¹¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹¹⁸² F. Beckett & D. Hencke, *Marching to the Fault Line: The Miners’ Strike and the Battle for Industrial Britain* (Constable, 2009), p.99

memory of Saltley Gate, to avenge the defeat of Heath and ultimately to ensure the radical transformation of industrial Britain. At Orgreave a force of 4,200 officers from ten counties, 50 mounted police, 58 police dogs and several riot units, I argue were not neutral – they had been politicised to ensure an ideological economic agenda could be realised.¹¹⁸³ It “might have been helpful” argued Sir Lawrence Byford, the Chief Inspector of Constabularies in 1984, “if government ministers had shown “greater evidence of neutrality” when it came to supporting the police.¹¹⁸⁴ And Sir Brian Cubbon, Permanent Secretary of the Home Office, in 1984 wrote that “internal questions” needed to be asked about how,

the Home Office relay(s) to the police service the political influence on operational policy which was wanted in the early days of the (miners) dispute.¹¹⁸⁵

There was to be direct political interference with a local policing matter. On 13th July 1984, the Prime Minister argued that, “Peter Walker’s strategy a few weeks ago was to hold talks” but the “central issues cannot be for negotiation” – there would need to be a reversion to a “war of attrition”.¹¹⁸⁶ Thatcher’s memo is revealing. Peter

¹¹⁸³ Gapper, J (2016) Orgreave Revisited, *The Financial Times*. Available at: <https://www.ft.com/content/>

¹¹⁸⁴ A. Travis & M. Weaver (2017). Miners' strike files suggest 'hints of political direction' of police. *The Guardian*. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/mar/09/miners-strike-files-battle-of-orgreave-hints-political-direction-police-uk>

¹¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁸⁶ PREM19/1331 Thatcher, M. (1984) Internal memo to John Redwood. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

Walker was to be side-lined – his “strategy” of negotiation and dialogue had not worked. In his autobiography, Walker admits his neutrality regarding the policing of the strike,

Police action was critical to breaking the strike. The police set up an operations room in Scotland Yard. Each of the forces had to provide so many men. They were moved wherever it was considered necessary and no politician was really involved. I only once visited the operations room¹¹⁸⁷

Though congratulatory of the role of the police, Walker concurs that “questions were raised about the principle of having a national police operation”.¹¹⁸⁸ New primary evidence, released in 2017 justifies Walker’s observation; there are a new set of questions that have arisen that examine direct government influence on policing at Orgreave and the miners’ dispute. In March 1979 Margaret Thatcher responded to MP Merlyn Rees, who advised that it was “not the task of the Home Secretary to give instructions to the police about the day to day conduct of their job”.¹¹⁸⁹ Thatcher

¹¹⁸⁷ P. Walker, *Staying Power – Peter Walker an Autobiography* (Bloomsbury, 1991), p180

¹¹⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p181

¹¹⁸⁹ Rees, M. (1979). Letter to Margaret Thatcher. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

replied, that “the only occasion when it would be proper to issue a circular to Chief Constables is when there has been a change in the law”.¹¹⁹⁰

Contrast this statement to events on 3rd July 1984. “The Battle of Orgreave” is over but the repercussions are still being felt; Leon Brittan, the then Home Secretary and MP for Richmond, North Yorkshire, forwarded a three-page document to Margaret Thatcher, detailing how Peter Wright, the then Chief Constable of South Yorkshire Police, had been “forbidden by Labour-controlled South Yorkshire Police Authority from incurring any costs policing the picket lines outside Orgreave without ‘their express authority’”.¹¹⁹¹ Proposing that the “Government bypasses the police authority”, and South Yorkshire County Council, by “making emergency funding available”¹¹⁹², Mr Brittan argues,

The Attorney general and I have already put in hand, however, certain contingency arrangements.

Because he has no funds available to him and the importance of ensuring his position, it is proposed that treasury Solicitor and Counsel be available to him.

¹¹⁹⁰ Thatcher, M (1979). Letter to Merlyn Rees MP. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

¹¹⁹¹ Richmond, T. (2016). The Confidential Cabinet papers – and how Thatcher interfered in policing of Miners’ Strike. *The Yorkshire Post*. Available at: <https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/opinion/tom-richmond-the-confidential-cabinet-papers-and-how-thatcher-interfered-in-policing-of-miners-strike-1-7911007>

¹¹⁹² PREM19/1331 Brittan, L (1984). Letter to Margaret Thatcher, 3rd July 1984. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

I am sure we need to move quickly in this way, to forestall public speculation that police operations against the dispute will be hampered, or even that the Armed Forces would have to be brought in instead.¹¹⁹³

On receipt of the letter from Brittan, Andrew Turnbull – Mrs Thatcher’s Private Secretary, scribbles at the top of the Home Office letter,

Prime Minister. Agree with Home Secretary’s line?

Mrs Thatcher wrote in her handwriting,

Is this enough? Can we provide the funds direct?”¹¹⁹⁴

These funds enable the continuation of the fight and the NUM would be defeated. The state would interfere directly in the policing of Orgreave – and Orgreave was to be Scargill’s Waterloo. Thatcherism could not be seen to be defeated as had Heath – there were no “U-turns” no dialogue and ultimately, unlike post-Saltley Gate in ‘74, no question of “Who governs?” was required. The victor was clear, and the “mob” had been clearly defeated.

¹¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

6.5 Conclusions

The above analysis demonstrates Margaret Thatcher's direct interference with "day-to-day conduct" of policing. It reflects, I believe, a determination to circumvent the accepted principles of refraining "from even seeming to usurp the powers of the judiciary of avenging individuals or the State"¹¹⁹⁵ – by the politicisation and indeed militarisation of the police force to defeat the NUM. The symbolism of the "mob" at Orgreave, of the mass that were to challenge the rule of law, was to redefine the miners' strike as a binary choice of good and bad – of law against lawlessness. This provided the moral cause so required by Thatcherism, the necessary foe to be able to deconstruct; I argue, it was the pinnacle of Ridley's plan, the final piece in the jigsaw of defeating the trade union movement. Scargill was correct, there was a "hit list" and there was to be defeat for the NUM – but, just as the police faced, and dealt out violence, they too were to be pawns in the greater ideological game. The construct of the miners' strike had been designed, patiently planned and implemented; an acceptance of violence, of the manipulation of the police force and of the symbolism of defiance against a mob; this was the mob at Saltley Gate in 1972 and the miners in 1974 who were to bring down the government of Edward Heath. The defeat of the miners at Orgreave was a cathartic moment, when the demons of

¹¹⁹⁵ GOV.UK FOI Release *Definition of Policing by Consent*, 10th December 2012. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/policing-by-consent>

the Conservative Party past were vanquished and a door to another world was opened. This was to be world post-trade union militancy, post-corporatism and post-industrialisation. This I argue, does not equate to the efficiency of government administration and of Conservative Party management; the defeat of Scargill ultimately demonstrated a win-at-all-odds mentality, to implement and to enshrine an ideological, economic crusade. Certainly, Arthur Scargill mirrored the dogma of his nemesis, but his political naivety ultimately led him to become another victim of the New Right's perpetual ascent to governance through an ideological and not statecraft agenda.

Chapter 7 – Conclusion – The ideological victory

7.0 Introduction

The primary evidence gathered and presented in this thesis gives legitimacy to the proposed theory that after 1974, in response to the defeat of Edward Heath, a group formed around the new leadership in the Conservative Party was to adopt and develop a predetermined policy, constructed through an ideological agenda, intended to target, confront and to defeat the NUM, as witnessed at Orgreave in 1984.

