BAKERS FOOD AND ALLIED WORKERS UNION
BFAWU STRENGTH IN UNITY

FOODWORKER

SPRING 2013

GM REGULATION:
THE LAST ROUNDUP?

HEALTH AND SAFETY

GM: THE GOVERNMENT AND THE BIOTECH INDUSTRY

WHAT IS **CANCER?** KNOW THE SYMPTOMS

ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION & REPORTING

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FOODWORKER is designed and produced for the BFAWU by:
Inscape Solutions Limited
3 Long Hedge Lane
Worthington
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EDITOR'S NOTES

"The longer this coalition reigns, the more important trade unions become"

Ronnie Draper @ronniebfawu

DESPITE THE FACT that most wage negotiations are concluded, the period of the year we are in at present continues to be both busy and extremely challenging for all concerned. The predictions are that this trend is set to continue as some companies seek to undermine our members' terms and conditions, backed by the most right wing government in living history.

The relevance of trade unions is becoming more important the longer the Coalition reigns, with the most radical reforms of the welfare state and employment law ever seen. They seem to work on the premise that if it wasn't their idea to invent it, then it is no good. The unfortunate thing is that greedy employers are jumping on this destructive bandwagon, to maximise profits at the workers' expense.

The Jackson 'reforms'

From April, we will see the Jackson reforms implemented. These will see access to justice for workers who have been injured at work or who have been dismissed, suddenly made much more difficult. The costs of private prosecutions are absolutely horrendous as the law does not come cheap. But this is the sad reality of people who are not in unions. They will not have access to legal aid and will very often have to pay up front. Of course, union members will continue to have a first class access to justice because of their membership.

At the time of writing we are undergoing a root and branch look at the structures within our organisation as we look to the future. This does not just revolve around employees; it focuses on political direction, policy implementation and, above all, membership growth. One of those areas that we are eager to drive forward is the development of the policies and involvement of young people.

"We need to encourage more young people to join our ranks"

We have just concluded our first youth forum which was successfully held in Leeds at the end of January. The forum didn't just focus on young shop stewards and activists. It encouraged young members to come forward and tell their story, air their views and to discuss their ideas for encouraging more young people to participate both in trade union affairs and political direction.

Young people network

We need to encourage more young people to join our ranks, not just to ensure their protection or to swell our numbers, but to capture the enthusiasm that young people bring to the things that they do and to help us develop the communications and social networking provisions that every modernising organisation needs to compete in ever changing markets.

The first opportunity that branches will have is when they come to elect their delegates for the next Annual Conference which will be held in June at Bridlington. Last year we saw the union for the first time in its history, elect a young person (Rachel Mullen) to the specialist young person's seat on our national executive. We have seen Sarah Woolley represent the BFAWU brilliantly on an international delegation to Israel and who can forget the telling contributions from the

conference rostrum last year, from young people like Chris Lay. Branches elected them last year and they did themselves proud and I would actively encourage branches to give young people a chance to participate at the highest levels of our union. When electing your delegations, branches should give consideration to giving a place to a young activist.

This year we have over 70 motions to conference touching every facet of modern life. Demonstrating that our members are becoming more switched on to the reality that politics goes way beyond political speeches made by Cameron, Clegg and Milliband. Indeed every facet of our lives from when we open the door of a morning to going to bed at night involves politics in some way and that is a message we have to drive home to our members.

Smokescreens

The Tories try to turn low paid workers against the unemployed with the myth that you work while they keep the curtains drawn, strivers v shirkers. The talk about referendums of whether or not we stay in Europe without demonstrating the consequences of any outcome. These are a smokescreen to detract from the mess they are making of the economy and the fact that unscrupulous employers exploit the situation to the full. It is not the unemployed, migrant workers or Martian invasion causing the ills that the country is experiencing. It is government, it is the Bankers and it is those employers who are using the fear within society to exploit worker's rights. That is where the problems lie and don't let the right wing press tell you any different.

If I am wrong, why do businesses within our industry pay *golden hello*s to acquire new Chief Executives worth £millions, cry poverty when it comes terms and conditions, cut our members terms and conditions or close their workplace making them redundant on a pittance and then pay the CEO a golden handshake when they leave? When Michael Clarke leaves Premier after 18 months service, he will probably leave with more money than the combined totals of those losing their jobs at Hovis. This will be deemed a success, but the question has to be asked, '*whose success?*'

It is the efforts of our members, producing the products that society wants, that make those at the top rich. It is not the negotiated terms and conditions of our members that should be sacrificed to keep those at the top in the lap of luxury.

Ronnie Draper

IS THIS WHAT THEY MEAN WHEN THEY TALK ABOUT 'FAIRNESS'?

As expected, a new year has already brought fresh attacks on both the employed and unemployed. So far, 2013 has seen the continued onslaught against families, the disabled, the young and the elderly. Even the police have become targets for this millionaires' government. With the exception of government ministers, politicians and their wealthy friends, it really is starting to look like we ARE 'all in it together'.

This campaign of terror against the poorest and most vulnerable people in our society is now in full flow, with millionaire government ministers hell-bent on cutting the lifelines for those with the least. Let's have a look at some of the individuals responsible for these policies: Chris Grayling (now the justice minister) is a millionaire who cheated the taxpayer to the tune of £127,000 by way of 'expenses'. This sum of money would equate to 20 years worth of benefits. He doesn't think that it's hypocritical to steal taxpayers' cash when he already earns a huge salary and he is more than comfortable about removing the benefits from the sick and disabled. This is also the man who believes that hoteliers should be able to reserve the right to refuse accommodation to homosexuals.

However, Chris Grayling is not the only one; George 'Gideon' Osborne, the so-called 'brains' behind the operation, somehow enabled the taxpayer to pay £1900 per month for his second home; Harrop Fold Farm. This is a property he bought for £450,000 in 1999 and has just sold for £900,000.

Let us also not forget the Prime Minister, David Cameron. He had no qualms about accepting the state 'hand-outs' for his family and his own disabled child who sadly died. However, despite the tragic case of his own, it hasn't stopped Cameron from now denying other families with disabled children the same benefit. This is the man who before he became Prime Minister, emphasised the need to raise taxes due to the budget deficit at the time. He went on to say that slashing spending and cutting benefits would be "inhuman". I wonder how much of that perspective was down to his own, personal circumstances and benefit entitlements as they were then.

We also need to consider the once failed Tory leader, Iain Duncan Smith, now Secretary for Work and Pensions. He is yet another millionaire who once used taxpayers' money to fund a CV which contained falsified information and fraudulent statements about his education, background and qualifications.

NATIONAL PRESIDENT
IAN HODSON

Scroungers?

He also has no problem whatsoever about charging the taxpayer for breakfasts, costing £39. However, this piece of work has condemned and demonised the unemployed and disabled as 'benefit scroungers' whilst actively encouraging a culture of hate against them, using a combination of false, manipulated figures and pure myth.

Strangely, all of these hypocrites lecture us about putting Britain 'back on track' and making 'difficult decisions'. Difficult for who? These parliamentarians still have gold and in some cases, platinum-plated pensions. They enjoy huge pay-outs and cosy redeployments when they fail at their jobs and lose their ministerial positions through their own incompetence and stupidity. They are entitled to have more than one job as long as they make it known whether or not there could be a conflict of interest in a debate they may be taking part in. They are and remain totally detached from the reality that everyone else has to deal with on a daily basis.

They make ideological decisions about us that have the potential to destroy people's lives, whilst earning massive salaries and claiming thousands in 'expenses'. Is this what they mean when they talk about 'fairness'?

Let's throw down the gauntlet

We believe that it's now time to throw down the gauntlet. No worker should be paid less than inflation and no employer should be allowed to pay their workers less than the government threshold. It's scandalous that workers are forced to rely on state handouts whilst employers make huge profits, award themselves massive salaries, bonuses and increases and in some cases, avoid paying tax.

If the government was serious about the need to 'heal' the economy, reduce the deficit and bring down the national debt, they would have identified that big businesses, banks and tax avoiders are part of the reason why the country is in a mess and would deal with them accordingly.

It's only just begun...

The reality is that we are only at the beginning in terms of austerity measures. The richest people in our society have now not only recouped their lost wealth, but in many cases figures suggest it has actually grown by between 5% and 18% – whilst the poorest 50% now share a mere 6% of the nation's wealth.

Direct Action

I predict that this year will see more demonstrations, protests and renewed, louder calls for a general strike. We will see more direct action relating to the protection of our NHS.

