



LAUNCHING FAST FOOD RIGHTS
DAY OF ACTION FEBRUARY 15TH



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EDITOR'S NOTES

**"IN MAY,
VOTE 'YES' TO
A VOICE"**

Ronnie Draper @ronniebfawu

SINCE MAY 2010 I, like many others, have been counting down the months to the next General Election. Now, with 15 months to go, it appears that we are on the homeward run – but realistically much damage can be done in that relatively short time.

In three and three quarter years the Tories, ably supported by their puppet Liberal Democrats, have devastated our NHS, restored the ethic of keeping a pool of unemployed workers to drive down wages, savaged the welfare state, destroyed our public services – all the while they have radically increased the worth of the very richest in our society.

Hundreds of thousands of people are now condemned to working for benefits, while the most unscrupulous employers exploit the system and swell profits with this constant stream of free labour.

The kids aren't alright

Then we have the housing problem that means that parents can't afford to let their grown-up children leave the family nest for fear of the dreaded Tory-induced Bedroom Tax and the kids can't leave because they can't afford to get onto the bottom rung of the housing ladder.

This problem is further exacerbated by the failure of successive governments to build affordable houses and this in turn has played directly into the hands of private landlords who can charge what they like when demand exceeds supply.

The list of attacks endured by working people over the last 33 months could easily fill the whole of this edition of the Foodworker and probably the next one and the one after that... and would only serve to add to the frustrations being felt by millions of families.

Irrespective of who is in power we seem to be fighting to try and stand still, but we must continue to fight if we are to gain any sort of justice.

In May 2014 we will be running our 10 yearly ballots to retain our Political Fund – with every member in England, Scotland and Wales being urged to vote 'YES' to retention. Introduced in 1984 by the Thatcher government, the political fund ballot was meant to encourage union members to rebel against donations to the Labour Party and therefore remove any political opposition to the Tory Party.

The list of attacks endured by working people could easily fill the whole of this edition of the Foodworker and probably the next one and the one after that...

Thankfully we have voted *three times* to keep our fund and with it, the ability to fight the good fight on behalf of our members and their families. This year we will have a different emphasis on political donations as the Labour Party seeks to change the influence of trade union members and instead hints at individual membership being the be all and end all of our democracy.

First Trade Unions then the Labour Party

They would do well to remember that the Labour Party was born out of the trade union movement and not the other way around. It was the trade unions that put Ed Miliband into power under the present voting system, but now the leadership believe it has flaws.

These will be major debates at the recalled Labour Party Conference in March when they will try to persuade us that the Collins report should be accepted. I personally believe it will be the biggest own goal the Labour Party has ever managed to inflict upon itself.

Irrespective of whether or not we accept or reject their findings, we still need to retain our political fund and with it the ability to campaign on behalf of our membership.

Labour is still our hope for the future

At present we are committed to using the Labour Party as our conduit to change, our passport to government ministers and our only hope for the future. Of course, if the Labour Party falls out of love with the trade union movement, then we must retain the ability to have our voice heard within government and the way to do this may be by forming our own coalitions with pressure groups, charities and sympathetic individuals who can move and shake in the corridors of power.

Everything we do in life is affected by the political system that we have inherited. From keeping the street lights on to the cost of funerals, our children's education to interest rates, crime levels to the ingredients in our food all have a political connotation that the union can have a say in.

WELL APPARENTLY, WE CAN ALL BREATHE A SIGH OF RELIEF –

The longest and deepest recession in recent history is over! The Condemns have finally achieved a return to growth back to near 2010 levels. At least that's what they're telling us. It's what the Daily Express is telling us as well, so it must be true.

I'd rather deal with facts.

Before the Coalition came to power, the UK economy was starting to grow again. Once David Cameron became Prime Minister by default in 2010, his government strangled the life out of that growth by increasing VAT and National Insurance, which in effect sent countless numbers of working people spiralling into debt. Wages have been cut and jobs axed to such a degree, that many have had to borrow in order to survive. In many cases, this has meant turning to predatory Payday Loan companies, like venture capitalist and major Conservative Party donor, Adrian Beecroft's Wonga. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation report recently commented that after decades of steadily reducing poverty, the tide has turned against low income families. So much for Cameron's claim that we are all sharing in the recovery! I think he must be referring to his inner circle of multi-millionaires and spivs.

NATIONAL PRESIDENT IAN HODSON

Despite the wealth of damning information that's readily available, politicians and certain sections of the media would now have you believe that we're living in some sort of Utopian Shangri La. They've clearly not spoken to BFAWU members employed at Hovis, Warburtons, Rathbones, Tangerine Foods, Bright Blue Foods, Maple Leaf, 2 Sisters and Greggs to name but a few, who have been thrown on the dole and/or been replaced by agency workers on zero hours contracts.

Instead of crowing about a drop in unemployment brought about through benefit sanctions, workfare and the aforementioned zero hour contracts, he should be hanging his head in shame for creating a massive pool of frightened and vulnerable workers, there to be exploited by ruthless and unscrupulous employers.

Politicians have failed the British people; they have failed to address inequality, failed to address the gulf in wages and living standards between those at the bottom and those at the top and failed to encourage the creation of genuine and sustainable jobs.

Employers who exploit workers terms and conditions, who cut pensions and who hire and fire at will, do so because the rotten government and their corrupt political policies allow it and that needs a trade union voice to reverse this heinous trend.

Say YES in May

So come May we want to get the biggest YES vote that we can muster. We want all our activists campaigning within their branches for a positive and overwhelming vote to retain our political fund. Remember, it is not about propping up any political party or any political system; it is about giving us a chance as working people to affect change.

With a bit of luck, a future Labour government will get the sense to abolish the need to conduct this 10 yearly ballot that puts a major hole in our funds and reduces our ability to support politicians of our choice.

If we really *must* ask a question of workers, let's ask them if they want to ballot the companies they work for, their insurance providers, bankers, fuel providers etc...

...if they want them to donate to the rotten to the core Conservative Party.

Ronnie Draper
General Secretary



They have systematically, deliberately and ideologically starved ordinary people of the opportunity to improve their lives. At a recent Prime Minister's Questions, David Cameron was faced with the issue of his policies having put a further 5 million workers on the breadline. He saw that as fair, as there had to be suffering in order to get the economy moving again.

Of course, the 'difficult decisions' and austerity measures laid down by his government don't apply to those who actually *created* the financial mess. The people ultimately saddled with the responsibility of paying the price for the follies of the financial sector are those who belong to the non-Tory donating sections of society – in other words, those who do not have the wealth or resources to resist any governmental attack.

They've even managed to deflect the blame onto unemployed people receiving £71 a week, under 25s receiving £56 a week, immigrants, the elderly and the disabled. They have used a combination of the tried and tested *divide and rule* and '*look over there*' politics, setting employed against unemployed, public sector against private sector, able-bodied against disabled, indigenous against immigrant and young against old.

The sad part is that many of these groups have fallen for the spin and engaged with the politics of hate and division while the usual suspects have scarpered with the loot and booty.

Perhaps we expect too much from our political classes. After all, when you consider that they claim expenses from the taxpayer to not only heat their first and second homes along with their stables, but also claim for travel, food, groceries and shopping, they surely can't be expected to understand the plight of others whose lives are hell on wheels as a result of their policies.

Let's look at how this recovery is working out – George Osborne has shifted a number of the further cuts that he intends to make until *after* the 2015 general election. If, as the government is telling us, we have just achieved an economic revival, why do we still need these cuts? The reality of this 'recovery' is that it amounts to the perpetuation of myths and figures plucked out of the air in order to create a 'feelgood factor' leading up to 2015 that they hope will ensure their re-election. Our downgraded Chancellor thinks that by 2015, we will have forgotten his statement that he should be judged on keeping Britain's 'Triple A' status – the status which was stripped from him last year.