To achieve this aim, sections of the Conservative Party that adhered to statecraft theory were to be marginalised and ultimately relieved of Cabinet responsibility, enabling the reconfiguration of economic and industrial strategy, by rejecting the considered parameters of statecraft to implement an ideologically driven agenda using confrontation. In short, conservatism was to be redesigned to enforce economic and industrial policy through confrontation.

In this chapter I intend to demonstrate both a summary of my research and the relevant messages and themes which flow between these chapters. This will demonstrate a procedural development and implementation of ideological change – a systematic and planned imposition of ideology. The chapter construction highlights this dedicated formulation of policy of confrontation – policy that did not adhere to

an organic or evolutionary nature, but as the chapter summary will reveal, a deliberate deconstruction of industrial and energy policy.

7.1 The End of Moral Decline

To end decline Thatcherism would have to pose and eventually answer some difficult, and at times unedifying questions. The questions of trade union impasse, of inflationary control, of a British industrial malaise, had been raised before, notably by Powell and Thorneycroft; yet the answer to these questions, the construct of a new national identity had never been successfully negotiated. Macmillan, Wilson and Heath had all broached large plans of technological and social improvement, yet they had failed in the process of deconstructing an old order. Thatcher's government, I evidence in this chapter, would through an adherence to a spirit beyond that of the political, through an individual, social and economic morality, would become the administration that would pick up the mantle of the post-war world, would face the challenge of the collective forces of trade unionism and enforce change – to end decline.

In this research I have chosen a specific historic period of political and social change. I demonstrate the reconfiguration of one political organisation and a reconstruction of the corporate dynamic; these were big challenges, with multiple dynamics of actors, policy and procedure; yet the greater challenge, this research demonstrates,

was the construction of a new dawn of British politics, a new moral purpose that had been eroded by the post-war “delusive dreams”.¹¹⁹⁶ To achieve this, there would be a requirement for clarity, vision and purpose; of an impetus, of movement and a challenge to implement social, political and moral change within The Conservative Party, the trade union movement and ultimately a Britain which was ready to throw off the shackles of regression.

The challenge was to change “the British character in peacetime”.¹¹⁹⁷ I reveal, that though the tools to realign British failure were economic – an implementation of monetary reform, the prioritising of the control of inflation over unemployment and a rejection of demand management – the agenda was far greater than simply economic. With echoes of Correlli Barnett’s ascertain of Britain’s “affinity for muddle”¹¹⁹⁸ and its “sacred cows” of consensus, Thatcherism rejected the doctrine of constructive, practical conservatism in the form of Macmillan and his “Middle way”. This was a conservatism that could not readdress the fault-lines of 1970’s stagflation and trade union impasse – it was a form of conservatism from a different age and indeed world; one that was prepared to accept corporatism, the tripartite state and embrace, or at least accept, this corporate status quo.

¹¹⁹⁶ C. Barnett, *The Verdict of Peace: Britain Between her Yesterday and the Future* (Macmillan, London), p.508

¹¹⁹⁷ *Ibid*, p.509

¹¹⁹⁸ C. Barnett, *The Verdict of Peace: Britain Between her Yesterday and the Future* (Macmillan, London), p. 502

A new form of conservatism would reject One Nation politics. The undefined nature of Conservative thought, though always averse to dogma, would allow for an embrace within Tory ranks of a new doctrine. Though an anathema to many established post-war politicians, there was a call within the party for a “New Conservatism” – a correction of politics. This would entail a new morality, a greater sense of determined demand for change and sense of renewal; a new dynamism within the Conservative Party. Edward Heath’s defeat in 1974 would present an opportunity, one that could introduce Nigel Lawson’s philosophy of *The New Conservatism* – from crisis to opportunity.

This would reinstate government which would not “lack backbone” as previous administrations had and would not fail as “a result of political pressures”. This presents a key point – Lawson’s new form of Conservative thought, based upon the assumption that “governments cannot create economic growth”¹¹⁹⁹ prioritised the resistance of these pressures and to redesign the political narrative. The implementation of monetarism, the “liberalisation of the financial markets” and prioritising of inflationary control, could only become reality, as Lawson acknowledged, if sacrifices were prepared to be made, arguing that “Reducing inflation, like most things in life, has its price... on output, profits and

¹¹⁹⁹ N. Lawson, *The View from No. 11 – Memoirs of a Tory Radical* (Bantam Press, London), p.70

employment”.¹²⁰⁰

And this is the essence of Lawson’s *The New Conservatism*.¹²⁰¹ It is, I argue, a pastiche of Conservative thought – a mime to the classic political philosophy of an understanding of the nation, of its body politic and balanced requirements. This research looks at ideology associated with a New Right; an ideology that is determined by a dogma, to enforce economic and societal change, in face of social discontent and violence, as illustrated by the scenes at Orgreave. One Nation conservatism contrasts with this; I have presented an argument that determines the conservatism of One Nation politics of pragmatism, consensus and harmonious industrial relations with the trade union movement. Lawson’s narrowed view of conservatism, demonstrates, I argue, a mindset of blinkered enslavement to this ideology; as Ian Gilmour argued of the New Right, they “have been blinded by their own rhetoric”.¹²⁰² Ideology would replace statecraft as a tool that would enshrine itself from the “political pressures” that Lawson describes; a political insulation against the extremes that monetarism would construct.

Jim Bulpitt argues, that the “high politics” of office – of the Parliamentary process, would shield an administration from the pressures of low politics – of local authority,

¹²⁰⁰ Ibid, p.76

¹²⁰¹ N. Lawson, *The New Conservatism*, (Centre for policy Studies, 1980).

¹²⁰² I. Gilmour & M. Garnett, *Whatever Happened to the Tories; The Conservative Government Since 1945* (Fourth Estate, 1998), p.54

of the nitty-gritty of political administration. This I counter. It was not statecraft that acted to aim for the safety of high politics but the shroud of dogma. Thatcher's high politics, infused within ideology, would not isolate her or her party from criticism – it would not shroud her from her moral convictions. The byproducts of monetary reform; unemployment, trade union militancy, social discontent – there was no protection from these, none of statecraft's retreat to a higher political arena. Thatcherite high politics would entail the rejection of U-turns and the ploughing of an ideological furrow. The pressures placed on the Thatcher administration, by Parliament and Cabinet, corporations and trade unions, socialists and “wets”, the critique of the 364 economists who were to denigrate economic monetarism; these pressures were not placated through statecraft but by an ideologically driven belief system.