However, if there is one policy to light the blue touch paper, it is the government's ridiculous *'bedroom tax'*. This vindictive policy is nothing more than a tax on the least well off, who cannot afford to buy their homes outright. I genuinely believe that this could end up being a 'poll-tax' for a new generation. It certainly has the potential to cause the kind of protests, not seen on our streets since the days of the last Conservative government.

The steady erosion of workers' rights is now leading to people having to pay for employment tribunals out of their own pocket. I expect to hear of companies not paying their employees and getting away with it – due to the worker's inability to fund a tribunal claim. I also expect to see more and more people turning to the likes of payday loan companies and, in particular, ***Wonga***, (the founder is a close friend of David Cameron). These companies claim to help people that are struggling yet they merely shackle them to a lifetime of debt, thanks to their **1000%+** interest rates. It's no coincidence that they ramp up their advertising campaigns in areas with high unemployment, such as Newcastle and Blackpool. The more indebted people are, the easier they are to exploit.

Protecting our members

We have to be able to protect our members. Where we have people facing unfair dismissal, rather than leave them to stump up the cash for an employment tribunal, we should instead call a branch meeting and seek a mandate for industrial action. If the right to justice from tribunals is to be removed, we should find other means of getting fair play.

The policies of this government are truly horrific for working people, and if you study both the Jackson Report and the Employment Bill, you will see for yourself how they reduce our rights at work – for instance, removal of Section 47 of the Health and Safety at Work Act. This will shift the liability away from the employer and onto you if you get injured. Think how this may affect your life and your future should you ever become involved in a serious accident at work. The government tells us that legislation relating to workers rights is 'needless red tape' that holds companies back and prevents employers from advertising jobs. In the same breath, they boast that unemployment is falling and one million jobs have been created. It's a total contradiction.

When it comes to current employment figures, a little bit of study shows that the government's boasts on falling unemployment are based on shameless lies and spin. The true story is rather more galling: Just over 300,000 of the jobs 'created' are public sector ones, transferred to the private sector. They are *not* new jobs.

The job figures also don't take into account the 214,000 being used as part of '*Workfare*' and apprenticeships. Again these are not real jobs.

This leaves just under 500,000 jobs they can realistically say have been created. However, when you look a little deeper into these figures, you will find that the majority of those jobs are neither fulltime, nor long-term positions. They are part-time and temporary.

Cameron's Cronies

Cameron's actions betray where his loyalties really lie. When people took to the streets in protest at tax avoiding companies, the government used our Police force to ensure the protection of the shops and businesses concerned. Can't tax avoiding private companies afford to hire their own security? They should have closed if they felt threatened. Only when a situation reaches critical mass does Cameron address it.

Cruel Britannia

We constantly see Tories wrapping themselves in the Union flag and talking about covenants for our armed services but what they say and what they do are as usual, completely different. The armed forces have been salami sliced ever since the coalition government took office. Despite on-going operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, along with support in Egypt, Libya and Mali, and an increasingly fragile situation in Algeria, Cameron's government has been sacking soldiers in their thousands.

Tories have always used the flag as a convenience that works well with the electorate. How many of the soldiers who have lost their jobs are now going to be branded as 'scroungers' and 'skivers' by government ministers, as they look forward to an uncertain future on benefits? At least we won't make the mistake of thinking that the politicians actually give a damn.

An opportunity for change

I have asked repeatedly from this column and at every event I have spoken at, "If not us, who?"; "If not now, when?"

This really is our opportunity to change the country for the better, but this will only happen if we demand it and take decisive action. Waiting for others to do it will not lead to a fairer society. Waiting for others to take action won't result in a country that our children can aspire to be part of.

Apathy will only lead to lower wages, diminished health and safety, reduced living standards and no chance of social mobility for our children. Britain needs investment to kick start its economy. Young people need skills and jobs, not forced labour and exploitation and certainly not five years of 'in or out' debate over the EU. Cameron's speeches on Europe are designed to protect his job and his friends' interests, not yours.

The announcement by Warburtons, Rathbones, Hovis and Two Sisters of factory closures and redundancies is a real tragedy and questions have to asked as to how such, household names have failed so miserably in the market place. It certainly wasn't down to their loyal workforces who have dedicated years of service, done all that was required of them and produced a quality product – but who have paid for others' failure with their jobs. We want real jobs, not temporary ones and the BFAWU will support its members in pursuing conference resolutions that call for the removal of agency labour and the return of directly advertised, permanent positions.

Engage with us – don't exclude us

Our union is facing challenges on just about every front and we have to keep reminding employers that our members are fed up with the continued attacks on terms and conditions along with the relentless changes they suffer.

Managers in our industry seem to be clones but unfortunately, *common sense* is not included in the genetic splice. Happily, history shows us that these managers are normally the first to be sacrificed by employers when they change their approach and seek to engage, rather than wage war with us.

Whilst we have a proud history of engagement with good employers, we cannot never forget the aggressive behaviour of certain employers, egged on by this government.

Solidarity!

Ian Hodson

GET ACTIVE!

Peter John Fox
National Vice President

As we start the New Year, the government is making more cuts and is now planning to give the go ahead for private companies to build more roads – yet another burden for us the tax (and road tax) payer.

These private companies would not build these without subsidies (paid for by us). A toll would be put onto these roads, no doubt overpriced to make the shareholders a profit (paid for by us). We already pay our taxes for new roads and the maintenance of them, so why should we pay a second time in tolls?

Public transport prices up! Fuel prices up! Airport taxes up! The cost of getting from A to B is now extortionate. This is not hitting just the public but even the travel companies – fewer people are using the services as they cannot afford it. ATOL may be bailing out more insolvent companies as they go to the wall – meaning more people out of work, more burden on the benefits system and more poverty. Surely, it benefits the government more if people are in work paying taxes, than on the dole taking benefits. Do they want to go back to slavery and force people to work for nothing with *Workfare*?

Who is paying?

With poverty now on the increase, it's not this millionaire government that is paying for the food banks, it's the working class generosity that looks after our own, and the volunteers that collect the food. If it was up to this government they would ethnic cleanse and starve us all to death.

These companies are now jumping on this bandwagon, and starting to give any new employees a second generation contract.

This can be £10,000 or even more in some cases, less than any existing employee. This we must fight against as we have made agreements on our terms and conditions, and this is for all employees that are on the same job description. How can a person work alongside someone who is on £10K more? This causes animosity and unrest in a workforce which cannot work.

New Employment Laws

New laws are coming into force which give employers the rights to sack people at will if their face doesn't fit – or if they stick up for their rights. If they could get away with shooting union representatives (as in Columbia) or putting into jail (as in Iran) without trial – I'm totally sure they would do.

Living wage or minimum wage

Last year this government tried to put blame with people on benefits for a lot of the deficit that the country has got, and the people that they have put onto the dole queues, as lazy and stayed in bed all day. They were found out as most of the people that were on benefits were in work and on a minimum wage not a living wage.

A great quote from my friend John Stott, " *When I went to work this morning at 8am my next door neighbours curtains was still drawn and they was still in bed; Still he did do night turn last night and only finished at 6am.*"

I can see where he is coming from, as the government are trying to make a division in the working class.

Fight the cuts

We now have more of our activists joining anti-cuts groups like *UK-Uncut*, *Black Triangle* and *Unite the Resistance*, but more are needed to fight and stand up to this government on issues of the National Health Service, Pensions, Benefits etc.

If we don't stand up to them then all that our forefathers have fought for will be lost, **we cannot let this happen**.

Many demonstrations and rallies have been organised around the country by these groups of activists, who are getting the message across to the general public and trade unionist that are just passive members.

If you think about your future and the future of your children and grandchildren then join one of these groups and have your input into the actions that you want to take.

Solidarity!

John Fox

WHY I BELIEVE IT'S TIME FOR A LIVING WAGE IN THE FOOD INDUSTRY AND BEYOND

CLIVE LEWIS

Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Norwich South Labour

For thousands of people in the food industry and beyond, work is no longer a route out of poverty. Think about that for a moment.

It's now pretty much accepted that for a fair day's work millions will NOT be paid a fair day's pay.

The minimum wage, currently £6.19 per hour, is in effect 'poverty pay'. That means the bare necessities of life such as food, heating, travel and clothes cannot be provided without assistance in the form of welfare payments. Payments which this April will be terribly squeezed.

It's known as 'in-work poverty' and nationwide the number of working families receiving these payments in the form of tax credits has risen 50% in the last decade.

In effect we as a society are subsidising low pay employers. In 2010 we spent £188bn on welfare. If we take away the £78bn spent on the elderly – which most people don't consider as welfare – that leaves £110bn. Of that, £42bn is spent on benefits for people on low incomes – much of it through housing benefit and tax credits. Likewise much of the £34bn on 'children and families' is also required because of inadequate incomes.

