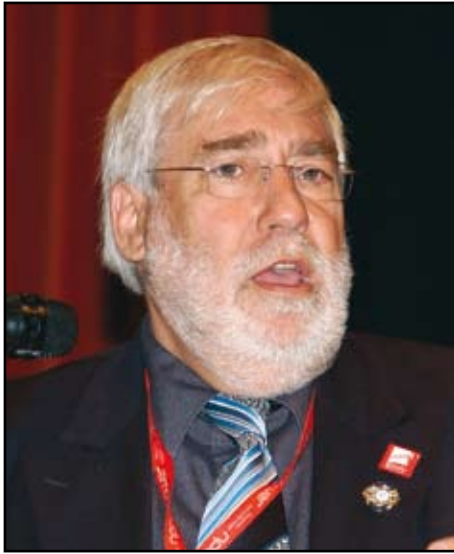




ULR MICK NEVILLE RECEIVING AN AWARD FROM SARAH BROWN AT No 10: TURN TO PAGE 5 FOR ALL THE LATEST NEWS ON OUR ULF ACTIVITIES

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EDITOR'S NOTES



Is it me? Have I been away somewhere on some distant planet or in some alternative universe? I think I must have been listening to David Cameron, George Osborne and the media in the last few weeks.

Here was I, secure in my belief that the current economic crises – the worst since the 1930s – had been caused by reckless bankers, spiv City traders, unregulated financial institutions and unfettered markets. Just shows how wrong you can be! According to the ‘new’ prophets who seek to be leaders of the country that is all hogwash. The real culprit was ‘big’ Government. Who would have thought it?

Deadly duo

Again I thought it was the Cameron/Osborne deadly duo who ‘savagely’ attacked the Government for its policies for saving the banking and financial system (who for is another question). Then they jumped on board when it became clear that their alternative – let the markets decide philosophy – was shown to be a disaster a la Lehman’s. Now they are back to square one attacking the policies that all main stream governments are following – talk of a dodgy duo? And finally, rather than seeking to learn from those mistakes they compound the errors by advocating policies that would, in the words of the former member of the Bank of England’s Monetary Policy Committee, David Blanchflower “... *have the potential to push the British economy into a death spiral of decline*

that would be almost impossible to reverse for a generation.” Well then! And as the Governor of the Bank of England, Mervyn King puts it – “*never in the field of financial endeavour has so much money been owed by so few to so many. And, one may add, so far with little reform*”

Of course the Tories have to shift the blame from their friends in the banking industry and the City. Not just because they are their friends. Of course not! But because it is the only way they can hope to peddle their policies for savage public spending cuts and of making us all pay for the failures of the banks and the markets. We are all in this together pontificates David Cameron. Oh yes! Is that why, whilst attacking public services and doling out pay freezes he still advocates tax breaks for the rich through changes to inheritance tax that favours the millionaires but not many food workers?

It is this inherent unfairness and rewriting of history that needs exposing. It seems the bankers have either learned nothing from their crisis – not our crisis – and are so hard nosed that they return without a blush to ‘*business as usual*’. Indeed some are forecasting an actual increase in City bonuses to around £6 billion this year. What an obscenity when politicians of all parties’ only answer seems to be to cut public services, introduce wage freezes – when they are not cutting wages and attacking terms and conditions – and savagely attack the poor, disabled and vulnerable. No mention of an equal distribution of pain or a placing of responsibility to where it belongs. All in this together – hogwash!

Fairer taxation

What about a fairer taxation system? One easy area would be the abolition of the upper earnings limit on National Insurance Contributions to make the richer in society pay an equal share of the tax burden. Why should a low paid food worker pay the same percentage National Insurance Contribution as the Bank bosses who got us into this mess in the first place? And how about a windfall tax on obscene Bank profits – actually made up from the hoarding of

the £37 billion of taxpayers’ subsidies poured into Lloyds and RBS alone, or from the elimination of competition – and unforgivable bonus payments – again subsidised by you and me?

And how about a tax on these unforgivable bonuses? Whilst the 50% tax rate is a step there needs to be more done in the area of the crazy bonus culture. The call for a super tax on bankers’ bonuses would not only be popular it would be fair.

Do not let anyone tell you these are unworkable. In relation to a windfall tax on bank profits the Conservative Government in 1981 did just that. How about a repeat, David, if we are “*all in this together*”? If the banks are not going to use this taxpayer’s handout to boost manufacturing and business borrowing, but rather to shore up their balance sheets and thus pay big bonuses – then they should be taxed on their hoardings. A return of the taxpayer’s handout to the taxpayer! If they will not use our money to boost the economy then let’s repatriate it and use it ourselves to create jobs.

Scams

The scams these bankers use are unbelievable. For example, due to their crassness having got themselves into a position of needing you and me to bail them out, banks declared huge losses since their self imposed crises and stored up tax credits that means they do not pay tax for a period of time even when they return to profit. RBS alone had £11 billion of tax credits even though it had to surrender them to insure its toxic assets. But the Government could eradicate other such tax credits even if banks do not like retrospective steps. However, if it good enough to put in retrospective changes to MPs’ allowances, why not for the banks?

It has been argued that at times of recession Government becomes the lender of last resort. When the economy is in free fall it falls to the Government to intervene to stabilise and sustain the economy and jobs. All serious economists and politicians around the world accept that – except, of course, for Cameron and Osborne, splendid back in their isolation. That was the reasoning behind the bank bail outs and

quantitative easing – printing money. However, if the banks are not prepared to play that role then the money given to them and the money poured into them by quantitative easing, should be withdrawn and redirected to industry to save jobs and boost spending. Cutting wages in a recession that inevitably leads to a lowering of consumer spending and thus a tightening of demand is the economics of the mad house.

Similarly it is sickening to see the banks saved by our money siphoning off taxpayers' money to pay obscene bonuses. That money again should be used to benefit the many through industrial regeneration and not be snaffled for the benefit of the few. If Banks persist in this immoral and promiscuous use of hard earned taxpayers' money then those individuals who profit from such largesse should feel the full force of the tax authorities.

We must not lose sight of the fact that it was the banks who got us into this mess in the first place, aided and abetted by loose regulation and small government. So what is also needed is greater regulation and more Government intervention – not less. If you or I made such a mess as these bankers we would be sacked, not given bonuses for failure. And our 'employer' would put in place policies to ensure such a mess could not happen again. That must be the aim of Government policy in the financial sector. Leaving them alone simply does not work.

Need to remember

There is an essential need to remember all this and to ensure that those who caused the crisis pay for it. Not the victims of that bankers-inspired crash. So when you are told "we are all in this together" ask where those making that statement see the axe falling. And you will find it is you and me – not those who caused the mess in the first place. They escape scott-free with boosted balance sheets, enhanced profits and huge bonuses. We are left to pick up the bill.

So when politicians talk of attacking our public services – services they do not use or value as you and I do – remember the alternative. Let those who caused this mess pay for it and leave our vital public services alone.

Hope to hear from you.

joe.marino@bfawu.org

No 4 IN PARTY MOOD TO CELEBRATE 40 YEARS OF MEMBERSHIP

No 4 Region would like to congratulate five of our members in the No 4 region who have reached this major landmark: Sister Gina Mayhew, Sister Jean Keville Sister Alice Cherry and Sister Hilda Newton who all attended the event and Sister Colacurcio who unfortunately was unable to attend.

And to celebrate we held a knees-up in the Trades Club in Blackpool. Members from across the region rocked to the fabulous Baker boys aka the Notorious Johnny C(John Cartain) and the Infamous Ronnie D (Ronnie Draper) who let rip to a packed audience with some 60s classics like House of the Rising Sun and the legendary Blackpool song Dirty ol' Town. And the night was wrapped up with a DJ playing some good tunes.

Presentations by our General Secretary Joe Marino and National President Ronnie Draper took place at the event and the specially invited guests of honour enjoyed the evening along with their family and friends.

Members attending the event enjoyed the evening and the buffet kindly sponsored by MWR solicitors.