Ideology, as evidenced in this research, does not reach for the pragmatic option to govern. Unlike statecraft, it is a mechanism that does not recognise the merits of dialogue, negotiation and political consensus. I have demonstrated that this clouds political judgment – statecraft is the nature of politics and political decision making. Nigel Lawson's proclaiming of some new form of Conservative thought or being does not stand up to political or indeed statecraft scrutiny – it is deluded to any form of traditions of Conservative thought or practice. It was to inhibit the space of a

recluse, of no inhibition to the moral and political implications of unemployment and the consequences that this brings. Ideology drove Nigel Lawson to accept the victory of low inflation at the expense of millions of British men and women being unemployed – it would ultimately lead to scenes of pitched battle at Orgreave. Lawson was to deny this, in a lecture entitled, *The British Experiment*,

It is, incidentally, sometimes argued that the reduction of inflation has been brought about not by the Government's monetary policy but by three million unemployed. The implication is that high unemployment has reduced wage demands which in turn have reduced inflation. This view derives from the widespread error of seeing inflation in terms of a simple cost-plus framework.¹²⁰³

I argue that Lawson's denial reflects a mindset that has redefined the nature of the political status quo – that allows for experimentation in dogma. His definition of *New Conservatism* inhibits a space where, as he argues, “political pressures” do not hold sway – where the old certainties and established political principles are realigned. His “new” politics of tacit acceptance of three million unemployed –

¹²⁰³ N. Lawson Speech, *The British Experiment, The Mais Lecture*, 18th June 1984, City University Business School, Centre for Banking and International Finance. Margaret Thatcher Foundation Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org>

whilst during an industrial dispute, of such intensity that has not been seen on mainland Britain since the 1920s, demonstrates an insularity and shroud of dogma and ideology. As Jim Bulpitt argues, statecraft “insulated” politicians to enable them to govern effectively, I conclude that this is reversed; Lawson’s economic *New Conservatism*, used the tools of ideology to implement economic dogma. Ideology was to insulate this New Right from the realities of industrial Britain, from the realities of three million unemployed and the inevitable socio-economic consequences of the 1984 miners’ strike.

Yet this was to influence the moral dynamic of Thatcherism. The insulation of an ideology – of economic dogmatism – was bound within a greater authenticity; one of the notions of righteousness. Economic liberalism facilitates the movement away from the Keynesian orthodoxy, but the real force was one of liberation and a reconstruction of the national soul. This would bypass the realities of unemployment and social discontent, as within the no U-turn agenda lay a greater force of nature – the religious connotation of freedom and liberty. Thatcherism’s economic and social realignment of British politics would have a legitimacy through a moral endeavor. Espousing Hayekian values of the immorality of state intervention and the purity of market forces, Thatcherism released a force of nature that would combine the *New Conservatism* of Lawson’s economic formula for recovery, with a spiritual crusade

against a tyranny of the collective. This infusion, of an ideological reinterpretation of an historic political party, would construct a political force that would dare to reconstruct – to creatively destroy a political, economic and social post-war agenda.

Statecraft would be consumed. The self-proclamation of *The New Conservatism*, its economic agenda pointing to a new, post-corporate world, would be driven on by a messianic verve for individual freedom. A quasi-economic and moral spirituality, enthused by an agenda to halt British decline, would now set an agenda, formulate a plan and look to target the established pillars of corporatism – the relationship between the trade union movement and government. The impasse and malignity that this has constructed during the post-war world, would justify the elimination of an “enemy within” – an internal enemy of “wets” who halted progress and rejected dogmatism, and an “enemy without”, the established enemy of economic liberalism – the trade union movement.

I have contextualised the debate showing where this new form of politics emerged, what its inspiration was and ultimately, as subsequent chapters reveal, how the government and trade union movement were to confront in 1984.

7.2 Enoch Powell – A pursuit of liberty and rejection of the mass

Powellism is a search for the sanctity of the sovereign nation. It is an emotive cry for the liberty and freedoms associated with Englishness, individualism and the delicate political forces from where these most treasured of gifts stem. Powell's decree of the "lunacy" of government intervention in a labour movement was, he argues counter to the "function" of government; corporatism was an attack on the legitimacy of Parliament and the delicate, complex and ancient spirit of political discourse. Powellism, in many forms, searches for the innate delicacy of British identity and the soul of our nation; man-made constructs, the altering of historical precedent, the notion of a collective, a union or bloc, challenge democratic institutions – a masse that was prepared to alter the delicate fabric of the autonomy of sovereignty. Enoch Powell represented a symbol of bittersweet resistance to this this unnatural phenomenon; a lone wolf whose cry was not always palatable but struck at the heart of British decline; the insatiable demands of the mass – the attack on liberty.

Unlike Powell, Thatcher's objective, as evidenced, was to "change the soul" of the nation – to bend a collective will in her image. A nation that had been dulled by mass representation, an adherence to the collective and the loss of an individual dynamic. Powell would not contend with the manipulation of national sovereign identity; his ideals were not to change national identity but to sustain it. His inspirational qualities

for Thatcherism lay in the conceptual ideal of liberty; the trade union movement, the Labour Party, these were functioning arms of a state that denied individualism and freedom – this was Powell’s legacy for Thatcherism.

For Powell there was “no political reality beyond the nation state”, it represented the “ultimate political reality”.¹²⁰⁴ There could be no challenge to this identity – the “extraordinarily well-developed homogeneity” would guide the British people to the ruling “dictates of ‘good tone’”.¹²⁰⁵ There could be no man-made challenges to this natural sovereignty, no trade union impasse, no collective identity or corporate cooperation – these constructs of a self-inflated state; these man-made edifices of power in the trade union movement were a challenge to a natural homogeneous state. Therefore, the sovereign state, Powell argued, held a “unique structure of power” – one that was as indefinable as it was delicate; it was constructed through an organic historicism, of an identity that could not be contrived, but through deference, dedication, loyalty, patriotism and military service, could enhance the individual holistically and morally.

Sovereignty presented an organic entity of “values and traditions”. I argue that, though there are fundamental disagreements, Powellism as an ideology helped to configure Thatcherism and ultimately the reinterpretation of trade union policy.

¹²⁰⁴ B. Jackson & R. Saunders, *Making Thatcher’s Britain* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge), p.95

¹²⁰⁵ E. Powell, Speech, *Commonwealth (sham)* 14th January 1966, Camborne. Available at: <http://www.enochpowell.net/speeches.html>

Powellism inspired Thatcherism. Though contrasting in the interpretation and of the importance of the nation state – and ultimately the imposition of state control in 1984 at Orgreave and beyond – Powellism’s defiance against a political establishment, the pursuit of a personal freedom through the prism of national patriotism, appealed to the New Right. Powell did not agree with the implementation of an ideological economic solution to renew Britain – it was not a pursuit of economic freedom, but one of personal liberty. The man-made state, the socialist ideals of control of the means of production, was to mean that “the people and the nation can be trusted to decide nothing unless the Government supplies the answer”¹²⁰⁶ – a challenge to the individuals who comprise this state and the liberty of which they are so destined to aspire to.

It was Powell’s avocation of liberty that was attractive to Thatcherism. Powell was not anti-trade union – it was the transgression of the state that required checks and balances; the “entire trade union movement” Powell argued, has “been brought to accept that the trade unions are responsible”¹²⁰⁷ for the sickness of inflation. Powell saw through the denouncing of industrial representation, “I am not blaming them”¹²⁰⁸.

¹²⁰⁶ S. Letwin, *The Anatomy of Thatcherism* (Harper Collins, 1993), p.75

¹²⁰⁷ E. Powell, Speech at Chippenham, *We live in an age of conspiracies*, 11th May 1968. Available at: <http://www.enochpowell.net/speeches.html>

¹²⁰⁸ Ibid.

