



cc: Mr. Redwood

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

5 April 1984

Dear David

Balance of Power within Trade Unions

During the course of discussion on the coal industry dispute, the Prime Minister remarked on the fact that militants in the NUM and transport unions seemed to be able to exert power over the membership disproportionate to their numbers. This was despite the fact that the Government has been seeking to reduce the power of militants and increase the influence of moderates.

She asked your Secretary of State to prepare a paper on what was being done to alter the balance of power within unions. Could you therefore set in hand the preparation of a paper which would cover what action Government has already taken, what developments, e.g. on the closed shop, are already in train, what further action is in hand, e.g. in the Bill before Parliament, and what further action might be sought. She will, of course, want the paper to cover the issue of whether making union leadership accountable to the membership is best achieved by postal or work-place ballots. Finally, the paper might cover the underlying factors affecting union membership such as the decline of traditional industry and the increase in the proportion of women in the labour force.

BF // Could this paper be available shortly after Easter? I expect the Prime Minister will then want to discuss it with your Secretary of State.

Your sincerely
Andrew Turnbull

Andrew Turnbull

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Department of Employment