Ian Hodson, No 4 Organising Regional Secretary



Top: Ronnie Draper, left, and, right, John Cartain – or is it Joe Brown? – playing rock 'n' roll – or is it just some country and western? Below: The party in full swing





NATIONAL PRESIDENT RONNIE DRAPER WRITES

Another year nearly over, but one I suspect many people will be glad to see the back of? But will 2010 herald the light at the end of the tunnel? I suppose it very much depends on what happens on a number of threads?

Will the recession end, will the bankers have to live on their inflated salaries alone and how would they manage without their bonuses, will we see an end to the growing unemployment figures and will we see a change of government?

I suspect the recession will bottom out and we will see a small upward change in the economy although how big the green shoots will be is a matter for conjecture? The bankers will, despite all the talk will find a way of paying themselves fat cat salaries whether they succeed or not. Like the economy I believe unemployment will start to turn the corner although I have doubts about the terms and conditions that will be offered for new starters and what shape these new jobs will take? Whilst the recession has hit many companies pretty badly, it has also presented the unscrupulous employer with the ideal opportunity to cut workers terms and conditions because of the fear that abounds throughout the country.

The greatest threat comes if the predicted change of government comes about. Our younger readers won't remember the 18 years of Tory rule spanning 1979 to 1997, but you are still dealing with the consequences today. The Tories took us through two recessions as opposed to Labours one, but they had the dual cushions of

privatisation money and North Sea oil revenue to help them through the crisis.

The fact is that we are all paying the price for Tory imprudence with sky high fuel prices after our oil went on fuelling dole queues instead of fuelling our homes and gas and electricity supplies were privatised. Souring water rates, rocketing rail fares and spiralling bank charges to name just a few are a direct result of the Tories destruction of the nations' portfolio. They sold off our council houses and stopped councils ploughing the money into a rebuild programme. They were the direct opposite of the legendary Robin Hood; they stole from the poor and gave to the rich.

Why should we suspect that things would be better under them this time? Would the NHS be safe in their hands or will it end up in the pockets of their rich friends? I suspect that the more lucrative parts of the NHS would be privatised and we will end up with a system of cheque book medicine, if you can afford it you can have the best of treatment, if you can't then you will fight over what is left?

Working people cannot afford to have a Conservative government and I believe those who lived and worked under 18 years of Tory tyranny should use the memories to encourage the rest to vote Labour in the General election 2010. We should also do all we can to steer people away from other extreme right wing party's like the BNP.

The BNP will not do anything to improve the political turmoil in the UK and nor do they want to. Their sole aim is to heighten racial tension, build on

discrimination and drive a wedge in the fissures of community harmony.

You only had to watch the abysmal performance by their leader, Nick Griffin on the BBC's Question Time in mid October. His claim that he was bullied by all participants on the panel is rich coming from someone who leads a party that oozes race hate, racial violence and ethnic division. They thrive on peoples' frustrations and resentments. We never hear about how they would improve the lot of the UK population through political policies only how we should be a country of white English dominance. It is interesting that Mr Griffin does not view London as part of England.

He does not want to understand the benefits of a multi-cultural society where we can live in peace and harmony, enjoying the benefits that we all bring to that society. He does not want to acknowledge the benefits to organisations like the National Health Service, manufacturing industry, civil services and many other facets of our life, of having a multi-national, multi-cultural workforce.

They are a fascist party with fascist beliefs and just like Hitler wanted the perfect Arian race, Nick Griffin wants a white English race, although it is difficult to understand how this is to be achieved given our past history of invasion and migration.

There is no room in British politics for people like Nick Griffin and no place in our society for the British National Party. We need to ensure that they are never allowed to represent us in the Palace of Westminster.

May I take this opportunity to wish all our Officials, office staff, activists, members and your families a very merry Christmas and a peaceful, prosperous new year and to thank you for your support over the past year?

Ronnie Draper
National President

**NEW YEAR'S
RESOLUTION:
KEEP THE TORIES
OUT!**

ULF UPDATE by Dorban Ippoma, National ULF Project Manager

ENDORISING CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT

BFAWU NATIONAL PROJECT MANAGER DORBAN IPPOMA

When Joe Marino and I set out in April 2004 to re-organise the Learning Services and re-design the BFAWU learning agenda, I believe at that time we both never thought how far and how much would be achieved in such a short period of time. My idea of creating a National Project that reached out across the BFAWU is now embedded into union life and structures, as many of our members have benefited from the courses we provide. This was mainly achieved by introducing change and the union embarking on a journey that allowed me the freedom to build the learning agenda and services, along with ULRs steady progression which has enable us to reach the dizzy heights we have achieved to this very day. Our ULRs have been recognised for their endeavours by receiving awards far and wide, from many organisations across the UK, even from 10 Downing Street, which was a very special day for those who attended that function. The recognition that the BFAWU National Project has injected so much into developing workplace learning, has elevated us alongside some of the biggest unions in the UK, in terms of offering our members an excellent service, which continues to be developed in setting the bench mark across workplace learning.

I feel great satisfaction to see ULRs endorse new learning initiatives and take up the challenges put before them with so much enthusiasm and commitment, which is a credit to them all, given that some employers still wish to drag their heels in endorsing the learning agenda and ULR role. The ever increasing workplace learning centres being supported by ULRs is an indicator of the ULRs willingness to succeed in supporting the learning agenda across their Branch structure. My staff and I will always keep working to introduce and implement new learning aims and objectives that will help to develop the project and ULRs, giving the learners an ever changing learning agenda with a wide outlook to supporting workplace learning. We may be a small union but we have a massive appetite for learning



Dorban Ippoma

that keeps engaging and pushing the project to reach new levels which others do not venture. When I travel across the UK visiting sites on a weekly basis I now see for the first time a completed project that offers learners more than just learning. It offers people the opportunity to change their lives, enhance their confidence, social standing and obtain a qualification, maybe for the first time in their lives. The ULR role is now being recognised more productively by the employer and although there still seems to be some confusion from employers as

to the role of the ULR, overall we appear to be going in the right direction. I say to all ULRs, never give up because the BFAWU Learning Services will never give up supporting you to reach your goals. At the ULR Working in Partnership Conference in Cardiff, we aim to premier our development of the dyslexia course by giving a presentation incorporating the 3D technology we are presently finalising. I would like to thank Dr Roy Rutherford, DORE Programme, Professor Rod Nicholson, Sheffield University, Professor Cathy Price, MRI Brain Scan Unit Central London, Derek Kennedy and Christina Christou BFAWU Project staff for their contribution to the development of the dyslexia model. This course development will enhance the dyslexia course accreditation with Open College Network (OCN) from level 2 to level 3 and 6 credits to 9 credits, which is excellent for students undertaking the course. Will more changes and development in the future be introduced? The answer to that question is yes. I firmly believe without change we all stand still and will not progress to new horizons. I wish all union members, learning staff, ULRs, learners, employers and partners to continue to support the work we have all achieved to



ULR Mick Neville receiving a reading award from Sarah Brown at Downing Street

date and continue to progress in the way we set out back in April 2004. If you ask any learner that completes a course or passes a qualification what they feel like, somewhere in their reply they will tell you their sense of achievement, which is priceless. This is only one aspect of what learning can give to many people who we will engage in the near future. With the introduction of Skills for Life section to our e-learning provision we will offer learners and union members a unique learning agenda that will give them even more scope and range when they engage learning.

Right: Learners at Northern Foods Pennines receiving their Certificates



CASE STUDY FROM KENDRA WALKER, NORTH EAST LOCAL PROJECT WORKER

I am enjoying the role of North East Local Project Worker and still very much learning the job. I feel I have improved immensely, and by passing my knowledge onto the ULRs at both Warburton's Stockton and Newburn, I can see the learning agenda moving forward across both sites. It's fantastic how we see the positive changes in every ones attitude towards learning and the learning agenda. Newburn are embracing this initiative, which is so nice, because in the past they have not engaged the learning agenda. It is now totally the opposite and I'm finding their appetite for learning great. The new ULRs are all very pro-active and are doing a fantastic job. We're getting learners that would never have dreamed of participating in courses, which is excellent for the said individuals and the site in general. The learners even spread the good word as to what's happening in the centre and the courses available, which is the best form of promotion. The site management supports this project 100%, which in the past may have been a hurdle to overcome and is clearly not the case now. The release of four ULRs to attend the unionlearn Learning Skills forum

in Darlington 22 October 09 and ULRs attending the BFAWU Learning Services Network Centre meeting in Nottingham, is again a clear indicator of the willingness from management to participate and support ULRs progression. These are very clear indicators of the effect the learning agenda has had in

the workplace and across business, when it is structured and supported by union and employer working in partnership.