Therefore, Powell's directive was anti-socialism, but not inherently anti-trade union. Trade unions were a state tool – a piece in the jigsaw of corporatism; a part of a coherent post-war plan to challenge the legitimacy of sovereignty. Deny the tools of corporatism – its power base of the trade union movement – and reaffirm parliamentary sovereignty. Trade unions were no more responsible for the rate of inflation or unemployment, than that of “ordinary people at being made the butt and scapegoat for evils from which they themselves”.¹²⁰⁹ As for economic decline, Powell was adamant “the Government causes it”.¹²¹⁰

Therefore, Powell does not denigrate the trade union movement – it is not the citizens who challenge the primacy of the sovereign state – it is not the individual – but government, and, corporate government. Corporatism reimagined artificially the role of the sovereign state, industry and industrial representation; artificial, non-organic – it was a political construct, a tool of socialism. Trade unionism was to present the human edifice of socialism – the mechanism of its implementation; those individuals that the trade union movement represented were not the guilty ones. The whole spectre of wage control, of negotiation, of boards, and the industrial “sermon

¹²⁰⁹ E. Powell, Speech at Chippenham, *We live in an age of conspiracies*, 11th May 1968. Available at: <http://www.enochpowell.net/speeches.html>

¹²¹⁰ Ibid

of threats” – these are constructs that bypass sovereign legitimacy; let them, Powell argues, “be shot into the dustbin”.¹²¹¹

Therefore, this research demonstrates that the influence of Powellism was to run through the New Right. As a newly constructed political force, it could reinterpret Powellism, redefine who was to be the “enemy within” and call for the subsequent confrontation with the trade union movement. I argue that Powellism, paradoxically in the context of this New Right, was reinterpreted as a movement proposing economic and social liberty, through a greater ideological agenda of change. The pursuit of liberty through adherence to sovereignty and an allegiance to historical monarchy and patriotism, was to re-emerge, through a New Right, as a new “peasants revolt”. It was a use of Powellism to justify a new moral code; an anti-corporate agenda that equated the established trade union movement with an attack on liberty and national moral decline.

Powellism, I argue, was to be manipulated. Powellism legitimised the perception of trade union repression and its role as an agent of anti-liberty intolerance. Indeed, Powell had argued that the trade unions’ “binding contracts on behalf of their members” was akin to a “fascist corporate state”. In the context of the collective enforcement of pay bargaining and working conditions, government proposals and

¹²¹¹ Ibid

negotiable terms of “enforceable collective bargaining”¹²¹² were akin to a “private law or code”. This flew in the face of individual freedom, initiatives and liberty; trade unionism, as argued by Powell, could through collective action descend to the bottomless pit of fascism. This was to be a bold and challenging statement – yet it was to serve the New Right in its application of a new economic agenda.¹²¹³

Therefore, the reinterpretation of Powellism and its bold, academic and moral assertions, used correctly, helped deconstruct an existing agenda. It would unlock a legacy – that of Keith Joseph, of *Stepping Stones* and ultimately the implementation of Ridley’s template for industrial sabotage. Powellism in isolation would not acknowledge the blame and sabotage of the trade union movement, the blaming of the trade union member – this he could not countenance. His rhetorical account of the issues of corporatism, collective bargaining, trade unions and socialism, constructed the required narrative for the New Right to expand.

Powell in 1975 would drift away politically. Yet his legacy, I have demonstrated, is paramount to the construction of a new form of conservatism and its attempt to deconstruct the established political and industrial playing field. His maverick tendencies and sacking by Heath, would not allow him to become a part of a radical

¹²¹³ E. Powell, Speech at Chippenham, *We live in an age of conspiracies*, 11th May 1968. Available at: <http://www.enochpowell.net/speeches.html>

new front in British politics, yet Powellism, I demonstrate, is the template for the formulation of a policy that was to be bold; that was to circumvent the established corporate protocols. Through the certainty of idealism Powell and Powellism could be bold; this is his legacy to a New Right seeking inspiration. The emboldened sentiments and rhetoric of Keith Joseph, his mantra of “monetarism is not enough” and *Stepping Stones*’ idiosyncratic challenge to the functioning industrial and political work forces, were inspired to think the unthinkable and to do the unthinkable in a post-war world. Powellism I argue, allows for, not simply policy or administrative efficiency – statecraft – but legitimises the implementation of policy of a grander ideological scheme. He dared to challenge the consensus thinking of the day – he dared to confront the collective and accepted notions of social, political, economic and industrial thought – for this, he was to be marginalised, but the importance of Powell is that he dared. In his defence of what he believed to be right, to be sacrosanct and to be organically and historically true – the relationship between the individual citizen and the homogenous state, he argued that,

If we are not to be powerful and glorious ourselves it is compensation to think we belong to something powerful and glorious.¹²¹⁴

¹²¹⁴ C. Schofield, *Enoch Powell and the making of Postcolonial Britain* (Cambridge University press, 2013), p.138

This “glorious” sovereign state; untouchable and sacrosanct, offering an unbreakable bond between the individual and a higher, greater authority. Through its history and complexities, the state offers inspiration to the individual, aspiring to grandeur, to reject the notion of mediocrity or decline and to pursue a higher social purpose. This innate relationship, fashioned through generations, could not succumb to a doctrine of socialism collectively; it is greater than one political doctrine demanding equality. Powellism looks beyond a government of corporate limitations – it was not the “function of government to plan the size and distribution between industries of the labour force.”¹²¹⁵ This was a prosaic interpretation of the functions of a government with state power; yet also, Powellism would not equate to Thatcherism’s aim – a hegemonic state construct. The function of government and the state was not to reconfigure community, or industry, to challenge or interfere with organic community and hierarchy; there were implications to direct state involvement with reinterpretation of industrial relations as “You can neither intervene, nor withdraw from intervention, by half measures”.¹²¹⁶

Thatcherism was not to adhere to the notion of “half measures” – ultimately it would reconstruct a state and challenge Powellism’s pursuit of natural liberty. Yet in

¹²¹⁵ E. Powell, Speech to Kensington Young Conservatives, 30th November 1970, Kensington Town Hall. Available at: <http://www.enochpowell.net/speeches.html>

¹²¹⁶ E. Powell, Speech to Kensington Young Conservatives, 30th November 1970, Kensington Town Hall. Available at: <http://www.enochpowell.net/speeches.html>

Powell, the New Right saw a champion of dialogue and critique; he was to dare to challenge the role of socialism, the follies of equality and the man-made constructs that would interfere with natural, historic liberty. Powellism was to forge a path for a new challenge, for conflict and questioning, from which a New Right was to emerge – for it to dream its ideological dream.

7.3 The silencing of Cabinet revolt; the end of One Nation “wets”

There is a duality of the challenge that has been explored in this research. At its heart is a revision of two dynamics; firstly, the “enemy within” of the NUM and militant trade unionism, but also a far less obvious enemy much nearer the historic citadel of Conservative Party power – the Establishment. Thatcherism derives not from the playing fields of Eton, but famously from the petit bourgeoisie of the grocer’s daughter from Grantham – denoting self-sufficiency, hard work, thrift, self-determination and opportunism. Margaret Thatcher was an “outsider” – not possessing the traditional background, or indeed gender, to ascribe to the established virtues of the Conservative Party. Yet this was to be a part of her arsenal – the ability to observe what was required for change, to not be constrained by the baggage of established political and theoretical views on what conservatism was and stood for; and ultimately to be able to challenge the regressive and stilted views of

Conservative thought. To challenge the nature of her Cabinet, to combat the lethargy of a class of politician, of men, who acted as a barrier to economic reform, she would take on and defeat this establishment within her party – to defeat the “wets”.