Osborne also believes that he can get away with achieving a huge increase in the national debt by having borrowed more in three years than Labour did in thirteen. To put it into even more context, public debt was £85 million after the financial crash. Having bailed out speculators and bankers and protected the incomes of the wealthy, it now stands at a staggering £1.3 trillion.

All this being the case, the government aren't prepared to let the facts get in the way of ideology. Blaming the financial crisis on the last Labour government for the last four years has enabled the Coalition to savage employment rights, erode Health and Safety and even introduce charges for those who wish to take their employers to a tribunal.

Despite all of this, David Cameron's buddy, Rupert Murdoch is using his trashy newspapers and other media to tell us that we've all seen a real increase in pay and that we're all much better off.

I suppose that having convinced his readers that the financial crisis was caused by everyone other than greedy bankers, he feels he can convince them of *just about anything*.

Ian Hodson
National President



FAST FOOD RIGHTS – ACTION NOW!



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Early day Motion 2013-14 ref 1067

That this House notes that the fast food industry in the UK sees revenue of over £5 billion every year; further notes that the sector is dominated by multinational corporations delivering vast profits for their shareholders; is appalled that many employees in the industry are not paid a living wage and are employed on zero-hours contracts; believes that workers should be able to join a trade union without fear of recrimination from employers; welcomes the initiative of the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union which, together with other campaign groups, has launched a Fast Food Rights campaign for workers in the industry; further notes that the campaign will be calling for a day of action on 15 February 2014 at branches of McDonald's UK, Burger King and Costa Coffee on London's Oxford Street; and calls for the management of the companies concerned to enter into meaningful discussions with the union over pay, conditions and trade union representation in their outlets.

Tabled by John McDonnell 10.02.2014

date: 14 February 2014
embargo: for immediate release

TUC

Attention: industry, economic, political
correspondents
2 pages

Fast food and zero hours contracts

On the 15th of February, the BFAWU and other like-minded organisations have instigated a day of action to raise the issue of justice for those working in the fast food industry. The aim is to end the exploitation of workers and the use of zero hour contracts, and to improve the pay of those working in this hugely profitable industry.

As part of the day of action, campaigners will be gathering around various fast food outlets around the country, including Newcastle, to highlight the increasing culture of zero hours contracts, low pay and unstable employment for the predominantly young workers in the fast food industry.

Alan Milne, BFAWU said, "We are calling on all of these massive, global fast-food companies to stop this shameful worker exploitation and instead ensure that their employees are provided with proper contracts of employment, with wages that mean they don't have to depend on benefits in order to exist. We also want to show these vulnerable workers that they are not alone and that what they are experiencing is not acceptable."

Beth Farhat, Northern TUC Regional Secretary said, "It speaks volumes that recent announcements from some of the largest and most profitable fast food chains regarding their use of unpaid labour and prolific use of zero hours contracts seem to have flown under the radar and gone unreported in the mainstream media. It would appear that forcing workers into poverty and having them rely on benefits to pay for basics such as rent and food is quite acceptable in David Cameron's 'big society' Britain. This is where trade unions prove themselves still every bit as

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TUC Press Release
14 February 2014

BFAWU PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

Chair: John McDonnell MP
Vice-chairs: David Crabb MP, Linda Riordan MP

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - 12/2/14

MPs back union campaign targeting Fast Food giants. Members of Parliament have lent support to the Fast Food Rights campaign, launched by the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union together with a number of campaigning groups, by signing **Early Day Motion 1067** in the House of Commons.

The motion has been tabled ahead of the campaign's first day of action (February 15) which will target the flagship McDonalds, Burger King and Costa Coffee outlets on London's Oxford Street, whilst similar demonstrations will be held in cities across the country.

Tabled by BFAWU Parliamentary Group Chair John McDonnell MP, the motion notes that 'the fast food industry in the UK sees revenue of over £5 billion every year' and that 'the sector is dominated by multinational corporations delivering vast profits for their shareholders'.

The MPs say they are 'appalled that many employees in the industry are not paid a living wage and are employed on zero-hours contracts' and argue that 'workers should be able to join a trade union without fear of recrimination from employers'. They go on to call for 'management of the companies concerned to enter into meaningful discussions with the union over pay, conditions and trade union representation in their outlets.'

BFAWU Parliamentary Group
Press Release 12 February 2014

FAST FOOD RIGHTS – ACTION NOW!

PREPARATION

CAMPAIGN ARTWORK



**BAKERS
FOOD
AND ALLIED
WORKERS
UNION** BFAWU
STRENGTH IN UNITY

You have rights to:

- A minimum wage: www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates
- 28 days holiday if full time (or a % if part time)
- Time off for study if you are 16 or 17
- Paid time off for women during and after pregnancy
- Paid paternity and adoption leave
- Maximum 48 hour week with breaks in the working day
- Not to be unfairly dismissed and to get redundancy pay (after 2 years work)

*Fighting for
your rights at
work*



**CAMPAIN
LEAFLETS**

FAST FOOD RIGHTS – ACTION NOW!

GFTU PLEDGES SUPPORT FOR BFAWU FAST FOOD RIGHTS CAMPAIGN

The General Federation Of Trade Unions has responded to the BFAWU campaign for rights in the fast food industry by pledging support from the organisation.

GFTU General Secretary, Doug Nicholls said: "I was pleased to hear that the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union is leading the campaign to organise workers in the fast food outlets. These companies have been exploiting workers for too long without any opposition. They seem to be more interested in a fast buck than fast food and good employment practice". He went on to say: "Anything we can do at the GFTU to support this campaign, we will".

This pledge comes hot on the heels of support being offered by the Southern and Eastern Region Trades Union Congress (SERTUC) who intend to bring a number of people down to the day of action on February 15th along with banners.

DECLARATIONS OF SUPPORT

Fast Food Rights is supported by Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union (BFAWU), Unite the Resistance, Disabled People Against Cuts (DPAC), Youth Fight for Jobs and the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) and other campaigning organisations.

Fast Food Rights Campaign and Day of Action on February 15th

The Fast Food Rights campaign, a newly launched initiative supported by John McDonnell MP, has called a day of action on Saturday 15 February under the banner 'Hungry for Justice'.

Ian Hodson, national president of BFAWU, said, "This campaign is about bringing to an end the heinous zero hours contracts in operation across the industry. It is about people receiving pay that they can live on; it is about fighting for a pay rise for workers. We are talking about hugely profitable companies here – they can afford to pay their workers a decent wage."

In London the day of action will see activists assemble at 1pm outside the McDonald's on the corner of Tottenham Court Road and Oxford Street to raise awareness about workers' rights and highlight the need for union organisation. Events will also take place elsewhere in the country on 15 February. Details will be announced on the campaign's website.

Campaigners will be building support for the day of action amongst fast food workers in the run up to 15 February. The first Fast Food Rights organising meeting following the day of action will take place on Monday 24 Feb, 6pm @ ULU, Malet St, London.

An upsurge of protests and strikes in up to 100 cities in the US by fast food workers burst through at the end of 2013, showing the potential for unionising in the industry. This movement highlighted a stark situation, where more than half of the US fast food industry's 3.65 million workers rely on benefits to top up their income, and 68 percent are the main breadwinner in their household.

