



## **Cool it! Ronnie Draper launches the BFAWU Campaign to Combat Workplace Heat**

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# EDITOR'S NOTES



As 2011 draws to a close we can reflect on a year that has seen major change for the BFAWU and also a year of massive challenge to our members' terms and conditions. The retirement of Joe Marino brought to an end an era that has written our history for the past 32 years and shaped our future for who knows how long.

## Our new National President

I have to say I have been impressed with the way in which Ian Hodson has taken over the mantle of National President and the enthusiasm and drive he brings to his new role. It is an enthusiasm we are going to need in bundles when you consider everything that is going on both in government and within industry.

During the recession we saw many companies jumping on the bandwagon – using the economic climate to freeze wages, reduce manning levels and attempt to gorge themselves greedily on our members' terms and conditions – *chancers* taking their opportunity to trim the company by preying on the uncertainty surrounding the economy.

But now we are facing a second wave of attacks as the Tories align themselves behind policies that will make it easier to get rid of workers whilst at the same time repealing laws that protect the health, safety and welfare of workers at work. Typical Tories venting their spleens about the burdens placed on business by restrictive practices, unproductive workers and the shackles of protective legislation.

For me it is about a government giving their backers the upper hand

and an opportunity to maximise profits at your expense and we are seeing glaring examples of how companies can manipulate the law for their own ends whilst reducing already poor terms and conditions.

On October 1st this year the Agency Workers Directive was introduced as a piece of protective legislation aimed at stopping unscrupulous employers from exploiting those who get their employment from working with an agency. In a simplified interpretation, it was to stop agency workers being paid less favourable terms than those they were working alongside.

## The brink of action

We have seen a perfect example of this at the two **Park Cakes** factories in Oldham and Bolton, where our members were taken to the brink of damaging strike action in defence of their trade union agreement and the protection of future terms and conditions.

At the time of writing we are involved in tense but, hopefully, productive talks with the company directors, aimed at resolving the need for industrial action by changing attitudes towards minimising terms and conditions.

Minimum wage, zero hour contracts, no double time or time and a half for overtime and no attendance allowance were just a few of the changes that threatened workers at these sites.

The decision to take strike action was not taken lightly, indeed it was very brave and difficult decision, taken when money was tight and many look forward to the pressures of Christmas.

If cuts need to be made to save money why not urge pay restraint amongst those at the higher salary levels instead of this mad rush to penalise those less capable of taking the hit? The excuse that companies have to pay salaries to entice the best people to the business is nothing short of ludicrous. It is one of those questions that has always puzzled me as to why we have to pay inflated salaries to get the 'best' people at the highest levels, yet when it comes to employing those people of whom they demand work nearing perfection (where *auditing* and *quality control* are the watch words), they look to provide slave wages and inferior terms.

## What needs to be done

This dispute has been halted and, hopefully, resolved due to a willingness to talk, but it should serve as a warning to employers that employees have a right to be treated fairly and that failure to do so can drive even moderate workers to react in this way. We need interventions from government and big customers like Marks and Spencer and Tesco's if we are to stop this happening. Government has to close loopholes in legislation allowing abuse of workers' rights. Supermarkets have to look at themselves for the role they play in driving down terms and conditions by imposing crazy discount demands on already struggling businesses.

We should be preparing to help in any way we can when the call comes or workers like those mentioned above, will become just another downtrodden statistic and this type of exploitation will become the norm. Members cannot be starved into submission or into accepting inferior terms and conditions – so we must be ready to assist in any practical way possible.

## and, in the end...

Finally I would like to wish all our members and their families a great festive season and a prosperous new year.

I would also ask that we also reflect on the man-made and natural disasters that have brought about the deaths of hundreds of thousands of trade unionists around the world, in hope that 2012 sees an outbreak of peace where there is conflict and that we see some government policies aimed at improving the employment opportunities for our young people.

Ronnie Draper @ronniebfawu



## NATIONAL PRESIDENT IAN HODSON WRITES

The recent riots have highlighted once again how politicians will use any opportunity to try and justify the unjustifiable.

David Cameron's attempt to suggest that somehow Health and Safety was to blame for the riots was laughable, as was his ludicrous claim that it was his return from holiday that stopped them – rather than the 16,000 police officers that had to tackle the issue on the streets of London. Can you imagine what will happen if we have the same situation in 2014 after the cuts to law enforcement have kicked in and we have 32,000 fewer police officers due to job losses? Where will the 16,000 police officers come from?

The so-called Independent Policy Forum set up by the Conservatives has stated that police officers should wear their uniforms when travelling to and from work to give the appearance of constant police presence in and around our communities. What a ridiculous idea! Will they be given overtime payments if they have to deal with an issue on the way to work? Will they be sued for having used force or a baton/pepper spray outside of work hours? It simply raises too many questions. Instead of PR solutions, we need real people with the necessary expertise and skills to fill the roles of police officers. Having off-duty police officers constantly in uniform calls to mind PC Plod from Noddy's Toytown rather than a credible law enforcement policy.

### H&S – red tape or vital protection?

Health and safety is being undermined by David Cameron and Chris Grayling. They portray it as unnecessary red tape holding businesses back. However, if deregulation of the banks gave us financial collapse, surely deregulation of health and safety will lead to more accidents, deaths and illness.

Why is it that when we are looking to justify conflicts around the world and our role in them, Cameron and Co talk about the 'safety of the people' – what about the safety of those they are elected to represent? The figures are now sadly starting to reflect the attempts of this government to undermine health and safety. Official figures are now showing a chilling 16% increase in deaths at work, rising from 147 in 2009/10 to 171 in 2010/11, with 50 deaths occurring within the construction industry. This

should come as no surprise to anyone. This particular industry has led the way in undervaluing its workers by removing employment contracts and forcing them into accepting conditions more akin to a third world dictatorship than a modern democracy.

In addition, they try to reduce costs by removing safety measures. Therefore, I congratulate all those construction workers who took action against those heinous and unjustified attacks from unscrupulous, money-grabbing employers. Like many in the financial sector, some construction industry bosses take absolutely no responsibility for their own recklessness and cavalier attitude.

Compare the anti-safety 'red tape' argument put forward by government and businesses to their own Conservative annual party conference in Manchester this year. The tax payer had to fork out £4 million to protect their safety for a week of partying and back slapping, with armed police given the task of protecting them from their own constituents. My opinion is that if safety is not important for us, then surely they don't need it either.

When you weigh it up, being an MP is less dangerous than working day in day out in a dusty environment. Despite this, they have no intention in putting £4 million into further funding for reducing workplace dust levels. The knock-on effect of a sound investment in the health of workers would be a reduction in cost to a health care system that is coming under increasing pressure through the government's safety agenda.

Anyone attending the Regional Health and Safety conferences and listening to the presentation from members of *Families Against Corporate Killers (FACK)* <http://www.hazardscampaign.org.uk/fack/about> will no doubt be horrified by what happens after someone is killed at work, and how most employers and politicians respond. I can assure you that it is a long way from accepting the argument for better health and safety with real punishment for those that murder at work. I honestly believe that a person's life should be valued higher than the paltry and insulting £1 one company was asked to pay after killing its employee. Unlike Theresa 'moggy' May's cat story, this is true and you can read it for yourself at <http://www.hazards.org/deadlybusiness/lifecanbecheap.htm>.

It's time that politicians were reminded that real people must be represented, not just the interests of big business. Politicians from all parties need to be made aware of whom they have a genuine duty to represent. Imagine sending your children to work and not knowing if they will come home alive or, at the very least, in the same mental and physical state as when they left. That sounds drastic but let's be clear – with the current legislation in place, thousands still die each year in work-related deaths, with countless others dying through diseases slowly killing them over a long period of time. Taking away existing protection (as this government wants to do) will inevitably lead to an increase in deaths, accidents and illnesses. Your children and grandchildren, currently at school will be the first in a generation to face no protection at work or rights to compensation for illnesses or injury caused by their employers. It's a blood-curdling thought that should be of concern to us all.

Finally, I hope that BFAWU officials and members alike, along with the wider public, support the public sector workers who are balloting for strike action on **November 30<sup>th</sup>**. Working people deserve a fair deal and we in the private sector should support their campaign. We should demand that all employers, irrespective of sector or industry, are given no alternative but to provide a proper pension, not just to the company directors but to their workers as well.

**Ian Hodson**



**Frank Loveday** (left), Organising District Secretary for Region 1 is pictured with **Stewart Duncan**, Director/General Manager of Oasis Foods Ltd, High Wycombe.

## FRANK LOVEDAY SIGNS A RECOGNITION AGREEMENT WITH OASIS FOODS LTD

### **Oasis Foods**

Oasis Foods Ltd are a mayonnaise and specialist sauce manufacturer who were purchased recently and became part of the Atlantic Foods chain. Oasis have seen quite a few changes to the management team since the takeover. The new Director is very supportive of our Union and we have quickly developed a good understanding and we are confident that we shall have a good partnership.

### **Full Recognition Agreement**

In October 2011 a full recognition agreement was signed after twelve months' work of meetings and recruitment with workers at their homes. I have to pay special thanks to all of the members for their commitment, belief and desire to ensure the success in

achieving this process. We wish them and the company every success for the future. We look forward to building a good working relationship and helping our members, supporting our new stewards and training them to look after their branch.

### **Strength in Unity**

We shall endeavour to encourage all employees to join, and stress the importance of retaining the members who can now consider themselves the pioneers of this new branch of the BFAWU. Proof that strength is in the unity of workers standing together.