This research has identified this challenge to and change of actor within the Conservative Party. The priority of an ideology was paramount, the implementation of a dogmatism vital in the empowerment of change, but these factors are embedded through the charisma, personality, background and nuance of an individual; the background, the mindset and thought processes. Thatcherism was to reject the individual MP who represented the muddle, fudge and confusion of the established consensus; a rejection of the cosy and fulfilled MP, who was happy with a status quo. Thatcherism in turn would turn to those with a moral backbone to impose that which was necessary, to implement economic reform which did not comply with the accepted wisdom of Keynesian aggregate demand and pursuit of full employment. Thatcherism would reject the compromise of the “wets” and consensual politics, the fudge of One Nation MPs – instead she would turn to those who believed; to the economic and theoretical inspiration of one who saw the danger of the “socialists of the Left and the Right”¹²¹⁷ – F.A. Hayek. He would propose a “conservative socialism”¹²¹⁸ within the ranks of the Conservative Party; the association with an

¹²¹⁷ I. Gilmour & M. Garnett, *Whatever Happened to the Tories – The Conservatives since 1945* (Fourth Estate, 1988), p.20

¹²¹⁸ Ibid

established economic and social apathy at the heart of the establishment – of a link between One Nation politics and the trade union movement.

Hayek dared to state what could not be countenanced within the Shadow Cabinet in June 1978 – the embrace of radicalism and the sweeping away of established Conservative traditions; “I have no way of knowing Mrs. Thatcher’s mind” Hayek argued, but, “it is more important to be placed in a position which she can save Britain from accelerating economic decline than to win the next election”.¹²¹⁹ There was to be a rejection of traditional conservatism, a reinterpretation of what is important to the political party – winning general elections and satisfying the careers of established MPs – and imposing what was economically and morally correct for the nation.

Therefore, Hayek would argue that country would “not be saved by the Tories being elected”.¹²²⁰ The administration would have to adopt economic ideology and reject effective governance; rejecting policy designed to reach out to the voting public through a unified political discourse. There was a greater agenda, and Hayek’s words and reference to “the timid” immerse him within the debates and fault-lines that were tearing the Conservative Party apart. Hayek’s emergence from the confines of an

¹²¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²²⁰ Hayek, F. (1977). Letter to *The Times*, *Trade union immunity under the law*. Margaret Thatcher Foundation Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org>

inter-party cause célèbre is unusual but fitting within the parameters of the radical debate occurring within the Conservative Party itself; just as Hayek would also intervene within the union question, asking of the British people in July 1977,

When will the British public at last learn to understand that there is no salvation for Britain until the special privileges granted to the trade unions by the Trade Disputes Act of 1906 are revoked?¹²²¹

Hayek's influence was obvious as I have demonstrated through this research, in the taking of "... drastic action. Mrs Thatcher must escape from the advice she is being given by Mr Prior and Sir Ian Gilmour"¹²²² and so the politics of established conservative principles were rejected – the individual actors of One Nation politics were rejected. Hayek's words could not have been more prophetic. His demands for the demotion of the centralists Gilmour and Prior were to be carried out with ruthless efficiency; they were, in Hayek's eyes, the stubborn "muddle in the middle"¹²²³ the apologists for progress; the established protocol of social, post-war Keynesian consensus economic thinking would prioritise demand and promote the evil of unemployment that was so predominant in the pre-war years. Controlling inflation

¹²²¹ Hayek, F (1977). Letter to *The Times*, Trade union immunity under the law. Margaret Thatcher Foundation Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org>

¹²²² Hayek, F (1980) Letter to *The Times*, Monetary policy, The Hayek cure; bigger and better bankruptcies. Margaret Thatcher Foundation Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org>

¹²²³ Hayek, F (1982). Letter to *The Times*, After being much too long restrained by the believers in the Muddle of the Middle. Margaret Thatcher Foundation Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org>

was the new mantra; the acceptable notion of a degree of cleansing of an economy through good bankruptcies and an entrepreneurial spirited business class. This was an economic call to arms – thanks to Hayek, Friedman, Keith Joseph, Alan Walters and Patrick Minford, the 364 economists who called for a return to Keynes in 1981 would be ignored, and the established economic and social protocols of the day would be smashed. Economics would now present a means to reinterpret conservatism; for decades a cosy consensus of corporatist trade unionists, economists and Conservative MPs which espoused the needs of the state and the provision of security through a collective environment.

Economic policy would refashion conservatism. Thatcherism would now offer a different form of conservatism; the ideology of opportunity through market and industrial reform would prevail, but there would be a cost. In January 1982 the number of jobless stood at 3,070,621 – the greatest number of unemployed since the 1930s; one in eight people were unemployed. And within the Conservative Party internal division reflected a challenge at the heart and soul of conservatism.

The fault-line that was espoused by Pym of “theorists and pragmatists” was a conflict that was bloodless and to a large extent gutless. The “wets” as they were termed were a representation of an older, gentler form of conservatism; one that was prepared to accept a status quo of corporatism to achieve the holy grails of One Nation stability and continuity. What is apparent is the ruthlessness of the New Right’s coup in

reorganising conservatism's theoretical stance in what *The Times* described in September 1981, to be "her last big effort to build a Cabinet in tune with her economic thinking" the "Prime Minister yesterday dropped three Cabinet ministers, including the hostile Sir Ian Gilmour".¹²²⁴ Jim Prior presented the amiable "Country squire" of conservatism; his relationship was to become the origins of "wets" as it was to be scribbled all over his briefings presented to the PM. Prior, like the "wets" overall was "more a bluffer than a plotter".¹²²⁵ It was a question of how life was to be seen – through which lens? Conservatism in the eyes of the "wets" – of Gilmour, Prior, Pym, even though the staying power and longevity of Peter Walker, was a means to reject the excesses of ideology and dogma, primarily associated with socialism. The New Right's embrace of dogma, at times seemed confusing to an old Tory guard, yet confusion was to turn to consternation as the grip of monetarist doctrine was to change the face of conservatism in its entirety; Patrick Cormack, MP for Staffordshire South West wrote,

Those of us who question the wisdom of the Government's policy were not answered at Blackpool and remain profoundly depressed by the

¹²²⁴ Commentary (1981) *The Times* Three Cabinet ministers sacked, Margaret Thatcher Foundation Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org>

¹²²⁵ J. Aitken, *Margaret Thatcher; Power and Personality* (Bloomsbury, 2013), p.307

obdurate attitude of the hardliners, who seem quite content to contemplate any sacrifice to maintain doctrinal purity, a strange posture for a Tory.¹²²⁶

This was indeed a “strange posture for a Tory”. This research has revealed, in accord with the manufactured attack on the trade union movement of Britain, a designed reconfiguration of the nature of conservatism – leading ultimately to the purging of the “wets” in Cabinet. These men were ministers of consequence and experience, they were fashioned by the post-war consensus and an intrinsic understanding of the nature of what conservatism presented. Yet they were unable, whether it be through weakness, inability or lack of desire, to mount a coherent defence of their Conservative ideals – conservatism, I have demonstrated was contorted and disfigured.

