



l'alliance

Alliance confédérale des syndicats libres

Mise au
Point

The Union Syndicale and the Reform:

1522 days to negotiate the Reform

4 elections to lose the majority

2 leaflets to deny everything

1 liar...

By way of responding to US flyers, and putting a stop to further provocation coming from direction, the Alliance has carried out a survey and discovered who the real liars actually are. In the event, it turned out to be a story about US-Jekyll who lied to US-Hyde, and *vice versa*. In this flyer, the ALLIANCE turns the spotlight on the Reform. The US will not succeed in diverting the ALLIANCE

from its true mission – that of keeping calm, confirming its commitment to TRADE UNION UNITY, and working TOGETHER to limit the damage caused by the Reform, and in the INTERESTS OF STAFF. Instead of stirring up controversy, the ALLIANCE has offered US-SFE a SOCIAL PACT designed to defend staff and re-establish a strong, independent European civil service.

After losing the elections in **Brussels** in 2002, in **Luxembourg** in 2004, and in **Seville/Ispra** and **Karlsruhe** in 2005, and after losing the concertation majority and a majority on the Central Staff Committee, Union Syndicale is now beginning to lose its grip as well, and has launched an all-out attack on the ALLIANCE, DG ADMIN, DG RELEX, Mr Kallas, the new Commission, and anyone else within range – each having a share of responsibility for the no-longer-disputed failure of the Kinnock Reform.

In response to these disasters, the US now seeks to deny paternity of its Reform – the very Reform it used to show off about so proudly. The US is trying to blame the ALLIANCE. And in responding to these provocations, the ALLIANCE “has no wish to fire on the ambulance”, or to enter into sterile controversy: staff deserve to know the

truth.

The sorcerers’ apprentices have been playing with fire. They have got their fingers burned, and are now trying to “shoot the firefighters” and blame them for their burns. Given this ingratitude and provocation, the ALLIANCE urges staff not to hold such slipshod thinking against the US, and to try and understand (insofar as it is possible) how hard it is for a trade union like the proud US to bid farewell to all its majorities and its former power.

The ALLIANCE hopes that the US will still be able to emerge from this profound crisis as quickly as possible, as social dialogue needs to find a new critical minority in the US – one that is reliable and capable of putting forward credible proposals.



The problems facing staff are too serious for energy and resources to carry on being wasted on sterile inter-union squabbles. The ALLIANCE will also restrict itself to providing purely factual information,

and will throw all its energy into trying to limit the damage of this appalling Reform. The ALLIANCE urges the US to do the same in the framework of the SOCIAL PACT.

I. THE KINNOCK REFORM – US-JEKYLL LIES TO US-HYDE

LESS THAN A YEAR after publishing a triumphalist flyer on the *“Balanced and credible Reform negotiated in 1522 days”* on 1 May 2004, the US is now churning out flyers in all directions. While waiting for the flyer called *“You’ve been lied to – No 1532”* (when you have lied to staff about the limitations of the Reform, the least you can do is produce a flyer for each day of negotiations...), staff get the feeling they are watching a poor theatrical adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson’s *“The Kinnock Reform – US-Jekyll and US-Hyde”*. Staff are invited to guess which part of the US tells the truth:

US-Jekyll tells us the truth

US-Jekyll tells us that the ALLIANCE *“has negotiated nothing and continues to be opposed to the Staff Regulations”* (see US flyer of 10 March 2005).

US-Jekyll claims paternity of its *“credible and balanced”* Reform that was *“negotiated solely”* with Lord Kinnock for 1522 days, and has no wish to share the merits with anyone, least of all with the ALLIANCE, *“which has negotiated nothing and continues to be opposed to the Staff Regulations”*.

US-Jekyll assures us that *“the new Staff Regulations are undeniably globally positive”*, and that they contain all the guarantees (e.g. promotion rates, salary growth, faster careers, a maximum salary cut of 11% for contract agents, no prejudice against empty grades or against staff recruited since 1 May 2004, maintenance of multiplier rates above 1, attestations for all 6600 colleagues formerly on grades C and D – and so the list goes on).

US-Hyde, too, tells us the truth

US-Hyde tells us that *“the ALLIANCE agreed to the Reform package”* (see US Flyer of 26 April 2005). US-Hyde suddenly discovers all of the Reform’s limitations. US-Hyde observes the electoral defeats and the problems faced by staff as a result of the Reform. It gets excited, waves its arms around like someone possessed, calls for crazy concertation, and tries to mobilise all precarious staff with a view to stopping the salary cuts that flow from the salary grid negotiated by US-Jekyll. US-Hyde would like to force DG ADMIN to keep unlikely oral promises negotiated in corridors with Lord Kinnock and his cabinet. US-Hyde shamelessly comes in on the back of legal proceedings initiated by the Alliance dealing with problems always denied by US-Jekyll such as empty grades and terms and conditions for staff recruited after 1 May 2004 – despite the fact that these are the very pillars of the oh!-so-balanced and credible Reform supported by US-Jekyll.

US-Hyde naturally wishes to share its failure with the ALLIANCE, which apparently *“agreed to the Reform package”* the same Alliance that only a few days earlier, according to US-Hyde, *“has negotiated nothing and continues to be opposed to the Staff Regulations”*. It is just as well for US that you don’t get shot for being half-witted.