As you would expect as a Parliamentary Candidate I spend a lot of my spare time talking to people. Many of them tell me how hard it is to make ends meet on low pay. One young woman, who works for a major city retailer on the minimum wage, told me how some months she has to go back to her mother if she wants to eat. One man had two cleaning jobs – one during the week and the other at weekends – which meant he did a continuous, seven day week.

Working more than one job is commonplace among those paid the minimum wage. Long hours are a must in order to survive and provide for dependants. Scant holiday provision and little or no paid sickness leave add up to a poor quality of life.

We live in an increasingly polarized and unequal society. The gap between the highest and lowest earners has widened dramatically over the past 25 years. That cannot be good for any of us. An increasing body of evidence suggests the more unequal a society, the unhappier and less stable it is.

That is why myself and other trades unionists are calling for more employers to pay a so-called Living Wage. Even David Cameron called it an 'idea whose time has come'.

The hourly amount, which has been set at £7.45 per hour outside of London (£8.55 within), is calculated to cover the basic cost of living. So far the campaign to pay workers a Living Wage has lifted 45,000 families out of working poverty. Much of that success has been in London. But I believe it's now time shops, factories and industries outside London became Living Wage employers.

It won't be easy, especially given the incompetent handling of the economy by this government. Spending cuts, which suck money out of the economy and reduce demand, mean that many businesses are struggling. Yet as counter-intuitive as it seems paying people more makes good economic and business sense. In the economy, workers paid a Living Wage have more money for goods and services, stimulating badly-needed growth as well lifting people out of poverty.

There are numerous benefits for business. An independent study of the business benefits of implementing a Living Wage policy found that more than 80% of employers believe that the Living Wage had enhanced the quality of the work of their staff, while absenteeism had fallen by approximately 25%.

Two thirds of employers reported a significant impact on recruitment and retention within their organisation. 70% of employers felt that the Living Wage had increased consumer awareness of their organisation's commitment to be an ethical employer – whilst another found turnover of contractors fell from 4% to 1%. Clearly not all businesses would be able to afford the Living Wage immediately. Clearly, these issues need addressing.

That's why I'm helping with the establishment of a *Living Wage Commission* here in Norwich. Politically neutral and made up of businesses, civic and community groups, it would be a forum to establish the business, economic, political and social case for a Living Wage.

Clearly the causes of poverty are complex. In order to improve lives there will need to be a package of solutions across a range of policy areas. The Living Wage is just a start but I believe it to be an important part in solving some of the problems we as a city and society are confronted by.

Clive Lewis

IS THIS THE BRITAIN WE WANT? 25% OF CHILDREN IN POVERTY BY 2015?

LISA NANDY MP WRITES FOR FOODWORKER

This year is going to prove exceptionally difficult for many families and individuals across the country. Long-term unemployment is rising and youth unemployment stands at nearly 1 million. An increasing number of people are in part-time, low-paid and insecure work. Many are forced to rely on tax-credits to top up low incomes or exist on welfare benefits, both of which are being cut. Meanwhile living costs, like food and fuel, have soared

The urgent task is to defend the welfare state which has provided support to so many people at moments of difficulty in their working lives and is now under attack. Just recently the Welfare Benefits Up-rating Bill capped benefit and tax credit rises at just 1% for the next three years – a measure that will have a devastating impact on people in and out of work. As food banks spring up across the country, children are particularly badly affected. The Government estimates that the benefits cap will push 200,000 more of them into poverty leaving over a quarter of children in poverty by the next election.

But it is worse that Ministers believe it is appropriate to label them and their families as *shirkers* and *scroungers*, forcing many to endure humiliation and insult, as well as hardship and hunger. We cannot allow this politics of division to take hold, pitting the working poor against the unemployed, when in reality both will lose. In April people's incomes will be hit hard as a perfect storm of housing benefit cuts, council tax cuts and benefit freezes take effect. At the same time, from April, millionaires will be handed a tax cut of £2,058 per week.

There is an Alternative

Last year I supported a campaign, led by my local councillors, to ask our Council to implement a Living Wage of at least £7.45 an hour for its lowest paid employees. As a result from October, 565 low-paid employees will see an increase in their pay of up to £40 a week. It is a scandal that so many people across the country work long hours, only to find they have to ask for help to meet their needs. Two parents on the minimum wage can only meet 82% of the basic costs of bringing up their children and this is a problem that is growing. In Greater Manchester, 40% of children already live in poverty, and more cuts are to come. Worse still, the Government is subsidising companies to pay poverty wages, topping up people's pay with tax credits, while many larger companies continue to make huge profits and refuse to pay their staff properly

Allowing low-pay to persist is bad economic policy. When the affluent are handed tax cuts, they tend to save or invest the money – sometimes offshore so it is not even subject to tax. Yet the more money we put into the pockets of the lowest paid, the more they spend in local businesses and help to stimulate the economy. This year I will be campaigning to ensure local businesses in my area pay their staff a Living Wage and that public sector contracts are only granted to those who do. I will also be pressing the Government to set an example by paying its own staff properly, and refusing to spend public money on contracts with companies who do not do the same.

Meanwhile, the situation facing many children overseas is just as pressing. As Shadow Children's Minister my focus is primarily on children in the UK, but I believe that if we threaten children's rights anywhere, we threaten them everywhere. Tumultuous events across the world always have profound, negative consequences for children. Of particular concern is the ongoing situation in the Middle East, which is central to Britain's humanitarian, security and economic interests. Last year on a visit to the West Bank I was appalled to see the situation of Palestinian children, detained without proper access to justice, forced out of homes and schools by illegal demolition programmes, and denied an education. The only solution – to create two separate states for Israel and Palestine – is becoming less and less likely as Israel continues to build on Palestinian land. That is why, alongside many of my colleagues, I have been campaigning for United Nations recognition of Palestine as a state, alongside the state of Israel, which this Government sadly refused to support. I am particularly appalled that British based multinationals like G4S have been involved in activities which undermine children's rights, and continue to receive Government backing. These companies are the face of Britain, and we should not allow them to promote the worst, rather than the best, of Britain to the world.

Lisa Nandy MP

Subject: International Report

CUBA SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN

In 2012 we launched the major ***End It Now!*** campaign to mark the 50th anniversary of the US blockade of Cuba with motions passed at various trade union conferences. As well as producing campaign materials we welcomed **Aleida Guevara** (pictured), daughter of Che Guevara, to the UK on a nationwide speaking tour. The centrepiece of Aleida's visit was the CSC fringe meeting at TUC Congress in Brighton which was the biggest fringe meeting of conference. Her visit received national press coverage in the Daily Mirror, Guardian and the BBC.

The End It Now! campaign will continue in 2013 with a number of speaker tours and meetings across the country, including the May visit of French author and academic, Salim Lamrani, to the UK following the publication of his book examining the effect of the US blockade on Cuba. Salim will be taking part in a nationwide speaking tour and doing a variety of press work.

With regard to the campaign for freedom for the Miami Five: in April/May, we hosted a major international art exhibition, *Beyond the Frame*, to raise funds and awareness for the campaign. The exhibition featured top Cuban and international artists and received national and international press coverage. We organised visits from the families of the Miami Five during the exhibition and, for the first time ever, brought over all four wives of the Miami Five for a speaking tour in June 2012.

We also launched a major parliamentary action in support of the Miami Five which is continuing in 2013. Early Day Motion 497 was launched in support of visitation rights for wives of the Miami Five and has already been signed by 124 MPs. This is an unprecedented level of parliamentary support and is the biggest parliamentary action ever in support of the Miami Five. Last year's Vigil for the Miami Five outside the US Embassy was again an overwhelming success as we welcomed speakers and contributors from across the trade union and labour movement.

We have taken a number of trade union delegations to Cuba over the year, including 20 young activists who took part in our May Day Brigade to Cuba and joined half-a-million Cubans celebrating International Workers' Day in Revolution Square, Havana.

We continue to work closely with our 24 national trade union affiliates and over 500 branch and regional affiliates. We continue to publish our regular *Trade Unions for Cuba* eNewsletter which focuses on our work with trade unions. Our Hurricane Sandy Appeal, following the most devastating hurricane to hit Eastern Cuba for half a century, has so far raised over £11,000.