Kendra Walker
North East Local Funded Project
Mobile: 07940183723, e-mail:
kendradenize@hotmail.co.uk



From Left to Right, ULRs Rob Dunn, Steve Dalziel, Charlene Lockey, Mary Lindo and Kendra Walker.

CASE STUDY: VICKY WATKINS LEAD ULR

Hi, my name is Vicky Watkins and I started with R F Brookes, Rogerstone in 2004 as a packer on the line in frozen packing. From there I became a senior operative, where I was in charge of the M&S lines. In 2006, I was offered to apply for an on-line trainer where I would train new employees on the factory floor. I was offered the position as an on-line trainer in the training department. From there, I was given my first task of working with the union to open a learning centre on site. After a visit with John James Regional Secretary BFAWU and Bill Adams Branch Secretary to one of the BFAWU Learning Centres in Plymouth, I saw how great the project was on site. This encouraged me to become a union learning rep, working alongside Bill Adams helping our staff at R F Brookes to develop themselves. Since becoming a ULR I have helped over 200 people to come forward and enrol on courses, such as computers, French and Spanish. I have also arranged for over 150 of our staff to learn English and better themselves within the

company, by being promoted within their jobs. In 2008, we won the Regional Company Award at the Learndirect Awards and were highly commended at the National Awards in London for all our hard work with our English classes for foreign staff. As a ULR, I love interacting with other people and encourage them back into learning whatever their needs are and I find it is rewarding when I know they have achieved a certificate, or even learnt how to switch a computer on for the first time. This year, I have had the opportunity to go on secondment and cover the ULF Project Coordinator for the BFAWU Welsh Project (WULF) This has given me a brilliant opportunity to get out there to other companies and learn more about the learning agenda and initiatives, as well as interacting with other learners and helping them further along their learning path. I would recommend to anyone to become a ULR as it is so rewarding when you know you have helped someone learn a new skill.



Top left: Vicky Watkins receiving a ULR award from Clive Thomas from Watkins & Gunn Solicitors at the BFAWU National ULR Conference.

Top right: Vicky Walters

Bottom: ULRs representing the WULF project in Wales

RUNNING FOR A GOOD CAUSE

Julie Summersgill (Branch secretary & ULR Park Cakes, Oldham), Justin Madders (Thompsons Solicitors) and Pauline Worsnop (BFAWU Learning Services) were recently invited to a presentation event, hosted by Greggs, to receive a certificate in recognition of the money that was raised for Greggs Children's Cancer Charity. The money was raised by sponsorship for a 5 mile run held at Heaton Park, Manchester in May this year. Due to the generosity of the people who sponsored the runners, they raised a total of £806 and many thanks to all concerned



Left to right) Eddy Estlin (MacMillan Paediatric Oncologist), Pauline Worsnop, Julie Summersgill, Justin Madders and Ian Pegg (Greggs MD)

LEARNING CENTRE OPENING NORTHERN FOODS, FOX'S BISCUITS, BATLEY by Branch Secretary and ULR Helena England

On Tuesday the 27th October, Fox's Biscuits had a re-launch of our learning and have now moved the centre to another room in the canteen to make it more accessible to all employees. The centre has been open for about nine months and the ULRs decided the time was right to have an official open day. Months of planning went into the day as it takes time for all the guests invited to adjust diaries. On behalf of all the ULRs and myself, I would like to thank the entire guest list for attending and showing their support on the day. It has not been an easy time in setting the learning centre up, as we have accounted lots of problems along the way. I will say to anyone who was thinking of starting a learning centre, don't give up hope of achieving your goals. You will need patience and understanding as it does not happen overnight. Dorban Ippoma, National Project Manager and Managing Director Graham Hunter, conducted the opening ceremony with good speeches from both on how important learning is to all, no matter what age, union or employment status. Fox's learning is for all across the workforce. We have 6 computers in the centre and have recently set up a library with a selection of books. The library section was an added extra to encourage people back into reading. We have held the Six Book challenge competition for 2 years running and the Quick Read Books are very popular with the workforce. We were very lucky to have as a guest, Lindsay Ashford, an author of one of the Quick Reads, who wrote the Rubber Woman. Lindsay was very popular and gracefully held book signings in the centre. We had a good cross selection of guests from the BFAWU, local MP, local library, colleges, TUC, Managing Directors, Managers, and Team Leaders, which was excellent. They were all impressed with the learning on offer to the employees of Fox's Biscuits. I would like to say a big thank you to the ULRs for all the hard work and to the entire guest list for their support on the day. Thank you all.



The commemorative plaque



Arfan Khan (middle) from the Classic Dept winner of the name the centre competition with Dorban Ippoma & Helena England Branch Secretary/ULR



Dorban Ippoma BFAWU National Project Manager, Janet Goodwin Project Worker Region 5 Author Lindsay Ashford, Helena England Branch Secretary/ULR & Jenny Oates ULR



Dorban Ippoma, National Project Manager and Managing Director Graham Hunter perform the opening ceremony.

JACOBS BAKERY LEARNING RESOURCE CENTRE OPENING 14 OCTOBER 2009

The Jacobs Bakery, which is part of the United Biscuits food group, is very supportive of the learning agenda and this is illustrated in the opening of the on-site learning centre. Matt Elliot, former football player for Leicester City, opened the Jacobs Bakery learning centre and presented the newly trained ULR's with their certificates. These were as follows: Dean Hassell, Karen Scotford, Shobhna Patel, Paul McGarry and Magda Macioszczyk. Two more ULRs were unable to attend as they were completing their training. They are: Mark Brookes and Sofina Osman. Angela Thawley, the Factory General Manager, welcomed guests including BFAWU Joe Marino, General Secretary and Ronnie Draper, National President with Dorban Ippoma National ULF Project Manager. Also represented were other partners, Mick Brightman, TUC unionlearn, South Leicester College and Leicester City Library, who provided the resource centre with a range of books in different languages. The company and the BFAWU Learning Services held open days back in May '09, during Adult Learners Week. The South Leicester College also attended, giving out prospectuses and information on courses available. Through the TUC Adult Learners Week funding, we were able to purchase a note book laptop, which we presented at the opening day, which was won by Parminder Singh who works in the Bake House. There will be 7 ULRs trained, completing the 5 day course, 3 days Skills for Life and a 1 day module of an ILM (Institute of Leadership and Management) in Mentoring and Coaching. Linda Sleath, H/R Business Manger and Angela Thawley, both acknowledged the work and training done by the ULRs in setting up the learning centre and encouraging people to participate in the learning agenda. Joe Marino agreed with management that the hard work starts now. Linda Sleath said: *On the wall at The Jacobs Bakery is a skills pledge signed by Angela Thawley, the Factory General Manager. I would like to thank you all for taking the time out of your busy schedules to join us at the opening of our Learning Resource Centre at The Jacob's Bakery at Wigston. It was good to share with*



Back row left to right: Dean Hassell ULR, Ronnie Draper, Joe Marino, Magda Macioszczyk ULR, Karen Benger Project Worker Region 3, Front row: Karen Scotford & Shobhna Patel ULRs

you all the progress we have made in such a short space of time, yet to echo Joe's words - the hard work is only just starting. I am pleased that we have such a determined team of ULR's who want to help move the learning agenda forwards and I am looking forward to working with them and the local college to provide the support to our learners in the workplace. Thanks again and we look forward to you all visiting again to

update on our progress. Dorban Ippoma BFAWU National Project Manager said: At Jacobs, they have worked hard to overcome any hurdles placed before them. The excellent response from ULRs and impressive opening to the centre is a credit to all involved. The BFAWU Learning Services aim to support the centre along with the local college. Well done to all.

