

Lawrence Daly

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Lawrence Daly was born on 20 October 1924 in Fife. His father, James Daly, was a foundation member of the Communist Party, a coal miner and an active trade unionist. Following the 1926 General Strike James Daly was unable to obtain work in the mines until 1938. Lawrence Daly was educated at Roman Catholic schools. He began work as a miner at Glenraig colliery in 1939.

Lawrence Daly was active in the National Union of Mineworkers from an early age. In 1945 he represented the British TUC on an international youth delegation to Moscow and briefly chaired the Youth Committee of the Scottish TUC. In 1949 he chaired the National Union of Mineworkers's Scottish Youth Cttee. At Glenraig colliery he held a number of lay union offices, including branch delegate. He was also the Workmen's Safety Inspector there, 1954-64. He was elected to the National Union of Mineworkers Scottish Area Executive Cttee in 1962. In 1963 he was at the forefront of the celebrated Scullion case which concerned holiday pay for disabled mineworkers. In 1963 Daly was elected full time agent for the Fife, Clackmannan and Stirling District and in 1965 General Secretary of the Scottish-Area. From 1968 until 1984 he was National Union of Mineworkers General Secretary but, following a serious road accident in 1975, had prolonged leave of absence.

From 1940 Daly was an active member of the Communist Party. From Jan to Oct 1951 he worked as full time agent for the CP in West Fife. He was also a local government candidate for the party. There is evidence that Daly was strongly critical of the leadership and direction of the Party from the late 1940s. In 1956 he broke with the CP on the issue of criticism of the Soviet Union. A few months later many other people either left or were expelled because of their attitude to events in Hungary. With the "New Left" thus formed Daly maintained links for some time.

In 1957 Daly founded the Fife Socialist League and in the general election of 1959 he contested the West Fife constituency as a Fife Socialist League candidate. The Fife Socialist League's platform included unilateral nuclear disarmament. His campaign attracted the financial and personal support of New Left and Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament activists and he polled approximately 10% of the vote. The Fife Socialist League disbanded in 1964 and Daly joined the Labour Party. In 1958 he was elected a County Councilor but had to give this up when he became a full time National Union of Mineworkers official. He continued, however, to have and to develop links with left - wing academics and others during his career as a National Union of Mineworkers official.

During 1966-8 he served on the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation's International War Crimes Tribunal. In 1967 he visited North Vietnam under the auspices of the Tribunal.