**Frank Loveday**

# LET'S START WINNING!



**Doug Nicholls, GFTU General Secretary Elect writes for Foodworker**

## Small and specialist

There is a great deal of truth in the idea that from small acorns great oak trees grow. Something small can achieve something great. Given the right conditions of course.

In trade union terms this is an important idea. Trade union principles and a genuine cause can make a big difference and change things for the better if doggedly pursued by even a few workers.

A good motion from a small branch with just a handful members debated at their national union conference can often set policy for the whole union.

## A successful campaign

A successful campaign by one union, even if it is a small union, can be of benefit for the whole trade union movement's seven million members while helping the 22 million non-trade unionists as well. Let's hope they recognise trade union benefits, join up and get organised, especially when we in the minority benefit the majority.

In recent years specialist trade unions have proved they can attract new recruits and keep the loyalty and hard work of their members.

Knowing your trade, knowing your workmates, knowing the democracy of your union and knowing how to have your say – these are all distinctive features of specialist unions.

Our trade union movement has a history of small, specialist trade unions leading the way. Often when the TUC congress meets the leadership comes from specialist unions and the so-called big boys in big unions must listen and learn.

## Leading from the front

There have been many examples of leadership given by specialist unions on issues like the big economic problems or opposition to wars of aggression, the dominance of the financial predators over our entire political life and, not least, the lack of worker-friendly employment rights.

A really good example is the TUC support for the BFAWU campaign against the Agency Workers legislation, which is designed to create cheap labour with minimum terms and conditions applied in every workplace in the country.

The TUC also supports the BFAWU work to legislate for a maximum workplace temperature regulation – legislation designed to benefit workers where the workplace gets too hot.

These are examples of two vital causes taken up by a few organised workers, which will help millions.

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*"Our trade union movement has a history of small, specialist trade unions leading the way"*

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Such campaigns inspire us all to believe that when we are clear-headed, united and determined we can set on a path to victory come what may.

They also, of course, remind us that specialist unions like the BFAWU can call on the support of the GFTU to make a difference and add value to their work.

## Protecting public service

Now, as we campaign hard against this government's destructive assault on all things good, the large public service unions have no alternative but to ballot for the biggest and most important strike vote for several generations.

Unless we fight with them to protect our social services, NHS and pensions we will all suffer.

We all need to understand that a well-resourced public service benefits the entire economy. This struggle, coupled with all those that have been born in the anti-cuts committees and debated throughout the country together with the involvement of a new generation of younger people, is undoubtedly the big one of our times. In today's political climate we will all need every bit of solidarity and help we can give in order to fight the cutbacks and increasing unemployment.

## I'm fed up with losing

Now, as the proud, newly-elected GFTU General Secretary, I am really honoured to have been nominated and supported throughout by the BFAWU. I can pledge a new, refreshed resolve on my part and all our GFTU colleagues to work together to make a difference and help build campaigns led by your union and our affiliates into real winners. Frankly, I am fed up with us losing so much. I applaud fearless campaigning such as yours and I want to help in every way I can.

Previously, as General Secretary of the Community and Youth Workers Union, I have made so many great friends from BFAWU and I know already that we have so much in common as unions: tenacity, democratic accountability, a vision of a different society not dominated by profit, but by the needs and concern for human beings.

The GFTU success is built on over one hundred years' experience as an independent federation of specialist unions and trade unionists who band together to support each other in ways that make a real difference and which cannot be achieved elsewhere.

BFAWU has been a marvellous contributor to the affairs of the GFTU and I hope that even more of your members will make use of our education and support. Above all I hope that together through your GFTU affiliation we can make a difference to your key campaigns and concerns.

**Let's start winning**, let's defend and support each other twice, even four times, as much as the fat cats and Tories defend each other. Let's show renewed hope to a new generation that trade union determination can win, that little ideas can become massive and that campaigns can bear fruit for *all* trade union organised workers.

**Doug Nicholls**

**On 30 November up to three million public sector workers from twenty unions could be on strike. Such unity around strike action is unprecedented in my lifetime.**

sustainable and that the government's proposals are unfair.

My union is working with other unions, including the largest private sector union UNITE, and the National

That's why we join unions, because workers needed to be united against unscrupulous bosses who would exploit us. I joined the union on my first day working for the Department for Health

## UNITED WE STAND!

### Mark Serwotka, General Secretary of the Public and Commercial Services Union, talks to Foodworker

#### Not just about pensions

Although this strike is predominantly about public sector pensions, at its core it is really about who pays for the crisis. Should ordinary workers suffer the loss of pay, pensions and jobs due to the bankers crashing the economy? And can we stop this coalition government from driving our economy back into recession?

The government doesn't want us to think about it like this, but is instead trying to create a false divide between public and private sector workers.

According to the government, it is unfair that public sector workers get a reasonable pension when so few in the private sector get the same. But we have to ask ourselves how it would help private sector workers if their public sector workmates had their pensions downgraded or removed. It would be an odd trade unionist who argued for an equality of misery.

The average pension of a PCS member is currently £4,200 a year. That's about £80 per week – hardly the gold-plated life of luxury the gutter press talk about. The Hutton report found the average across the whole public sector is £5,600. This compares with the average private sector defined benefit pension of £5,860 – about the same. The scandal, however, is that only 11% of private sector workers now have a defined benefit pension – and only one-third are in any sort of pension scheme.

#### Fair pensions for all

The government is trying to force our members to pay more and work longer for a smaller pension.

The coalition government commissioned the Hutton report to look at public sector pensions, and found the cost is projected to fall in the foreseeable future. Backed up by evidence from the National Audit Office, Institute for Fiscal Studies and others, we have said from the start that our pensions are affordable,

Pensioners Convention to campaign for 'Fair Pensions for All'. We have published jointly a new pamphlet under this title which addresses public sector and private sector pensions – as well as the basic state pension.

As low- and medium-paid public servants, my members have more in common with BFAWU members than they do with the millionaire ministers and bosses who run government departments; and BFAWU members have more in common with PCS members than they do with the chief executives of the food industry. All of us should be fighting for fair pensions for all – including the basic state pension, because most workers will rely on it to supplement any occupational pension.

and Social Security in Aberdare, and was still working on the shop floor when I was elected General Secretary in 2000.

In all my working life, this is the gravest time for working people, and therefore the most important time to be part of a union. It is more important than ever that unions work together – and that's why PCS and BFAWU are both part of the Trade Union Co-ordinating Group (TUCG) bringing together public and private sector unions.



Mark Serwotka addresses congress  
photo PCS/Jess Hurd

I know BFAWU members will be demonstrating their solidarity: visiting the picket lines, joining the marches and rallies, and lobbying councillors and MPs to back the strike in advance.

### Our commitment

We remain committed to resolving this dispute through negotiation, though the government refuses to budge on the four main issues of *retirement age, contributions, accrual rates and indexation*. This should not come as a surprise. The government's case has never really been about affordability – but about imposing an effective tax on public sector workers to pay for the bankers' crisis, and to reduce public sector pensions to make privatisation more attractive to private profiteers.

This cabinet of millionaires is determined to stick to its plans because they are ideologically wedded to them. It will take huge pressure to budge them, but the trade union movement has responded by organising this unprecedented co-ordinated action.

There is another task for all of us: the government and sections of the right wing media will be more vicious than

ever in their attempts to smear us, deceive the public about our pensions and to demoralise members. We need everyone to counter these lies by responding with letters and in radio phone-ins, through social media, and in day to day conversations with friends, family and workmates.

This is not a strong government with an overwhelming mandate, but a weak minority Tory administration with a Lib Dem figleaf. If we allow our unity to be broken now, if we allow this strike to be defeated, and these pension changes to go through, it will embolden this government to go further: cutting and privatising more services. That will certainly cause damage to our society.

### Let's stand together, and win!

Mark was writing this article for us at the end of October. The issues have not altered. For more information go to:

[www.pcs.org.uk/n30](http://www.pcs.org.uk/n30)

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# 2011 TUC CONGRESS REPORT

from Marilyn McCarthy

At conference in June I was proud to be elected as a delegate to the TUC Annual Conference to be held in London, in September. Ronnie Draper (General Secretary), Marilyn French (Executive Council Member) and myself went to the conference to represent our union.

Ronnie Draper moved Motion 12, Employment Law, regarding 'reasonable belief' of a person's guilt being used by employers to sack workers. Unlike criminal law (where you are innocent until proved guilty and only found guilty where the evidence proves guilt *beyond reasonable doubt*), in employment law the employer only has to have 'reasonable belief' that you are guilty of the charge against you!

You could, therefore, be sacked just for being in the vicinity of an alleged disciplinary matter. Ronnie gave a brilliant speech and was supported by other trade unions. Needless to say the motion was supported by congress and was passed.

On the final Wednesday, Ronnie, Marilyn and myself were joined by Frank Loveday and Dave Hunt to launch the *Cool it!* campaign. We were outside Congress House handing out literature and free thermometers to conference delegates, to make them aware of our campaign. We were well received by lots of other unions both inside and outside. Inevitably, we picked the coldest day of conference to be stood outside!

The teachers unions were very supportive and said how high temperatures often affect their pupils in summer, which no-one in officialdom seemed perturbed by!

Ronnie moved Motion 79 on Maximum Working Temperatures with a very informative and impassioned speech to congress, pointing out that we don't need to be told to dress 'appropriately' for work. We don't usually turn up to work on ovens wearing collar and ties, fur coats or Ugg boots!

His speech was seconded by a chef from the RMT union who described working in a tiny galley kitchen whilst on the move, trying to cook meals in ridiculously high temperatures. Once again the motion was carried unanimously.

