

the workplace REPORTER

The newspaper for Unite activists

December 2008/January 2009



DOUGLAS ROBERTSON

FINANCE FIGHTS BACK



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BARGAINING

CHECK OUT THE FAST FACTS AND DATA HELPING YOU WIN IN THE WORKPLACE

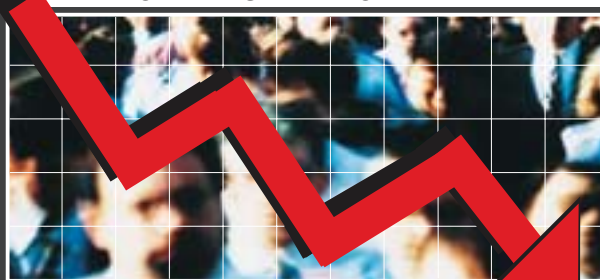


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UNION DEMANDS HELP FOR ORDINARY WORKERS AS ECONOMIC CRISIS BITES

UNITE'S PLAN FOR ACTION

TIME TO REVERSE THE DOWNWARD TREND



by Mik Sabiers

UNITE'S call for action to help ordinary working people as the world faces the most significant economic crisis in 60 years is being taken up by the government.

Falling stock markets, collapsing demand, rising unemployment, a fall in house prices and a crash in consumer confidence all demand concrete action.

That's why Unite has

developed a comprehensive 10-stage plan to protect all workers.

Unite's plan is calling for increased public spending to spur demand, the construction of a million new homes, and support for manufacturing and industry to match the bail out of the banking sector.

Find out more on Unite's 'New Deal' on pages 16-17, plus see how Unite is fighting back for finance sector workers on pages 4-5.

SEE PAGES 4-5 & 16-17

Message from the joint general secretaries



Derek Simpson



Tony Woodley

Helping working people

Joint general secretaries Derek Simpson and Tony Woodley on Unite's plans to support all workers during the financial crisis and the importance of change in the White House following the landmark election of Barack Obama

Our top priority

THE last few months have been dominated above all by the unfolding global financial crisis.

While there may be some satisfaction in seeing the apostles of unfettered capitalism confounded by the spectacular collapse of their speculative system under the weight of its own greed, the consequent recession means serious difficulties for working people, including many sections of our membership.

For the first time in 15 years, trade unions are going to have to fight for members' jobs and living standards in the conditions of a recession.

This will be a serious test for our new union, and one in which it must prove its real worth, industrially, politically and in organising. All our nearly two million members would agree that this must now be the top priority for Unite, and other issues must take second place.

Unite's plan

As a first step, we have put together our own detailed plan to tackle the crisis, outlined elsewhere in this issue of the Rep.

We have backed that up with specific plans to help the worst-affected sectors, as in our 'Social Contract for Financial Services'

aimed at defending our thousands of members in the banking and finance sector or with our campaigning around support for manufacturing particularly keeping car plants open to take two examples.

Our guiding principle is this: The crisis was made in the City, by the high priests of high finance.

They were aided and abetted by politicians from both governing parties who placed their faith in the free market and discarded almost every tool of state intervention.

Time for action

Our members are not going to be the ones to pick up the tab, in the form of lost jobs and homes or falling living standards, for these failures by the elite.

Campaigning demands will of course vary from sector to sector. But a common thread is that the state is now back as an active economic player.

The bail-out of the banks sets the precedent. Industries suffering because of a slump made on Wall Street and in the City should expect no less.

The taxpayer now has complete control of two major banks and a major, effectively controlling, stake in others.

This investment should be used to pursue social objectives –

keeping major businesses afloat through the recession, preventing panic closures and redundancies, as well as curbing home repossessions. That is what we want for our money.

Unite is throwing the full weight of our political influence behind securing government backing for this approach.

As a result of the financial crisis, political opinion is starting to move in our direction. Ideas which would have been laughed out of court just a year ago are now being given serious consideration, and we expect Unite's MPs to be leading the debate.

The government's response to date has clearly secured a large measure of public approval, and has highlighted the weaknesses in the Tory approach.