In the UK, we've seen the extent of the scandal of zero hours contracts exposed, while the UK take away and fast foods industry raked in total revenue of £5 billion. In 2012, fast food chains in the UK saw sales rise to a staggering £6.9 billion. Yet for example, McDonald's, the leading player in the UK industry, boosts its mega profits through forcing 90 percent of its workforce to live on zero hours contracts. And despite the huge profits made by these corporations, the average fast food worker in the UK earns just £5 an hour according to PayScale figures in January 2014.

Fast food workers need strong unions so they can fight collectively for decent pay, secure contracts and respect. The day of action on 15 February will mark the beginning of a battle that will take on the multinationals that dominate the fast foods industry, ensure workers know their rights, and open the door to organising fast food workers into unions.

John McDonnell said "Work in fast food restaurants for many people means low pay, insecure employment and poor employment conditions. We are launching this campaign to recruit fast food workers into a trade union so that we can secure decent pay and conditions. We call upon trade unionists to join us in our day of action."

THE DAY FEBRUARY

JOHN McDONNELL
AND IAN HODSON GET
THE DAY UNDERWAY IN
LONDON



AT THE SAME TIME IN LEEDS



... AND IN SCOTLAND

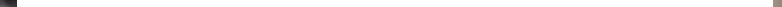


OF ACTION 15TH 2014

... AND IN WIGAN



A VOICE FOR YOUTH



OUR FIRST DAY OF ACTION Report from *Unite the Resistance*

Saturday 15 February saw the first day of action to launch the Fast Food Rights campaign.

In London, around 50 campaigners turned out. Alongside BFAWU, John McDonnell and the campaigns supporting Fast Food Rights, there were trade unionists from other industries and sectors with high levels of casualisation, such as construction and higher education, who have been involved in union drives and fighting zero hours contracts.

The protest hit McDonald's, Costa Coffee and Burger King stores, raising demands over pay, conditions and the right of fast food workers to organise in unions, while inside the stores activists leafleted workers about the campaign's meeting on Monday 24 February and joining the union.

Protests elsewhere saw dozens of campaigners join the day of action. In Birmingham, activists report that they targeted every McDonald's, Burger King and Costa in the city centre. In Wigan, all fast food, bakery shops and cafe chains were paid a visit. The day of action also saw protests take place in Brighton, Sheffield, Leeds, Newcastle, Barnsley and Cardiff.

Keep an eye on the Fast Food Rights website for future meetings and events.

Morning Star FAST FOOD STAFF SERVE UP ACTION

Underpaid and overworked – workers want a taste of justice



... WE EVEN MADE THE PAPERS!

YOUNG MEMBERS REPORT FEBRUARY 2014

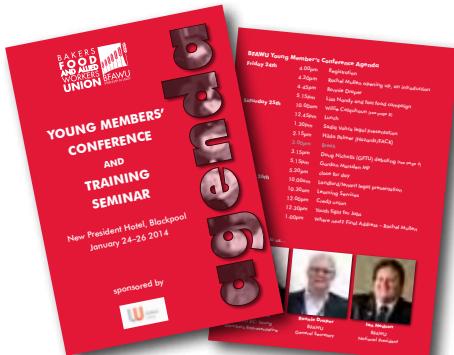


RACHEL MULLEN – whose hard work and enthusiasm made the event possible as well as informative and enjoyable – reports on the YOUNG MEMBERS CONFERENCE

Below:

Rachel, Sarah Woolley and Chris Lay pose with **Lisa Nandy MP, Gordon Marsden MP** and some of the delegates.

SINCE THE LAST FOODWORKER we have had quite a historical event happen within our union – our first ever *Young Member's Conference and Training Seminar*.



This was held in Blackpool from the 24th–26th January with a range of guest speakers and activities.

Our guest speakers included Lisa Nandy MP (Wigan), Gordon Marsden MP (Blackpool), Hilda Palmer (Hazards), Doug Nicholls (GFTU), Willie Colquhoun, Pauline Nazir, Ronnie Draper, Kendra Walker and Karen Plasom (all BFAWU), Alan Kenny from *Unite the Resistance*, and Claire Laker-Mansfield from *Youth Fight for Jobs*.

Our sponsors, **Walkers Union Solicitors**, gave a number of interesting and insightful presentations – specifically intended for our young members and young workers

Overall, I feel that the conference went smoothly and well for a first event – we gave out feedback forms at the end and everyone said that they had enjoyed the event overall. The parts that they enjoyed the most were the role play and group discussions.

The delegates pointed out that they enjoyed the opportunity to speak to, and ask questions to a range of different people from different organisations, – speaking to different activists and delegates they hadn't met before.

Doug Nicholls ran the role-play session which was basically about negotiating *terms and conditions*: three delegates were the employers or owners of the business and the other delegates were the employees – they had to negotiate terms and conditions as the owners wanted to reduce them as the company wasn't doing very well.

The delegates enjoyed this as I think it was a new experience to them. Not many, if any, had ever been involved with any form of pay or terms and conditions negotiations, so I think it was good for them to get involved and learn about it.

Another interactive session which I think was enjoyable for the delegates was the **Learning Services** presentation and activities. First they gave a short presentation about what they do and what is available for members.



I don't think they realised that there were so many different courses on offer through the learning services.

Then everyone's competitive side came out with the next two activities: *Base 7 maths quiz* (which I still don't fully understand but John Fox was great at it!) and the first ever *Unionversity challenge*, which was great fun – even more fun as I got to join in with the rest of the delegates. We were split into 2 teams and we had to answer questions relating to the weekend and what we had learned, and everyone got a certificate (presented by a distinguished guest – as you can see below) for joining in which I think was good as everyone felt included, whether they won or lost.



Also on the questionnaire, there was a question that asked delegates whether the weekend was more or less likely to want them to go to National Conference and it is great to see that the weekend had made them more interested in being a delegate or a guest.

I believe that **Willie Colquhoun** will have been largely responsible for this as he gave a great session on what National Conference is, what it does, who goes there, and about how motions work. Sometimes I think that we forget that not everyone in the union knows what Conference is and what goes on there so it was good to hear that delegates had a better understanding of this and actually want to attend to have their say and offer their inputs into debates.

Delegates also want to get involved with being *Representatives*, whether as Health and Safety reps, shop floor or as learning reps. I think it is great that our young members are getting interested and want to be further involved with the union beyond membership as this is what it's about, getting young people active, and getting other young workers joined up and involved with the union as well.

As this was a first time event we are, of course, aware that there are bits and pieces we could improve on if this event were to happen again in future and as delegates did give their feedback we now know what would make future events better and can take that information forward with us.

Overall I think that we as a union are on the right track for attracting young members. The delegates pointed out that what we are currently doing is good, but we just need to *promote* it more, whether this be through leaflets, campaigns, social media (perhaps twitter as we already have the facebook page), a few even suggested having a young members stand at Conference.

I would personally like to thank **Sarah Woolley** and **Chris Lay** for their support and for chairing some parts of this brilliant event. To everyone who helped organise it, whether it was telling members about it or setting the room up or just helped in any way – *thank you*.

I would also just like to point out that this event wouldn't have been possible without the support and help from **Walkers Union Solicitors**. On behalf of the young members I would like to thank them and also the union for allowing us this great opportunity to engage and learn, and *I hope this will be the first of many opportunities like this*.

Rachel Mullen
Young EC rep



Hilda Palmer of HAZARDS and Families Against Corporate Killers (FACK)
addressing YM Conference



Alan Kenny of Unite the Resistance addressing YM Conference

BFAWU YOUTH CONFERENCE

THE FIRST EVER BFAWU YOUTH CONFERENCE sponsored by **Walkers Union** was held in Blackpool. We had some fabulous guest speakers talking on a range of different issues but all affecting youth.