It was disappointing when Ed Miliband addressed conference and told delegates they shouldn't be using their right to strike! His comments were not well received. I was SO proud to be a trade unionist that day when he was booed. Like so many before him he has forgotten who helped put him in his current role.

We also attended fringe meetings in the evenings and at lunch times. At one of these, Matt Wrack (Fire Brigades Union) questioned the way in which we choose the leader of the Labour Party. He pointed out that so many of these people are professional politicians and, therefore, out of touch with workers in this country. He made the comment, "*There is no reason why the next leader of the labour party shouldn't be a Baker, for example.*" What a good idea, put me down for that one!

Thanks to all the people who supported me as a delegate. You gave me a wonderful opportunity to attend the conference (also thanks from Jeff McCarthy, who thought he had gone deaf for 4 days).

Marilyn McCarthy



*Inevitably, we chose the coldest day of Conference to promote Cool it! outside Congress House!*

# INHERITANCE LAW AND THE IMPORTANCE OF PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE



## Helen Scott-Parker, solicitor at MWR Solicitors, looks at wills and tax planning

Ever thought about what would happen to your financial affairs if you were mentally unable to handle them yourself? Who will take care of your family if you die?

Many people choose not to think of such scenarios, however planning ahead and making decisions in advance can ensure your personal assets and the people

you care about most are looked after by the people you trust.

A will contains your last wishes and instruction, they can stipulate entitlements of value to your family, friends or a preferred charity. Another possible benefit of having a will in place is to safeguard precious heirlooms and collections or to nominate someone to look after a family pet when you are gone.

A well-drafted will can also prevent arguments when you are not present, especially if you have children from previous marriages or relationships. It is possible to delay when your children or grandchildren can receive financial gain and measures to limit care fees can also be achieved through making a will.

If you do not have a will in place there are rules for deciding who inherits your assets, depending on your personal circumstances. This can result in the law deciding what happens to your estate under Intestacy rules.

With an average family property now worth just over £250,000, failing to have a will can become problematic for your family. For example, a common scenario

lawyers often come across is where one or both parties to a marriage have children by a previous relationship. Without careful planning there is a risk that future extended families will not be adequately provided for.

Many people view making a will as a time-consuming and expensive process, or understandably, don't wish to think about death. However, it can be a really simple process, one which can ensure your wishes are well documented and your family are cared for.

MWR Solicitors is based in Preston city centre, employing over 30 staff. It focuses on accidents, employment law, wills and probate, conveyancing and family law. Its mission is to help its clients solve life's legal problems, whatever they are. The firm was founded in 1912. If you wish to get your finances and decisions in order, contact MWR today.

The law firm's wills and probate team specialises in will writing, tax planning, powers of attorney, living wills, statutory wills and Islamic wills.

Call 0800 7310717 or email [helen.scottparker@mwrlaw.com](mailto:helen.scottparker@mwrlaw.com)

## NEGOTIATING OUR FUTURES

Anybody who is reading this article has negotiated at some point in his or her life – from little kicks inside the womb, from your first job interview, from giving way at a junction once you have started driving.

We negotiate through words, both written and spoken, through nods and gestures. We negotiate through silence (especially in marriage) and through body language and posture.

The art of negotiation is innate. Some will nurture it and others will let it lay dormant. This is where *leaders* emerge: men and women who, by the power invested in them, negotiate on behalf of others. We are of course talking about union representatives.

In the current economic climate negotiating is as hard as it has ever been. It is only likely to get harder.

Whether we are negotiating pay or contractual issues, it is very important that

we know our subject matter. Knowledge is power and with its availability in the modern world (primarily through the internet), it would be folly to enter any negotiations without being prepared.

- As mentioned previously, body language and posture play a pivotal part in the outcome of meetings. A slouched or slovenly appearance will exhibit lack of interest. Employers will seize on this.
- If, during negotiations, you are faced with terms or business rhetoric that you do not understand, it's always best to ask for explanations.
- Aim high by all means, but not too high. Be prepared for a 'middle-ground', somewhere between your aspirations and reality.
- If you are met with '*we can't discuss that at this moment in time*', always ask for a time when it might be convenient.

- Ask for timelines for answers.
- I've always found it best not to break silences. Negotiations often become a battle of wills. **Don't blink first.**

Try to use this simple acronym: **E.R.I.C**  
*Emotional Reaction Impedes Control*  
This is no time to hide in the trenches.

**Stand up for Strength in Unity!!**



**Nicky Sheemar** is the Branch Secretary at Hovis Leicester



The BFAWU Credit Union was the first national Credit Union set up in 1997 with the common bond being membership of the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union. The aim was (and remains) to assist members with financial problems, to encourage savings and to keep members out of the hands of money lenders. Its aim also was to assist members in short term financial problems that ordinary Banks would not help with as the loans being sought were for small amounts and short terms – *no money in that for Bankers.*

Credit Union members save and borrow for many reasons. It may be for that family holiday, for that emergency purchase, for a wedding or funeral expenses and many more. Savings are made at regular, weekly or monthly periods – as are repayments. Unlike banks, interest is paid on the *reducing* repayment figure not on the whole capital borrowed.

### **An easy way to save**

Most employers who recognise the Union agree deductions from wages/salaries, so it is an easy way to save. Savings can also be made by direct bank payments. Joining the Credit Union could not be easier. A simple application form is all that is needed for members of the Trade Union. (A request form for membership appears on the next page).

Membership is open not only to members – we also run a junior section where savings can be made on behalf of children and grandchildren.

### **Secure, safe borrowing**

Obviously, as we are dealing with members' money, security is of prime importance. The Directors of the Credit

# CREDIT UNION

Union are elected for a two year period at the Credit Union Annual General Meeting. This meeting also sets the Rules of the Credit Union which can be seen on the Credit Union web page ([www.bfawucreditunion.org.uk](http://www.bfawucreditunion.org.uk))

The Credit Union is regulated by the Financial Services Authority to ensure it is run correctly. There are also independent Accountants and Financial Advisers to protect Credit Union money. Behind that, and giving full support, is the Union itself.

Credit checks are made before loans are made so as to ensure loans are being made correctly. However, the Credit Union recognises that, at time, difficulties arise – for example redundancies happen and people get sick. In these days of reduction in hours, members' income can come under strain. After discussion with the Credit Union, Members with trouble making repayments may reschedule the loan to meet their new circumstances. The Credit Union is there to help in times of difficulty.

### **So what are the details?**

There is a minimum savings of *£2 per week* or *£10 per month*. Members of the Credit Union need to have 25% savings of any loan amount requested.

Members can take out a loan of double what they have saved after three months, triple what they have saved after twelve months and, after two years membership, the loan limit is £3,000.

Once a member applies for a loan and credit checks take place the loan will be in the member's bank account in *three working days*.

Interest on loans is charged at 1% on a diminishing balance. The length of repayment is up to two years but members can pay it off quicker if they so choose. Members receive an annual statement either by mail or electronically. A call to the Credit Union Office in Leeds will always give updated account details.

### **Benefits of membership**

The Credit Union is a major benefit for Union members and their families. Loans can be raised for holidays, household items such as fridges, televisions, family celebrations etc. There are many reasons for members to seek loans. Christmas is a time when families seek extra money for the celebrations. This is one of the busiest times for the Credit Union as members take advantage of the loan arrangements and the easy repayment terms. Banks cannot or will not arrange loans on such easy terms – and it is a really positive way to stay out of the clutches of unscrupulous money lenders.

With over 1,800 members the BFAWU Credit Union is a first class member benefit. It is a member-based and member-run organisation. Set up to assist Union members and to counter the dangers of loan sharks it has, in the past 14 years, helped thousands of members and their families at time of need.

Now is a good time to join the Credit Union and applications are welcome. Why look to loan sharks or discredited Banks for assistance for that one off purchase or holiday? Here are Union members saving and lending to each other. That is what trade unionism is all about.

**So come and join us.**



## PLEASE NOTE: THE CREDIT UNION IS MOVING

**As from Thursday, September 1st 2011, the Credit Union will be moving to the following address:**

**BFAWU Credit Union**

10 Greenside  
Pudsey  
West Yorkshire  
LS2 8PU

Email: admin@bfawucreditunion.co.uk

Phone: 0113 205 7509

Web page www.bfawucreditunion.org.uk

**The new opening times are:**

<b>Monday</b>	9.00am – 3.00pm
<b>Tuesday</b>	9.00am – 3.00pm
<b>Wednesday</b>	8.30am – 12.30pm
<b>Thursday</b>	10.00am – 4.00pm
<b>Friday</b>	9.00am – 3.00pm

**This move will help us deliver improved service to our members**



## JOIN THE CREDIT UNION TODAY

Membership application forms are available from:

**BFAWU Credit Union**

10 Greenside, Pudsey, West Yorkshire. LS2 8PU

Email: admin@bfawucreditunion.co.uk

Phone: 01132057509

Web page www.bfawucreditunion.org.uk

**YES!** *I would like more information on the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union Credit Union.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Post Code \_\_\_\_\_

Branch \_\_\_\_\_ Union Membership Number (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

Contact phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Email address (where applicable) \_\_\_\_\_



## 'We didn't vote to die at work'

**Government tells us modern work doesn't harm many people and that our health and safety is a burden on business, costs employers far too much and is stopping jobs being created. It's all lies!**

Every worker has the human right to come home alive and unharmed from their work every day but this government threatens to make work even more dangerous. The protection of workers is under attack as never before. Government public spending cuts have slashed jobs so fewer workers are doing more work and workplace stress has massively increased, damaging workers' health.