As a result, the next general election is wide open once more. If ministers maintain their present approach, the choice will clearly be between a Labour party which puts people first and the Tories who are and will always remain the party of the spivs and the silver-spoon-in-their-mouth speculators.

Your union is clear where it stands. With our members in our fight for jobs and justice, first of all. And for a Labour government that, at long last, is starting to stand up for working people.

President Obama

THE other major development of the autumn has of course been the election of Barack Obama as president of the United States of America.

No repetition is required here of the historic significance of this election.

We hope his arrival in the White House will create the conditions for global political action to tackle the destruction wrought by a generation of neo-liberal excess. The trade union movement worldwide cannot be mere observers in this process. More than ever the international situation demands industrially-strong and politically-mobilised trade unionism. Can Unite rise to the occasion and play a leading part? Yes, we can...

Happy new year

FINALLY could we extend season's greetings to all Unite activists and wish you and your families a happy and successful 2009.

Inside this issue

Pages 3-10 News

All the updates on how Unite is fighting back in the workplace including the demand for equal pay on the buses, a new social contract for the finance sector and more

Pages 11-22 Bargaining

Your 12 page pull out section with legal wins, updates on health and safety campaigns, news on growing the union and all the latest data to help you win in your workplace

Pages 23-32 Features

Find out the latest steps in the Miami 5 campaign, the importance of planning for elections next year, the Unite campaign for a windfall tax on excess energy profits as well as Unite at the TUC and Labour party conferences

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UNITY ON THE BUSES

LONDON-WIDE STRIKE SUSPENDED DUE TO LEGAL ACTION

CAMPAIGN CONTINUES

LONDON'S bus workers started a wave of demonstrations on London's slightly less busy streets as they took strike action to demand the same rate of pay for the same job.

With more than 2,500 workers demonstrating in August, and further action planned, the workers are determined to end the race to the bottom over pay.

In many cases the pay disparity for drivers working for different operators, there are 18 in total, can be as much as \$6,000 a year.

Unite is challenging the current system in London where drivers (and other grades) performing identical jobs within the industry - regulated by Transport for London - receive hugely varying pay and conditions.

Strike ballots across London have seen wave after wave of bus workers join the fight for equal pay, although a legal challenge from the bus companies means that action has been suspended.

Unite will now reballot all workers at all bus companies at the same time with the possible result that London's streets could soon grind to a halt.

Bus drivers do a stressful job, working alone, often under a lot of pressure and with a lot of responsibility.

Michele Mafolo works for Metrobus in north London: "I love my job and enjoy it, but we work very long hours for not great money. Sometimes I work seven days a week just to cover my expenses," he said.

And the drivers are united, Anthony Konmouren drives the busy W7 route: "We are on strike. We are not asking for the world. The action has been a real success at this garage, with 395 out of 400 drivers out on strike. As a driver I used to just concentrate on the driving, but now I have so much more responsibility."

Many London drivers need to complete 60 hour weeks to earn enough to survive in costly London.

Driver Paul Brandon: "There is this terrible long hours culture which has been adopted recently."

All these factors highlight why London's bus workers are determined to succeed in their fight for equal pay for the same job.

Said Unite senior regional industrial organiser Pete Kavanagh: "Boris Johnson recently described London's bus drivers as the finest in the world. He needs to show them and their union a bit of respect."

"The employers' actions are an attack on democracy and the right to strike. Thousands of London bus drivers voted for industrial action in a secret ballot, in most cases by around 90 percent, because they are fed up with the pay mess inflicted on them by the bus companies. Now they are even more furious that they are being robbed of their human right to take lawful industrial action despite voting overwhelmingly for it."

"The growing unity of London's bus workers will not be undermined. Equal pay for equal work will continue to be our demand."



On the picket line at Holloway bus garage at the start of the campaign for fair pay

Correction: Bye bye bendybus

The editor of the *Rep* would like to make clear that an article titled 'Bye bye bendybus' in the last edition could be misinterpreted as endorsing the replacement of bendy buses on London's roads. This is not the case. Unite has welcomed the initiative to design a brand new bus for London but not the replacement of London's fleet of bendybuses.