We had a talk on Credit Unions and their importance. BFAWU has one of the best Credit unions around, offering low interest rate loans whilst also creating savings for yourself.

Gordon Marsden MP and Lisa Nandy MP also joined us for a Question and Answer session. They were grilled on all aspects of youth and politics including questions like '*is Ed Milliband right leader for Labour?*' and '*is Tony Blair a war criminal?*'. As good MPs do, they answered each question on its own merit without getting themselves into a jam. What I enjoyed was that they were honest with their answers and didn't hide.

We also had a session on the importance of Conference. A lot of our youth haven't been to conference, so this was important to show delegates how motions work and what the *protocol* is at Conference. Our union helps more young people to conference by allowing an extra youth delegate per branch. We feel this is important to allow more youth to get involved in the union.

We had excellent sessions from our solicitors talking about all things affecting youth, including working time regulations, health and safety, age discrimination and also tenancy agreements.

We also had the excellent Hilda Palmer from Hazards talking about diminishing Health and Safety within the workplace and how Mr Cameron has allowed corporations and businesses to flout Health and Safety principles by cutting down the so-called '*Red Tape*'.

Doug Nicholls from GFTU had possibly the best session by getting us to do a role play about negotiation – exploring *what* and *who* affects them. For the people who had to play the role of the company directors, it was hard work as they were used to fighting *against* the company and saving jobs, not *vice versa*!

It was a great way to finish off the day, but also got the group thinking about negotiations.

We also had speeches from Alan from *Unite the Resistance* and also Claire from *Youth Fight for Jobs* talking about the impossible situation youth have been put in. The price of Higher Education is stopping youth from going to college and university.

We also talked about the new campaign the BFAWU has started called **Fast Food Rights**. This is to stop the exploitation of fast food workers within the UK. It includes an Action Day across the country on the 15th February. For more info, see www.bfawu.org

The Youth Conference was a great success and hopefully it will be the first of many. The delegation showed how bright the future looks for the BFAWU.

Chris Lay



CHRIS LAY gives a delegate's view



Claire Laker-Mansfield of Youth Fight for Jobs addressing YM Conference



YOUTH FIGHT FOR JOBS

WHAT'S IT LIKE LIVING IN CON-DEM BRITAIN? Many of us want to obtain a university education to give ourselves the best start in life. If the £9,000 tuition fees don't price us out, the £50,000 debt surely will. That's if we can even get to university. EMA, the grant paid to the poorest college students was cut when the Con-Dem government were elected.

How about getting a decent job? Not likely. Almost 1million of us are out of work, what an indictment of the current system! If we're lucky enough to find a job, the only ones created for young people today are most likely zero-hour and minimum wage.

Sh*tted!

If we're out of work, young people receive less benefit. If we're in work; the minimum wage is set at a much lower rate. The only things not cut are our rents, bills and living costs! All the doors to young people's future are being closed – we're shafted no matter whether we're working, unemployed, or studying.

On a grand scale, the global economic crisis is wasting the talents of young people. Around the world 290 million young people are unemployed and almost a quarter (23 per cent) across the EU are out of work.

It doesn't have to be like this!

Youth Fight for Jobs was formed in 2009 to fight against rising tide of youth unemployment because none of the main political parties were taking the issue seriously. Since then we have organised countless protests to address the issues facing young people.

The Con-Dem government, after 4 years of brutal austerity, has tried to start claiming we're now entering the 'recovery'. But where is the recovery for us? Profits soar while workers and young people suffer. Even throughout George Osborne's so-called recovery, wages are falling and the only jobs being created are likely to be zero-hour and low-pay, driving young working people even deeper into poverty.

But we don't have to accept the lot we are dealt. We're inspired by what's happening in the USA. The massive growth of insecure, precarious employment has been met with strikes by fast-food workers. They've demanded **\$15/hour minimum wage** to reflect the real cost of living. In Seattle, this helped propel Socialist Alternative's Kshama Sawant, to election in the city council, winning more than 93,000 votes.

In 2013, Youth Fight for Jobs launched the 'Are you Sick of your Boss?' initiative to tackle under-employment and fight zero-hour contracts. Armed with leaflets, we've marched straight into shops and handed them to staff.

The ConDems have defended their enormous welfare cuts by labelling many unemployed and disabled people as 'scroungers'. The latest example is Channel 4's '**Benefits Street**', siding with the rabid Tory media to demonise people on benefits. Zero-hour and poverty pay contracts blow apart the government's lie on welfare cuts. Many new benefit claimants are in work, but with barely enough hours to survive. If you're on a zero-hour contract, it makes it almost impossible to claim benefits, as you don't know from one week to the next how many hours you will work and how much you'll be paid.

What do we need?

We need a united campaign of workers, the unemployed, and students to stop austerity attacks on welfare and reverse the race to the bottom.

Although some companies see a unionised workforce as a threat to profits, getting organised is the only lasting solution to ensure decent jobs with proper contracts.

Youth Fight for Jobs is supporting the Bakers, Food, and Allied Workers Union in a new campaign to replace fast food exploitation with '**Fast Food Rights!**' The campaign has the potential to bring fast food workers into the unions, strengthening them and the fight for all workers' rights.

In the USA, the chant rang loud and clear '**\$15/hr and a Union!**'. Wildcat strikes transformed the political debate. Here in Britain we demand a real living wage of **at least £10 a hour** for all workers, the right to get organised without facing bullying or victimisation and replacing zero-hour contracts with secure permanent jobs. Bosses see workers' rights as inconvenient luxuries the profit system can ill afford. Fast Food Rights can put them on every worker's lips and into every contract.

The Financial Times newspaper said that if we want capitalism, then we're going to have to put up with zero-hour contracts, young people have to 'lower their expectations'. **We say that if the capitalist system can't afford decent work, we can't afford capitalism.**

Ian Pattison, Youth Fight for Jobs



Whose crisis is it anyway?

We're in the middle of one of the worst economic crises that capitalism has ever seen. 'Tough economic times' are often used as an excuse to attack workers' rights. Ordinary people didn't create the economic crisis. It was the bankers and big business – but it is workers and young people who are paying the price. Under successive governments, workers' rights have been undermined and attacked to the point where zero-hour contracts are more and more the norm. *Unite the Union's* survey demonstrating that 5.5million people in Britain today are on zero-hour contracts cannot be emphasised enough.

In driving down wages and work conditions, big business is taking a lead from the savage £95 billion budget cuts being made by the Con-Dem coalition.

Sanitising Mandela



NO DOUBT LIKE MANY OF YOU I've been thinking a lot about Nelson Mandela. I've also been thinking about how his life and death affects our political fortunes both at home and further afield.

As a young black man, on the edge of political consciousness, the anti-apartheid movement and the political left became one and the same to me. It was overwhelmingly the left that allied itself to the ANC cause. Ultimately it was one of the defining factors that allowed me to work out where my politics lay.

“Overcoming poverty is not a task of charity, it is an act of JUSTICE”

Nelson Mandela

Apartheid was the manifestation of a racist ideology. One that had its roots in slavery, empire and post-colonialism. It affected the lives of millions of people including myself and my family here in the UK.

A Hero of our Time – to the Right?
For as long as Apartheid was tolerated and allowed to flourish by Thatcher, Regan and their like, there could be no real and lasting race equality in either Soweto or Solihull.

So it bothers me deeply when the political right seek to bask in the light of a man, who throughout his life opposed so much of what they stand for.

“Nelson Mandela was a hero of our time,” intoned David Cameron, who went off on a junket to apartheid South Africa in 1989, with all expenses paid by a firm lobbying against sanctions.