The Jacob's Bakery Skills Pledge

On behalf of The Jacob's Bakery, United Biscuits, I, as Factory General Manager, make a commitment that we shall:

- Actively encourage and support our employees to gain the skills and qualifications that will support their future employability and meet the needs of the business/organisation
- Actively encourage and support our employees to acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills, and with government support, work towards their first level 2 qualification in an area that is relevant to our business/organisation.
- Demonstrably raise our employees' skills and competencies to improve company/organisation performance through investing in economically valuable training and development



DIWALI BLESSING OF THE JACOBS CENTRE OPENING

The opening of the centre was timed to coincide with Diwali, one of the biggest festivals for Hindus. At the opening both management and employees wore the traditional sari for the blessing of the learning centre. A prayer was said to the Saraswati, the Goddess of Knowledge. Diwali is one of the biggest festivals of Hinduism, celebrated with great enthusiasm and happiness in India. The festival is celebrated for five continuous days, where the third day is celebrated as the main Diwali festival or 'Festival of lights'. Different colorful varieties of fireworks are associated with this festival. On this auspicious day, people light up diyas and candles all around their house. They perform Laxmi Puja in the evening and seek divine blessings of Goddess of Wealth. The festival of Diwali is never complete without the exchanging of gifts.

People present Diwali gifts to all those near and dear. The exact day of the festival is decided by the position of the moon. According to the Hindu calendar, Amavasya or 'no moon day' is considered as the perfect day to celebrate Diwali. This dark night comes after every fortnight and in the month of Kartik, it marks this festival of lights and diyas. As per the English calendar, the festival generally comes in the month of November and December. For all Hindu people, the festival holds an imperative meaning since the festival is reckoned with Lord Rama's victory, as the King of Ayodhya after his return to the kingdom, from 14 years of exile, along with his wife Sita & brother Laxman, after killing the demon, King Ravana. The festival is celebrated by lighting diyas and candles to drive away the darkness of Amavasya. Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge and arts, represents the free flow of wisdom and consciousness. She is the mother of the Vedas, and chants to her, called the 'Saraswati Vandana' often begin and end Vedic lessons. Saraswati is the daughter of Lord Shiva and Goddess Durga. It is believed that goddess Saraswati endows human beings with the powers of speech, wisdom and learning. She has four hands representing four aspects of human personality in learning: mind, intellect, alertness and ego. She has sacred scriptures in one hand and a lotus – the symbol of true knowledge – in the second. Information and pictures accredited to: <http://www.diwalifestival.org/>



Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge and arts, represents the free flow of wisdom and consciousness. Saraswati is the daughter of Lord Shiva and Goddess Durga. It is believed that goddess Saraswati endows human beings with the powers of speech, wisdom and learning. She has four hands representing four aspects of human personality in learning: mind, intellect, alertness and ego. She has sacred scriptures in one hand and a lotus – the symbol of true knowledge – in the second.



(Angela Thawley, Factory General Manager dressed in sari for the occasion)

THE EDUCATION, LEARNING AND SKILLS FORUM NORTH EAST

Darlington Football Club played host to The Education, Learning and Skills Forum (ELSF), which focused on informal adult learning and October's Learning Revolution Festival. The ELSF shared new developments across the learning agenda, trade union learning and ULR successes from both Warburton's Stockton and Warburton's Newburn. ULRs helped in the discussion, along with other reps, throughout the Northern region, including debate regarding best practice to motivate and enable others to engage lifelong learning. The Forum focused its attention on supporting apprentices and heard presentations from the National Apprenticeship Service and the TUC's Apprenticeship Advocate Network. David Kendall from The Reading Agency also discussed the 'Six Book Challenge' which invites less confident readers to read six books and record their reading in a diary, with a view to increasing confidence and motivation and making reading a habit. As part of the Forum, delegates got the chance to try their hands at something new, including cycle maintenance, an introduction to Bagpipes and heartstart. ULRs from Warburton's, Stockton, Kendra Walker and Mary Lindo, along with our fellow ULR David Hunt, decided to attend the heartstart workshop, where they had the chance to meet and speak to the heartstart crew, who train at HMP Frankland in CPR. Warburton's Newburn ULRs, Steve Dalziel, Charlene Lockey and Rob Dunn, all decided to attend the Quick Reads workshop, where David Kendall explained about the Six Book Challenge and gave hints and tips on how to encourage work mates back into reading. This will be the second time that ULRs from both Warburton's Newburn and Stockton have attended the quarterly ELSF and have found attending such events a great resource in not only developing



National Apprenticeship Service Albert Leaf, LSC

their role as a ULR, but also to see the development of their learners. Joyce McAndrew, Chair of the Forum, said: "The ELSF is a regular event and a great opportunity, which allows everyone who is involved in union learning the chance to come together and benefit from face to face and interactive communication" Welcome to new ULRs from Warburton's Newburn, Steve Dalziel, Rob Dunn and Charlene Lockey and from Warburton's Stockton, Mary Lindo. All are doing a fantastic job in developing the learning culture at both these sites.

BFAWU National ULR Conference 2010 – Registering Interest Slip

Name:

Address:

..... Post Code:

Telephone: Mobile:

email:

Union Position: ULR Branch Secretary Shop Steward H & S Rep

Please tick appropriate box(es)

Company Name Location:

Please return slip to: National ULR Conference, BFAWU Learning Services, Unit 9 Sinclair House, 66 Willoughby Lane, Tottenham, London N17 0SQ

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SWINE FLU AND YOU

This short article is intended to give assistance and advice to members of the BFAWU regarding the current pandemic of Swine Flu or H1N1.

The likelihood is that many of our members will come into contact with or indeed contract the symptoms of Swine Flu and this could have a profound effect on their families and also the businesses they work for and so we aim to give practical tips on prevention. It will be interesting to see how many companies have a strategy to cope with the pandemic and possible high levels of absenteeism. Health and Safety reps should raise any concerns they may have with management and to ascertain what provisions have been made.

This strain of Flu is not unique to the UK, indeed it has spread to more than 100 countries in less than 2 years and whilst its symptoms have generally proved relatively mild there have been a small number of more serious cases and a few patients have died. Many of the more serious cases have been complicated by other underlying health conditions, such as heart or respiratory diseases.

The virus is spread is mainly spread when they become airborne, either from a contaminated person sneezing or coughing and if you happen to be in their vicinity you can breathe the infection in?

It can also be spread through physical contact. When you cough or sneeze into your hand, tiny droplets of infected mucus are left behind and can then be easily transferred from your hand to that of another person if you shake hands or if they come into contact with a surface that you have touched. Germs can live on most surfaces for some time and so

practices that we take for granted on a daily basis can harbour the virus and infect others without them ever realising they have had contact with it.

The symptoms of Swine Flu are very similar to those of normal seasonal flu all though they can have some extra symptoms such as Diarrhoea, aching limbs, vomiting, sore throat and dizziness. Whilst this is not an exhaustive list it generally covers most of the more serious effects that you are likely to encounter

We can all help to reduce the chances of catching or spreading the germs by following some very basic hygiene practices that we have followed throughout our careers in the food industry. Good practices like washing hands regularly with hot soapy water, using sanitizer, using tissues when sneezing and disposing of them properly and of course keeping surfaces clean.

One of the major questions asked revolves around what to do if you come into contact with someone who has Swine Flu? Should you go to work? Should you avoid contact with others? The simple answer is to carry on as normal unless you have the symptoms yourself. The infection will start around one day before the symptoms show and will last for about one week.

The Department of Health has advised that there may be a case for pregnant women avoiding crowds or unnecessary travel. This may mean employers having to make special arrangements for the woman if they are requested to do so? While the risk may not be great, many pregnant women are very worried about the possible effect on their health and employers should look sympathetically

at any such requests.

Your employer should tell you if someone within your workplace has contracted swine flu. They have a duty of care to all staff and should consult with the unions health and safety representatives on matters of health, safety and welfare that affect our members.

Employers should ensure that anyone who is showing signs or symptoms of Swine Flu are advised to stay at home and not return until they are clear of the virus.