Minister Grayling has cut the HSE budget by 35%, Council EHOs have been cut by at least 28% – slashing enforcement (which is already inadequate) – and he has commissioned another review of health and safety law by Professor Löfstedt, due to report end of November. Already Grayling has ordered a 33% cut in proactive, preventative inspections, in all but the most dangerous industries, created a new charging regime for the HSE ('fee for fault') and the HSE Infoline has been closed.

This ideological attack on workers' lives and health, plus cuts to pay, pensions, legal aid, out of work benefits, the NHS and education, is meant to make us all more flexible, willing to work for the lowest wage and in more risky jobs. It will undoubtedly injure or kill more workers and make more workers ill. It is based on lies and the mythology that decent, safe and healthy work is a 'burden on business' and that regulation kills jobs creation.

All the evidence refutes this and shows that the real burden of poor health and safety is borne by those workers harmed and their families, and then mostly by the whole of society rather than the employers who create the risks.

The Hazards Campaign launched the '**We didn't vote to die at work**' campaign to challenge these lies and to build up a grassroots campaign against the specific attacks on health and safety which are part of the overall attack on the working class and any more lawlessness by employers.

**Lie No.1** *Health and Safety in Britain is one of best in world and very few people now are hurt by modern work.*

**TRUTH:** up to 1,500 killed in work-related Incidents, up to 50,000 die due to work-related illnesses and millions made ill by work EVERY YEAR; Britain ranks only 30th out of 176 countries for occupational safety and health performance; we have more work-related ill-health now than ever, according to occupational health experts. <http://www.gmhazards.org.uk/Whole%20story%202009-10%20update.doc>

HSE provisional and fractional figures – less than 1% of the real total – show 171 workers killed in GB in 2010/11, up 16% on 09/10 – with a 22% rise in construction deaths. This is all before the cuts in enforcement, deregulation and reduction in proactive inspections kick in. First quarter HSE figures for 2011/12 show 51 workers killed, 41 in the 'low hazard' sectors about to be denied proactive inspections.

**Lie No. 2** *Health and safety has gone mad, it's over the top, over-enforced and over-bureaucratic.*

**TRUTH:** There's less regulation now than 40 years ago, less paperwork, less time required by employers; less spot inspection of workplaces (only once in 38 years now!); fewer investigations – only 1 in 13 major and fatal injuries even investigated; fewer prosecutions – down 50% over 10 years and in 98% of major injuries there is no enforcement action taken against the employer at all.

**Lie No. 3** *Offices, shops, schools are 'non-hazardous' so have no need for health and safety designed for factories and building sites.*

**TRUTH:** You're less likely to be killed or physically injured but these workers face musculo-skeletal risks from working with computers and manual handling, violence from customers and pupils, and a whole host of stress-related illnesses caused by bullying and harassment, by long hours and excessive workloads.

Risk assessment is proportionate and takes account of the different hazards in these workplaces and doesn't require the same response as on construction sites or in factories.

**Lie No. 4** *Compensation culture is rife.*

**TRUTH:** Fewer than 10% of workers made ill, injured and the families of those killed by work, get any sort of compensation at all – research show claims down (except for road traffic incidents).

**Lie No 5** *Health and safety costs too much.*

**TRUTH:** Good health and safety saves employers and state money. Poor health and safety costs at least £30 billion EVERY YEAR and who pays? **You do** – workers and their families pay in heartbreak and poverty, we (the state) pay via health and benefit costs but the employers who cause the damage pay *less than 25%*!

**Lie No.6** *Health and safety is only common sense, we can do away with laws and enforcement and trust employers to do the right thing.*

**TRUTH:** Workers are made ill and killed every day because of employers failing to manage health and safety and all the evidence shows clear laws, strictly enforced to protect workers from ignorant, non-compliant negligent employers, really work. What also works is trade union organisation and safety reps – which reduces injuries by 50%. So join a trade union or, if you are already in a union, become a safety rep.

**Fight Back**

- Join the 'We didn't Vote to Die at Work' Campaign on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#!/group.php?gid=123746101003963>
- Keep up to date via *Hazards* magazine: <http://www.hazards.org/votetodie/>
- Use the **Families Against Corporate Killers** DVD 'Face the FACKS: the human cost of workplace killing' available to you, your members, mates and employers, £10 from [mail@gmhazards.org.uk](mailto:mail@gmhazards.org.uk).
- Lobby your MP and government ministers – make them realise our lives, our health are **important**.
- Write to your local press on the value of good health and safety and trade union safety representatives' role, emphasising the intolerable burden on workers and their families due to negligent employers.

Hilda Palmer

**Hazards Campaign**

Also *Families Against Corporate Killers*

[mail@gmhazards.org.uk](mailto:mail@gmhazards.org.uk)

## Ronnie Draper, General Secretary BFAWU launches the 'Cool it!' Campaign

Article reprinted from *Morning Star*

### Wilting workers deserve protection from extreme temperatures, bakers' union BFAWU said today.

General Secretary Ronnie Draper unveiled the union's new *Cool It!* campaign at the TUC, which is demanding a maximum workplace temperature of 27–30°C.

Mr Draper told delegates that industry-specific guidance was not enough.

"Our campaign's never been about standing in front of a bread oven alone," he said, "It's about the people who work in foundries, it's about teachers who work in under-ventilated classrooms, it's about people in catering and those who work on trains and galleys.

It's about anyone who works in temperatures they find uncomfortable."

Mr Draper said it was not about 'stopping the job' but setting consistent trigger points at which safety measures kicked in.

No company he knew of had kept any record of workplace temperatures or injuries they had caused nor had any studies been done.

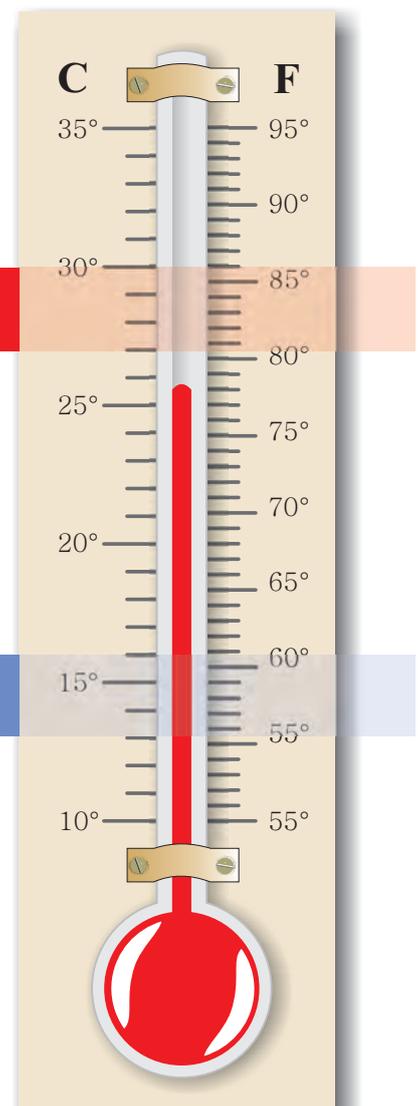
"But then asbestos was never thought to be dangerous until we did a long-term study. And then we found out what a killer that was."

**Delegates carried the motion unanimously.**

A picture of the launch appears on the next page.

Maximum working temp

Minimum working temp





Ronnie Draper, General Secretary of BFAWU, pictured here outside Congress House with Len McCluskey, General Secretary of UNITE, launching the 'Cool it!' Campaign at this year's TUC Annual Conference.

Some of the campaign literature produced to support the Cool it! Campaign.

Copies of this and The **Workplace Temperature Survey** are available from Ronnie – complete and return to [ronnie.draper@bfawu.org](mailto:ronnie.draper@bfawu.org)



## The Campaign to Combat Workplace Heat

### Does your boss need to 'Cool it'?

Have you experienced being too hot at work? Has this meant that you fell dizzy, drowsy, irritable or uncomfortable? Maybe you feel that it is connected to more serious medical issues? Well you are one of the many workers who are forced to endure unreasonable workplace heat.

Whilst some employers do take measures to ensure a 'reasonable' working temperature (as required under UK law) our experiences prove that this can vary greatly from employer to employer leading to an ad-hoc approach across the country. It is usually accepted that people work best at a temperature between 16°C and 24°C. Previous wording used by the Health and Safety Executive refers to an acceptable zone of thermal comfort...between 13°C (55°F) and 30°C (86°F).

The 2006 TUC Safety Representatives' Survey revealed one in three (34 per cent) safety representatives cited high or low temperatures as one of their top concerns. Anecdotal information suggests that the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) receives frequent complaints about workplace heat and yet, the HSE's activity in this area is very limited. Heat is a problem in workplaces and the current enforcement framework is not working.

"The lack of a solid legal framework makes it difficult for us, as a trade union, to protect our members and leads to vast inconsistencies across the country." Ronnie Draper, General Secretary, BFAWU

Get involved in the 'Cool it!' Campaign by emailing [ronnie.draper@bfawu.org](mailto:ronnie.draper@bfawu.org)

Supported by  which brings together ten national unions - BFAWU, FBV, NAFO, NUJ, NUT, PCS, POA, RMT, UCU and URTU - to co-ordinate campaigning activities.



### Health Effects of Heat in the Workplace

There is a danger in underestimating both the short and long term psychological and physical effects of regular exposure to heat. The effects of high temperatures on employees are very serious.

If people get too hot, they risk **dizziness, fainting**, or even **heat cramps**. Particularly for those doing manual work, high temperature can even have very **severe physical effects** - fatigue, extra strain on the heart and lungs, dizziness and fainting, heat cramps due to loss of water and salt. Hot, dry air can increase the risk of **eye and throat infections**, and **breathing problems** such as asthma and rhinitis.