“President Mandela was one of the great forces for freedom and equality of our time” declared George W Bush, neglecting to mention the ANC were still on a US terror-watch list until 2008 and Dick Cheney was voting against resolutions calling for his release.

“Death of a Colossus,” was the headline in a recent Daily Mail article, yet it marked his 1990 release with “*The violent homecoming*” – “*Violence and death disfigured the release of Nelson Mandela yesterday ...*”.

But it's not just their hypocrisy that bothers me – much more important, it's their land grab for his political and historical legacy.

Mandela's legacy

The world's powerful understand that Mandela's legacy and message, as relating to the downfall of injustice, is a potential danger to their own hegemony. He was a freedom fighter. He challenged the established order and he won.

At a time when our planet is burning, where vested interests seem untouchable and corporate greed and power makes a mockery of democracy, Mandela's appeal is a powerful one.

Mandela's life was a journey. The powerful, who do not want to see change, wish us to see him as a sanitised, saintly, establishment figure who through his

kind and gentle way achieved the end of Apartheid. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Hard fought economic sanctions and for a time armed struggle and later the threat of it, as well as mass protest and unrest, played its part. It was this, in conjunction with his later peaceful approach, that brought Apartheid to its knees – and rightly so.

The inconvenient truth

The wider struggle, like his own life, has many facets, some of them darker than others. The powerful must not be allowed to sanitise the entirety of that struggle in the public's consciousness. Throughout his life Mandela took cause with injustice and wrong – from Iraq and Afghanistan through to Israel, Palestine and the immorality of poverty.

The world's powerful will want to paper over these inconvenient truths. Therefore we ourselves should not get carried away with his ‘saintliness’ and in so doing let them rewrite history and reframe his life and very human struggle, to suit their own ends.



Reflections on the aftertaste of Mandela's death from

CLIVE LEWIS

Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Norwich South Labour



The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work – Gender Issues at Work

THE AGENCY HAS PRODUCED a new report this year which presents an update to its previous research on gender issues at work which found that inequality both inside and outside of the workplace can have an effect on the health and safety of women at work.

Women make up 45% of the employed population in the European Union. Men and women are not the same and the jobs they do, the working conditions and how they are treated by society are not the same. These factors can affect the hazards they face at work and the approach that needs to be taken to assess and control them.

Exposures, health problems and occupational diseases

The occupational health risks of female workers tend to relate to their exposure to material, physical and ergonomic hazards, as well as intimidation and discrimination at work.

These types of exposures are especially high for women who work in agriculture, hotels, restaurants and catering, transport and manufacturing. Women in the manufacturing sector also report high rates of exposure to vibrations, which is a risk not normally attributed to 'female' workplaces. Although initially it may seem that male workers are more exposed to specific risks than their female counterparts, because female workers are segregated largely into fewer sectors and often perform different tasks from men, they may be more exposed in some instances than their male colleagues.



Sarah Woolley gives us an update on the latest EASHW Report

On average substantially more male (43 %) than female (25 %) workers have to carry or move heavy loads at work. However, the exposure to jobs involving lifting or moving people has a higher prevalence among female workers (11.1 %) than among male workers (5.8 %) and is of course one of the main factors in health and homecare.

One of the risk factors for which exposure of women remains under assessed is noise at work, which continues to contribute to a high proportion of occupational diseases, mainly recognised for male workers. Generally, women appear to be more exposed to medium levels of noise, with

the exception of known high-noise sectors such as textile and food production. Moreover, women are occasionally exposed to sudden and disturbing noise, which can be considerably higher than for male workers. This is particularly the case for the female-dominated education, health, hotel, restaurant and catering and social sectors, as well as for jobs in call centres and other offices. A high proportion of women in these sectors report tinnitus, and a considerable proportion also suffer voice disorders. Noise levels may be high in some occupations, such as work in nurseries and primary schools, in emergency wards of hospitals or in school workshops, where they may be above the permissible occupational exposure limits. Medium- and high-level noise may also lead to circulatory diseases and contribute to work-related stress.

Generally, at first glance, male workers seem to be more exposed to vibration than their female counterparts. However, as female workers are more segregated into fewer sectors and often perform different tasks from men, the data should be extracted by sectors and occupations. When specifically assessed, 30 % of female workers are exposed to vibration in manufacturing. Female workers may also be exposed to high noise levels and ergonomic risks, as well as accidents involving machinery in the relevant sectors, for example agriculture, food production and the textiles industry which are often overlooked as they aren't traditionally female jobs therefore prevention measures aren't then put into place.



Mental health problems

Across the EU there is an observed trend of increasing absenteeism and early retirement due to mental health problems, particularly in relation to stress and depression. Women are particularly affected by this trend. **The Mental Health Foundation (2007)** suggests that women are particularly exposed to some of the factors that may increase the relative risk of poor mental health because of the role and status that they typically have in society. Some of the key social factors that may affect women's mental health include:

- More women than men act as the main carer for their children and other dependent relatives – affecting emotional and physical health, social activities and finances.
- Women often juggle multiple roles – they may be mothers, partners and carers, as well as being employed in paid work and running a household.
- Women are over-represented in low-income, low-status jobs (often part-time) and are more likely than men to live in poverty.
- Poverty, working mainly in the home on housework and concerns about personal safety can make women feel particularly isolated.
- The characteristics of their work, lack of career progression, multiple jobs, work intensification and lack of autonomy contribute to higher strain and stress levels

Research from the European Commission shows that, even by 1995, women accounted for close to or above half of all cases of work-associated ill health including:

- | | |
|--|-----|
| ● Allergies | 45% |
| ● Infectious illness | 61% |
| ● Neurological complaints | 55% |
| ● Hepatic and dermatological complaints | 48% |

This situation has not improved even now – which after nearly 20 years I find really shocking.

For 'women's jobs' such as those in health and social services, retail and hospitality sectors there is a flattening out in accident rates in some countries and women are more likely to be bullied, harassed, subject to sexual harassment and have to use poorly-fitted personal protective equipment that is not usually sized for a smaller frame. This is unacceptable, not to mention dangerous.

Work-related risks for women have been greatly underestimated and neglected compared to men's – in both research and prevention. This imbalance must be addressed. Continuous efforts are needed to improve the working conditions of both men and women. Taking a gender neutral approach in policy and legislation is not working. Instead it has contributed to less attention and fewer resources being directed towards preventing work-related risks to women.

European health and safety directives do not cover (predominately female) domestic workers or women partners of men in family businesses – nor the ever-increasing amount of women turning to informal work. These groups of women are particularly vulnerable as the jobs/work they are doing are likely to be unstable, unprotected and precarious.

The fact that women are underrepresented in decision-making concerning occupational safety and health at all levels is definitely a concern and has been highlighted by the report. Women should be more directly involved and their views and experiences, knowledge and skills should be reflected in formulating and implementing occupational safety and health strategies.

This is just part of the extensive report which covers a range of factors affecting occupational safety and health issues for women throughout the European Union to read the report in full visit the website: osha.europa.eu

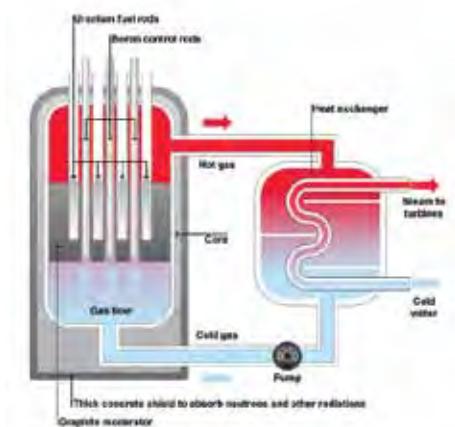
Sarah Woolley

IN THE UNITED KINGDOM WE HAVE SIXTEEN NUCLEAR REACTORS IN USE AND ALL BUT ONE IS TO BE DECOMMISSIONED BY 2024.