Fat Cat

by ANDY VINE



UNITE LAUNCHES SOCIAL CONTRACT FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES PROTECTING JOBS IN

THE financial sector has been at the forefront of the cause of the credit crunch and the subsequent economic crisis that is now engulfing the global economy.

But while many people are rightly condemning the fat cat bankers that grew rich on inflated bonuses and had a major role to play in creating the crisis, spare a thought for the thousands of ordinary workers in the finance sector.

These are the people that have been hit hard by the crisis in the financial sector, but bear none of the blame.

The real victims

Unite deputy general secretary, Graham Goddard, said: "There are hundreds of thousands of staff working in financial services in branches, call centres and back offices right across the country. They are not the culprits of the credit crunch and we are not prepared to allow them to become the victims.

"Unite's senior representatives from across the financial services sector have launched a campaign to fight for their jobs and their industry. We will use all our legal rights and political influence to campaign for job security and an end to greed and irresponsibility.

"Its time to hold employers to account. Their disgraceful



Derek Simpson and Unite finance sector members launch the social contract outside the House of Commons

behaviour and cavalier attitudes to lending and risk has brought a highly profitable industry to the brink of collapse."

Unite's demands

Unite is calling for a fundamental overhaul of the banking system, with

tougher regulatory requirements. The union is also demanding an end to the offshoring of finance work and for the culprits of the credit crunch to be held to account.

Capital injections

Commenting on

government plans to inject billions into the banks and financial markets, joint general secretary, Derek Simpson, said: "Unite welcomes the decisive action by the government to inject capital into the markets. The union is demanding that this financial support is tied to

clear commitments to secure vital jobs in the financial services' sector. This government finance must serve to make the industry more transparent and accountable.

"It is not acceptable for the government to socialise the risks taken and continue to



Derek at the launch in parliament



UNITE SOCIAL CONTRACT FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES

1. Recognition of staff as a key stakeholder in the future of the financial services industry
2. To ensure the employment security of employees in the finance sector
3. To protect and improve the terms and conditions of employees, including pension arrangements
4. And the remuneration packages of senior executives which reward short termism and irresponsible risk taking
5. Overhaul of the regulatory structure of the financial services sector to include trade union involvement in order to enhance the accountability of finance institutions.

FIVE POINT PLAN TO PROTECT ORDINARY FINANCE WORKERS

THE FINANCE SECTOR

capitalise the rewards in the finance industry. The measures announced today must be extended to include undertakings by the banks of no job losses, no repossessions of homes, and no rewards for irresponsible risk taking or failure.

"It is imperative that these financial measures mark the turning point in the world of banking and finance. The taxpayer must now get a firm assurance that the financial lifeline extended to these large organisations will be used to protect jobs and the public."

That was why Unite launched its social charter for the financial services sector at the end of October.

Unite's social charter

Hundreds of Unite representatives came together outside parliament to demand the financial sector be reformed to ensure that it is not executive bonuses, but jobs and communities that are the focus.

Said Derek: "Unite is calling for the protection of jobs and pensions, the end to short-term remuneration policies and an overhaul of the regulatory structures in the financial services sector.

"There must be a recognition of the importance of employment in the financial services sector, as many communities now depend on this sector since the collapse of manufacturing industry in many parts of the country."

The event was packed with members wearing t-shirts stating: 'stop bankers greed' with the workers calling for the government and finance companies to adopt the five point social contract.

The contract in full

The Unite Social Contract calls for:

- ☐ Recognition of Unite as a key stakeholder in the future of the financial services industry
- ☐ the employment security of employees in the finance sector
- ☐ the protection and improvement of terms and conditions of finance sector employees, including pension arrangements
- ☐ an end to the remuneration packages of senior executives which reward short-termism and irresponsible risk taking
- ☐ an overhaul of the regulatory structures of the financial services sector to include trade union involvement in order to enhance the accountability of finance institutions

REGULATE NOW

COMMENTING on the news in mid October that nationalised lender Northern Rock has said it will not take legal action for negligence against the executives in charge of the bank before its collapse Graham Goddard, Unite deputy general secretary, said: "The corporate greed and egos of a small number of individuals contributed to the near collapse of Northern Rock and the loss of thousands of jobs in the north east.