Andrew Gamble argues, that “the success of Thatcherism as statecraft has baffled and dismayed many One Nation Conservatives... Thatcherism never did subordinate statecraft to ideology as its critics complained”.¹²²⁷ This research counters this notion. Statecraft policy allows for the “relaxed and pragmatic defence of tradition which is the true essence of Toryism”¹²²⁸ offering the prudent and historically credible alternative to recent and changing forms of ideology. Conservatism has

¹²²⁶ Commentary, *The Times*, Rumbings of revolt among Tory dissidents, 20th October 1981. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/153142>

¹²²⁷ A. Gamble, *The Free Economy and the Strong State; The Politics of Thatcherism* (Macmillan Education, 1988), p.153

¹²²⁸ B. Evans & A. Taylor, *From Salisbury to Major; Continuity and Change in Conservative Politics* (Manchester University press, 1996), p.220

touched upon variant interpretations over the decades, yet inherently, I argue, the “wets” presented a form of Conservative thought that resonated with and complimented the political and importantly industrial landscape of the post-war world. There are arguments to suggest that conservatism has altered dramatically, has morphed since its 19th Century connotations, yet the conservatism of the “wets” was acknowledged as a form of credible representation of a non-ideological construct – of which had been, by some margins, the dominant form of Parliamentary and democratically electable form of conservatism. This form of pragmatic, One Nation, statecraft politics, complimented industrial Britain and did not seek to reinvent the relationship between trade union and government. In many ways it was unique in its ability to sustain the traditions of a mixed economy, recognition of, but not enslavement to both state and market place and cordial relations with corporate Britain.

In Churchill, Macmillan and latterly Heath this was unique in its nature. This form of conservatism was deemed superfluous by a New Right whose aim was to instigate economic and social reform, to readdress the industrial nature of the UK and by doing so adopted dogma, rejected statecraft and reinvented the Tory Party.

7.4 The Revelation of Industrial Sabotage

Thatcher's "moral crusade" would be fuelled and inspired by the theoretical purity of Powellism; the next stage would be an implementation of economic and industrial policy. This is demonstrated through the industrial radicalism proposed within the seminal *Ridley Report* of 1977 and the exposure of the secret "Hit List" of pit closures of 1984. Through these industrial proposals, I have demonstrated empirical evidence of the ideological template regarding industrial deconstruction; evidence not solely of the theoretical influence of Powell, but a finite process, based on evidence, from theoretical to practical and from academic to physical conflict.

I have evidenced, academically, the existence of an industrial process of deconstruction, one that was denied to the public, Arthur Scargill and the NUM in 1984. I have demonstrated new evidence, categorically eliminating statecraft accountability, of a government industrial strategy that was designed to deny the existence of a pit closure scheme, at a point when the legitimacy of the 1984 strike was being challenged, due to the lack of an official national ballot being cast.

I demonstrate a process, a template, evidenced through primary source material, that was to require a necessary degree of planning and practical application. The revelations of this paper, sourced through MISC 57, demonstrate the existence of a pit closure scheme, that fits the criteria laid down through *The Ridley Report* in 1977.

Ridley's report was to redefine the parameters of industrial relations – it would not simply redesign the practical response to an industrial dispute but change the terms of the debate. The report instigated on paper an ideological mindset that had been bubbling under the surface since 1974; now was a time to formulate a concrete, industrial plan – one designed to confront the trade union movement.

The leaked secret draft to *The Economist* in May 1978, would be designed with one key area of concern; how to deal with the political threat from “the enemies of the next Tory government”.¹²²⁹ This description of “enemies” is of seminal importance. I argue this language, this construction of an enemy, eschewing that of both Powell and Thatcher, redesigns a form of social and industrial contract of the post-war period. It realigns the nature of government, industry and labour relations, and legitimises a new moral code aimed at industrial activity – one that ultimately would lead to the scenes of violence at Orgreave and the deceit of the evidenced “Hit List”. There is no question that successive generations of politicians had grappled with the trade union question. Barbara Castle's proposed white paper *In Place of Strife* attempted to challenge the culture of unofficial strikes and industrial unrest yet was to lead to a “humiliating” defeat, as did Edward Heath's 1971 Industrial Relations Act. By the turn of the 1970s both Labour and Conservative Party had seen attempts

¹²²⁹ Economic Reconstruction Group (1977). Report Final of the Nationalised Industries Policy Group. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

to curb the excesses of trade union agitation and introduce legal constraints end in failure; the response of the 1974 Labour Government was to look to conciliation and dialogue – the development of the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS). Though ultimately the “Winter of Discontent” was to discontinue Wilson’s Social Contract once and for all, there had been set an historical precedent of a relations formed with trade unions through dialogue – of attempts to broker agreement and wage negotiation.

The adoption of Ridley’s plan ripped apart this agenda; there was now a need to “provoke a battle in a non-vulnerable industry.”¹²³⁰ Negotiation with trade union leadership would become an historic footnote; there would be no more negotiation – no more reticence from government or conciliation; no more concessions or dialogue – only the need for a “chosen battle ground”. In ideological terms the worm had turned sharply in favour of an acceptance of conflict and confrontation. Indeed, Ridley’s report actively reflects a determination to pursue a solution to the trade union impasse of the 1970s through violence – this led directly to Orgreave in 1984. The progression to a “battle” led inextricably to the miners – the historical narrative lies cannily within the confines of Ridley’s blueprint for this combat – the targeting

¹²³⁰ Economic Reconstruction Group (1977). Report Final of the Nationalised Industries Policy Group. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

of a specific industrial representative, the imposition of policy in vulnerable and bloated industries, the planning and preparation for a conclusive confrontation with a dominant industrial player and military policing techniques to ensure victory on the ground.

The selected period between 1974 and 1984 reveals the processing of Ridley's ideological brief. The primary research demonstrating a manipulation of coke stock and levels of "allowable imports", the fallacy of a non-energy policy and the rejection of policy and scrutiny, to prepare for conflict, is revealed in full. The dialogue between Lawson and Brittan highlights an imposition of deceit to Cabinet, Parliament and the public that reveals an alarming precedent that post-Orgreave is still being negotiated today. There has been an historic tacit acknowledgement of the stockpiling of reserves, and this research demonstrates the full the existence and acceptance of this within the higher echelons of the New Right hierarchy in government. Again, it reflects an administration not content to observe the basic principles of sound government and energy policy designed to produce coherent and effective policy – to deliver energy policy of note to the UK population. This is a staggering observation – the rejection of statecraft policy – the administration of a nation's energy and industrial needs to implement ideology. And this was to precede an ever-greater incendiary deceit – the existence of a pit closure "Hit List".

This research demonstrates categorically an existence of the “Hit List” of UK coal plants. The production and importation of additional coal and coke supplies, the preceding deindustrialisation of BSC and the transfer of Ian MacGregor to the NCB all pre-empted the eventual targeting of the UK coal industry, the NUM and the closure of the coal industry as a viable, working industry. Secret cabinet papers I have revealed demonstrate the existence of this list, known by just seven people, whose effect was clear – that the National Coal Board’s pit closure programme, had, as evidenced, “Gone better this year than planned”.¹²³¹ The public statements of MacGregor and Thatcher was that there were only 20 target pit closures – in reality, as revealed was a proposed 75 over three years, with a loss of up to 64,000 jobs. This was to fit criteria – a precedent set by the deconstruction of BSC – where the proclamations of MacGregor and Thatcher’s inner cabal, without debate in the House of Commons and without Cabinet’s full consent, would instigate wholesale industrial sabotage of a prime UK raw material.

The “Hit List” of which Scargill protested and yet was much maligned – it existed, and this primary research details this existence. From a Conservative Party of industrial conciliation to a Conservative Party that would engineer a grand scheme of denationalisation, firstly through the concessional trade unions at BSC and then

¹²³¹ PREM 19/1329 Report by the Official Group on Coal (MISC57) Secret CMO; Record of A Meeting Held at No.10 Downing Street 15th September. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

their scalp – the NUM and a pit closure scheme. So sensitive an issue that Cabinet collective responsibility was jettisoned in favour of miscellaneous and unaccountable sub-committees of strategists, the plan was to deconstruct the coal fields of the UK; to redefine whole regions geographically, socially, politically and morally – to, as Ridley required, deconstruct. The pit closure scheme, so vehemently denied, and never officially recognised, I have evidenced through this research, is of vital significance to the history of the NUM and the now defunct coal fields of the UK.