Nuclear power has been around since the end of the Second World War. Uranium was first discovered in 1789 by Martin Klapoth, a German chemist, but it wasn't until the end of the 19th Century that research took off. In 1896, Pierre and Marie Curie gave this strange force the name *radioactivity*. Two years later, Samuel Prescott showed that radiation destroyed bacteria in food.

At the beginning of the 20th Century work started on trying to get energy out of Uranium. From this research came the splitting of the atom and the atomic bomb. After the war, research focussed again on using the energy from uranium – nuclear reactors came into operation.

How It Works



Uranium fuel is loaded into the reactor and atoms split apart, releasing neutrons which in turn split other atoms – creating intense heat in a controlled nuclear reaction.

Control rods made of cadmium or boron absorb neutrons and are raised or lowered to slow down or speed up the chain reaction. A coolant is constantly pumped through the reactor to collect the heat energy.

Water is pumped through a heat exchanger and rapidly changes to superheated steam. It is this steam which is piped to a turbine connected to an electricity generator.



The reactor is, in fact, a gigantic kettle. The generator produces the electricity that goes into the power grid – to our homes and workplaces.

Fukushima in Japan (2011) was a freak natural disaster – a major earthquake ruptured the compound and the following tsunami hit the site and devastated the area. Massive radiation leaks endangered the surrounding settlements.

Many people died directly as a result of these (and other) disasters while many more contracted incurable diseases. Some are still suffering and have lost the quality of life they deserve.

Although the United Kingdom is not known for Tsunamis, two or three have been identified – the last in 1755 as a result of the Lisbon Earthquake.

Earthquakes, on the other hand, are relatively frequent in the United Kingdom but rarely cause damage to well-constructed structures. However, with the emergence of *Fracking*, this could change as the process breaks up the ground deep below us.

In the United Kingdom, waste was originally dumped into the Irish Sea from Sellafield nuclear plant and reports of catches of mutated fish were the norm from the Irish fishermen. This turned the Irish Sea into one of the most radioactive bodies of water in the world. Sellafield has been dumping radioactive waste since 1952, so sea plants, shellfish and fish now contain a substantial amount of radiation.

Costs

The coalition has signed contracts with French companies EdF and Areva and Chinese companies CGN and CNNC, for a new nuclear plant at Hinkley Point, in the Southwest of England for £16 billion. The contract guarantees an agreed price of £92.50pmwh plus inflation (double the current market rate). If the price falls below this, the government agrees to pay the difference to the guaranteed level. I believe that this will be US – paying it through our taxes or a levy on our energy bills.



Nuclear or Renewable?

Peter John Fox looks at the arguments

Nuclear Waste Disposal

The waste from nuclear power is of great concern to the general public, both in handling and storage.

There are three degrees of nuclear waste: *Low*, *Intermediate* and *High*.

- **Low level waste** is stored for up to fifteen years in secure storage, then packed and disposed of.
- **Intermediate level** is contained in steel drums, kept in concrete trenches over at least 60 feet deep then covered by a concrete slab and a thick layer of clay on top of it. Some intermediate waste must be stored at over 100 metres.
- **High level waste** is extremely radioactive and remains so for thousands of years. There is a major concern for the safe storage of this kind of waste.

Radioactive liquid waste is mixed with glass to form a solid compound, to prevent leaks. They are then stored indefinitely in deep caves or caverns.

Dangers

The dangers are shown through history. In 1986 at **Chernobyl** (Ukraine) a whole town had to be evacuated following a nuclear accident and the government still won't let anyone return without special permits. They are still monitoring the surrounding areas for radioactivity.

Nuclear versus Renewables

There is no need now for any extra nuclear power facilities – given the expansion of wind and solar capacity. Nuclear may share the low carbon footprint of these sources of energy – but wind and solar power do not present the dangerous safety hazards that nuclear power has shown to involve.

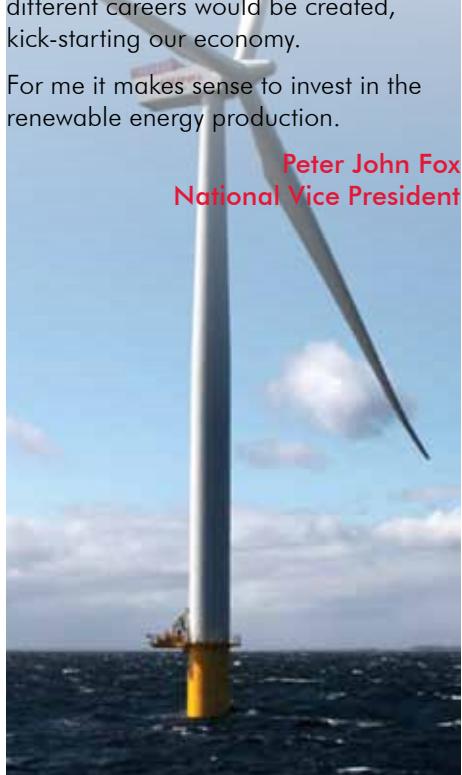
- Wind power plant technology is more cost and time effective. They only take about a year to build, whereas nuclear plants take over 10 years to build.
- There would be no need for fossil fuels to be used, another saving in the cost of the products.
- There would be no deadly waste to dispose of or to store away for thousands of years deep underground.

The energy produced could still be used as electricity, stored into large batteries for future use or even, through a simple process, it could be changed into a gas which could be stored in tanks. A small amount of energy is lost in this process but it would only be used if a large excess of energy could not be stored in the batteries.

With these renewables it has been projected that over a million jobs would be created – including ship building for servicing the offshore wind farms and the wave- and tidal current-based energy producing systems. Many other different careers would be created, kick-starting our economy.

For me it makes sense to invest in the renewable energy production.

Peter John Fox
National Vice President



A number of officials from the BFAWU attended. Ronnie Draper gave an inspirational speech about the union's commitment to offering training and development to individuals in the workplace and supporting individuals to gain life skills

Pictured l to r, Monica Busfield (ULR), Lisa Greenfield (Project Admin) with BFAWU General Secretary, Ronnie Draper.



The centre will be promoting Adult Apprenticeships, literacy and Numeracy and ESOL. Basic computers are available for individuals to use for online training and we have also set up a lending library where people can come and borrow books at no cost (all the books have been donated from employees across the site).

Visit the **BFAWU Learning Services** webpage or our Facebook page for more about this event (including a video of Ronnie's presentation).

Meet the ULRs



Monica Busfield



Keith Garrett



Monika Radomska



Safraz Ali

9TH DECEMBER 2013 MARKED the re-launch of **Pennine Union Learning Centre**. **Simon Wookey**, Managing Director of Meal Solutions, cut the ribbon to officially mark the opening.

We would like to thank all of the people who have been involved in making this possible.

Special mention to **Deborah Loy**, Branch Secretary **Keith Garrett**, **Lisa Greenfield**, Project Administrator, **Monica Busfield** Learner Rep BFAWU, **Sam** and **John Vickers**, BFAWU.



Grimsby Institute have worked with us to offer a range of courses to cover all abilities. **Paul Jennings** (left) has worked with the site to help people gain NVQ qualifications.

Here he is shown with Safraz Ali and Monica Radomska (our ULRs).