"It is inconceivable that there will be no legal action against the former directors whose actions lead to the turmoil within the bank. "The failure of the

auditors to question the business practices of these individuals is without doubt disgraceful.

"Staff at Northern Rock have paid the ultimate price in the loss of their jobs for the failures of those at the top. Yet those individuals, who became consumed with achieving short term financial rewards, are able to escape punishment for bringing Northern Rock to the ground.

"That's why Unite wants to see tighter regulation of the market and strengthening of the framework which regulates the finance



Northern Rock staff demonstrate for their jobs industry together proceedings, those who with increased powers contribute to failings to hold to account, on a massive including criminal scale."

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MOD WORKERS STAGE WALK OUT IN PAY DISPUTE FIRING RANGES FALL SILENT

FIRING ranges across the country fell silent last October as Unite members at Landmarc Support Services started an overtime ban in a dispute over pay.

Demonstrating at firing ranges in Cumbria, Hampshire, Kent, Pembroke, North Yorkshire and outside the Ministry of Defence in London, the workers - who provide key services including tracking, plotting and safety - had earlier voted overwhelmingly to reject a below inflation three per cent pay offer.

Even worse, the company offered the possibility of a bonus but this was reliant on 'unclear' health and safety issues being met.

The workers were not only demanding a proper living wage, many of them struggle to get by on a salary of just £14,000 per annum, but were also demonstrating to make the company recognise that maintaining a safe working environment must be a priority for the company and not left to individual workers to provide in a bid to boost meagre wages.

Jennie Formby, Unite national secretary, said: "Our members take this action with a heavy heart as they know that any



MARK THOMAS

MoD workers, including some prepared for 'gorilla' warfare, demand an end to poverty pay

industrial action, particularly an overtime ban, will cause huge problems for the army in carrying out crucial training for soldiers just about to go off to Afghanistan.

"However, although

they have a mandate for full strike action, our members have taken a decision not to use that yet as they know how vital their role is in the training of these troops.

"Up until now working relationship between the

workforce and the MoD, and then with subsequent contractors, has been excellent. But since Landmarc won the contract in 2003 conditions for the workforce have deteriorated rapidly. We

call on the management to recognise the seriousness of this dispute and to sit down and negotiate."

As The Rep went to press the overtime ban was continuing.

IT SECTOR Workers to strike over offshoring

WORKERS employed by French IT service provider Steria in Manchester and Skelmersdale have voted to strike over compulsory redundancies and the offshoring of their jobs to India.

The workers provide IT support to Co-operative Financial Services and 31 of them are facing compulsory redundancy because of Steria's offshoring policies. The workers also fear that more jobs will be lost to India once those currently under threat have gone.

Richard Lynch, Unite's negotiating officer for the IT Sector, said: "The vote for industrial action is a clear reflection of our members' anger that their jobs are being offshored to India at a time of increasing economic uncertainty in the UK.

"We believe that this export of jobs is unacceptable in the current climate.

"We urge Steria to halt the compulsory redundancies and to reconsider its plans to offshore 70 per cent of the work on this account," concluded Richard.

QUE? UNITE CONDEMNS SCANDAL OF FAILURE TO OFFER CONSTRUCTION JOBS TO LOCAL SKILLED WORKERS

UNITE, Britain's biggest union, says the decision of two overseas contracting companies not to use any UK labour to build a power station in Britain is an absolute scandal, and makes little sense given the present tough economic conditions facing the UK.

Unite has been informed by the two Spanish contracting companies working on the Staythorpe power station construction site near Newark that there is no intention of employing any local labour to undertake

the work. Alstom was originally contracted by RWE to build a gas-fired power station near Newark.

Alstom then subcontracted the work to two Spanish companies, Montpresa and FMM. At a site meeting in mid October the contractors, Montpresa and FMM, stated that they would be using non-UK workers for almost all the work they needed to carry out onsite.