One problem that may be encountered by Shop Stewards is the use of absence management agreements such as the Bridlington procedures against workers who are off work with flu? The danger of not relaxing these punitive procedures is that people will come into work despite feeling ill and risk infecting many others. A common sense approach has to be applied and applied fairly. Employers will have to manage other issues relating to the illness such as allowing parents time off at relatively short notice to look after sick children.

There may be health and safety concerns for remaining staff that have to cover for absent colleagues – for example, if someone is expected to carry out work or use machinery for which they have not been trained. What about avoiding unreasonable demands on the workers left to work excessive hours and what about the possible detriment to their health?

There is much to consider if we are to avoid a catastrophe in our industry but nothing that is rocket science. If we use many of the procedures that we have adopted successfully over the years we will minimise the effects felt?

GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES CONSULTATION INTO WMD

After many years of campaigning, there would appear to be some light at the end of the tunnel regarding the recognition of Workers Memorial Day by the government. Secretary of State, Yvette Cooper said "It is a tragedy that some people go out to work and then never return home to their families. I want to look at what the UK can do to remember the thousands of workers who have lost their lives"

The BFAWU like many other organisations has actively campaigned for the day to be recognised, not just as a day of commemoration but as a day of prevention. Whilst we should remember everyone who has lost their lives in pursuance of their livelihood we need to use the day as a day of inspection, monitoring, education and proactive intervention to promote safer, healthier workplaces. Hence the joint slogan of the campaign "Remember the dead, fight for the living".

The true extent of work related deaths goes well beyond the published figures that we are given every year. Publishing figures that remain stubbornly around the 200 mark do not portray the real size of the tragedy as is quoted in the Hazards Campaign response to the consultation

"The Hazards Campaign wants to see no more inaccurate and misleading 'Only 180 killed by work last year' headlines. These figures are just those workers killed in incidents whose deaths are reportable to the HSE, it excludes:

members of the public killed by work activities; work-related deaths reported to other regulators such as the Marine Accident Investigation Board, and Civil Aviation Authority, for example those workers killed in recent well publicised helicopter crashes are not included in the HSE figures; the estimated 1,000 per year killed in work-related driving incidents, those who commit suicide due to the unbearable pressures of over work, long hours, stress and bullying; and all those dying of occupational illnesses. This large number includes workers who inhaled dust and fumes which caused or exacerbate COPD, asbestos-related mesothelioma and lung cancer deaths, other cancer deaths and those from heart disease due to long hours, stress and over work. Pre recession we estimated the total death toll due to work in the UK each year as between 1,500 and 1,600 in incidents plus up to 50,000 dying from work-related illness. The Hazards Campaign sets out our estimates regularly but most recently in an article published in Safety and Health Practitioner in December 2008 'The Whole Story'

In our response to the consultation we demonstrated our support for Workers Memorial Day to be held on the 28th April every year, irrespective of the day it falls on. We also want it to be held right across the country in all cities, towns, villages and workplaces as opposed to a central location. Centralising the commemoration may well make it a bigger

event, but it will preclude many who would normally have been involved from attending due to travel problems.

We want all government agency websites including HSE, local authorities and Business Link to promote the day to the best of their ability, but it must be in keeping with the values and meaning of the day.

We need to make workplaces safer and healthier and employer's, government and ourselves must be more active in bringing our aims to fruition. Government must recognise that it has a responsibility to regulate and control employers whose lack of compliance makes work unsafe, Government must police workplaces more effectively and that needs a better funded HSE.

This will also include introducing penalties for H&S breaches that are more severe and more readily hold senior policy and decision making individuals in organisations accountable to the judicial system. If the government recognises WMD, and fully acknowledges the tragic cost of work-related harm, then their actions can encourage employers to engage in activities that will promote better health and safety standards with their workers?

Employers must recognise and acknowledge that they need to be much more proactive and that by abdicating their responsibilities in health and safety terms is not acceptable. They need to go further than merely complying with minimum standards and become committed employers by adopting best practice in the workplace, embracing, consulting and co-operating meaningfully with trade unions safety reps and workers as the law requires.

If we can gain Government recognition of WMD then the impetus will provide a stimulus for a much wider range of activities in workplaces from a minutes silence to workplace inspections, from flags flying at half mast to a review of risk assessment. Whatever we do, government recognition and endorsement will provide real opportunities for trade unions and campaigners to promote better practices with employers, helping to raise their awareness of the true cost of workplace harm and the need for better management of health, safety and welfare, and a more robust view of where workplace standards should be.

On 28th April 2009 the BFAWU held a reception, sponsored by MWR solicitors, at the House of Commons dedicated to highlighting our campaign for the recognition of Workers Memorial Day. We were supported by other trade unions, Families Against Corporate Killing (FACK), the Hazards Campaign and some of the nations Members of Parliament. Together we form a pretty powerful lobbying alliance.

Let us hope that on April 28th 2010 we are holding our commemorations at a place of our choice on a day that has been nationally recognised?

NEW RISK ASSESSMENT TOOLS CAN SAVE BUSINESSES TIME AND MONEY

Businesses are set to save time and money with the launch of new, simplified documents to help get their health and safety arrangements in place.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has developed a new electronic template specially for small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) which combines, into one document, the requirements of a health and safety policy, risk assessment and written record of health and safety arrangements.

Example risk assessments for a range of industries have also been developed to show businesses what a 'good enough' record may look like.

90 per cent of test users of the example risk assessments said they could get their own done more quickly, saving almost half the time on average.

In addition, almost three-quarters of businesses that took part in the survey said the example risk assessments provided were very good or excellent.

Speaking during The European Week for Safety and Health at Work (19-23 October), HSE Chair, Judith Hackitt, said:

"We want to help get the message to small and medium-sized companies that risk assessments needn't be time consuming, bureaucratic or complicated. But they are essential to managing dangers in the workplace. We encourage a common sense approach that is proportionate to the potential risks involved."

"Most employers are already well aware of the risks that exist in their workplaces, making it easy for them to complete risk assessments. The most important aspects of risk assessments are that they need to be acted upon and updated regularly."

HSE has saved businesses more than £400 million since the development of its simplification plan in 2005. The aim was to ensure that health and safety works better for everyone.

HSE is on track to deliver a 25% reduction in administrative burdens by April 2010, taking the total savings to around £500 million.

The electronic templates, worked examples and a simple, no-nonsense guide - '5 steps to risk assessment' - are available at www.hse.gov.uk/risk/index.htm



MANAGING SKIN EXPOSURE RISKS AT WORK

The Health and Safety Executive have published a new book entitled "Managing skin exposure risks at work", which gives practical advice and guidance on protecting the skin from occupational risks.

During 2007/08, an estimated 20,000 people complained of work related skin problems, demonstrating the incidences are fairly widespread and it is thought that this book will help workers better understand the causes, symptoms and problems caused by contact with hazardous substances.

There is also a free leaflet "Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Essentials Guidance sheet, which gives advice and guidance on the selection and suitability of protective gloves, has been updated.

www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/guidance/s101.pdf

REPORT PREDICTS INCREASE IN CHRONIC ILLNESS

A recent report entitled "Healthy Work: Challenges and Opportunities to 2030", predicts that British industry will struggle to meet its obligations due to an increase in chronic disease combined with an ageing workforce by the year 2030.

The report is part 1 of a two part study by the Oxford Health Alliance, BUPA, the Work Foundation and RAND Europe, combining more than 200 individual pieces of research looking at the impact that the ageing workforce will have on company production? It predicts that with less people fit to work that absence levels will increase and therefore productivity will be adversely affected.

If the research figures are an accurate representation of what is to come, then clearly there is a great deal of preventative, pro-active remedy to be developed?

The report estimates that over the next 2 decades we are likely to see a significant increase in (COPD) Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, Asthma and other respiratory diseases to an extent were 4 million workers could be affected. Given that we work in an industry that has been labelled one of the worst for occupational asthma in the past, we need to use our experiences in improving the likelihood of adding to the predicted statistics.