Representatives from Grimsby Institute were on site taking people through the courses they offer and signing anybody up that wished to do so (those signing for a course on the day were entered into a prize draw to win a Kindle!)

LEARNING PARTNERSHIP OASIS FOODS, HIGH WYCOMBE



OASIS FOODS IS A NEW COMPANY for Learning Services to work with. Based in High Wycombe, they have been producing high-quality mayonnaise products for over 20 years, as well as a wide range of high-quality sauces and dressings for the foodservice and wholesale sectors.

While Frank Loveday was organising on site he mentioned Learning Services and we were invited to a meeting. Karen Plasom and I went along and met up with **Mike Wood**, Group Operations Director for the Atlantic Food Group (which Oasis is part of). This was a productive first meeting, made easier as Karen and I had previously worked with Mike at Hovis, Avonmouth, so a general recap of how we could help and support was all that was needed. Following a tour of the factory we then had a discussion about what the company required, the provider we hoped to engage for the site, and a plan of action regarding getting the workforce to participate.

Several open days were held to map the site and encourage learners to come forward. I then had a meeting with the WEA (Workers Educational Association) and introduced them to the company. Founded in 1903, WEA is a charity and the UK's largest voluntary sector provider of Adult Education. This led to a day conducting Initial Assessments. These showed that *English* was definitely required but there was some interest for *Maths* too.

The company was unable to run a full course before Christmas, being so busy, so Karen suggested a short, non-accredited taster course enabling employees to see the type of learning they would be undertaking and the level of commitment expected. This was agreed and the accredited course scheduled to start in January – showing the learners we were committed to moving on. The course would run on Tuesdays between 12.30pm and 3.30pm which meant we had 2 x 90min sessions with the people who started shift at 2pm coming in before their shift and staff finishing at 2pm staying on till 3.30pm

With the help of **Sandra Smith**, Human Resources Manager, who wrote to, and encouraged individuals verbally, the course started on the 24th September. In all we had 13 students, even one of the night shift attended, and they must have enjoyed it because they kept coming to the course!



Mike Wood (far left), **Hilary Pugh**, WEA, **Steve Finn**, BFAWU (right),
Ian Wood (far right) with learners

Our final day was 5th November with learners completing tasks and evaluation forms. We decided to make a big thing of the last day because of the time and effort the learners had put in. Karen bought along a box of sweets and I made cupcakes. **Hilary Pugh**, the WEA tutor, had completion certificates to give to the learners so we invited Steve Finn (BFAWU Regional Officer), Ian Wood, Mike Wood and Sandra Smith to make the presentations.

Ian Wood, Operations Manager at Oasis, commented, "All in all it has worked well. The level of commitment shown by the learners for the short course was exceptional and I am sure the accredited courses starting in January will be equally well attended. Special thanks go to Sandra (HR) and Hilary (WEA tutor) for their work in organising the course."

Mike added, "Having worked with the Bakers Union before I would like to thank Carol and Karen for their support and the seamless way they have put this course together with Sandra and the WEA and for the constant encouragement given to everyone here at Oasis. Learning partnerships add real value for us as an employer, but also give our team members extra skills which they can use both inside and outside work. We see initiatives like this as important tools in increasing the overall skill level of our workforce."

Steve Finn said, "The education and learning of not just our members, but of everyone on-site, is important to the success of the business and to fulfilling both the customer expectations and the wellbeing of the staff. We will look forward to more courses in the future."

We wanted to make this a special day and all the learners said they were looking forward to the next course starting in January.

The support of the team at Oasis Foods was paramount to the success of this course. I would also like to thank Hilary Pugh, WEA tutor; she was patient and very kind with the learners and I learned a lot from her too.

A big **THANK YOU** to all involved especially the learners for their commitment. We all look forward to January when the next phase begins.

Carol Hillaby
Project Worker, South East



Mike Wood (far left), **Hilary Pugh**, WEA, **Sandra Smith** (front),
Steve Finn, BFAWU (right), **Ian Wood** (far right) with learners

DAWNFRESH SEAFOODS DIVERSITY WEEK

20TH JANUARY 2014



THE BFAWU RECENTLY CREATED a little bit of history with the *Diversity Week* at Dawnfresh Seafoods.

We are the first union in the UK to undertake a learning course where the full workforce attended a course in *Diversity*.

This was achieved through the steering group committee where we negotiated release for all 240 employees to attend one of the twenty-three 2 hour sessions we provided.

The session were enjoyed by all 240 employees and going by the *course evaluation feedback forms*, the diversity message was put across in a manner enjoyable to all, thanks to the tutor Tom Brown. In order to make a success of this we had to convince the company to bring in extra labour thus ensuring the week ran smoothly. For bespoke learning on such a grand scale we had to convince the company that this was the best course of delivery.

With this new and innovative learning week, it gave us the opportunity to talk to every employee on site on the benefits of joining the BFAWU. This was enhanced by Ronnie Draper, the General Secretary, meeting members in the canteen and even attending a session himself.

Mark McHugh
Union Learning Organiser
Scotland



RESIDENTIAL TENANCY AGREEMENTS



HELEN SCOTT PARKER
of Walkers Union



GUIDES YOU THROUGH THE
MAZE OF TENANCY AGREEMENTS

AN ASSURED SHORTHOLD TENANCY (AST) is the usual tenancy you will be offered when renting a home, be it a flat, house or bedsit.

The law governing these tenancies is the Housing Act 1988 and the Housing Act 1996. These state that an AST must comply with the following:

- 1 The tenancy should be entered into on or after 28 February 1997.
- 2 The term must be at least 6 months – it will then roll on month by month under the same tenancy agreement.
- 3 The tenant must be an *individual* (rather than a company).
- 4 The property concerned must be a dwelling house, and
- 5 The tenant must occupy the property as his/her principal home.

You have limited security in the rented property, as you do not own the property. You only have the right to stay there under the terms of the tenancy.

If a Landlord wishes you to leave they must follow a strict procedure. Briefly, a landlord must apply to the Court and obtain an Order for Possession unless the tenant leaves voluntarily. The landlord is required to serve a 'Section 21 Notice' upon the tenant. This Notice must give the tenant *at least 2 months* notice to leave the property.

Rent Deposits

These are Regulated by the Housing Act 2004, which states that a landlord can no longer keep a deposit unless he complies with a 'tenancy deposit scheme'. Your deposit is *your* money.

The landlord should protect your deposit in a government-backed **tenancy deposit protection scheme** within 30 days of receiving it. If not, you could be due compensation of 1 to 3 times the value of the deposit.

Do not be afraid to ask the landlord/agent how the deposit will be protected. For further details about the protection of rent deposits visit www.tds.gb.com or the Housing charity 'Shelter' website.

The two types of tenancy deposit protection schemes are:

- **Custodial schemes** – the landlord or agent pays the tenant's deposit into the scheme where it will be kept until the end of the tenancy.
- **Insurance scheme** – the landlord or agent keeps the tenant's deposit but pays an insurance premium to the scheme – meaning the tenant's deposit is insured in case of dispute.

These organisations provide government-backed schemes:

- **Deposit Protection Service (DPS)**
- **MyDeposits**
- **The Dispute Service (TDS)**

If a landlord fails to properly protect a deposit the consequences are serious:

- A landlord cannot evict a tenant (even if the tenant owes arrears of rent); and
- A landlord may be liable to pay the tenant *compensation*.

Guarantors

Parents are usually asked to act as guarantors, especially where the tenant is a student. The guarantor will be liable for all tenant breaches, including the payment of all arrears of rent.