And what does *The Ridley Report* reflect of the Conservative Party? It reveals the decimation of a form of communal conservatism – the rejection of a middle ground, the seizure of a political party and reorganisation through dogma. It demonstrates a changing of identity – a metamorphosis of culture and personnel which was to transform the party. Through primary evidence I have demonstrated this ideological journey, encompassing a rejection of policy and the planning for the energy needs of a nation, to that of the creation of a timeline towards industrial confrontation – ultimately a “Hit List” of which this research categorically demonstrates the existence of. Regarding this research this is highly significant; the proven “Hit List” reveals not just the lengths to which a New Right were prepared to go to instigate industrial conflict but how far the Conservative Party had travelled – how far it had removed itself from the realities of statecraft and embraced the now all-

encompassing dogma of its moral and economic agenda. The revelation of secret meetings and covert planning to implement the violence required by Ridley's plan challenged the reality of what conservatism is and what the Conservative Party now stood for. This certainly was the case for the few remaining who were loyal to the remnants of One Nation conservatism – the “wets”.

7.5 The 1984 Miners' Strike

The 1984 miners' strike represents a conclusion to an implementation of a new form of relationship between the state and industrial relations. I have evidenced this process; the construct of an ideological vision – a moral crusade – a reinvigoration of the ideals of conservatism and the Conservative Party, a template for industrial reform, its implementation and ultimately the finality of confrontation – the 1984 miners' strike and most evidently “The Battle of Orgreave”. The conflict fits perfectly the narrative that this research has revealed; it presents the final piece of a jigsaw that would reveal a new social, economic and industrial dynamic within the UK. It is, I demonstrate, the fulfilment of New Right ideological strategy to replace statecraft.

This is proven though primary source material revealing the existence of MISC 57. Willie Whitelaw's secret internal letter to Margaret Thatcher dated July 1981, is

entitled *Withstanding a Coal Strike* – it dictates that the pause in preparation for a dispute would enhance “endurance potential” to be able to “study longer term aspects of the coal problem” including the “use for troops for moving stock”.¹²³² The evidence in MISC 57, starts as demonstrated, as early as 1981; it reveals the concerted effort to maintain an edifice of calm – of a pursuit of a “peaceful settlement” – until stocks were secured and preparation for conflict was complete. The “shadowy Whitehall committee”¹²³³ that would sit in “extreme secrecy”¹²³⁴ from February 1981, formulated meticulous long-term plans; this included the use of servicemen “in reserve until a strike started but a willingness to use for movement of ancillaries”¹²³⁵ and the accumulation of a necessary “22 m.t. without provocation” of coke reserves. This demonstrates a clear rejection of Collective Cabinet responsibility, the end to corporate dialogue, the rejection of conciliatory dialogue – a symbolic end to One Nation conservatism and consensus politics.

Confrontation was inevitable – and desired. The primary evidence I have demonstrated confirms the inevitability of the confrontation; the accumulation of coke stock, the pursuit of a “peaceful” settlement in 1981 against the backdrop of

¹²³² PREM19/541 MISC 57 W. Whitelaw (1981). Internal Secret Memo; Willie Whitelaw to Margaret Thatcher - *Withstanding a Coal Strike*. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

¹²³³ Marsden, S (2013). *Thatcher made secret plans to bring in the military during the miners' strike*. *The Telegraph*. Available at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/margaret-thatcher/10213447/Thatcher-made-secret-plans-to-bring-in-the-military-during-the-miners-strike.html>

¹²³⁴ J. Campbell, *The Iron Lady* (Vintage Books, 2008), p.355

¹²³⁵ PREM19/541 MISC 57 (1981) *report on MISC 57 meeting regarding planning for possible miners' strike*. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

mounting preparation for the assault on the NUM and the “slanted treatment of the use of servicemen”¹²³⁶ during a UK industrial dispute. Indeed, the evidence of planning for confrontation counters the ideological line of a “non-energy policy” as advocated by Lawson – planning by a neoliberal, of an economist who would view planning as an anathema. Yet the paradox is clear; government energy planning did not fit with the orthodoxy of economic purity – it had connotations of socialism and collective identity; as Hugo Young argued, Thatcher “was not by heart a strategist”.¹²³⁷ Yet this research demonstrates the long-term planning that was to fuel the conflict; this counters the light touch laissez-faire approach espoused by Lawson, Britten, Joseph and Howe; yet for the preparation for countering an industrial dispute,

This increases the importance of building up stocks, and thereby endurance potential, for the future.¹²³⁸

This was pencilled in as early as July 1981 – some four years prior to Orgreave. This does not fit with the economic model of non-state interference and planning; it counters any formal Conservative Party economic policy of this period that was driven by a reticence for government intervention and of course Thatcherism’s

¹²³⁶ Ibid

¹²³⁷ H. Young, *One of Us* (Macmillan, London), p.365

¹²³⁸ PREM19/541 MISC 57 W. Whitelaw (1981). Internal Secret Memo; Willie Whitelaw to Margaret Thatcher - *Withstanding a Coal Strike*. The National Archives of the UK (TNA)

realignment of socialism's culture of planning. Thatcherism would not advocate a planned economy, nationalised industries or long-term industrial strategy; that was a byword for the failure of 1974, the regression and U-turn of Heath and the obsession with planning and corporate culture. The entrepreneurial energy and immediacy of the individual, the small business and service culture, would reject the need for state planning; albeit allowing for the preparation for industrial conflict.

This contradiction is important. I have evidenced through primary source material the rejection by Lawson of energy planning; the dialogue and debate with Leon Brittan as to the ideological conflict of interest of state intervention when importing coal stock and the deconstruction of BSC as a viable long-term industry. This was an administration that did not trust energy or industrial planning, and was intrinsically opposed to the ideals of a planned economy; yet the miners' strike was planned in detail; MISC 57 documentation – the “group on coal”¹²³⁹ reveals the extent of this planning for “endurance potential”¹²⁴⁰ in the face of industrial conflict with the NUM – from 21 million tonnes of coke reserve in 1981 to 57 million tonnes in 1984 – there was mass planning on an industrial state scale, the likes that had rarely been witnessed before in peacetime Britain.

¹²³⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁴⁰ Ibid.

Therefore, the reasoning behind planning for conflict does not sit easily with the economic and energy strategy of laissez-faire – it contradicts the notions of government policy to serve the nation’s energy and industrial requirements. The secrecy of MISC 57, the lack of accountability and public scrutiny I have evidenced; demonstrates the grander narrative beyond that of good governance, Parliamentary accountability and public scrutiny; the NUM and Arthur Scargill were not terror organisations, yet they were to be challenged in secrecy and defeat was planned within a shroud of covert meetings. It is beyond statecraft – it is the final construct of *The Ridley Report* and it was to be played out against a backdrop of an attack on a recognised industrial representative body – the NUM.