However even at lower temperatures heat leads to a loss of concentration and increased tiredness, which means that workers are more likely to put themselves or others at risk. Workplace heat can cause an increase in the likelihood of accidents due to reduced concentration. Heat can also **aggravate other medical conditions** and illnesses such as **high blood pressure or heart disease** due to increased load on the heart as well as interacting with, or increasing the effect of, other workplace hazards.

**More extensive research needs to be done to investigate the long term impact of daily exposure to heat.**

"Staff have no control because we can't open windows or get fans or heaters. Often we are told no because of wires being across the floor" Rachel Pointer

"I am just one of the many people who have genuine throat and nasal problems working on this plant. It is too hot. I woke up the next day with a limited speaking and singing range, suffer extreme dryness of throat whilst on the plant and easily get a blocked nose and headaches." Seema Patel

"Headaches were common place as was a general discomfort and malaise. Staff tried their best to find jobs that took them into fresh air. We had to go out and buy fans and eventually we got a water dispenser. The Local Authority was uninterested and we only got the improvements because our boss was also suffering and was a decent person." Presley Jones

A recent trade union survey of almost 6,000 teachers, school and college leaders and Health and Safety Representatives, found that 94% of respondents reported that they had worked in excessively high temperatures during the summer.

A union representative reported on a survey of twenty seven telephone exchanges. The temperatures ranged from the lowest at 21°C increasing to 36°C. The average reported temperature was 28.64°C and 76% of the buildings were over the WHO recommended standard.

The 2009 Usdaw survey revealed that 72% of respondents said that thermometers were not available in the workplace to allow workers to monitor the temperature (an apparent breach of the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations). Of those who asked for thermometers 27% were refused.

Get involved in the 'Cool it!' Campaign by emailing [ronnie.draper@bfawu.org](mailto:ronnie.draper@bfawu.org)

Supported by  which brings together ten national unions - BFAWU, FBV, NAFO, NUJ, NUT, PCS, POA, RMT, UCU and URTU - to co-ordinate campaigning activities.

**Workplace Temperature Survey 2011**

Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

What is the temperature in your work place at this moment (include date and time)? \_\_\_\_\_

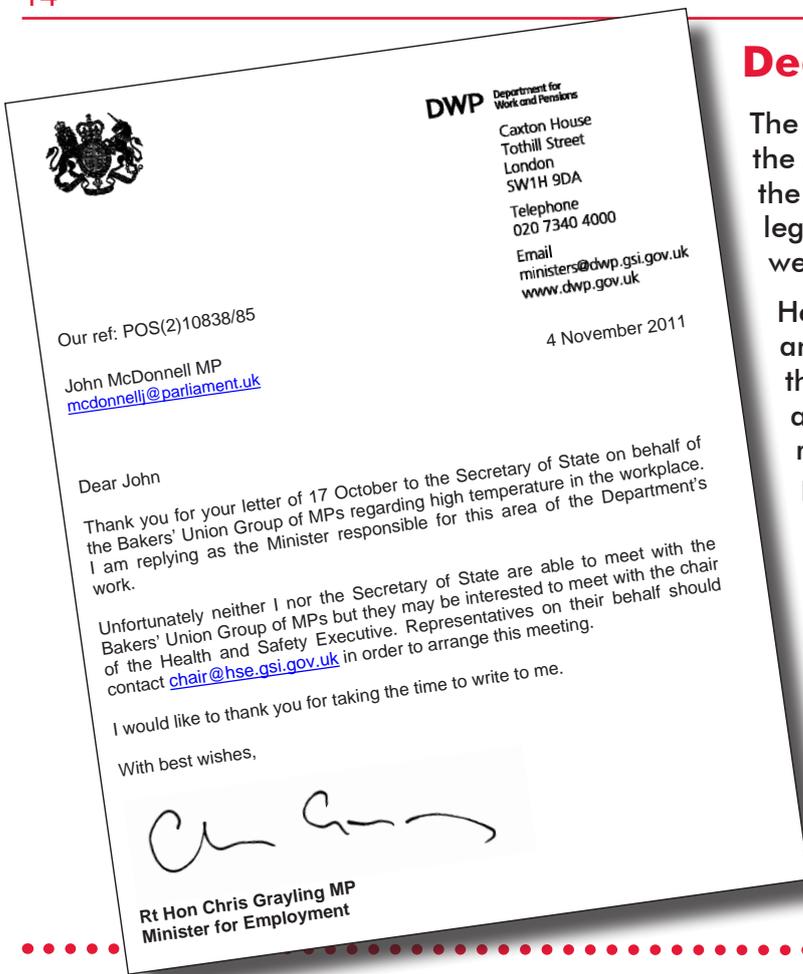
Are high workplace temperatures of concern for you? \_\_\_\_\_

Are high temperatures a concern all year round? (Or are high temperatures seasonal, relating to the external temperature? Or if it is dependent on some other factor such as humidity or required clothing please?) \_\_\_\_\_

Confidential  
Please return to Ronnie Draper, General Secretary, BFAWU  
[ronnie.draper@bfawu.org](mailto:ronnie.draper@bfawu.org) or Starborough House, Great North Road, Starborough, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, AL8 7TA

campaign supported by:





## Dear John...

The letter reproduced here from **Chris Grayling**, the Minister of State for Employment demonstrates the sheer contempt that this government has for legislation that protects the health, safety and welfare of working people.

He does not have the basic courtesy to say that he and the Secretary of State have a busy schedule or that they are away on holiday etc. No excuse, no argument – just a straightforward snub to a civil request for a meeting to discuss a cross-industry problem.

If protecting workers from the ravages of excessive heat doesn't warrant a second of his time, then we must turn the heat up on him.

**We should ensure that when the time comes for a general election, we mobilise resources, both human and financial to ensure that this shyster never graces the corridors of power ever again.**

**Ronnie Draper**

## Given all the anti-union press surfacing over the last few weeks...

Consider life without Unions. A union represents 'the people'. Without it, all that remains is the governing employer. To decline the right to join a trade union is like not choosing to vote – its an invitation for dictatorship. It's also an invitation to wave goodbye to hard-fought terms and conditions, holidays, collective bargaining rights and representation – and say hello to pay freezes and more agency workers. ('Google' the **Park Cakes** story for a classic case in point.)

Germany is respected the world over for its trademark efficiency. The strong relationship between

employers and the union is a key factor in this. Under the Conservative government particularly, anti-Trade Union laws are at fever pitch. Ballots for strikes, excessive tribunal costs... allegedly because it reduces the employers productivity.

This is the same right wing claptrap that claims health and safety is keeping us in a recession. Better employee welfare and safer workplaces – as championed by the tireless Union campaigns – will not only boost morale, it will reduce stress, absence and improve efficiency as a result. Our health and safety laws are actually well below European standards and we've just had the HSE budget cut by 35%. Stop and think. Nine hundred deaths a year and 125,000 accidents – if it was one of *your* children, *your* parents, relatives, or friends Mr. Cameron, would health and safety be too OTT then?

A good example of a local employer with an excellent Union and employer relationship is **Mr Kipling** (Premier Foods Stoke). A Union-endorsed workplace with over 85% membership (around 800 employees) management have just

approved a BFAWU Union led idea for an on-site Learning Centre. Coupled with 'skills for life' courses and computer access, 'The Gateway' will be an asset for years to come. These are the sort of bridges we should be seeking to build instead of politically-motivated blame games.

Long live the Trade Union movement and the BFAWU – 'Strength in Unity'.

### Andy Law

Shop Steward  
Premier Foods, Stoke



# LABOUR PARTY ANNUAL CONFERENCE LIVERPOOL 2011

## Delegates:

**Ian Hodson**

BFAWU National President

**Vi Carr**, Female Representative,

**John James**, FTO Region 2

**Marilyn French**, EC Region 5

## Only Labour can fulfil the promise of Britain

The Labour party conference was a conference of change if we believe the messages sent out by the party leaders.

At Conference front page reported, *'Under Ed Miliband's Leadership, Labour is a party of Change: changes in our economy, change to our welfare system, changes to the deal for the next generation' Change to reflect and reward the values of hard work, looking out for each other, something for something – the everyday values of the British people.'*

The hard working majority faces a crisis of squeezed living standards and opportunities for their kids under threat, but this Tory-led Government is making it worse. Only Labour can fulfil the promise of Britain.

## A plan that works...

Ed Balls' speech review added, "Conference, a plan to help struggling families and small businesses, get our economy growing and create jobs which is the key to getting our deficit down. *Action on Jobs; Investment brought forward; Support for families; Support for homeowners; Support for small businesses* – these are five immediate steps the government could take tomorrow – and if they do so, we will back them. Call it Plan A plus. Call it Plan B. Call it Plan C. I don't care what they call it. *Britain just needs a plan that works.*"

This is the second Labour party Conference that I have been nominated to attend and I think one of the most inspiring things I have seen this year is the amount of high quality competent young people who came to the platform and contributed to the debates. This just goes to show that given the right encouragement, help and support we can

engage young people to become involved in both the CLP and the Trade Unions.

So shouldn't it go without saying that access to good high quality Education is a must, should be a right for all, and not just reserved for the Rich, Privileged Few? *Knowledge is power, Power is Knowledge.*

## On the fringe

Well anyone who has been to conference before will know the fringe meetings are really interesting. We attended several: including Unite for Palestine, Venezuela, Cuba and the New Latin America,

Labour Representation Committee fringe speakers included Tony Benn, Christine Blower, Katy Clark, Jeremy Corbyn, Owen Jones, Len McCluskey, Mark Serwotka, Matt Wrack and Michelle Stanistreet. John McDonnell MP took the Chair.