John Fitzpatrick
Executive Council

LEVELLERS AND DIGGERS

"There is waste land enough and to spare. We only desire leave to work and enjoy the fruits of our labour. If this is denied we must raise collections for the poor out of your estates; but many are proud, and desperate, and will rob and steal rather than take charity, and many are ashamed to beg; ***but if the land were granted there would not be a beggar or idle person****".*

No truer words have been said relating to today's political situation than those by **Gerard Winstanley and the True Levellers (Diggers)** in 1649.

The Levellers got their ideas from life before the Norman invasion, when the land belonged to the people, and followed family principles where they grew their own food and raised animals to eat in small holdings. Together the small community farmed the land they had commandeered (St Georges Hill in Surrey). They got the name *Levellers* (later the *Diggers*) from cutting hedges down and removing fences.

In September an event takes place in Wigan, celebrating the life of Gerard Winstanley; (1609 – 1676). Re-enactments from passages that Gerard Winstanley wrote take place, and numerous live bands perform. There are many stalls to mull over, and a beer tent – usually with a brew to commemorate the festival. Over 2000 people attended in 2012 and it is going from strength to strength.

More information can be found at
www.facebook.com/wigandiggersfestival
Twitter @wigandigger

CREDIT UNION

here to help you!

Members can be forgiven for wondering what the Union can do outside work to assist in these hard times.

Many view Unions as reactive organisations that only act *after* the event. There are many examples where this view is wrong and there is none better than our Union's pioneering work in the area of setting up a national Credit Union based on the common bond of Union membership.

Driven by concerns in the 1980s and 1990s of the danger of workers falling into the clutches of loan sharks, Conference agreed to set up our own Credit Union. The aim was to encourage members into regular savings and to have an easy way of members lending to each other at low interest rates – avoiding the extortionate rates charged by those praying on vulnerable individuals and families in financial difficulties, and those frozen out of the banking system due to low earnings.

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The Credit Union was to be a vehicle where members could get quick, easy loans to cover everything from an emergency loan to planned holidays – to make a difference for those who had no access to high street banks for small loans and to encourage a savings/lending approach to personal finance. Over the last decade this has proven to be a worthwhile aim, reaching more and more members and their families.

In front of the curve

What was true when we set up the Credit Union is even more relevant today. The media is full of horror stories of vulnerable people being fleeced by many payday loan sharks and by crippling interest payments on other short-term loans. People simply trying to make ends meet, give the kids a treat for the festive season or birthday or to pay for a replacement washing machine or other household appliance.

It was in order to avoid these pitfalls and to assist members that the Union set up the first national Credit Union in the UK. Members have the confidence of a swift, easy approach to loans for those unplanned emergency and low interest rates. Interest on loans is charged at 1% per month on a reducing balance of the loan. This is equivalent to 12.68% APR – an interest rate unequaled in any Bank or Building Society or other financial institutions. For example, a member borrowing £1,000 over 12 months would repay £1,062.12 in total.

Joining the Credit Union

Membership is easy. Any Union member or employee can join the Credit Union. If you are over the age of16 just apply for membership via your Branch Secretary, Union Office or the Credit Union Office. Once accepted you pay an initial £5 non-returnable membership fee and thereafter £2 per year to cover general administration. These fees are deductible from your savings account. Members must save a minimum of £2 per week or £10 per month – more if you wish. Members can change the amount saved above the base savings at any time.

We also run a Junior Accounts section for those family members under 16.

Contact us now and be part of a first class Union benefit!

Joe Marino, Credit Union Chair
BFAWU Credit Union
Stanborough House, Great North Road,
Welwyn Garden City, Herts. AL87TA
01707 259455
admin@bfawucreditunion.co.uk
www.bfawucreditunion.co.uk

THE 2013 CREDIT UNION AGM WILL BE HELD ON SATURDAY, 8th JUNE IN THE SPA HALL, BRIDLINGTON AT 2pm

As the Credit Union does not operate in cash, savings are normally collected by deductions from members' salaries at source or, if the member prefers, by Direct Debit, Standing Order or cheque. Loans are paid direct into member's bank account.

Loan Policy

Loans are set by Credit Union Rules. The policy is set out below:

Membership	Maximum loan
0–3 Months	zero
4–12 Months	2 x amount of member's share account
13–24 Months	3 x amount of member's share account
25 months+	**up to £3,000**

£3,000 is the maximum amount of a loan.

Repayment Policy

In effecting a loan, the member must be paying enough to cover the loan repayment plus £2 per week (or £10 per month) in savings.

Once a loan is granted, share levels must be maintained and agreed repayments made until the loan is repaid, unless otherwise agreed by the Credit Committee.

A loan can be paid off early with no penalty clauses (unlike Bank loans).

Democratic Control

The Credit Union is your organisation – run *for* and *by* members.

It is, of course, registered with the Financial Services Authority and has to follow FSA rules and procedures. That is to protect members' savings. The Credit Union also takes out insurance to protect members' savings.

Annual accounts, prepared by independent auditors, are presented to the FSA and the Annual General Meeting of the Credit Union, which is held each June. Members can request a copy of these accounts at any time.

Members and Junior Members are sent an annual statement of their accounts on the anniversary of their joining date. Members can, of course, check their

account at any time by contacting the Credit Union Office.

The Credit Union AGM

Credit Union Rules are decided by the Annual General Meeting and voted on there by members. The Annual General Meeting elects the Board of Directors who serve for a 2 year period. The whole Board of Directors is due for election in June 2013.

The rate of interest, loans policy and other rules can be changed at the Annual General Meeting.

The Board of Directors meets quarterly with the financial subcommittee meeting on the first Tuesday of each month. No remuneration is paid to the Board of Directors, who are all volunteers elected by the membership.

Striving Forward

When the Credit Union was first set up the incidence of loan sharks was in its infancy. Now it is rife.

We have also seen the collapse of Christmas savings clubs – with families left desolate –and the near impossibility of getting small loans off the High Street Banks. The Credit Union is an ideal forum for members to help each other through this unique *savings and lending club* – a club that ***you*** own and control.

All applications for loans are dealt with in the strictest confidence. The Credit Union has a strong complaints procedure if members feel they have not been treated properly. The reason for loans is for the member to decide. As long as the relevant savings/loan ratio is in place then the member's loan is given.

The Credit Committee

The Credit Union operates a Credit Committee to approve *exceptional* loans – as long as the loan is within guidelines. Loans have been approved for such items as holidays, household repairs, and assistance in funeral arrangements, birthday/anniversary/festive times, weddings, christenings and car insurance/ tax etc. The list is endless.

The whole idea of the Credit Union is to assist members in affordable loans at cheap rates that keep them out of the hands of loan sharks, expensive repayment agreements and to give peace of mind at difficult times, with no small-print catches.

Membership of the Credit Union is quick and easy.
Just contact your Branch Secretary, Union Office or the Credit Union Head Office at the address shown.

We are here to help you!

LOOK FORWARD NOT BACK

THE LAST COUPLE OF YEARS for all union representatives have been very tough – from FTOs down through to branch secretaries and union representatives.

We have, as union representatives of the BFAWU members, had to make some tough decisions and make compromises and because of this we have seen some of our terms and conditions eroded.

We know we do, and will continue to do, our very best for our union members when we are ever in negotiations but (there is always a 'but') I have to say it is not always an easy task.

Sometimes we may do very well, some times we don't – last year has been one of them *don't* times.

Negotiation representatives have had struggle with the companies they work for to try and get the best possible deal for the members.

But, you know what? – we have survived and we will continue to survive. This is because our members have stuck with us and faced the tough times with us – and I thank them for that.

We have now to look forward, not back, and hope that the compromises and removal or reduction in some of the terms and conditions are proven to be beneficial to the members – by keeping their workplaces in business and open for them to continue to work.

That may sound like a management talking, but believe me I live in the real world. I know what some companies are capable of if we don't try and work out what is best for the members.

We always try to get the better deal and if we sometimes have to compromise we try and make that compromise as painless as possible.

> ***"But, you know what? – we have survived and we* will continue to survive"**

For some companies, it's easy – you either do what they want or they will take it anyway or close the workplace.

Keeping members in work should always be a priority, but sometimes you have to take risk and hope for the best outcome.

We know people in the past have fought for better terms and conditions of working and it's very important not to forget this.

They achieved a good many things for the generations that came after them, they achived: better pay, health and safety, holidays, sick pay and better working conditions

I know some of the benefits have now been removed or reduced by employers. They will tell you it is to survive in a very competitive market. That may or may not be true – *but I bet it does not stop them from still making big profits*.

Take pride in who we are

I would ask the BFAWU representatives to stay positive in the knowledge that we did and will always do the very best we can in any negotiations.