The memories of the longest serving and successful political party are far reaching. The Conservative Party – certainly in the form of the New Right – remembered Saltley Gate and they remembered the fall of Edward Heath. Arthur Scargill had signed up with the National Union of Mineworkers as a lad of 19 in 1957 and had risen through the ranks to play a prominent role in the “Battle of Saltley Gate” when fifteen thousand Birmingham engineers walked out to support flying pickets of the NUM. This one event was to prove the catalyst for another battle, some ten years later at Orgreave. Here Scargill was to be arrested and condemned, seen as a fantasist in his claims of a “hit list” of pit closures and vilified, and ultimately to lose the conflict in 1984 and to slide into inconsequence and ignominy.

Scargill and the NUM were the required devils required for the New Right's narrative. They were to lead the "mob" at Orgreave and to attempt to replicate Saltley Gate's challenge to the establishment; this was not to happen, and yet for a New Right destined to succeed through the oxygen of confrontation, Scargill and the NUM, the combative militant loner and the largest trade union organisation in Western Europe, were the perfect symbol of an "enemy within". As evidenced, *The Ridley Report* states;

We should fragment the industries as far as possible.

It will be very much easier to attempt a permanent form of denationalisation after we have achieved a certain degree of fragmentation.

Next there are some industries that should be broken down¹²⁴¹

I have demonstrated the implementation of Ridley's ideologically driven plan for industrial deconstruction. Orgreave was to become a metaphor for industrial unrest and division; it presents a defining image of deconstruction – of an industry, a trade union, a way of life and community. It was to be a last stand for the British industrial

¹²⁴¹ Economic Reconstruction Group (1977). Report Final of the Nationalised Industries Policy Group. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document>

classes to retain a form of communal industrial heritage – the maintaining of community. And in certainly less graphic and violent terms, it was, I have evidenced, the end of a form of conservatism – of One Nation politics, as in its graphic disposition it revealed fragmentation and division, of police on horseback driving against striking miners, of police being attacked with bricks, bottles and rocks – of a necessary anarchy that was to ascribe itself to the NUM, the mining industry and to Arthur Scargill. This would never fit with the conservatism of Macmillan, Heath or indeed the “wets”.

The year-long conflict defied any sense of national logic or pursuit of harmony – of national equilibrium. It was to reject conservatism, the Conservative Party and any notion of statecraft politics. It was planned and ruthlessly executed; it was in its perversity successful – yet it was a victory that came with so many caveats – the beginning of the end of the mining industry, the excessive billions of taxpayers’ money and ultimately the end of One Nation conservatism. Peter Walker, Thatcher’s sole “wet” and political survivor, was to maintain a stoic ignorance of the destruction of the coal fields; yet as the last of the “wets” – his consensual ambiguity seen as a neutral instrument by Thatcher – he was to be the last of a generation. The miners’ strike and certainly Orgreave graphically implemented the fragmentation of Ridley’s plan – the recognition of a necessary target and the culmination of this process. It is this process that I have presented and examined through primary sources; the

rejection of statecraft industrial and energy policy which reflected a Conservative Party at ease with the notion of an industrial class – to be replaced by the ideology of a New Right; of an imposition through conflict and fragmentation of a dogma, driven through an economic crusade against an industrial and political class.

7.6 Conclusions

The 1984 miners' strike and the rejection of Conservative statecraft are, this research demonstrates, symbiotic in their nature. The structure of this thesis builds on evidence of a premeditated agenda aimed at destabilising established political and corporate structures – of which the NUM and the Conservative Party were a part. The research reveals a duality in the implementation of New Right ideology; to enforce an agenda of anti-inflationary and fiscal monetary policy, whilst propagating economic and individual freedoms; and so established pillars of British politics had to be removed. Both the Conservative Party and the trade union movement constituted parts of this failing post-war agenda. Consecutive post-war Conservative administrations had failed to solve the “trade union problem” and through statecraft policy of negotiation and conciliation, had actively failed in curing the “British disease”. Therefore, I demonstrate, the Conservative Party was complicit in the failure to confront head on the trade union question and end decline. To ensure the

successful implementation of New Right policy, the existing established status quo would have to be reconstructed. The structure of the Conservative Party, its adherence to consensus and pragmatic deference to statecraft theory could not be tolerated.

The recognised corporate political establishment would be challenged and marginalised. This research demonstrates – through primary evidence – the planning for this change in political and industrial culture. The manipulation of UK national energy policy, the internal coup against One Nation “wets”, the covert, long-term preparation for industrial conflict with the NUM, the deconstruction of BSC, the deceiving of the UK public regarding a “Hit list” during the 1984 conflict and ultimately the manipulation of police and government established protocol at Orgreave – all demonstrate a consistent theme of an administration that was prepared to forego the accepted protocol of industrial, energy strategy and political orthodoxy. This represents a rejection of statecraft – of statecraft policy which priorities national and party unity to be replaced by an ideological and dogmatic agenda for national reconfiguration.

This is evidenced by “The Battle of Orgreave”. The confrontation at Orgreave symbolised a cathartic moment for the New Right – its moment of destiny; an ugly and brutal dénouement of an industrial dogma that was conceived in 1977. Orgreave

physically demonstrates an implementation of *The Ridley Report*; the chosen battlefield, planning and preparation for conflict and a systematic implementation of force. It evidences the template of which the New Right had formulated – against both the trade union movement and internal dissention. Its symbolism, one that was to bring Harold Macmillan to tears, demonstrated a visceral violence against miners, and an end to the intellectual and philosophical battle that had been waging within the Conservative Cabinet. It is, as demonstrated, an endpoint on a road map of change, of whose germination was in 1974 and which was to ultimately end on the fields of Yorkshire.

And both these events, the purging of both internal and external challenges, were predetermined by the New Right. Both the Conservative Party and the NUM were part and parcel of corporate, consensus post-war Britain. In their diversity, the classes they represented, the socio-economic backgrounds of the actors who led them, they were disparate. But more importantly they were also integral targets – in many ways connected by a common desire for a form of politics that the New Right despised – a continuation of a status quo and communal and cultural solidity. Both these political and corporate demographics understood these attributes; therefore, both would be targeted. One Nation conservatism has been marginalised as has the mining industry. The miners' strike and the confrontation with the NUM, was an

obvious assault on the trade union movement, yet in order, I demonstrate, to achieve this goal, the nature of both the political party and One Nation conservatism as a force in British politics was to be reconstructed.

Therefore, this research has contributed in key areas towards the literature of UK Conservative Party and trade union relations. Firstly, it has demonstrated that during an historical timeline between 1974 and 1984 the design and development of a conservatism was to reject statecraft and embrace an ideologically driven agenda. This is demonstrated using primary source material evidencing this construct and revealing a dedicated template to succeed in conflicts with the trade union movement. I have also evidenced the manufacture of this conflict without the knowledge of the full Cabinet, and to the detriment and undermining of One Nation Conservative “wets” in government.

Secondly, the use of this primary evidence from miscellaneous cabinet source material clarifies the existence of a concerted effort to plan and undertake a conflict with the NUM from as early as 1981. The use of primary sources taken from secret cabinet records – MISC 57 – demonstrate conclusively the existence of a “hit list” of pit closures. Denied by the government yet categorically championed by Arthur Scargill, this paper can and does verify the existence of this “hit list” drawn up by the government and Ian MacGregor through secret talks with select cabinet officials

through MISC 57. Finally, I have detailed direct government influence on the policing of the miners' strike; police activity at Orgreave, irrespective of local and national police protocol, did receive direct communication from individual members of Cabinet to defeat the NUM and to end the 1984 miners' strike.

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