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Extract from a speech by the Rt. Hon. Sir Keith Joseph Bt. M.P. (Leeds NE), the Opposition Spokesman on Industry, to the Chelmsford Constituency Conservative Association at the House of Commons on Monday 20th June 1977

I make no apology for returning to the Brunwick siege, for Grunwick could be all our tomorrows. We do not choose our battlegrounds.

I want to discuss the role of Albert Booth, Secretary of State for Employment. He summoned to him the MD of Grunwick and the Union Leaders. The Managing Director declined to attend. He is not only well within his rights in doing so, but well advised to clarify the position before agreeing to the meeting.

For the Minister, unfortunately, is not a conciliator but a party to the dispute. It is Mr. Booth and his mentors who have encouraged the unions to use all means, legal and illegal, fair and foul, very foul, to coerce workers, citizens of this country, into joining organisations they do not wish to join. The Minister should represent the rule of law, not one side or the other but he should set a framework within which disputes can be resolved peacefully. Unfortunately we cannot rely on Mr. Booth to do this.

Neither Mr. Roy Grantham, nor Mr. Booth, nor the TUC nor the Government are guiltless of the violence, illegality, disgraceful behaviour of the rent-a-mob flying pickets mobilised by the revolutionary parties. Not only have they not denounced it. They have done everything to outlaw the right not to join a union - though this is in fact a vital safeguard for democratic union control - and the right not to strike and to stand up against strikes.

/Mr. Grantham

Mr. Grantham was silent as he saw his union functions taken over day by day by the apostles of mob violence as the road to totalitarian revolution. He knew what was happening as well as we all did, better in fact, but he chose silence and acquiescence. The Minister was silent. His government was a very busy denouncing all sorts of things the world over: Rhodesian raids, or alleged raids into Mozambique; Amin's murders; a scottish football team's visit to Chile; New Zealand's sporting links with South Africa. But blatant terrorism and illegality in the name of trade unionism right under their noses not half an hour's drive from the Palace of Westminster went unnoticed.

I am not a party to the dispute. The details are not my business; the conditions under which they are dealt with are all our businesses. This is what should be our concern. This is what conciliation means.

I should suggest that as pre-condition for Mr. Booth presiding over talks between the Managing Director of besieged Grunwick and anyone else at all, Mr. Booth should make his position clear. Will he condemn the violence by pickets, redolent of the Shrewsbury two? Will he make it clear that it not only defies the law but defiles the true ideals of trade-unionism which are now part of the warp and weft of our history?

Will he recognise that the right not to join a union, a particular union, is an essential corollary to the right to join a union of one's choice, and not necessarily the TUC's choice? Will he make a precondition for the meeting withdrawal of the flying pickets, the professional revolutionaries, and "workers" who have never worked?

Or is he merely an adjunct to the machinery of union coercion as his predecessor Michael Foot was. END