We should be proud of who we are and look on the positive side of what we do achieve.

The BFAWU maybe only a small union. However, given time, I think we will grow our membership with the commitment of the representatives and members we have. This will make us more stable, which in turn will help us in our task of achieving better things in the future for the next generations to come.

Brothers and Sisters stand tall, be proud and stay strong.

United we stand and our strength and commitment will win us through the tough times.

Yours fraternally,
Helena England
BFAWU, Fox's Biscuits, Batley

Health and Safety BULLETIN

LAST YEAR DEFRA AUTHORISED a trial of genetically modified wheat at Rothamsted Research in Hertfordshire. This is the first GM trial in the UK for over a decade, and it's proving to be highly controversial since the Government remains vocal in its support for GM.

In December 2012, Defra Secretary of State, Owen Paterson, told the Daily Telegraph, "*Emphatically we should be looking at GM … I'm very clear it would be a good thing*," and at the Oxford Farming Conference in January he said, "*I believe that GM offers great opportunities but I also recognise that we owe a duty to the public to reassure them that it is a safe and beneficial innovation*." The Prime Minister also chipped in, with Number 10 calling for GM approvals to be 'speeded up'.

The 2010 Tory manifesto outlined several reassurances for GM sceptics, including pledges to:

- Ensure that consumers have the right to choose non-GM foods through clear labelling
- Support the continued ban on the commercial planting of GM crops until and unless this has been assessed as *safe* for people and the environment
- Develop a legally-binding protocol covering the separation of GM and non-GM material, including clear industry liability.

GM Freeze has not seen any action to deliver on these pledges and, in fact, the UK continues to vote consistently in favour of every pro-GM measure tabled at EU level. The fact is the UK Government has a long history of cosy relationships with the biotech industry, even against the wishes of the electorate. GM wheat trials are only the latest manifestation of this official support for GM.

GOVERNMENT DANCES TO THE BIOTECH TUNE

Peter Riley, GM Freeze

Most recently in June 2012 the Agricultural Biotechnology Council (the UK's biotech lobby organisation) published a report called ***Going for Growth***, which called for 'stronger political support' for a growth strategy for agricultural technologies. This report was supported by the NFU and three publicly funded research establishments.

The report was presented to the UK Government ministers at a roundtable at the BIS Conference Centre on 26 June 2012. Attendees included Government Ministers David Willets (BIS) and Lord Taylor (Defra), and senior civil servants from both departments. All the major biotech and pesticides companies were represented, as well as publicly-funded research institutions like Rothamsted and The Sainsbury Laboratory (where GM potatoes were tested in 2012). One surprise attendee was someone from Spearhead Ltd – a large farming company with interests in the UK and Eastern Europe that specialises in intensive production utilising the latest technology requiring minimal work force.

The outcomes of the meeting (obtained by *GeneWatch UK* using Freedom of Information Regulations) indicated a clear Government intention to:

- 'Improve' the regulatory framework regarding GM – meaning make it easier for GM to reach UK fields and shelves.
- Develop a clear strategy for biotech.
- Provide incentives for investment in biotech.
- Take a clear position in Europe in favour of the above.
- Work with industry to ensure these and other outcomes are achieved.

In other words, GM technology should get full Government backing, relaxed regulation and financial support. GM Freeze believes Owen Paterson's outspoken support for GM crops is a direct result of this meeting.

The presence of 'public' GM scientists at the meeting destroys the myth that they are independent of industry and only working in the public good. The truth is that past GM developments in the public sector have been consistently patented in the hope that they will be developed commercially and make profits for the inventors.

These are clear cases of public money being used to generate private profit.

Take the Rothamsted GM wheat trial. For this to progress to the point where seeds could be sold commercially through the public sector, a public plant breeding institute would have to develop suitable varieties for the UK market. Such institutions no longer exist, as they were privatised in the Thatcher era. So in the UK, for GM crop development to progress, biotech companies need to pick up such 'public' crops and turn them into commercial varieties.

The rationale for Rothamsted's aphid repelling GM wheat, a spring sown variety, remains a mystery. Aphids are rarely a problem pest on spring wheat, and this has led many, including some pro-GM farmers, to question why £1.28 million of tax payers' money is being used on this project. Could it be a case of public money paving the way for commercial exploitation overseas by one of the biotech corporations?

GM crop developments in the UK have slowed right down since 2003, and only two publicly-funded GM test sites took place in 2012. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, biotech corporations like Monsanto and Bayer were trying to push ahead with GM crops and hundreds of test sites were sown around the world. Public rejection of GM food is often cited as a reason for this, yet tax money is still spent on research into products for which there is no market. Reconciling the lack of public support was a key goal of the Government/industry meeting last Summer.

As a result comments in the media by the biotech companies have been rare recently. Instead publicly-funded scientists from institutions like Rothamsted and the John Innes Centre near Norwich have been fronting pro-GM statements and media coverage. Often these appearances are arranged and co-ordinated by the pro-GM Science Media Centre (SMC) which also receives public money. SMC not only choreographs pro-GM media stories but also ensures that research showing possible harmful effects of GM and pesticides is denigrated in the media. This happened last September; research by a French team found GM maize with tolerance to Monsanto's *Roundup* weedkiller damages the livers and kidneys of laboratory rats, as well as increasing both mortality rates and the incidence of tumours. The research came under global attack from pro-GM scientists who ignored the fact that the team were trying to find the impact of low level exposure to the GM maize and herbicide over the whole lifetime of laboratory rats.

Such experiments had not been carried out before, as the statutory risk assessment to approve GM as *safe* for food or feed only requires feeding studies to last 90 days. The public are now rightly concerned not only that GM foods may not be safe in the long term, but that the regulatory system that assures us it is safe is not fit for purpose.

The French research results add to the growing body of evidence on the health impacts of Roundup's active ingredient glyphosate. This is the most widely sprayed weedkiller on the planet and can now be sprayed directly on growing crops, such as GM soya and maize, and also on non-GM cereal crops to ensure they are dried out when harvested.

Applying glyphosate directly to growing crops leads to greater risk of residues in food and animal feed. To accommodate this practice, the legal limit for glyphosate residues in all the affected crops, such as GM soya, and conventional wheat, barley and oats, were raised. Official EU monitoring for glyphosate residues of GM-based animal feed and foods from animals fed on it is virtually non-existent across. Residues in flour and bread are monitored in some countries, and residues below the legal limit are frequently found. What's worse, legal residue thresholds were breached in other crops on which glyphosate is applied directly near harvest, such as imported lentils and chick peas, when they were checked in the UK in 2011, and the EU obligingly raised the legal threshold to allow trade to continue.

Investigating the effects of long-term exposure to low levels of glyphosate (and its breakdown chemical known as AMPA) does not form part of the pre-approval risk assessment for the GMOs designed to be used with it, so the safety remains open to question.

Insistence that GM wheat is vital to feeding the world has been growing steadily for several years despite the lack of evidence that GM crops yield more than conventional ones. GM varieties tolerant to Roundup and other herbicides could be developed, and with them would come the risk of increasing exposure to pesticide residues in our staple foods, such as bread and breakfast cereals.

It's pretty clear that this Government can no longer be relied upon to do the right thing when it comes to GM crops and safety. They are simply too close to industry and increasing dancing to their tune. To avoid the threat of more GM crops entering the food chain, citizens and trade union members will need to work together to ensures that the nation's bakers make it clear to government and industry that there will be no market for GM wheat or other crops.

GM Freeze has a ready-made pledge companies can sign to help us demonstrate there is no market for Rothamsted's, or any other, GM wheat. With the help of BFAWU members we will challenge the big manufacturers to join the many smaller bakers who have already signed the pledge. Please sign and return the leaflet in this newsletter, contact info@gmfreeze.org or go straight to the pledge at www.gmfreeze.org/actions/24/. Many thanks for your help on this important issue.

Pete Riley

WHAT IS CANCER?

CANCER RESEARCH UK

Cancer is a Killer

On September 13th 2012, my Mum died of Bowel Cancer.

Cancer doesn't discriminate whether you're Male or Female, Young or Old, Rich or Poor – anyone can get cancer. Losing my Mum left a void in my life which can never be filled. **Cancer Research UK** introduces you to what you need to know about the five main cancers.

Breast cancer

Read all about breast cancer, including symptoms, risk factors, causes, and prevention. Screening and diagnosis of breast cancer, including mammograms, ultrasound and biopsy. Treatment information includes surgery, chemotherapy, hormone therapy, radiotherapy and biological therapy. *Coping with Breast Cancer* provides information on managing after surgery, coping with menopausal symptoms, and breast cancer in pregnancy.