Joint general secretary, Derek Simpson said "This is

an absolute scandal. The country is in the grip of a credit crunch and the construction industry is one of the worst hit sectors. We know there are qualified people in the local area who are out of work and are more than ready and willing to do the job.

"Unite is demanding that RWE and Alstom put pressure on the sub-contractors to end this scandalous situation and give UK workers a fair chance to get a cut of the action to build the new generation of UK power stations."

MANUFACTURING

Buses for Cuba

UNITE is calling on the UK government to pursue trade opportunities with Cuba that will benefit UK manufacturing.

Joint general secretary Tony Woodley has written to the Department of Trade and Industry suggesting the government sends a high level trade delegation to Cuba to look at ways of increasing trade, in particular by investigating how UK bus manufacturers could provide Cuba with much needed public buses.

"Cuba has suffered for decades as a result of the blockade the US government has enforced.

"By developing trading links with Cuba we could also help our own manufacturing base here in the UK," said Tony Woodley as he called for the UK's busmaking expertise to help solve Cuba's travel problems.

UNITE CAMPAIGN CALLS FOR MAXIMUM LUGGAGE WEIGHT LIMIT

LIGHTEN UP!



MARK THOMAS

Unite launched the national 'Lighten up' campaign with events at over a dozen airports across the country including workers at Heathrow (above)

WITH the Christmas season coming up some people may be thinking of getting away for a welcome break, or even packing their suitcase full of presents to take home to friends and family.

But when all the winter clothes, presents and other stuff is packed into a bulging suitcase, spare a thought for the baggage handlers that help make sure all that luggage gets to its destination.

Because baggage can get very heavy. In fact, baggage handlers are five times more likely to suffer back injuries than any other worker in the UK.

That's why Unite has

SAVING lbs CAN SAVE YOU £££s

launched a campaign calling on the airlines to introduce a maximum weight for bags.

Airlines have chosen to ignore the HSE and IATA standards designed to reduce baggage weight and are continuing to allow dangerously heavy bags to be transported. Not only that, they are cashing in on the process by charging excess baggage charges on travellers that have packed the bags over the limit.

Steve Turner, Unite national secretary for civil aviation, said:



"Our members have had enough. They work in extremely cramped conditions. It's unacceptable to expect workers to handle hundreds of suitcases a shift, many of which are in excess of the current 32 kilogram limit."

And they are a revenue raising ruse

based on excess charges for excess baggage.

For example, a family of four travelling within Europe on a return ticket with one bag each weighing 23 kilograms could pay anything from zero excess at British Airways to £280 at

easyJet and a whopping £928 at so called low-cost airline Ryanair.

Said Steve: "Airlines are making a fortune from excess baggage. Our advice to the travelling public is to 'Lighten Up' and spend your money on holiday not on getting there."

And as well as helping the baggage handlers avoid injuries and travellers save money the campaign will also benefit the environment.

Lighter bags equals lighter planes resulting in less fuel use and lower carbon

admissions.

All in all it's a triple whammy.

"Unite's campaign will benefit everyone," said Steve, "it's not only good news for the environment, but passengers will have more money to spend on their holiday and our members will suffer fewer back injuries."

So next time you fly why not pack properly, make sure you only take what you need and you won't only be carrying less pounds in weight but you'll probably be saving pounds too.

Find out more at <http://www.uniteunion.com/lightenup>

RALLY REVEALS REAL FEELINGS ABOUT PAY PROPOSALS NHS SAYS NO!

PUBLIC sector workers from across the country marched through Manchester during the Labour party conference in their continued fight to improve the 2.5 percent below inflation pay deal from their employers.

Unite members from across the public sector, including low paid hospital staff, social workers and refuse collectors, came out in force as they were angry of the way their pay is being cut to curb inflation, even though experts agree there is no relation between a living wage for public sector workers and rising living costs.

Low morale

Derek Simpson, joint general secretary, commented: "Staff morale is at an all time low.