When it comes to other aspects of health the news does not get any better, musculoskeletal problems will continue to grow and unless we tackle the question of both childhood and adult obesity we sit on a health time bomb. If we do nothing then we are predicted to see male obesity rise to 47% and female obesity to 36% over the next 25 years, with corresponding increases in coronary heart disease and diabetes as a consequence.

There could also be a major rise in mental illness over the coming 20 years, affecting more than 4 million workers, brought about by the pressures of work and the wider world. Fear of losing one's job, with increased competition more and more people will find themselves doing jobs that do not compliment their skills and the general global downturn all conspire towards the possibility of mental health problems.

We will also be faced with rises in the age of retirement and the number of people seeking to work beyond retirement age because of economic pressures and so an ageing workforce doing fewer jobs will bring increased health problems.

If we are to reduce the predicted impact that this report is forecasting then we have to start our interventions now otherwise we will be accused of shutting the stable door after the horse has bolted.

More emphasis on good occupational health, promoting healthy diet and regular exercise, improved health screening are all likely to improve the negative impact of failure.

Another intervention is to adopt a good programme of rehabilitation, including job adaptation for people returning to work or with pre-existing conditions that may otherwise preclude them from permanent employment.

The report gives a frightening insight into what may well be if we are not stirred into action, but just like Ebenezer Scrooge in Dickens Christmas Carol, there is always a chance that we can change the future.

JIM THOMPSON LEAVES THE TEAM

At the October National Health and Safety Committee Bro Jim Thompson (right) tendered his resignation as representative of No7 Region. The NHSC members would like to thank Jim for his service, not only to the committee but to the members in general.

Jim has represented the BFAWU at the last two National Hazards conferences and has been a vocal campaigner for improving workers health and safety standards. Unfortunately Jim has not enjoyed the best of health in recent times and has decided to relinquish his seat.

I am sure you will join me in thanking Jim for his service to the union and to wish him every success in the future.

Ronnie Draper
National President



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LETTERS

FREE CARD FOR ALAN HARRISON



At the No.4 Regional Council in September Bro Alan Harrison received his 40 year Free Card Award, presented by Bro Ronnie Draper, our National President. Bro Kenny Pritchard also said a few words congratulating Bro Harrison, and spoke about Bro Harrison's loyalty and his trustworthiness. Kenny also recollected that Alan spent most of his 40 years drinking tea with him in the canteen.

Bro Harrison also said a few words, saying that he left school at the age of 15 in 1964 and started working for Fred Dawes TV Rentals. After 3 years of hanging from chimney stacks he decided this was not for him. His father Ted, who had always been a baker would not let him go on the dole and got him a job working with him, so he started as a casual on the bread ovens at Price Bros who are now Greggs, and although he has worked for Greggs for 41 years he said he still felt like a casual.

From all of the No.4 Regional Council many, many congratulations.

Yours fraternally
Roy Streeter
 No. 4 Regional Officer

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NATIONAL PRESIDENT VISITS SPEEDIBAKE

BFAWU National President Ronnie Draper made a visit to Speedibake to look at the new autobake muffin plant. It is the largest autobake in Europe at cost of 6.5 million pounds.

From left to right: Paul Thresh, Ronnie Draper, Sandra Best, Carl Thorne, Makesh Mistry.



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COMPENSATION CLAIMS THREATENED

by Tom Jones, Thompsons Solicitors

Tom Jones examines the possible impact on union legal services of the Jackson review of civil litigation costs

Unions are facing a potentially devastating attack on their legal services under proposals being considered by one of Britain's top Judges.

One of the options being considered by Sir Rupert Jackson would deter thousands of union members from making claims against employers and their insurers.

As part of his review of civil litigation costs, Sir Rupert is considering whether to increase the "small claims" limit from £1,000 to either £2,500 or even £5,000.

What may seem a minor technicality, could have huge consequences for union members and anyone else making a "small claim".

Anyone making a claim in the small claims court has to pay legal costs out of their own pockets, even if they win. As a consequence many of them do not have legal representation.

In cases where **compensation** is above the small claims limit, courts can award costs to the winning side. This is the so-called "loser pays" principle. Because union lawyers usually win the cases they run, the principle makes it much easier for unions to fund litigation.

Increase in small claims

If the proposal is implemented, there would be a huge increase in the number of potential claims regarded as "small". That would mean far fewer claimants taking their cases to court for fear of incurring legal costs.

We estimate that an increase to £2,500 would free insurers from paying costs in around 50 per cent of union-backed **personal injury** cases.

Just because an injury claim is valued at less than £5,000 or £2,500, it doesn't mean that it requires less work to prove that someone such as an employer was liable for an injury.

And who says £1,000 is a "small" amount, let alone £2,500 or £5,000? The answer is well-paid Judges and insurers!

Lower value claims are as hotly contested by defendants as high value ones. Even now in the small claims court

defendant insurers routinely engage lawyers. They take the risk of having to pay the costs themselves out of their own deep pockets if they lose.

The claimant is very unlikely to be able to afford to do the same. To deny the injured party legal representation in this way would be a denial of access to justice and means there would be no equality between the parties.

Sir Rupert, a judge in the Court of Appeal, is carrying out the review because of what he says are "mounting concerns" that legal costs are too high.

Blocking tactics

But claimants' legal costs are often made much higher by the blocking tactics used by insurance companies' lawyers. Too often they delay the process, or even fight cases where they are clearly in the wrong.

And if the court believes that costs are too high in any particular case, it can demand an explanation – and if necessary a reduction. So why the fuss?

The review, carried out at the request of the Master of the Rolls, follows the media myth that there is a compensation culture in the UK. In fact, insurance companies, which helped to whip up the myth, are trying anything to stop accident victims and those made ill through their work from receiving compensation. Fewer cases means bigger profits for insurance companies.

Sir Rupert acknowledges that unions have said that they would not have the resources to deal with the huge increase in the number of claims their members would bring in the small claims court should the upper limit be increased. We believe that any significant rise in the small claims limit, would be a gift to employers and their insurers and a disaster for both union legal services and access to justice.

Sir Rupert's preliminary report also appears to have accepted insurance companies' arguments that there should be more take-up of before-the-event (BTE) insurance.

This is the legal expenses insurance that is added to motor and domestic insurance policies and which trade union members don't need.



The document suggests that it could become compulsory, like motor insurance.

BTE enables insurers to gain control of cases brought against them because the claimant who uses BTE to fund their legal claim is referred to a solicitor on an insurer's approved list. This means injured people will be herded off to lawyers who are reliant on insurers for their work.

Any extension of BTE will considerably undermine independent legal services and will also be bad for unions and their membership.

Union members already have a legal service dedicated to fighting for the maximum compensation. Why should they be made to pay for a service that is beholden to the insurance industry? They shouldn't be forced to use BTE.

The report is also enthusiastic about electronic (software based) assessment of **damages**. These computer programmes have been developed by insurers for insurers – and the only data on which they are based, comes from insurance companies.

Substantially lower

Defendant insurers are inevitably reluctant to admit when they have used such a programme, but it is often possible for Thompsons to spot when they have. The compensation offer is almost always substantially lower than our calculation and any increased offers appear to follow low and formulaic amounts.

There is a big business agenda at play here and Sir Rupert will need to show he has genuinely listened to all sides.

One thing is for sure, if some of the ideas and proposals in Sir Rupert's preliminary report are repeated in his final report (due in December) then there will have to be a serious fight to mitigate the impact on trade union legal services specifically and access to justice generally.

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FIGHTING GLOBAL POVERTY

LOVE FASHION . . . HATE SWEATSHOPS

Most of us love fashion. But the clothes we buy in the UK come at a terrible human cost. Millions of workers around the world suffer poverty wages and exploitation, producing cheap fashion for our high street shops. The buying practices of UK retailers have given us “fast fashion”. The idea is that the latest styles appear on the high street only six weeks after they first appeared on the catwalk and sold at prices that turn clothes into “disposable goods”. The problem is that so much of today’s fashion is still based on the exploitation of the people who make our clothes.