## Their Crisis Not Ours

Across the country working people are losing their jobs and their homes. Meanwhile, the bankers who plunged us into this crisis have been bailed out with billions of pounds of our money. It's time to fight back.

Their Crisis Not Ours! is the LRC's campaign to bring together workers, pensioners, the unemployed, students, those facing repossession and all those suffering because of an economic crisis that has been imposed on us. The campaign is supporting the demands of the People's Charter.

## Resounding Labour

The issues that are most concerning activists about Resounding Labour are:

- Forcing conference to vote on the proposals as a whole, rather than on each change individually
- Letting 'supporters' vote in internal party elections
- Abolishing Local Government Committees which hold councillors to account

Many local labour parties have submitted emergency motions asking for each proposal to be voted on individually, and opposing some of the individual changes.

John McDonnell MP, LRC chair, has expressed his fears that the moves to include supporters in leadership elections will reduce the input of ordinary members and trade unions affiliates.

For more information. visit [www.l-r-c.org.uk](http://www.l-r-c.org.uk)

## Justice for Columbia

Justice for Colombia Fringe speakers: Ivan Cepeda (Colombia's opposition party) Steve Cavalier (Thompsons Solicitors), Billy Hayes, Richard Howitt, Tony Lloyd, Tosh McDonald, Ellie Reeves and Tony Woodhouse. The meeting was chaired by Jim Sheridan.

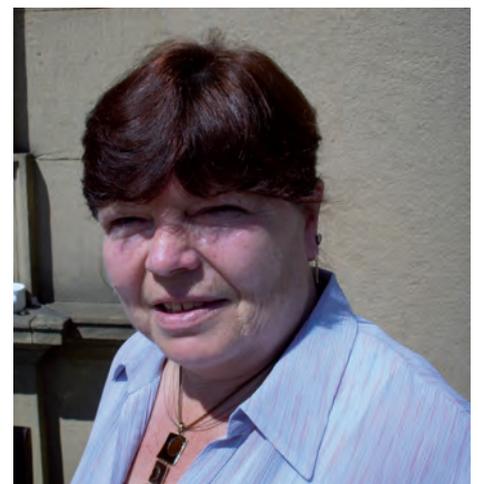
## About Columbia

A war has been raging in Colombia for over 50 years between the government and the left wing rebel groups. Every year thousands of civilians are killed – the vast majority of them by the Colombian military and the right wing parliamentary death squads that work alongside them. The dreadful situation has also resulted in over 4 million people fleeing their homes.

Colombia is the most dangerous country in the world to be a trade unionist – almost 3000 have been killed in recent years.

For more information. visit [www.justiceforcolombia.org](http://www.justiceforcolombia.org)

Conference highlights were reported by **Marilyn French**





## Gerd Callesen describes the life and philosophy of a woman who can be described as one of the founders of our union

### A word of thanks

On behalf of the BFAWU I would like to thank Gerd Callesen for writing this inspiring article on **Johanna Lahr**, whom we believe to be one of the founding members of our union in the London area.

It is amazing that 122 years after her campaigning work an article like this should come to light, an article that helps us understand how our history has been shaped.

You will see from his words what a great activist and campaigner Johanna was and that her spirit and belief in working people made a profound difference.

Gerd is a truly remarkable historian with a real nose for a great story.

**Ronnie Draper**

**"She was a brave, intelligent, strong-willed woman who went out to organise"**

## JOHANNA LAHR (1867–1905)

On 8 April 1889, the wife of a German journeyman baker in London wrote to Frederick Engels. He may have known the writer, Johanna Lahr, to be a member of the Socialist League, an organization of which Eleanor Marx (Karl Marx's youngest daughter) had been a prominent member. From at least March 1888, Lahr had been one of the foremost agitators of the Socialist League. In the organisation's weekly pamphlet, *The Commonweal*, she was reported to have given speeches on 13 occasions during March, most of them in Hyde Park, but several in various assembly halls all over London. On 6 April of that year, she spoke at a meeting in Regent's Park, almost on Engels' doorsteps for he lived at 122 Regent's Park Road.

Two days later, she asked him for a meeting to discuss Marx and his theory and to get some advice about which of his works she should read. She claimed that her husband did remember having heard about Marx and that her father-in-law still had 'the book' from 1848 (which must have been the first edition of the Communist Manifesto). She was proud of being a member of a socialist organisation and being able to work for a solution to the 'social question' in England. There is, however, no evidence that they ever did actually meet.

Socialist theory was not her only interest, she was determined to organise the bakers' of London, and had called for a first meeting at a public house. Her intention was to hold meetings all over London and at the same time to disseminate Marx's theory.

### A meeting of the Bakers' Union

The first meeting was announced in *The Commonweal*: *'Bakers' Union—A meeting is to be held next Saturday evening at 8 p.m., at the 'Prince Arthur' Brunswick Place, City Road, for the purpose of starting a union for the district of Shoreditch, Hoxton, and St. Lukes. Meetings will be held shortly in the north, south, and west of London.'*

(*The Commonweal*. No. 170, 13 April 1889, p. 118.). A report of the meeting was given in the following number of *The Commonweal* (no. 171, p. 126): *'Bakers' Union.—A meeting was held on Saturday last at the 'Prince Arthur', Brunswick Place, City Road, to organise the journeymen bakers of the district into a Society, so that they may be the better able to fight the battle of Labour v. Capital: The meeting was international in character, speeches being in both German and English. It was decided to hold meetings with the same objective all over London.'*

### The International Bakers' Union

It has not been possible to ascertain if more meetings aimed at unionisation of the London Bakers were held under the auspices of the Socialist League. It is conceivable that Johanna Lahr took an active part in the process of organising an International Bakers' Union which was founded in the East End and existed during the years 1892–1901.

Unfortunately, it has not been possible to find any more material relating to this union. Possibly it was resurrected in 1903 under the name of the 'London Jewish Bakers' Union'. However, Johanna Lahr was very often a speaker and agitator at meetings of the Socialist League at least during the years 1888 to 1890. During this time, the League became more and more of an anarchist organisation, and Engels severed his contacts with them.

### Please, Mr Engels...

In April 1889 a Mr Robinson, a neighbour of Johanna, had asked Engels for a loan to redeem his tools which he had pawned, and mentioned Lahr as a person who might vouch for him as they both belonged to the Bloomsbury branch of the Socialist League. He got his money after Engels had verified that he was in fact a member.

At the end of May 1889 Johanna asked Engels for a loan because her husband was out of work. Engels wanted

## The Poorest of the Wage-Slaves.

THE journeymen bakers of London are at last making themselves heard, being urged on by the lessons taught by the skilled and unskilled Labour Strike of the dockers, and the sweated tailors in the East End, which showed what can be done if workers are united and organised. The journeymen bakers must admit that they are, in comparison with any other skilled workers, the poorest, the most sweated, wretched slaves; that their present condition is a most deplorable one, and a disgrace to civilisation. The extraordinary long hours, varying from 14 to 16 hours a day, for the first five days of the week, 22 hours on Saturday, and Sunday work as well, makes up an average of from 90 to 120 hours each week; and in most cases the poor wretches have to work in filthy, unhealthy bakehouses not fit for a dog, let alone a human being. These wage-slaves are injured in health, and are broken men before they enter into full manhood; their lives cut short, and an early grave their reward. Now, lads, the time has arrived when you should bind yourselves together under the Banner of Unity, and strike the blow. God knows, your demands are too moderate; but as the saying goes, with eating commences a craving for more. Now then, be firm; do not surrender or compromise like the dockers. Be men indeed, and yours is the victory. But at the same time I call upon you as a true friend of the workers; I plead as a woman who feels it her duty to go amongst you, white slaves, to help to unite, to organise, to educate you. I seek no honour, no reward; all I ask of you, men of labour, is to double your efforts when the blow is to be struck. A strike is your only remedy, and will be more beneficial to the masters than to yourselves. Where you gain a shilling they gain a pound. To suit themselves they raise the price of bread, although there is no occasion for it, and keep the wage-rate as before. Up and act, or new troubles and new tyrannies will necessarily follow!

And now I consider it my duty to impress upon you to make a better use in future of your Trades' Union, and will here ask three questions: First, do you toil and suffer such lives under these wretched conditions for the sake of yourselves and your families, or your masters? Second, Where are the fruits of your labour? And, lastly, What hopes have you when you are past

work? My answer to the first question is, You have worked for a master who gives you only one-fourth of your real labour, merely to keep your body in order that you may be able to bring forth new slaves; that is to say, your own children, to work for him as you are working now. To the second question I answer, From the produce of your labour the master is enabled to live with his family in perfect comfort, idleness, luxury, and store up wealth which is the blood-money wrung from you at the expense of your lives. To the third question I say, The only hope you have is starvation, the workhouse, and an early grave; for your wages are such that you are quite unable to lay anything aside for a rainy day—it only suffices for a hand-to-mouth existence for yourselves and your families.

Again, strikes cannot remove all your grievances so long as there are masters who suck your blood—in such a case you must necessarily be slaves. Now, what I want you to understand is, that a heavy blow must be struck, if you wish to better your position and keep it—you must work together, organise, and co-operate with your Trades' Union, and by this means you will hold such a weapon that your masters will not dare refuse your demands when you make them. You will thus be enabled to break your chains of slavery like men, and rid yourselves of tyrants of masters who are nothing but hangers-on to "Society."