What to look out for

Changes that could be due to a breast cancer are:

- A lump or thickening in an area of the breast
- Changes in size or shape of a breast
- Dimpling of the skin
- A change in the shape of your nipple, particularly if it turns in, sinks into the breast, or has an irregular shape
- A blood stained discharge from the nipple
- A rash on a nipple or surrounding area
- A swelling or lump in your armpit.

Lung Cancer

Lung cancer can start in the windpipe (*trachea*), the main airway (*bronchus*) or the lung tissue. Find out about symptoms, risk factors and causes of lung cancer, diagnostic tests, treatment (including surgery, chemotherapy, radiotherapy and biological therapy), likely outcome (*prognosis*), research and how to cope with lung cancer, including managing breathlessness.

General symptoms of lung cancer

The symptoms of lung cancer may include:

- Having a cough most of the time
- A change in a cough you have had for a long time
- Being short of breath
- Coughing up phlegm (*sputum*) with signs of blood in it
- An ache or pain when breathing or coughing
- Loss of appetite
- Tiredness (fatigue)
- Losing weight
- Having a chest infection that doesn't go away with treatment.

Bowel Cancer

Bowel cancer is also called colorectal cancer and includes large bowel cancer (colon cancer) and cancer of the back passage (rectal cancer or cancer of the rectum). Find out about bowel cancer symptoms, risk factors, causes and preventing bowel cancer. There is information about tests to diagnose bowel cancer and treatments including surgery, chemotherapy, radiotherapy, biological therapy, research and clinical trials. The *Living with Bowel Cancer* section has information about diet after surgery, managing a colostomy, and how cancer may affect your sex life.

Symptoms of large bowel cancer

- Bleeding from the back passage (*rectum*) or blood in your stools
- A change in normal bowel habits to diarrhoea or looser stools, lasting longer than 6 weeks
- A lump that your doctor can feel in your back passage or abdomen (more commonly on the right side)
- A feeling of needing to strain in your back passage (as if you needed to pass a bowel motion)
- Losing weight
- Pain in your abdomen or back passage
- A lower than normal level of red blood cells (*anaemia*).

Bowel tumours can bleed, so cancer of the bowel often causes a shortage of red blood cells. This is called *anaemia* and may cause tiredness and sometimes breathlessness.

Sometimes cancer can block the bowel. This is called a bowel obstruction. The symptoms include:

- Griping pains in the abdomen
- Feeling bloated
- Constipation
- Being sick.

Prostrate Cancer

Find out about prostate cancer – including symptoms and causes, tests to diagnose cancer of the prostate, treatment (including surgery, hormone therapy, chemotherapy and high intensity focused ultrasound) and current research, including *abiraterone* and *cabazitaxel*. *Living with Prostate Cancer* covers coping with your diagnosis, urinary problems and your sex life.

As men get older their prostate gland often enlarges. This is usually not due to cancer. It is a condition called *benign prostatic hyperplasia*. The symptoms of growths in the prostate are similar whether they are non-cancerous (*benign*) or cancerous (*malignant*). The symptoms include:

- Having to rush to the toilet to pass urine
- Difficulty passing urine
- Passing urine more often than usual, especially at night
- Pain when passing urine
- Blood in the urine or semen.

The last two symptoms – pain and bleeding – are very rare in prostate cancer. They are more often a symptom of non-cancerous prostate conditions.

It is important to realise though, that very early prostate cancer generally does not cause any symptoms at all. If a tumour is not large enough to put much pressure on the tube that carries urine out of the body (the urethra), you may not notice any effects from it at all.

Cervical Cancer

All about cervical cancer including symptoms and causes, cervical screening, treatment for abnormal cervical cells, tests to diagnose cervical cancer, treatment (including surgery, radiotherapy and chemotherapy) and current research. *Living with Cervical Cancer* covers coping with your diagnosis, fertility and how cancer and treatment can affect your sex life.

Cervical cancer symptoms

The most common symptom is bleeding from the vagina at times other than when you are having a period. You may have bleeding:

- Between periods
- After or during sex
- At any time if you are past your menopause.

Some women also have a vaginal discharge that smells unpleasant.

Discomfort or pain during sex – Doctors call pain related to sex *dyspareunia*.

There are many other conditions that cause these symptoms – most of them much more common than cervical cancer. But you should go to your doctor straight away if you have any of these symptoms. You probably don't have cancer but if you do, the sooner you are treated, the more likely you are to be cured (*and usually the less treatment you will need to have*). Which is why it is so important to have ***a regular smear test***.

Conclusion

Unfortunately cancer claimed the life of my Mum and robbed me and my family of at least 20 years more with her. Treatment for cancer is available but early detection gives a better chance of surviving cancer.

Cancer research uk says that in 15 years time, 50% of Men and 47% of women will get some form of cancer. These are not great figures, so if you see or feel anything different in your body please go see your doctor and get checked out.

For further information please visit the **Cancer Research UK** website: www.cruk.org

Mark Brooks
National Health & Safety Rep

BFAWU GUIDE TO ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

Detailed accident investigation should be seen as a positive opportunity to improve Health and Safety standards in the workplace. Our actions in gathering, recording, disseminating and acting on the information may be the difference between a reccurrence (and possibly more serious accident) and the preventative measures we are looking for. This is where an efficient, formal accident investigation plan comes in.

An effective Accident Investigation system should contain the following:

- **Clear guidelines** on how to conduct the investigation, setting standards that are easy for all to follow. This will allow a consistent approach, irrespective of who does the investigation (it's no good having standards of conduct that are only understood by the person who wrote them).
- A system encouraging **sensible reporting** of all accidents and near misses, no matter how trivial. Most serious accidents are preceded by several minor ones or some near misses.
- The opportunity for management and union to jointly investigate all accidents as **partners in risk management**.
- A **decision-making process** that can evaluate the actual or potential risk of reccurrence.
- An effective system of **dealing with the possible consequences**, like first aid provisions and emergency services. It is no use analysing the causes, if we can't deal with the consequences.
- A **review process** that can evaluate the effectiveness of the investigation.

BFAWU Working With You for a Safer Future

Following an accident or near miss, Safety Reps should:

- Gather the evidence (including witness statements).
- Put the evidence into chronological order. (It will help to determine what happened)
- Use the decision-making process to ensure that measures are taken to prevent reccurrence.
- Report your findings to management, including your recommendations and any possible breaches of legislation. (Always document your evidence, it may be needed later.)

Safety Reps should also take the environment into account when conducting an investigation: eg. is it cold, humid, greasy, dark or untidy? Are there holes in the floor? Is there a lack of space? They should also look at the risk assessment, previous problems and the levels of training given, as this will help with the final evaluation. Lastly, ensure that there is a system of reporting back to the workforce. There is nothing worse than being left in the dark for building mistrust. Sensible and coherent communications help to encourage future participation by the workforce in accident investigation.

Undermining Health and Safety at work

The long standing advice and guidance given by the BFAWU (due to employers moving to disciplining workers rather than dealing with the accident and trying to ensure it does not reccur), is as follows. Where employers resort to disciplining members for either reporting, witnessing or being injured at work:

- Where the accident or incident has occurred and an investigation is convened which may lead to disciplinary action, that a shop steward is asked to accompany you that meeting.
- Raise a grievance in relation to the potential disciplinary hearing.
- If there is a failure to hear or resolve the grievance satisfactory – enter stage 2.

If you have an internal or external stage 3:

- Once concluded, if still no resolution then ask for branch meeting for a mandate for industrial action due to company's undermining of Health and Safety.

BAKERS FOOD AND ALLIED WORKERS UNION BFAWU STRENGTH IN UNITY

TO ALL BAKERS FOOD AND ALLIED WORKERS UNION MEMBERS AT SOLWAY FOODS, MANTON WOODS:

Dear Colleague

The Union is currently campaigning at your site in Manton Woods, where a large number of your fellow workers have now joined the union.

At your sister plant (Solway Foods, Corby in Northampton) they were in the same situation like yourselves, but by joining the Bakers Union, they now have Trade Union Recognition, which gives them the right to raise all issues that affects their Terms and Conditions at work.

At your place of work (Manton Woods) you have a legal right to be represented by the Bakers Union in any Disciplinary, Grievance, or matters that affects your Terms and Conditions at work.

We are looking for internal representatives on the various shift patterns to help promote the Union at work in your own time.