US OUTSIDE THE UNION tells us anything it likes

With a small variation compared with the original piece, we mustn’t forget the young agitated nephews in the Outside the Union sector who, after managing the Local Outside the Union Committee ALONE (14 US representatives out

of 14) with the help of a “more than cordial” understanding with DG RELEX, suddenly wake on the eve of the election to discover a huge number of problems and dysfunctioning caused by the Reform and the transition that they “forgot” to deal with and denounce before, and they now hurl themselves into all-out attacks in which they accuse DG RELEX of slave-driver and/or colonialist [*sic*] practices, and propose that all the precarious staff they have created all over the world (by leaving selection to the arbitrary decisions of heads of delegation in a setting completely lacking in transparency and equal treatment) should be made into permanent officials. The last straw in this hideous affair is that with 14 US representatives out of 14, the ALLIANCE is always held responsible for what has not been done in this sector, and could do a lot more. Once again, you don’t get shot for being half-witted.

Unfortunately for staff, even the problems that were raised late by US-Hyde are real enough! So far, the only undisputed realities that colleagues have faced are career slowdown, cuts of between 30% and 40% in salaries of newly recruited staff and contract agents, discrimination against staff taken on since 1 May 2004, attestation for dozens of people every year... Well, the list does rather go on.

I. THE KINNOCK REFORM – THE BARE FACTS: NEITHER MORE NOR LESS

1. The ALLIANCE: a minority with a clear, consistent position for defending staff and a strong, independent European civil service.

Staff understand very well that these are empty gestures made by the US to cover up a profound crisis that it is unable to cope with. They also know perfectly well that, **while they were in a minority**, the ALLIANCE spared no effort. Its strategy has always been very clear and consistent. It involves:

- **not presenting this grubby package** to the Council, and

remembering that our Staff Regulations should not have been turned upside down, but simply applied (the proud US did not adopt this approach, and back in 2001 agreed that the Staff Regs should be placed in the hands of the Council);

- **withdrawing the package** as soon as it was distorted by the Council (the proud, blind US **again** opposed the ALLIANCE’s demand, which was also supported by all the other trade unions in all other institutions;
- **extinguishing the light lit by the US and Kinnock as quickly as possible** as the Council was making a serious attack on the Commission’s pension.

2. The myth of the empty chair

Throughout the process of negotiating the 2002-2003 Reform package, strategic decisions relating to the career structures and salary grids were taken **long before** formal concertations in “political meetings organised by the US and Lord Kinnock. The ALLIANCE was not invited to sit at the table as there was no chair for Cassandra. They predicted the worst, created a foul atmosphere, and upset the little Reform geniuses in their high-minded work. Only walk-on parts were still being reserved for the US.

March 2003: the US smashes trade union unity and lets the US run the show

In March 2003, far from being concerned about smashing trade union unity, the US gave Lord Kinnock a free hand in presenting “*a proposal only negotiated with the US/CONF-SFE*” (see the US flyer of 26 April 2005) to the Council. It was going to be a rude awakening for the US. The Council already had covetous eyes for our pension scheme and pay, and now began to distort the US-Kinnock proposal. The proud US, which had not been aware of what was happening and had woken up too late to what was going on, suddenly found

itself impotent. Lord Kinnock does not keep his word, and is not prepared to withdraw the Commission proposal *unless it is has been self-evidently distorted*.

The ALLIANCE immediately denounced this undertaking aimed at European disintegration, and the US (now caught in a trap) can only comment that its protocol agreement was breached *"in the letter and in the spirit"*. *After setting fire to the house and burning themselves, the pyromaniacs then called the fire brigade*, the US issuing a desperate appeal for trade union unity and for strike action. The trade unions that had not previously been needed to negotiate the Reform and other small benefits once more became essential if the fire was to be extinguished, the damage limited, and the US's impotence hidden.

3. May 2003: Kinnock withdraws the US walk-on actors and negotiates alone

Misfortunes do not come singly. Not only has the house been on fire but, since 19 May 2003, Lord Kinnock has withdrawn all the US walk-on players. Kinnock continues to negotiate on his own like some noble grandee, and leaves the Council to attack pensions. Kinnock has treated the US just as the US has treated its minority and the Alliance. The sort of thing that has never been seen before in any form of social dialogue. Not only were changes made to the package, but the Council also attacked the PENSION scheme **even though it was not part of the package. Let us cast our minds back to the US's umpteenth empty promise which had always guaranteed staff that in exchange for the concessions made to the Reform, our pensions were not to be touched!** And we all know what happened after that. The apostles of the Reform found out about the outcomes of the negotiations... from reading Agence Europe – and while the US and the Commission slugged it out in public, the Alliance organised resistance and a reconquest on decision-making bodies with the help of staff.

4. June 2003-March 2004: The ALLIANCE refuses to abandon staff

By way of responding to the catastrophic way in which the US has handled this issue – the fruit of an unhappy mixture of recklessness, contempt for the minority, arrogance, naiveté and the lust for power – the ALLIANCE has re-grouped and rolled up its sleeves to see what can be saved, and pensions in particular. As far as everything is concerned, it was too late: **the career structure, salary grids, the consigning of contract agents to precarious employment – all of that formed part of the political agreement on 19 May 2003, and could no longer be discussed any further.**

Without EVER renouncing its fundamental opposition to the Reform, and without ever repudiating its objectives, "The Alliance," as the US Lux minutes of the first meeting of the Concertation Committee before the Council on 26 June 2003 state, *"demonstrated its openness to these negotiations without backtracking on its ideal objectives. It wants to be party to having improvements made on this subject, but believes that the Staff Regulations are sufficient and address many problems."*

Thanks to the confidence that the staff accorded it at the last elections, the ALLIANCE has become a **majority** union and continues to try and limit the damage of this appalling Reform throughout the negotiations of the **General Implementing Provisions** of the new Staff Regulations. Unlike the US, the ALLIANCE has always demonstrated **the greatest attachment to TRADE UNION UNITY and the greatest respect for the minority**, and has always offered the US a chance to work **TOGETHER** in defending staff interests.

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