Your help, unity, and perseverance are needed to bring about a better position for yourselves—which is worth fighting for. Men and women, you are the producers of *all* wealth; therefore courage, brothers and sisters! Come and join hands with your fellows, no matter what creed or nationality they belong to, and we *will* win the battle.

Have no trust in your Houses of Parliament. The sooner they are turned into a washhouses or bakehouses the better for the workers. I am with you heart and spirit, and will never tire of helping you to a brighter future, where freedom, love, and harmony shall reign; where the dawn of the morning shall be greeted with gladness, and work be only a pleasure; and where the burden of life and sorrow-stricken faces shall disappear like a snow-white mist in the morning.

JOHANNA LAHR.

HENRY DETHLOFF, Printer, 18, Sun Street, Finsbury, London, E.C.

to transfer his loan to Robinson to her, but she refused as she had broken off all contact with Robinson as soon as she had 'found his principles to be bad as well his behaviour'.

### The Poorest of the Wage-Slaves

At some point in the course of 1889, Johanna Lahr published a two-page flyer, 'The Poorest of the Wage-Slaves', addressing the journeymen bakers of London. She can't have written it single-handedly, her knowledge of English would not have been good enough. She could write in English as well as in German, but only in a version that corresponded to spoken English/German. Probably she had been to school in Germany, but as she was born about 1867 she would only have attended school for a few years.

We can not be sure when she arrived in London. As it was probably between 1885 and 1887, she would naturally have needed help in formulating the flyer. In an article in Reynolds' Newspaper from September 1888, she was described as 'a stout female with a strong foreign accent'.

The flyer is not dated, but it was most likely written in the autumn of 1889, as she referred to **The Great Dock Strike** (14th August–16th September 1889) and to **The Great Strike of East London Tailors**, for 10 ½ hours per day (27th August – 2nd October 1889).

### Critical of the Dockers

She criticised the dockers: 'Do not surrender or compromise like the dockers'. In her opinion the most important lesson to be learned from the strike was 'what can be done if workers are united and organised'. She did not rely on Parliament; to better their future the bakers had to help themselves and become united in a Union. A strike alone would not be enough. As can be seen from the text, she was influenced by the radicals in the Labour Movement.

We do not know her maiden name, so it is difficult to trace her life in Germany; neither do we know what happened to her in later years, the full story of her life is not really known. She died about 1905, leaving her husband alone with two sons. He remarried but all we know about her

so far is that she was a brave, intelligent, strong-willed woman. Some of her descendants are still living in London.

### Have you any information to add?

If anyone knows any more about this woman union pioneer who has been 'hidden from history', please contact me:

**Gerd Callesen,**

Email: [gerd.callesen@chello.at](mailto:gerd.callesen@chello.at)

The facsimile of the flyer 'The Poorest of the Wage-Slaves' was generously made available for this article by **Ms Sheila Lahr.**

She would also be pleased to receive any further information on her ancestor.

Email: [leslie505@btinternet.com](mailto:leslie505@btinternet.com)

# REDUNDANCY LAW

Government cuts are not just hitting public sector workers. Hundreds of thousands of private sector jobs are expected to be lost over the next four years. Many workplaces in which the BFAWU has members have been making redundancies and it is vital that union reps are aware of the law on redundancy and how it can be best used to protect members' interests.

The Employment Rights Act (ERA) 1996 sets out the law on redundancy dismissals, including the redundancy process and how it can be challenged, what happens when someone is dismissed for reasons of redundancy, how much they are entitled to and what workers can do when private sector employers become insolvent.

The starting point in any redundancy situation is that only *employees* are entitled to a redundancy payment. Contract and agency workers do not have the same legal rights as employees in redundancy situations. A redundancy situation arises when a business or workplace closes or when fewer employees are needed to do the work. A dismissal cannot be a redundancy unless it for one of those reasons.

Often employees and unions will challenge a decision to make redundancies either because they dispute the financial situation of the company or they believe that the employer could take action to avoid redundancies. Unfortunately, an employment tribunal (ET) will not look at the reasons *why* the company is making redundancies, only whether redundancy is the genuine reason for an employee's dismissal.

Therefore, unions recognised for collective bargaining purposes should use the obligation on employers, set out in the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act (TULRCA) 1992, to consult with them when 20 or more redundancies are proposed. This is when issues around whether redundancies can be avoided can be hammered out.

The clearest example of a redundancy situation is where the workplace (be it an entire factory or just one section) is closing down. Where work of a particular kind ceases or diminishes or where fewer employees are needed to do the work, it depends on the type of work done by employees as to whether they have been fairly identified as being at risk of redundancy.

Where an employer becomes insolvent, whether contracts of employment continue depends on the type of insolvency. They continue where a company is in voluntary receivership and a receiver or administrator is appointed. The receiver or administrator's obligations under the redundancy process is the same as if they were the employer although they will not usually become liable to pay compensation themselves.

By law, employers have to follow fair procedures when selecting employees for redundancy. In workplaces where unions are recognised, an agreed selection criteria is likely to have been negotiated. These usually stipulate that where there is a potential redundancy situation the employer will consult with the union on ways of avoiding or reducing the number of redundancies.

Redundancy procedures should also ensure that volunteers are sought before making compulsory redundancies. Where compulsory redundancies become necessary, the agreement should set out the method of selecting the 'pool' of employees to be made redundant and the rate of redundancy pay and notice periods above the statutory minimum. Some agreements also require the employer to help with retraining and careers advice.

Employers must also consult about the method by which individual employees are to be selected and the process for challenging the employer's decision. Finally there must also be consideration of offering suitable, alternative employment.

If no consultation about redundancy takes place with either the trade union or the employee then it will normally be an *unfair dismissal* – unless the tribunal decides that consultation would have been a futile exercise. If the failure to consult is with the union then a tribunal may also decide to make a Protective Award with up to 13 weeks additional compensation being awarded. Further, consulting with unions does not absolve employers from the duty to also consult individuals and give them enough information for them to be able to contest their selection.

Failure to follow the correct redundancy procedures should *always* be challenged and employment tribunals have the power to award compensation to employees where proper consultation did not take place or where they have been unfairly dismissed as part of the redundancy exercise.



**Robert Smith of Thompsons Solicitors** explains the law on redundancy dismissals and introduces a case study

## LEAMINGTON REDUNDANCIES

BFAWU members working at Leamington Desserts in Royal Leamington Spa have each been awarded 90 days pay by an employment tribunal, after their employer went into administration and made them redundant without consultation with the union.

The company's administrators announced in January this year that the firm would cease trading, after failing to find a buyer for it. All employees were made redundant apart from a small skeleton team retained to assist with the closing of the site. In spite of there being up to 166 redundancies (85 being BFAWU members), the BFAWU was not consulted either before or after the firm went into administration. This was in breach of the law which says there must be consultation with the recognised trade unions within 90 days when 20 or more redundancies are proposed.

None of the members received the notice pay, redundancy pay, holiday pay and arrears of wages that they were entitled to. Instead they had to apply to the Insolvency Service for a statutory payment.

BFAWU lawyers Thompsons lodged a tribunal claim on behalf of the 85 members at the firm. The tribunal granted a protective award for the maximum 90 days.

Jackie Barnwell, BFAWU senior steward at the company said, "The company left the workforce high and dry. There was absolutely no consultation with the union and we are very pleased that the tribunal made the maximum award to our members".

The Insolvency Service's redundancy payments office will pay the members directly up to the maximum amount allowed of 8 weeks pay.

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**BFAWUdrive**

Mozambique is one of the poorest countries in the world, with over 70% of the population living on less than \$1 a day and poverty rates as high as 90% in rural areas. In Mozambique, 80% of the poor live in rural areas and land rights are hugely important, both for people's livelihoods and their cultural identity.

## OUT TO LUNCH – FOOD SOVEREIGNTY AND THE RIGHT TO DECIDE WHAT WE EAT

To coincide with the launch of a new report: *Food Sovereignty: reclaiming the Food System*, War on Want recently held a Food Sovereignty day in the House of Commons. Members of the general public, small farmers from the UK, non-profit organisations, and academics joined with representatives from La Via Campesina, (the worldwide movement of small-scale farmers), Sri Lanka, Brazil and Mozambique, as well as a representative from Cuba, to debate the importance of regaining control over the decisions made on what is produced, what is consumed, how it is produced and who has access to food.

### MP visits Mozambique

Prior to the launch of the report, War on Want took Robert Ffello MP, Co-Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Agroecology, to Mozambique to visit their partners UNAC (União Nacional de Camponeses), the national farmers' movement founded in 1987. UNAC comprises 86,000 members, and enables rural people to demand their rights and participate in policy making. Rather than relying on corporate technology, UNAC helps to build a bank of traditional knowledge which can actually help to produce food in a sustainable manner and protect the livelihoods of small farmers against detrimental policies. UNAC recognises that rural people face major difficulties, in terms of awareness and organisation, including the need to involve women in the decision-making process.



One of their key achievements has been to increase the participation of women in leadership positions.

In Mozambique, there are strong social and cultural ties to the land, and each farmer has access to about 1.5 hectares of land which they can farm. Despite having one of the most pro-poor land laws and having resisted pressure from the IMF in the past, the government is now encouraging foreign, private investment, resulting in the rights of private investors taking priority over those of rural people.

### Defending the rights of the small farmer

UNAC is concerned that this pattern of private investment in rural areas in other countries has not reduced rural poverty and in some instances has actually destroyed livelihoods. UNAC is working to defend the rights of small farmers against the opportunism of private investment.