THOSE WHO ARE ALREADY MEMBERS OF THE UNION PLEASE ENCOURAGE YOUR WORK COLLEAGUES TO JOIN THE UNION AS COLLECTIVELY WE CAN WORK TOGETHER TO IMPROVE YOUR WORKING TERMS AND CONDITIONS AT SOLWAY MANTON WOODS:

PLEASE CONTACT THE FOLLOWING TRADE UNION OFFICIALS FOR ANY HELP YOU MAY REQUIRE:

George Atwall (07739326009)
Tony Lewis (07739326006)
Lukasz Bemka (07872967467)

THE BAKERS FOOD AND ALLIED WORKERS UNION TAKES THIS OPPORTUNITY TO WISH YOU AND YOUR FAMILY A HAPPY XMAS AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR.

Anthony.D.Lewis (Regional Officer)

Executive Council Registered Office: Stanborough House, Great North Road, Stanborough, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, AL8 7TA
Tel: 01707 260150 **Email:** info@bfawu.org **Web:** www.bfawu.org Certified under section 8(10), Trade Union and Labour Relations Act 1974

The union organising committee at Solway Foods, Manton Woods (plus friend) brave the cold and the snow – ***Solidarity!***

BAKERS FOOD AND ALLIED WORKERS UNION BFAWU STRENGTH IN UNITY

B F A W U CND NEWS

CND welcomes LibDem commitment to fight Trident

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) has welcomed Danny Alexander's commitment to ensure a full and open debate on the future of the UK's nuclear weapons.

In an interview with The Guardian, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, (who is leading the Trident Alternatives Review) asserted that we are at a 'significant moment', with an historic opportunity to reconsider Britain's nuclear arsenal.

Alexander stressed the need to reformulate policy on Trident replacement – citing the financially ruinous £100bn+ price-tag of like-for-like replacement and its irrelevance to Britain's 21st century defence needs. He stated that the Lib Dem-led review will produce a 'clear, credible and compelling, set of arguments for alternatives', and he challenged politicians of all parties, including Labour politicians, to look at this review when it comes out with an open mind.

Speaking in the wake of the latest tranche of personnel cuts by the MOD, he also made clear the impact of Trident spending on conventional defence forces and the antipathy to Trident within the military.

Kate Hudson, CND General Secretary, said, "Danny Alexander is right to point out what he describes as the 'real significance of this debate for the future of our country' – it's high-time that Labour and the Tories realise that a blind commitment to wasting well over £100bn on a new nuclear weapons system is not what the public want."

If that still doesn't convince them, then how about the fact that it's unusable, strategically redundant and ***not even the military want it!***"

Norville Grazette, EC No1 Region

YOUNG MEMBER'S FORUM REPORT

SINCE BEING ELECTED to the post of young members' rep at annual conference last year, I have been keen to start a project aimed at and about young people. As I'm the first person to hold this post within our Union I wasn't quite sure what to do for this. But with the help of Ian Hodson and the rest of the Union, we held the BFAWU's first ever young member's forum!

As it was the first it was more of a trial, just to get a feel of what the meeting should be like, if there was much interest for the forum, and also to see how we could improve future events of this sort. So on Wednesday 30th January, we held the forum at the Thompsons Solicitors' offices in Leeds. We were lucky enough to have 3 great guest speakers on the day: **Doug Nichols**, General Secretary of the GFTU, **Julie Blackburn** of Thompsons Solicitors and **Andrew Fisher** from the LRC came to talk to us.

The day started with myself and Ian introducing the event and the aims of the day – to get a feel for the direction we want to be heading in, as a Union, for young members, and to lay a foundation for that, as well as establishing some long term aims which are improving the way the Union communicates with young members, how some benefits could be improved so they appeal to young members more and most importantly how we can make young people and potential members see that the Union is relevant to them.

I would say that at least half of young people don't know what a trade union is, and we need to change that. The first speaker of the day, Andrew Fisher, spoke about this problem. He gave us a very interesting talk on how politics relates to everything in everyday life, either through our local authorities or through government as a whole. He also talked about taxes and the Myth of how Benefit Fraud is costing the government millions (it costs in between £1 and £2 billion a year). But what they fail to tell us is that there is £16 billion left *unclaimed* because people don't know they are entitled to it or don't know how to claim. Also, the government fails to mention the £120 billion in taxes that aren't collected from the Rich, and big businesses.

Other points Andrew raised were the 20% difference between benefits paid to those over 25 and those under 25; how this country has the *lowest unemployment benefit payment in Western Europe*. He discussed how the economic crisis came about. He also spoke about how easy it is for young people to organise through *social networking*, eg. Facebook and twitter.

The second speaker of the day was Doug Nichols. He gave a good talk about the gap between young and old workers, not just in the workplace, but within the Union as well. He also touched on how within unions young people need to be shown and guided into positions so that the union doesn't die and that it carries on.

In the next part of his session we were split into groups and asked to think about three points:

1 *What one thing do we want Ian Hodson and Ronnie Draper to take and put before the Executive Council*
2 *What one thing did we want the Union to do for young people before conference, and*
3 *What one thing did we want the Union to do for young people at conference.*

We all came up with different ideas, which we voted on to get our final points. The first point was that we as a Union should be sending *at least 1 young member to every available conference or meeting* – and this is the point we wanted to be put forward to the Executive Council.

We decided as a group that what we wanted the Union to do for young members before Conference was to see branches encouraging young members to take part and to send younger members to conference as delegates and guests.

Our final point was that at conference we wanted a fringe meeting specifically *about* young people, not just *for* young people – for all members to share their views and opinions about how the Union could improve communications, because if we don't do something soon about encouraging the younger generation, the future of this Union looks uncertain.

This brought us onto Julie Blackburn, or Thompsons Solicitors, speaking about the legal services they provide, and how they can be seen to be a bit irrelevant by young people, like the free wills services and funeral benefit, how many young members are thinking about that realistically? But Julie talked about current Health and Safety laws and how accidents at work can easily happen, no matter how old you are, and she also raised the point about this current Tory government destroying Health and Safety laws that protect our members, and that this will only take the workplace safety back to the level of Victorian times, and that we have to be united as a Union to defend our Health and Safety laws, and our terms and conditions.

This brought us to the end of our first young members' forum. Once again, I would like to than Julie Blackburn, Doug Nichols, and Andrew Fisher for taking time to speak at our forum. I also want to thank all the young members who attended, and look forward to seeing them at the next forum (ideally to be held in the Birmingham area, to allow more members from different regions to take part).

All in all, it was a good starting point and a step in the right directions for our young members and for our Union.

Rachel Mullen
Young Members' Representative

we worked hard... just not all the time!

WILL I BE AFFECTED BY CHANGES TO EMPLOYMENT LAW?

MWR Solicitors employment law specialist, **Sadiq Vohra**, outlines the expected law changes which lie ahead

If you have concerns about the changes, or require advice on any other aspect of employment law:
contact **Sadiq Vohra**:
tel: 01772 254201
or
visit: http://www.mwrlaw.com.

Last year, the government brought in a number of proposed changes to employment law. These include increasing the qualifying period for unfair dismissal claims to two years, changes to the employment tribunal system and the pensions auto enrolment scheme. All of the alterations are in differing stages of development from consultation to draft so it is yet to be known when they will come in force and how they could affect workers. We can however inspect those which are likely to come into force in the first half of the year.

Consultation on Redundancy

The 90 days consultation period for collective redundancies of 100 or more employees is being reduced to 45 days. This change is due to come into effect from April, 6.

Employment Tribunal Fees

Anyone taking a claim to the Employment Tribunal is likely to face two sets of costs associated with that. They will have to pay an initial fee to issue a claim, and another fee if it goes to a hearing.

The level of fee will be determined by the type of claim. The fee for more straightforward claims (including claims for breach of contract, unauthorised deductions from wages, holiday pay, various statutory time off rights, and failure to pay a protective award or redundancy payment) will be £160 for issue and £230 for the hearing.

All other claims covering unfair dismissal, discrimination, whistle-blowing claims will be subject to an issue fee of £250 and a hearing fee of £950. It's expected that this will come into force in the summer.

There is a different fee structure for multiple claimants.

The President and National Secretary of BFAWU have confirmed that the Union will support claims, subject to the provisions of the Union Rule Book.

Discrimination

Employers will also no longer be liable for third party harassment (eg. a customer who comes in to a bakery and harasses a member of staff).

Discrimination questionnaires are also being scrapped. Discrimination questionnaires allowed those suffering from discrimination to seek specific answers from their employer.

Parental leave

Also in March from the 8th, the right to unpaid parental leave will be increased to 18 weeks per parent, per child.

There will also be an extension to the right to request flexible leave to agency workers who return from parental leave. Statutory maternity, paternity and adoption pay is also due to go up from £135.45 to £136.78 per week.