"Our members are angry that central government wants poorly paid public sector workers to carry the can for rising



Unite members at the Labour conference calling on government to award a proper pay increase

inflation. They want their employers to listen to their plea to keep them off the breadline.

"These are some of the country's lowest paid workers, yet their employers are forcing further pay cuts on

them. Hardworking people who keep this country running are facing poverty. This is no reward for years of public service."

Joint general secretary, Tony Woodley, added: "Government, both

nationally and locally, must think again on this. It is simply unacceptable that in the world's fourth richest economy we should have hundreds of thousands of workers - those who help run our hospitals, care homes and classrooms - scrimping and saving to get by while their employers bank huge savings.

"Low paid workers are hit especially hard by spiralling fuel and food costs. This pay deal will push them onto the breadline and force many into debt.

"If government does not act to solve this situation now, there is a very real danger that the recruitment and retention crisis of years gone by returns to our public services."

A decent wage

Unite is calling upon central government to intervene in the pay dispute and ensure that all public sector workers receive a decent living wage.

And if the demands are ignored?

Well, a ballot on strike action by NHS members saw them voting by 76 per cent to

23 per cent to take part in industrial action short of a strike and just over half voted in favour of taking strike action.

In fact if ministers don't make concessions then strike action is on the cards for the new year.

Having agreed to hold a 'work to rule' day of action in early December, Unite will ratchet up industrial action in January if the government does not budge.

Unite's national officer for health, David Fleming, identified the 'necessary concessions' from ministers as focusing on: "addressing the pay issue which has seen below inflation pay rises for NHS staff for the last two years, an end to 'back-stairs' pay negotiations that affect all NHS staff, and a full-scale review of the government's public sector pay strategy.

"We have a democratic mandate for this action and ministers should hear that our members are very angry at the continued below-inflation pay awards seen in recent years."

HEALTH & SAFETY

Investigate

NEW research published by Unite shows investigation levels into major injuries to workers have declined by 43 per cent between 2001/2 and 2006/7.

In 2006/7, the last year when statistics were available, only 10.5 per cent of major injuries reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) were investigated.

Derek Simpson, joint general secretary, said: "Unite's report highlights the need for the government to address the problem of injuries accordingly and admit that the HSE needs more money, more resources, and more inspectors.

"The significant reductions in the level of investigations and prosecutions together with less HSE inspectors, goes to the heart of the question of levels of adequate HSE resources.

"We believe the most fundamental right for workers is that they return home from work to their families, healthy and safe." concluded Derek.

AVIATION

No sale at Gatwick

UNITE has condemned the announcement by BAA that it plans to put Gatwick airport up for sale.

Unite national officer, Steve Turner, said: "It beggars belief that a 'For Sale' sign can be hung across the country's second largest airport. Gatwick is to be flogged off with little care for the wider social impact.

"At a time when the sector is being battered by the credit crunch, faces tough challenges in soaring fuel prices and new security measures, aviation needs stability, not the fire sale of a profitable, significant airport.

Unite national officer Brian Boyd said: "This announcement brings uncertainty for hundreds of Unite members.

"Unite will now be doing everything it can to ensure that the Gatwick workforce do not become the losers.

"All too often in these situations the consumer is put first at the expense of staff.

"Our members' livelihoods depend on Gatwick airport and we will not stand by and allow their jobs and conditions of employment to be put at risk as a result of any sale."

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Morning Star

Draft national wage agreement rejected

MEMBERS of Unite, Ireland's second largest trade union, have voted by a large majority of three to one to reject the draft national wage agreement negotiated between government, employer and union representatives in Dublin in September.

The 40 delegates which Unite sent to the ICTU Special Conference are now mandated to express that view and to vote accordingly against the agreement.

"We were clear from the outset what our minimum requirements were from any deal," said Unite regional secretary Jimmy Kelly. "The draft agreement on which our

members have now voted came up short in too many key areas. The leadership of this union put forward a view that a national agreement is no longer the best basis on which to advance the rights and fair remuneration of workers. Our members share that view.

"There have been conflicting views on all sides as to whether this was the best deal in the current rapidly changing economic circumstances. We stood up to be counted with a view that the pay element was not enough in real terms for working people," concluded Jimmy.