War on Want’s research into the conditions facing the workers who make our clothes in sweatshops in countries such as Bangladesh has made front page news and attracted attention nationwide. Published in 2006, the *Fashion Victims* report exposed the everyday reality of extremely low pay, poor working conditions, long hours and a complete lack of trade union representation in the factories. Two years later, when *Fashion Victims II* was published, the UK companies involved had still failed to make any improvements with garment workers still working up to 80 hours a week for as little as 7p an hour. Forced overtime is illegal in Bangladesh, yet the researchers revealed that this practice is still commonplace.

Lina began working in a garment factory at the age of 13. The oldest of eight children; her parents became unable to pay for her education when her brother became sick. She moved from her village to the Bangladeshi capital Dhaka to get a job and help them make ends meet. Now 22, she works in a factory that supplies Primark, Asda and Tesco. She is one of the lucky ones to have learned how to operate a sewing machine, and so can command a wage of £17 per month. To earn this amount, she must work between 60 and 90 hours each week. Lina earns far less than even the most conservative estimate of a living wage in Bangladesh, which is £22 per month.

In spite of the great success in raising awareness of the issue, it is not always clear what practical steps members of the UK public can take to end sweatshop labour abroad. Surely we should be able to shop without having to feel bad about the conditions in which our clothes are made. Consumer boycotts will only lead to job losses. The unfortunate truth is that even a bad job is better than no job for the poorest workers, often young women who have moved from the countryside to urban areas in order to earn money to send home to their families. Exploitation and harassment is rife. The work is exhausting, eventually crippling, yet often these jobs represent the only employment available for young women and men in the swelling cities of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Without it,



BFAWU General Secretary Joe Marino makes the point.

millions would face even worse destitution.

The UK government’s approach of supporting purely voluntary initiatives for improving the rights of overseas workers has shown that asking companies to regulate themselves just hasn’t worked.

This can’t go on. At the start of London Fashion Week in September, War on Want launched its **Love Fashion Hate Sweatshops** campaign. The campaign is supported by a mix of designers, trade unionists and celebrities and calls on the government to regulate companies in order to protect the rights of workers supplying UK companies. By regulating the business practices of UK retailers we want to ensure that overseas workers are guaranteed a living wage, decent working conditions and the right to join a trade union.

In the run-up to Christmas, War on Want is asking people to add their faces, names and voices to our campaign against sweatshops. Our aim is to have 50,000 people join our call for immediate government action. It’s an ambitious goal, but together we can bring an end to sweatshops and put an end to the exploitation of overseas workers.

We demand a fashion industry that respects workers’ rights. Our government must act now to protect the people who make our clothes.

Here’s how you can add your voice:

- 1 Add your name to our call <http://www.lovefashionhatesweatshops.org/page/s/TakeAction>
- 2 Submit your picture and personalised message to our Love Fashion Hate Sweatshops web gallery: <http://www.lovefashionhatesweatshops.org/page/s/YourPhoto>

Simply download and print the Love Fashion Hate Sweatshops banner. We’ll take these images, and your signature, to Downing Street.

- 3 Write to your MP asking them to support the campaign.
- 4 Contact War on Want for LFHS materials: action cards and posters: www.waronwant.org

*Jackie Simpkins is the trade unions officer at War on Want
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TONY RICHARDSON REPORTS . . .

LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE 2009 – DELEGATE'S REPORT

The Labour Party returned to Brighton this year, the delegation Ronnie Draper, Olive Molloy, Vi Carr & Myself all arrived on the Saturday night full of vigour and ready for another week of Labour Party soul searching!

After arriving on Saturday we attended the Community Union reception, this was also attended by Gordon Brown who gave his usual pre-conference speech, this year it was all about our position in the polls and the fact that we must fight right up to the election (had the party listened to some of us earlier we would not be in this position!!). The reception was once again well managed and gave all of us the opportunity to talk to colleagues from the Party and the Trade Unions.

During the week the usual speeches from Ministers & Party Candidates, furiously attacking the Tories and this time definitely setting out a General Election theme of "fighting" and "the election is not yet lost", I did agree that as a Party we must take the fight to the Tories but to me it all sounded a little jaded and after the horse had bolted.

Gordon Brown tried to rally the troops and didn't do too bad but many of the announcements were repeated ideas and some were a little late to say the least, he did start his speech by reeling off the many achievements of the Labour Government, Minimum Wage, Sure Start, Working Families Tax Credits, 5% Vat on Fuel, Increased Winter Fuel Allowance, Free Elderly Bus Travel, Increased Maternity Leave, Increased Paternity Leave, Improved Employment Rights, etc etc etc and I would ask that members try to keep these in mind when deciding next year.

The debates were once again very stage managed although I feel the party leadership are beginning to realise what they have done in terms of removing party democracy and so "turning off" many thousands of activists across the country, the very activists that the party will need in the fight that is to come, and they are very slowly starting to listen and take heed of what grass roots members are saying.

There were two points worthy of particular note firstly the "Left" had a great victory in persuading Conference into a rule change to elect members to the National Policy Forum by the One Member



one Vote system (OMOV) this was achieved very much in the face of massive opposition from the Labour Party machine but will mean that a more representative spread of delegates will emerge onto the policy forum as a result. (This may not seem so important to our members but that is because we in the Bakers Union enjoy this system on all ballots!!)

And second to many delegates surprise the prince of darkness himself (Peter Mandelson) came to conference and gave quite a good speech and managed to endear himself to the delegates!!! I was as surprised as anyone but will always remember that it was his & Blair's vision of New Labour that has brought the party to where we are today and we should never forget that.

Between us the delegation visited and networked with almost 40 of the exhibitors in the conference centre including Animal Welfare groups, Political Groups, Overseas Visitors, etc, we also attended Fringe meetings on the following issues, Labour Representation Committee, Venezuelan Information Centre, EU Referendum, Foreign Policy commission, Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, Community Safer Betting shops (at which Ronnie intervened and after spoke to Lord McKenzie to keep the pressure on his department for regulation on Working Temperatures)

As I have said many times on my reports once again it was an honour for us all as delegates & visitors to represent our Union & once again all the delegation worked hard on behalf of the Union arguing our cause and getting our message across at every opportunity, again the delegation worked and acted as a unit and I send my thanks for a busy but pleasant week with them all.

Tony Richardson

TUC 2009 – DELEGATE'S REPORT

The delegation to this years TUC Congress were Joe Marino, Pauline Nazir, Tony Richardson & due to Vi Carr not being able to attend the substitute delegate was Marilyn French

After arriving on the afternoon of Sunday 9th Sept in the evening we all attended The GFTU reception and as Joe is President of the GFTU he acted as the "master of Ceremonies". As usual the evening gave all in the delegation the opportunity to "network" and renew old friendships & we all made contributions to the evenings discussions.

During Congress this week we listened to the debates on all the major themes, NHS, Anti Racism & the far Right, Pensions, Public Services Health & Safety, Organising at work, Equal Rights, Economy & Manufacturing, The Environment & Energy, Employment rights, Transport, Education Learning & Skills, Vulnerable Workers, International Affairs, The Arts & The Media, Education, TUC Organisation & Campaigns & Communications.

Once again many of the debates were stage managed forgone conclusions and the bigger Unions had control of voting which in my mind detracts from the TUC but one of the highlights of the congress was the POA who once again asked for the TUC to organise a General strike to combat attacks on Public Services this was obviously defeated but not without an excellent debate. We heard a number of emergency resolutions including: Vestas, Sri Lanka, National Grid & Royal Mail.

Our Union had resolutions on Working Temperatures in which Pauline Nazir made an excellent contribution highlighting the serious issues our members suffer "at the coal face" & I spoke on Manufacturing.

We were addressed by a number of Government speakers Gordon Brown, Yvette Cooper & Ed Milliband, after Gordon Browns speech he took a number of questions, both Pauline and I tried to get called but we were not successful, during the speech by Ed Milliband there was a demonstration by Vestas wind farm workers which got a 5 minute standing ovation.

We also heard from Cath Speight (Labour Party), General Secretary of

CTC (Cuban workers), Amnesty UK, The AFL/CIO (by video link as Barack Obama made his address to their Congress).

