

AMICUS EC ELECTIONS 2003 - ENERGY

Vote for a campaigning executive in touch with and accountable to the members

According to OFGEM regulation has been a resounding success. The proof they say is the creation of a competitive market in the entire energy industry. Competition means winners and losers with city speculators winning and consumers and workers in the industry losing. Each of the previous regulatory reviews has led to job losses and further contractisation/casualisation of the workforce. Workers in distribution are facing another review announcement next year. Regulation and competition have created a situation where power cuts have happened, in London last summer, and over large parts of the southern half of Britain last October after the wind blew. This was not due to too much investment in the network and infrastructure!

According to the Guardian, British energy despite its difficulties is likely to pay city spivs' £100 million in advisor fees as it attempts to solve its problems. The former Midlands electricity board, currently up for sale, has had nearly every other company in the industry run a slide rule over it to see if "costs" can be squeezed out. Privatisation/Regulation has also led to the failure of companies such as TXU Europe and created a situation in generation where power cuts are being talked about as a serious prospect this winter. Some success!

The response from our Union has been the concept of partnership. This is the idea that if we assist the company in achieving maximum profits then their gratitude will ensure that our members jobs are safe. Partnership allowed the introduction of all kinds of schemes gimmicks and fads designed to squeeze every last drop of productivity out of us and in my opinion little else. The partnership argument was also used to lower expectations of what the election of a Labour Government could achieve. 'Better to use our influence with the Government and co-operate with, rather than, confront the employer' ran the argument. This approach has failed miserably, Since privatisation jobs have shrunk from 114,219 in 1990 to 71,000 in 2001. This reduction went largely unnoticed with no campaign of opposition organised by the union. In some instances the union supported schemes such as "conversion franchising". This is in effect a scheme that allows companies to make workers redundant. Those workers then use their redundancy money to buy their jobs back. The end product is the smashing of organised Trade Unionism with collective agreements terms and conditions etc and the creation of many small businesses all competing against each other for work. A Tory dream.

The partnership approach, however, has not prevented disputes and in the example of Scottish Power, power systems, led to strike action in 2001. In that dispute partnership proved to be a very poor defence against attacks on our terms and conditions. I am opposed to that approach and believe that we have the industrial strength and ability to stand up to the attacks on us from both the employer and the regulator.

It is now six long years since we elected a Labour government. The massive optimism and expectation that things could only get better have been betrayed. As a Socialist I believe that the union exists to represent the members, to defend our current terms and conditions and to improve them. The union should also have ambition on behalf of its membership and should argue and campaign for a better society. What is wrong with calling for full employment on decent wages? The right to a decent affordable home. A health service free and readily accessible to everyone. The right for trade unions to take strike action when needed, free from the interference of the courts. For the ending of the free market anarchy currently ruining our industry. In my opinion the privatisation experiment has failed and should be ended. We need an energy plan that looks to the future needs of the country and not the short-term need for profit that cares nothing for the wider needs of society. I am a supporter of the calls to reclaim the labour party for the Labour movement. Criticism of the Government does not mean we want the Tories back.



MIKE GASKELL

WE SHOULD CAMPAIGN AS A UNION FOR

- **An energy plan in order to end the free market anarchy that is ruining our industry**
- **Common standards of pay, hours of work, pension provision, holidays these should be not less than the best already achieved**
- **A thirty five hour week**
- **A massive influx of trainees (apprentices, trainee engineers, clerical and admin) to end the culture of casualisation**
- **Retirement at fifty**
- **The election of full time officials**
- **An executive accountable and answerable to the members that elected them**

I have continuous membership of this union since joining the EETPU as a sixteen-year-old apprentice electrician in 1979. I have worked in the energy industry since joining Manweb in 1986; I am employed as a distribution electrical fitter for what is now Scottish Power and have been a shop steward since 1988. I have represented the membership on all of the company consultative and negotiating committees was instrumental in forging links with our Scottish shop stewards and was a member of the strike committee that ran the dispute 2001.

I am a member of the Labour party and served as a Labour Councillor on Wirral Metropolitan Borough council from 1990 to 1994.

I have attended Energy industrial conference as a delegate for a number of years and have managed to get to national conference on two occasions. I was also a member of the National Industrial Committee 1996-2000.

I am married to a part time worker and have three boys aged Six Ten and Twelve.

I aim to be accessible and accountable to the membership unlike the current energy executive councillors who have managed to remain anonymous for the five years they have held their seats. The only campaign that they appear to have taken up was the one to save Sir Ken Jackson's job after the members had voted to boot him out. I aim to visit as many Shop Stewards committees and workplaces in order to talk to and, more importantly, listen to the members. It is worth pointing out that, if elected, I will remain a fitter working in the industry.

Amicus unity gazette

For a democratic union controlled by the members

We are standing for election as part of a group of candidates committed to returning the union to its members. We are supported by Amicus Unity Gazette, the grouping that was central to Derek Simpson's election campaign, bringing together activists from both AEEU and MSF.

For more information, see www.amicusunitygazette.com or write to
Bill Young, 22 Swale Road, Rochester, Kent ME2 2TT.
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