Filton's fantastic future

UNITE has hailed the sale of Airbus' manufacturing facility at Filton to engineering giant GKN.

Unite national officer, Bernie Hamilton said: "This is fantastic news for British manufacturing.

"This deal secures the UK aerospace industry for decades to come.

"GKN and the government are making substantial investments into cutting edge composite technology.

"This will help to ensure that the UK retains its leading world class position for designing, manufacturing and assembling wings for



An airbus A380 wing test

large aircraft."

The announcement secures the UK's share for the manufacturing of

wings for the new Airbus A350XWB and also positions the site at the forefront of the next

generation of single aisle planes, the workhorses of the airline industry.

STRIKES CALLED OVER OUTSOURCING AT DOVER'S FERRY PORT

PORTS PROTEST

CROSSINGS from Dover across the English Channel were disrupted because the management of Dover Ports is refusing to back down and negotiate over plans to outsource 190 jobs.

The company's refusal to negotiate with the union saw workers take to the streets in mid November to demand that their jobs not be

outsourced. Jane Jeffery, Unite regional industrial organiser, said: "Our members have voted overwhelmingly in a consultative ballot to support industrial action to protect their employment with the Port of Dover.

"Our members are determined to protect their terms and conditions

of employment, and most importantly pensions, which will undoubtedly be threatened by these outsourcing plans."

Unite national secretary for docks and waterways, Brendan Gold, said: "Dover

Port management has forgotten the huge contribution our members make to run the port efficiently. To outsource port security at a time when security is of vital importance is negligent in the extreme.

"Dover is a trust port

which has a drive for profit."

responsibility to its workforce and the local community. Clearly the port management have ignored this important fact in their relentless



Protesting at the Port of Dover

WORKERS UNITING IN POTASH PAY PROTEST



Neil Wolff (left) and Roy Howell from the United Steelworkers' Union took to London's streets at an analysts' briefing

International action sees Unite and USW join forces in London lobby

STRIKING Canadian potash miners from the USW took their campaign across the Atlantic to London as they joined forces with Unite to lobby the company's investors meeting at the end of September.

The workers, who had been on strike since August, were demanding a fair share of the company's profits.

Potash Corp is the world's biggest fertiliser company and has benefited significantly from a doubling in potash fertiliser prices in the past year.

This increase has been driven by demand from farmers for fertiliser to boost farm production so they can benefit from rising food prices.

Neil Wolff and Roy Howell

travelled over from Saskatchewan, Canada to lobby analysts outside the investors' meeting.

They were joined by Unite demonstrators all determined to highlight the impact of the strike and management's actions on the company's future performance.

Said Neil Wolff: "We feel like our cause was a fight that Unite would go to any lengths to help resolve and we really appreciate that."

They were campaigning on behalf of almost 500 strikers who they argue have helped the company generate record profits.

The USW was also seeking a new labour agreement, greater controls over the use of contract labour, a bonus

scheme, and improvements in pensions and holidays.

And the London action has made a difference. In early October the company revised its stance to agree to bargaining with conditions.

Previously they had refused to negotiate but the USW said no limits should be put on the talks. "We're in touch with the company all the time because we want a resolution to this," said USW spokesman Roger Falconer at the time, "but we're not going to meet if, in this case, they're going to put some kind of limitations or qualifications



Helping to get the workers' message out

on what we can talk about." And playing hardball worked.

With the strike remaining solid the company was forced to meet the workers' demands and get back to the negotiating table. This resulted in a new three year agreement being offered in mid November which was approved by 77.5 per cent of the workforce.

AVIATION

Workers have a right to know

THE collapse of XL, the UK's third largest package holiday group, left not only tens of thousands of Britons stranded abroad, but hundreds of Unite members out of a job with almost no notice.

Unite condemned the secrecy surrounding the closure of the company last September, especially as Unite was locked in wage negotiations at the time, and is calling on companies to be more open with their employees in these difficult economic times.

