



THE ECONOMIC LEAGUE

Limited by Guarantee

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TO ALL LEAGUE SUBSCRIBERS

Dear Member,

Last month Radio Moscow broadcast an item about the Economic League. In spite of Glasnost, it was a fairly obvious propaganda attack upon us, but arguably no more biased or unfair than one or two other recent programmes about us by our own domestic media.

The League will, of course, always be attacked by those on the extreme Left and their sympathisers just as it is by those on the extreme Right. We have never considered it worthwhile to reply individually to such attacks since we are sure that most people and, certainly, most companies, can see these attacks for what they are. It is, however, perhaps useful from time to time to put on public record what the League does do for British industry and how it goes about it. Accordingly, the following is a brief account of our work, which you may wish to use in responding to any enquiries which you may receive.

"Understanding Not Strife"

The League has existed for 70 years precisely to counter the highly damaging view that is sadly still being actively advanced that industry must always consist of two opposing "sides". The League was one of the first organisations to promote the idea that every company should in fact be a united team with a single common purpose where class antagonisms and "them and us" attitudes have no place.

At least as damaging as the deliberate promotion of politically motivated divisions within industry are those divisions which arise from simple ignorance or genuine misunderstanding.

The League was founded on the principle that the best antidote to both these sources of division is wider and better understanding of basic economics and the facts of industrial and commercial life. The League seeks to achieve this understanding through its own publications and courses and through its contacts with member companies, other industrial organisations and the media.

The League also sets out directly to counter the activities of extreme revolutionary groups of both the far Left and the far Right, particularly as they affect industry.

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Founded in 1919

These groups know that they do not enjoy any real measure of support among any significant section of the population. Accordingly, they attempt to achieve their objectives by non-democratic, often covert means.

a) Entryism

One of their better known techniques is that of "entryism" - that is secretly putting their supporters into legitimate democratic organisations either to undermine them from within or to influence their policies. The League has consistently frustrated efforts to infiltrate, for example, the trade unions and genuine campaign groups by publishing the facts and drawing public attention to them.

b) Front Organisations

Another of their techniques is the creation of innocent sounding front organisations who pursue political campaigns without revealing their true background. The League regularly answers queries from firms who have been approached by organisations or individuals often for help with "research". Many of these are entirely bona fide but some are not.

c) Support Groups

Anarchist and far Left groups are often active in the "support groups" that spring up during major disputes. The League is often able to identify the true background of such groups. When the genuine employees are made aware of the real character of these "supporters" they are usually quick to distance themselves from them.

d) Company Infiltration

Finally, the extremist groups seek to put their members into key positions in companies either to steal information from them for a variety of purposes, or to create discord or physical damage within them. There is no shortage of evidence in the form of training manuals for the activists and well documented case histories to substantiate this.

The League believes that companies in common with political parties, campaign groups and charities have a right to identify these people and to protect themselves against their activities. Indeed, the League would suggest that companies have a duty at least as much to fellow staff as to shareholders to do so.

Accordingly, League members can, as just one part of the comprehensive evaluation which all companies should make of potential recruits, check to see if they are known to the League as active members or supporters of one of the revolutionary groups of the far Right or far Left.

The League gives straight factual answers to such questions. The League does not itself advise for or against employing anyone. It is always for the company to decide whether or not any information supplied to them is relevant to the job they have on offer or not. The League is happy for companies to put any information supplied to prospective employees to give them a chance to deny or explain it.

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Equally, any individual who believes that he or she may appear in the League's records is free to check with us and will be told precisely what information, if any, is held. Accordingly, although the Data Protection Act does not apply to us because our records are currently not on computer, we are already on an ex-gratia basis freely giving individuals the rights they would enjoy if it did. The people in charge of this work have training and experience in the collection and evaluation of such data and the League is satisfied that the service operates on a fair and professional basis.

Advisory Services

a) Lobbying

A further League service derives from the fact that as Governments have become more and more involved in industrial affairs companies, either on their own or on an industry basis, find an increasing need to lobby for or against some policy or specific item of legislation.

While the League would not itself take part in any such individual campaign it can often give very valuable advice to members on which parties, groups or individuals are likely to be helpful or hostile.

b) Cuttings Service

Most companies also subscribe to commercial cuttings services for mentions of the company name or particular issues affecting them. These services operate efficiently so far as the mainstream media are concerned, but usually ignore the fringe political papers and one-off leaflets and magazines.

Any mention of any member company in any of the papers read by the League is immediately referred to them. It can sometimes happen that articles containing allegations about a company or its senior managers are widely circulating within the company before management even gets to hear of it. Often the original source is not quoted. Swift and accurate notification to management by the League can allow such allegations to be scotched before damage is done.

c) Industrial Relations

Most major companies do, of course, have substantial professionally staffed personnel departments to handle industrial relations issues. Many firms are also members of the appropriate trade associations who are often able to give additional industrial relations advice. There are firms, however, who do not have such resources available to them and, in these cases, the League is able to help with advice on legislative and general industrial relations issues.

d) Training Courses

From time to time the League organises training courses and seminars. These cover a range of topics within the general objective of promoting the success of British Industry.

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What The League Is Not

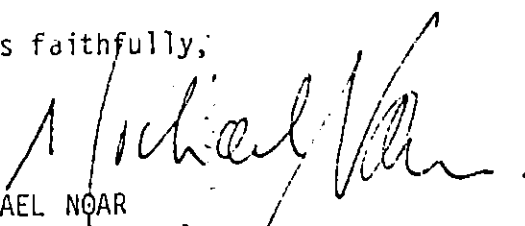
The extremist groups and parties who make regular efforts to discredit the League, often describe us as "Right-Wing" or "Anti-Union". We are neither of these things.

The League supports the whole of the democratic centre of British politics. In fact the Articles of Association prevent us from taking sides in party politics. The League believes that unions can have a key role to play in securing good industrial relations and over many years has worked to achieve that. Senior Trades Union leaders have participated in League functions at both Regional and National level.

The fact that some sections of the media have seen fit to launch attacks on the League indicates the concern experienced in militant circles at the effectiveness of the League in combating their activity aimed at undermining industry and the economy.

Recent industrial legislation has provided a more equitable balance between management and Unions to the benefit of both. However extremist organisations will be awaiting a more favourable climate for industrial action and any opportunity to foment trouble. The League is prepared for this threat, and with the continued support of its members and by the efforts of its staff will ensure that any future threat to the economy is frustrated.

Yours faithfully,


MICHAEL NOAR
Director General.