Sickness

Statutory sick pay is to go up from £85.85 to £86.70 per week from April.

The changes mean that employees are facing a storm of complex new rules and regulations. Some will bring about a new confidence for employees; however the instruction of new fees for going to a tribunal could mean that those with difficult cases will have to pay around £1,200 in fees before their case is heard.

These measures are seen by trade unions as an attack on workers' rights by the coalition government and so ***being part of a union has never been so important***.

Sadiq Vohra

THANKS TO LIGHTHOUSE FINANCIAL SERVICES

As I am retiring (and always telling members to use the union benefits) I thought this would be a good time to try out our Union financial advisors **Lighthouse Financial services**.

I contacted Lighthouse and **Mark Lucas** made arrangements to come and meet me to discuss the help I needed.

I was looking for advice on the best way to use my pension fund and the best opportunities to make the most of my pension fund.

After a couple of meetings looking at the options available I was more than happy to go with the advice given by Mark, and I saved over £400 in fees.

I would definitely use Lighthouse again, and would like to say thanks Mark for all the help you have given me.

Marylin French
No 5 Region

For more information visit:
www.lighthousefa.co.uk

WHAT DOES 2013 HAVE IN STORE FOR *RIGHTS AT WORK?*

Iain Birrell of Thompsons Solicitors gives his thoughts on the upcoming legislation

THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGES to employment law for 14 years will be made this year by the **Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Bill (ERRB).**

The Bill is expected to become law in April. One of its key provisions is enabling employers to hold "pre-termination negotiations" (otherwise known as "protected conversations"), allowing employers to fire staff at will knowing that an employment tribunal cannot take the conversation into account when considering a claim for unfair dismissal.

Compromise agreements

Compromise agreements, the contract by which an employee agrees not to pursue compensation claims against their employer, usually in return for a financial settlement, will be renamed as *settlement agreements.*

There will now be a new requirement to provide various information to ACAS before lodging an employment tribunal claim form and this is aimed at achieving early settlement. But as the government has only just launched a consultation about the forms the information will be submitted on (which ends on 15 February) it is clear that policies and procedures are being rushed through before the practicalities have been properly agreed.

The Bill enables the Secretary of State to limit unfair dismissal awards. We now know this will be a cap of 12 months' pay, alongside the current overall cap, meaning that if 12 months' pay for a unfairly sacked employee is more than the overall cap, they get the lower amount.

Loss of compensation

So, not only will an employee whose life has been blighted by their employer's wrongdoing and whose losses significantly exceed 12 months' wages lose out on compensation they are morally due, but their employer is allowed to limit the cost of their behaviour, leaving them free to repeat it.

Protection for workers harassed by a third party, such as a customer in a shop, are being repealed so that it will no longer be possible to sue an employer for failing to take action to stop it happening.

The TUPE regulations are to be the next victim of the government's assault on employment rights

And where an employer proposes to make 100 or more employees redundant, they will only have to consult with the workers' trade union for 45 days, not the current 90.

Less time for negotiation

That means there will be a lot less time for unions to negotiate to try to save jobs or to find the redundant workers jobs or training elsewhere.

Any positives?

Two brighter spots amid the gloom of the government's dismantling of employment rights legislation are the new power for employment tribunals to order an employer to carry out an ***Equal Pay Audit*** where there has been an equal pay breach, and there will be penalties on employers who have *breached employment rights* where the breach has aggravating factors (we do not know how this will be defined, but we think it should include, for example, when there is a flagrant disregard for rules and fairness, or where there is victimisation).

Having said that, there's not much of a penalty or remedy as that is capped at £5,000 and is paid to the *State* – not to the employee him or herself.

Tribunals to require a 'fee'

From this summer there will be a fee for launching an employment tribunal and we also expect the government's '*shares for rights*' employee-shareholders much-derided plan to come with it.

This scheme will allow employers to ask employees to give up certain employment rights, such as to be able to claim unfair dismissal, in return for shares in the company.

And there's more...

There's more on the horizon. The regulations which protect workers when the business or undertaking they work for is transferred to a new employer are to be the next victim of the government's assault on employment rights.

A new consultation on the TUPE regulations includes removing the so-called '*gold plating*' of some provisions which was done in 2006 in order to give less room for legal argument and uncertainty.

There is no doubt that legal wrangles *have* been reduced by the changes – but inevitably the business lobby hated them and the government reckons it hinders the transfer process.

The reality is that ministers want to make it easier for employers to offload their workers onto others without having too much regard for their rights.

Employment agencies under scrutiny

Finally, for now, a consultation on employment agencies could have consequences for workers in the food industry.

It is, however, good to see that it doesn't propose to lift the ban on agencies supplying workers to companies in order to break strikes.

Ian Birrell

We'll help you put the pieces **back together.**

Tens of thousands of BFAWU members have already talked to our expert solicitors about an accident or illness - and they're waiting to hear from you.

Remember, your accident or illness doesn't have to happen at work - you might have been at home, on the road or even on holiday.

From April 2013, the way personal injury claims are funded will change.

We urge you to act now before the new rules come into effect, as it could make all the difference.

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We'll ensure you're not fobbed off with just crumbs.
Call the **BFAWU Legal Helpline** on **0333 321 2781**

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THE INSTITUTE OF EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

INFORMING THE PROGRESSIVE RESISTANCE

THE THINK TANK for the labour movement, the Institute of Employment Rights (IER) has worked tirelessly for over 20 years to inform the discussion around worker and trade union rights and provide expert analysis to arm the progressive resistance.

Traditionally, the IER provided low-cost publications and conferences to keep the labour movement updated on the latest changes to employment law, but it has recently also begun to provide free resources online as well.

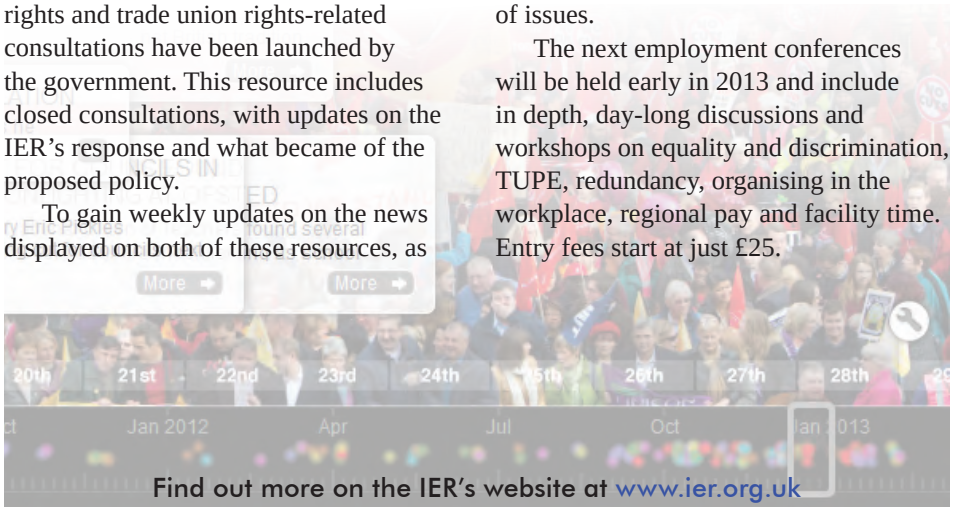
Among the free resources accessible on the IER's website is the interactive **Coalition Timeline,** which provides users with a new way of tracking the ideological moves of the Government. The timeline boasts extensive and detailed coverage of more than 100 proposals, policies, u-turns and backbench whispers split into 14 colour-coded sections, including trade union rights, health and safety, equality and the public sector.

Elsewhere on the site is the **Consultation Calendar**, which keeps users updated on which employment rights and trade union rights-related consultations have been launched by the government. This resource includes closed consultations, with updates on the IER's response and what became of the proposed policy.

To gain weekly updates on the news displayed on both of these resources, as well as to receive special offers, details of forthcoming events and critical analysis on the latest government proposals, just sign up for a free subscription to the IER's email mailing list.

Alternatively, become a paid subscriber from just £25 per year to receive all of the Institute's specialist publications – six of which are released per year – completely free, as well as discount entrance fees to its frequent employment law conferences, which always feature presentations from some of the UK's top experts on a wide range of issues.

The next employment conferences will be held early in 2013 and include in depth, day-long discussions and workshops on equality and discrimination, TUPE, redundancy, organising in the workplace, regional pay and facility time. Entry fees start at just £25.



Find out more on the IER's website at www.ier.org.uk

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