During the week the delegation attended the following Fringe Events, LRC, TUCG (Which Joe Chaired), Defend Council Housing, among others and I spoke at the NO to the Irish referendum on the Lisbon treaty, giving them our support. The delegation again networked at the many exhibitions & stalls around conference in the interest of the Union including UIA, Labour Animal Welfare Society, ATL, TU Fund managers, POA etc.

For the conference our Union had supplied many of the stewards, we all met with these colleagues during the week including the Liverpool contingent they all did a great job and thanks to them all.

Once again the delegation represented the Union well we contributed to Congress and made our presence felt both inside the conference hall & outside and once again for me it was an honour to represent our Union I send my thanks to the rest of the delegation for an excellent week, we may not be the biggest or win all the debates but we are certainly listened to.

Tony Richardson

THE LABOUR PARTY IN FREE FALL? An opportunity for the Left?

Tony Richardson West Yorkshire

As colleagues will be aware the Labour Party over the past 2 years has seriously fallen from grace with the British public, from the days of real expectation in 1997 that ushered in the Blair phenomenon on a wave of optimism Labour is now low in the polls, is discredited amongst the voters & in real danger of losing the next General Election. This has been very hard to swallow for many activists on the left and inside Trade Unions as Labour has over these past 12 years contributed enormously to the well being of the British people, but that well being and significant benefits have been lost in the continuing bad policies, poor decision making and blind “Blair dogma” of the Blairite Labour machine.

Many of us “on the Left” have argued for a decade that the Party needed to take a different direction, produce the policies that the British people really want *and need* and Labour would now be flying high as they were back in 1997. If the Labour Party is anything it is the representative of working people, those ideals are our roots and that is where we need to return.

As the Blairite “hangers-on MPs” & the “Johnny –come –Lately members” one by one fall by the wayside our leaders in Downing street and on the NEC must understand that the way forward is actually to look backwards! We must stop trying to be the party of big business, the party of the privileged and re-establish our links with the people, rebuild local communities, regain the trust of Trade Unions & their members, and start to genuinely reconnect with our principles and core beliefs and then perhaps the people will start to respond and again believe that they are being represented by this great party.

This has been the cry in the wilderness from the Left for many years, the recent catastrophic disaster in the financial sector that has brought the world to its knees and cost us the tax payer eye watering sums of money in bank bailouts, shows that the capitalist system is fatally flawed and will eventually fail to the cost of everyone.

That is why we on the left in the Labour Party and members & activists in Trade Unions should now be asserting ourselves as vigorously as possible to ensure that the opportunity that this situation gives to the left is taken in both hands and used to ensure our party re-discovers itself and moves in the right direction.

This is what organisations on the left are already trying to do, the Labour Representation Committee, Centre Left Grass Roots Alliance, Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, Save the Labour Party, Defend Council Housing, Trade Unions, Trade Union Coordinating Group, Like minded MP’s, and many other political and non-political organisations are coming together & marshalling their forces in an attempt to ensure the political agenda in Britain works firmly in favour of the working class.

This *is* an opportunity for the Left, an opportunity to show the voters of Britain that there is an alternative and that alternative is the Labour Party, a Labour Party truly in tune with the aspirations of ordinary people, truly aware of the everyday problems and issues facing ordinary people, and generating policies and ideas that give real solutions and hope to those people.

Instead of supporting the bankers and financial institutions, *the very people that have brought our country to its knees* the Labour Government should be putting money in place aimed at saving and generating jobs, Instead of trying to sell off Royal Mail the Labour Government should be looking to take back into public ownership some of the failed private & privatised organisations (Failed Banks, National Express Rail etc) and instead of privatising our schools and reducing our welfare system the Labour Government should be looking to widen real opportunity & real possibilities to all regardless of wealth.

The opportunity to really change the face of British politics is now a reality and everyone should take that opportunity by getting involved at whatever level as a member of the Labour Party, as a member of a Trade Union, or as member of your local community, and put the pressure on Labour to change the direction of travel, look to the people, re-state the contract with the British electorate, *go forwards by looking back!* and then maybe, just maybe we can bring back the enthusiasm and the hope of 1997.

**SEASON'S
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VOTE AND
KEEP THE TORIES
OUT!**

ARE YOU BEING PROTECTED?

Sadiq Vohra, partner at MWR Solicitors, talks about employment rights for vulnerable workers.

The term ‘vulnerable workers’ is often misunderstood because it applies to a far wider range of situations than many people realise. Broadly speaking, vulnerable workers are defined as people with little knowledge of their rights, who find it hard to access advice and do not have the ability to protect themselves against rights abuses. Situations where the term can apply include:

- When only one person works on the premises, e.g. small workshops, petrol stations, kiosks
- People working in small groups in the retail industry
- People working separately from others, e.g. in factories, warehouses, leisure centres or fairgrounds
- People working outside normal hours, e.g. cleaners, security, special production, maintenance or repair staff.
- Service workers, e.g. rent collectors, postal staff, social workers, district nurses, pest control workers, drivers, engineers, sales representatives and care workers
- On construction, plant installation, maintenance and cleaning work, electrical repairs, lift repairs, painting and decorating, vehicle recovery etc
- Agricultural and forestry workers
- Migrant workers
- Workers in the transport industry

These situations all present potential hazards, such as accidents or emergencies arising out of inadequate provision of first aid, sudden illnesses, inadequate provision of rest, hygiene and welfare facilities, violence or aggression from members of the public, or safety issues surrounding the banking of cash.

Where the law stands

There are no specific legal duties on employers in relation to vulnerable workers. However, employers are under a general duty under Section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to maintain safe working arrangements. There are also a number of other regulations in place to protect workers.

The main question is whether the job can be done safely. The employer needs to show that workers are not exposed to extra risk and safety measures should take account of normal work and foreseeable

emergencies, e.g. fire, equipment failure, violence/aggression, illness and accidents. In particular, employers should consider:

- Does the workplace present a special risk to the workers?
- Is there a risk of violence (see below)?
- Are women especially at risk?
- Are young workers especially at risk?

A major cause for concern is whether the required action is taken to prevent workers from violence. In addition to providing personal alarms, the employer should have procedures in place to minimise the risk of violence from the public, for example, the elimination of handling cash, constant changes of route when transporting valuables, and adequate building security for out-of-hours working.

When a risk assessment shows it is not possible for the work to be done safely, arrangements for providing help or back-up should be put in place. Consideration should be given to the fact that women working alone are mainly at risk. Where the job involves a considerable risk of violence from the public, doubling the staffing levels will significantly improve security.

Employee’s duties

As an employee you have legal duties too. They include:

- Taking reasonable care for your own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by what you do or do not do
- Co-operating with your employer on health and safety
- Correctly using work items provided by your employer, including personal protective equipment, in accordance with training or instructions; and
- Not interfering with or misusing anything provided for your health, safety or welfare.
- To report any injuries, strains or illnesses you suffer as a result of doing your job (your employer may need to change the way you work)
- To tell your employer if something happens that might affect your ability to work (e.g. becoming pregnant or suffering an injury).
- If you drive or operate machinery, to tell your employer if you take medication that makes you drowsy - they should



temporarily move you to another job if they have one for you to do.

Helpline

The government has now set up a single helpline to give employers and employees advice on basic employment rights. The helpline has been developed in conjunction with employers, trade unions, and various government enforcement agencies, following recommendations from the Vulnerable Workers Enforcement Forum.

The new ‘Pay and Work Rights Helpline’ is free to call and provides advice on:

- National minimum wage
- The Working Time Directive
- Employment agency standards
- Agricultural minimum wage – agricultural workers have different rights from other workers. The helpline can provide advice on pay, hours and treatment.
- Licensing of gangmasters – if you work for a gangmaster you have employment rights.

The helpline is staffed by specialist advisers and information is passed to the relevant enforcement body to take further action where appropriate. The number to call is 0800 917 2368. Workers can also find out more about their rights via their Union Representatives and Union Solicitors.

For more information and advice speak to an expert at MWR Solicitors today in strictest confidence. Call 01772 254201 or visit www.mwrlaw.com



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Source: FT Advisor Magazine 15.09.09

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