Multinational corporations are investing heavily, focussing on cotton and tobacco. Farmers have been given credit to purchase agricultural inputs. The farmers then sell the produce back to the company. Luis Muchanga, General Coordinator of UNAC said that, "unfortunately, this arrangement is based on nothing more than verbal agreements". There is, of course no such thing as a free lunch. Farmers must pay back the credit before they are able to earn anything from their labour. This inevitably leads to a cycle of debt as the value of the crop is dependent on the vagaries of the international market.

### Foreign investment in Mozambique

Pressure is not just coming from corporations. Foreign countries such as Brazil and South Africa are investing heavily in Mozambique, putting pressure on small farmers and their ability to farm the land

It is important that we understand why UNAC works with small farmers, and why it is so important to offer a positive alternative. For the first time in human history, over a billion people have been officially classified as living in hunger. This is not a consequence of poor global harvests or natural disasters. Hunger on this scale results from a global economy in which hundreds of millions of small farmers, fisherfolk, pastoralists and indigenous people have faced ruin through the hijacking of the global food system by large agribusiness and food retailers.

Decisions about what is produced, what is consumed and who has access to food are defined by multinational corporations that control the entire food chain. In the midst of the food crisis, companies such as Cargill, Unilever and supermarket chain Tesco have reported record profits.

## A billion hungry stomachs

The dominant model for dealing with the food crisis, backed by the UK government is based on market solutions to the problems of world hunger, with food treated as just another commodity to be traded on global markets. In addition there is an increasing reliance on corporate-owned technology and on greater private sector control of food production and its distribution.

However, with a billion hungry stomachs to feed, it is clearly a model which has gone wrong.

Graciela Romero Vasquez, International Programmes Director at War on Want says, *“The right to food is a human right, not a welfare issue. There is a real solution to the problem of the world hunger crisis: food sovereignty, which farmers around the world are increasingly demanding. But that solution*

*has been consistently blocked by the UK government’s infatuation with the corporate sector”.*

If you would like to find out more about Food Sovereignty, or to download a copy of the report, then please visit: [www.waronwant.org](http://www.waronwant.org)

If you would like any more materials, information or to book a speaker, please contact Jackie Simpkins: [jsimpkins@waronwant.org](mailto:jsimpkins@waronwant.org) or telephone 020 7324 5057.



## EFFAT (European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Union)

### Activity Report

On 7 September 2011, EFFAT and Food and Drink Europe (former CIAA) reached an agreement on the prospective terms of reference for EU Dialogue in the sector. As a result, a joint letter was sent to the Commission informing them of the agreement.

This agreement is a major achievement in that this is the first time that all Food & Drink EU employers – both Companies and national associations – recognise EFFAT as a legitimate counterpart representing employees in the sector. The Terms of Reference allows for joint negotiations, common statements and codes of conduct. A representativeness study will now be carried out for both EFFAT and Food and Drink Europe and discussion around a work plan is to take place within the end of the year, to begin work in 2012.

### Cocoa

Over 70 employee representatives from chocolate companies from 13 European countries (including Lindt, Mars, Nestle, Cargill, Kraft, Ferrero and Barry Callebaut employees) gathered at EFFAT affiliated training centre, Elewijt in May. The meeting was held under the aegis of the EU-sponsored project [CocoaNet.eu](http://CocoaNet.eu) to review and launch the results of their work on cocoa social sustainability along the supply chain carried out by EFFAT affiliates. Results include a trade union guide to engage shop floor workers and European Works Councils to promote child labour-free cocoa and to scrutinise sustainability practices of chocolate companies, a communication platform for EU chocolate workers, [www.cocoanet.eu](http://www.cocoanet.eu), and an analysis of the

working conditions in the EU Chocolate industry. In Europe, workers’ representatives expressed concern about the increasing trend of precarious working conditions in a number of countries.

### Food Hygiene Training for All

EFFAT and FERCO (European Federation of Contract Catering Organisation) launched a basic online training tool for first level workers handling food in the contract catering sector across Europe.

On October 5th the EU social partners in the contract catering sector, EFFAT and FERCO launched a basic online training tool for first level workers handling food in the contract catering sector across Europe. Aware that food safety is important issue for EU consumers and that food hygiene is a key skill in the contract catering sector, EFFAT and FERCO have decided to jointly carry out the project, **Food Hygiene Training for All**, to create an online training tool for the industry.

This EU wide training tool is accessible online free of charge [www.contract-catering-guide.org/food-hygiene-training-for-all](http://www.contract-catering-guide.org/food-hygiene-training-for-all).

The training is designed to reflect food hygiene requirements under EU legislation and focuses on the tasks performed by first level food handlers and on main critical points they go through while preparing/serving food. Available in seven languages, it covers a wide range of topics including an introduction to HACCP (Hazards Analysis And Critical Control Points), personal hygiene, safe food handling, and health and safety at work.

Whilst this training has been designed for the contract catering sector, its potential scope goes beyond this sector and could also be applied to other food service sector such as hotels, restaurants and the food manufacturing sector. For further information, visit: [www.effat.org](http://www.effat.org)

EFFAT is a European Federation representing 120 national trade unions from 35 European countries. It defends the interests of more than 2.6 million members towards the European Institutions, European industrial federations and enterprise management.

**Marilyn French**

## LEARNER CERTIFICATE PRESENTATIONS



Having completed their English courses and passed their exams, 58 course members received their certificates from **Ronnie Draper**, General Secretary of the BFAWU, and **Mandy Major**, Factory Manager Jacobs Biscuits, Leicester.

Janet Goodwin Project Worker said, "The Company and ULRs should be congratulated for their active involvement across all shifts which enabled the learners to get to this point." She added that, "A series of open days had been held where learners could come along and find out what was on offer and how it could improve not only their prospects at work but could also help them in their day to day lives."

Karen Stoffard said that the learning agenda is managed through a site steering group which meets every six weeks and plans events and courses which are then rolled out site wide.

She went on to add that as the result of an open day there were learners signing up for follow on English and Numeracy courses and around 50 people waiting to be signed up to *UK Online Go-On* and *BBC first click*.

Ronnie Draper General Secretary of the BFAWU said, "This clearly demonstrates what can be achieved when employers and unions work together in partnership."

## BRANCH 347 JACOBS, LEICESTER DAY OF CELEBRATION AND PRESENTATIONS



### Anthony Lewis writes...

On the 1st November 2011, the General Secretary (Bro. Ronnie Draper) ULR Project Manager (Bro. John Vickers) and ULR Project Worker (Sis. Janet Goodwin) were present at the branch to participate in presentations to those of our members who had attained various levels of learning from Entry Level to Level 2 with a total of 58 learners achieving the relevant qualification.

There were also over 120 members who also received 20 years' service badges. There was also a **40 year badge** presented to Bro. John Inglis by the General Secretary.

I also take this opportunity to thank Jacobs Bakery General Factory Manager, Mandy Major, for her support in jointly presenting the above to our members and the kind hospitality given to our Union on the day in question.

May I also take this opportunity to thank all the Jacobs branch officials for their help and support in making the day a real success.

**Anthony D Lewis** (Regional Officer)

▼ Ronnie Draper presents **Bro. John Inglis** with his **40 Year Badge**



## ... and at Manor 339, Rugby



### 20 Year Badges

At our last Branch Meeting, **Tony Lewis** presented the following members with their 20 year badges:

Bottom left: **Dean Senter**  
 Top left: **Rod Rollins**  
 Top right: **Martyn Pearcey**



### Excel ..ence

A number of members had all completed training through the Union Learning Centre in Excel Spreadsheets.

The photo bottom right shows some of the successful learners, with their Admin FLM and ULR Trainer, receiving their certificates.

From left to right:  
**Andy Jones, Nick Rayner** (Admin FLM), **Martyn Pearcey, Steve Prior, Dave Moon** (ULR Trainer) and **Steph Irish** (seated).

The following members completed the course but were unavailable for the photo:  
**Richard Parker, Phil Parry and Chris Irish.**



## WHY SHOULD YOUNG WORKERS JOIN A UNION?

### Rachel Mullen Greggs, North East 529 gives her view

Well, I Joined the union because my mother is a trade union representative and I wanted to be able to help people. I think most young workers today don't have any real understanding of the work that trade union representatives do, what the unions stand for, or why it's so important that they should join a union.

And one of the main problems the unions have is we don't always promote ourselves very well, and workers often take a lot of what we do for granted.

Union representative can't tell their members if they have been successful when representing members at a disciplinary – that's *confidential*, we can't talk about the help or advice we give to members when they ask for support – that would not be acceptable – but that is all part of the role of being a trade union representative.

Negotiating wage rises, and trying to improve terms and conditions for the workers has always been on the union agenda, but so is being able to give support and advise on training through the union learning services, helping members who need legal advice with our Solicitors, encouraging members to save and helping with low cost loans with the Credit Union.

Trade unions are about supporting workers, giving members the right to have their say, putting member's views forward and representing the workers

In general the union representatives are there as a support network. How many times have you heard it said, when something goes wrong in the workplace, you get a disciplinary, have an accident, or just need advice – '*You should have been in the union*'.

### What's in it for me?

I think that's up to the individual. For me, being involved as a union shop representative has created some interesting opportunities. I was nominated and won the Youth Award in 2010. I have since enrolled in a 6 year part time course, in International Labour and Trade Union Studies at Ruskin College Oxford, kindly sponsored by both Thompsons Solicitors and the BFAWU.

I have also joined the Labour party and become Youth Officer for the CLP Windy Nook & Whitehills Gateshead. I'm currently working on a project to encourage more young workers to be actively involved in the trade union.

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