If the house is a shared letting, the parents of one tenant could end up being personally liable for the debts of another!

A request for a guarantor should be **rejected**, especially if another form of security is being provided (ie a deposit).

Rent

The rent is usually fixed during the agreed term of the tenancy (eg. £450 *pcm*).

Be aware of any attempt to review the rent or increase it during the term. Check the rent clause *very* carefully!

Insurance

It is the landlord's obligation to insure the main structure and building. The tenant, however, will be responsible for *contents insurance* at their own expense.

Gas Safety Check

The landlord has a statutory obligation to check all gas appliances at least once every 12 months. The annual check must be completed by a 'Gas Safe' registered contractor.

It is a criminal offence if the landlord fails to arrange this check, which can result in a custodial sentence. Ask to see a copy of the current gas safety certificate before moving in.

Electrical Safety Check

Unlike the annual gas check, there is no similar requirement to inspect the electrical appliances, nor the wiring. However, it is good practice to do so.

Again, don't be afraid to ask to see a copy of the most recent electrical safety certificate before moving in.

Repairs

Generally, a tenant is only responsible for the *interior* of a property. It is the landlord's responsibility to deal with any main structure repairs (ie. roof) and heating repairs at his/her own expense.

Other issues

Additional Points you will need to check by reading the agreement and checking the physical property. Consider:

- Do I have adequate access rights?
- Fittings (oven/fridge). Who is responsible if they break down or need replacing?
- Parking space(s)?
- Who is responsible for paying the Council Tax?
- Who is responsible for paying the water/gas/electricity charges?
- If the property is shared, will the tenants be jointly and severally responsible for the payment of rent?
- Is there an *inventory* and is it correct?

The Devil is in the Detail!

NEVER sign anything without reading it in full. If in doubt, ask a lawyer to advise you on the terms of the tenancy agreement and your obligations.

If you require advice on a specific matter please contact me direct or speak with my colleagues at Walkers Union:

hscottparker@walkersunion.com

WAR ON WELFARE UPDATE – PAT'S PETITION

DO YOU REMEMBER this article from Foodworker Autumn 2012?



December 12th, 2013 was, for many of us, a small moment of celebration as the **WOW Petition** ended with over 104,000 signatures and triggered the eligibility for consideration by the Back Bench Business Committee (BBCB).

After a year of cajoling, persuading, writing to MPs, campaign groups, charities, anti-austerity groups and many others it had all paid off and, for at least a moment, we could relax and realise that we had completed the first part of what we had set out to achieve. Now, of course, the hard part comes.

John McDonnell, Labour MP for Hayes and Harlington, graciously agreed to present the WOW Petition to the BBCB, which he did on both the 3rd and the 10th of December and managed to secure in principle a full debate on the WOW Petition in the House of Commons in the New Year.

We need your help again

Once again, we need your help. For us to have any chance of success whatsoever, we must persuade MPs of our case and get them to support what we are trying to achieve. That's no easy task, but it is vital that we try and this is how you can help us.

- **Write to your MP** – We need the support of as many MPs as possible going into this debate, we must persuade them to support us.
- **Continue to Spread the Word** – By promoting **#WOWpetition** on Twitter and Facebook (we'll be using Hashtag **#WOWdebate2014** in the run up to the actual day).

We must show how much support there is out there. Let family and friends know how they can help us.

Employment Support Allowance is a disaster

Yesterday members of CarerWatch and **Pat's Petition** met with Kate Green, Shadow Spokesperson for Disabled People. From there they went to Lambeth Palace to meet with the Archbishop's advisers.

Proposed Reforms to ESA – Pat's Petition and CarerWatch

For many chronically sick/ill and disabled people the barriers faced in the open job market are so significant that they do not have the opportunity to compete on equal terms.

This is the elephant in the room.



The main Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) Group – the Work Related Activity Group (WRAG) – is based on the false premise that chronically sick/ill and disabled people can compete on equal terms. It makes no allowance for the barriers in the job market.

Many *can* compete on equal terms – but many others have a lot to offer but can't compete on equal terms.

It is unfair to place sanctions and time limits on disabled people in the WRAG until this problem is addressed and rectified.

We suggest these reforms

ESA/WRAG is currently a disaster and we suggest the following reforms:

- 1 Find out how to make the labour market *inclusive*. Disabled people have a lot to contribute.

Face up to the question of disabled people and open competition in a flexible labour market.

Explore quotas, kite marks, subsidies, public pressure and any other option you can find.

- 2 Meanwhile place far more chronically sick/ill and disabled people in a safe, long term ESA group. The WRAG is not a safe group because of sanctions, time limits and means tests. The criteria to be placed in this safe group should be that you have an impairment which means you can't compete in the labour market on equal terms. WCA isn't designed to determine this. It doesn't make allowances for the barriers in the labour market.

So scrap Work Capability Assessment

Some disabilities might involve a little more investigation, but with most the diagnosis should be a passport to a safe group.

- 3 Fraud has nothing to do with disability. Stop making the association.
- 4 Spend all the money on dedicated, person-centred support – either to get paid employment that supports you financially or to live a happy, productive life doing voluntary work, permitted work, other activities – and don't dismiss the second option.

Supporters

This statement has received support from:

Pat Onions	<i>Pat's Petition</i>
Frances Kelly	<i>CarerWatch</i>
Rosemary O'Neill	<i>CarerWatch</i>
Rick Burgess	<i>Wow Petition</i>
Jane Benz	<i>Wow Petition</i>
Prof. Nicholas Watson	<i>Institute of Disability Studies, University of Glasgow</i>
Sir Tom Shakespeare	<i>University of East Anglia</i>
Dr Simon Duffy	<i>Director Centre for Welfare Reform</i>
Paul Swann	<i>Disability Wales/Anabledd Cymru</i>
Mo Stewart	<i>Disability Researcher</i>
Gail Ward	<i>Disability Campaigner</i>
Catherine Hale	<i>South East London ME Support Group</i>
Jim Elder-Woodward OBE	<i>Chair of the UK Committee of the Campaign for a Fair Society</i>
Jackie Maceira	<i>Scottish Disability Equality Forum</i>
Michele Findlay	<i>Disability Campaigner</i>



CYNTHIA'S 40 YEAR BADGE

ON THE 27TH NOVEMBER 2013 it gave me great pleasure to spend a lovely morning with **Mrs Cynthia Rose**. After some heart-warming discussions and a walk down Memory Lane I had the pleasure of presenting her with her 40 Year Badge.

Cynthia started working in the food industry at Hagenbachs Bakery in 1956 she worked on the pastry line. In 1972 she decided to leave and started work at Lyons cakes in Wakefield packing on the Penny bun line and later transferred to working on the Swiss Roll plant.

In 1985 at the grand young age of 59 Cynthia retired and she has remained a union member ever since. All in all, it was an extremely pleasurable couple of hours spent with a long-serving, loyal member.

Ian Wood
No5 Organising Regional Secretary

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BRANCH 417 RAISE MONEY TO FIGHT FRACKING

Nik Hughes (Branch Secretary) and **Andy Moorhouse** (Branch Chairman) presented a cheque on behalf of branch 417 to **Stephen Hall** for the *Greater Manchester Anti-fracking Campaign*.

Below and left:

Protesters march at Barton Moss to protest against Fracking in the area



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HERTS
AL8 7BR

I would like to know more about the benefits of belonging to the Union:

Name (Block letters)

Address

Postcode

Contact Phone Email address

Where employed at present

Occupation

Signature Date

Please complete details above and hand to your local representative, Branch Official, Regional Office (for addresses see above) or send to Head Office at the FREEPOST address shown.