Unite national officer Brian Boyd said: "Airlines that are struggling in the present climate are treating their workforce and the trade unions representing them with contempt."

"It is appalling that employees have been left to hear of their fate through the media. Given the difficulties that aviation workers are facing today to hide the plight of the business from its employees is a disgrace."

PRISONS

Prison problems

PRISONS around the country could soon see widespread disruption, but rather than prisoners staging a protest, it will be the ordinary people who keep prisons ticking over day in day out.

That's because Unite has announced its intention to ballot over 3,500 workers that cover maintenance, grounds, farms and gardens and kitchens in English and Welsh prisons.

The workers are incensed over a paltry 2.5 per cent pay offer.

Ian Waddell, national officer for Unite, said: "The pay offer our members have received from the Prison Service is a joke, but our members aren't laughing. It's a pay cut at a time when their costs are spiralling."

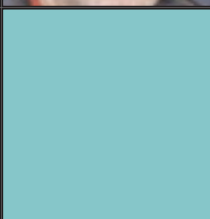
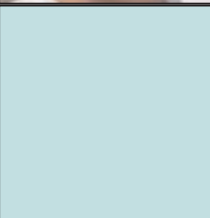
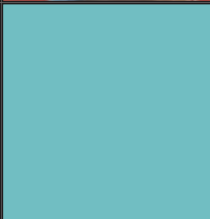
"In the face of a national shortage of the skills our members have, it's a grossly insulting offer. Our members are loyal, hard-working people, operating in an extremely difficult environment and all they want is fair pay for what they do."

Unite intends to discuss how the unions can work together to maximise disruption.

BRIEF

BARGAINING

WINNING IN YOUR WORKPLACE



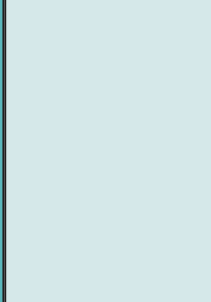
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GET TRAINED

Taking the risk out of being a rep

UNDERSTANDING how to carry out a risk assessment is an important part of being a health and safety rep. But while it is an employer's duty to carry out assessments, reps need to know how to challenge employers who don't do the job correctly.

October's European Health & Safety Week kicked off a new two year campaign highlighting the need for risk assessments.

The aim is to promote the benefits of completing and implementing risk assessments, seeking to demystify the process and show it is not complicated, bureaucratic or a task only for experts. That's why the TUC has updated its course materials and guidance, and is offering training courses for trade union health and safety reps.

Graham Peterson, course coordinator at the Trade Union Studies Centre at South Thames College said: "There is a need to understand how risk assessments work. Though it's the duty of employers to carry out full risk assessments, most don't. Very few have decent policies in place and those that do don't always implement the control measures that have been highlighted."

Anna Sopwith works for Bristol City Council as a housing advisor to the homeless. She joined the union in January 2003, and is about to undertake health and safety training as a new rep.

Anna explained why: "I want to improve the working conditions for myself and my colleagues."

"There is currently no health and safety rep in our building. I work in a front of house team, our office is divided by a low partition from the public waiting area and we have a drop-in session which is open to all. Our clients are often extremely frustrated by their situation and chaotic, or in crisis."

"Staff have experienced violence and aggression from clients, including threats to kill."

Anna feels the rep's role to advise and negotiate between staff and management is very important, and has a number of workplace concerns.

Anna says a proper risk assessment of the workplace is vital to ensure the safety of staff in situations like this, and proper trade union training is essential to understand the law and employer's responsibilities.

Anna concluded: "At present I feel there is a danger that staff health and safety may be compromised in order to 'keep the service running'. How can a safety rep challenge or advocate change, or advise staff if they don't understand what it is they are dealing with, that's why I wanted to go on this training course."

Training is key, health and safety reps have statutory rights, make sure you use them. Find out more about being trained on the Unite or TUC websites.

New Unite guidance on health and safety and agency workers **MAKE SURE EVERYONE'S PROTECTED**

ARE agency workers employed in your workplace?

Do you need to know more about agency workers' rights?

Well Unite has put together a new briefing to provide detailed guidance on agency workers and health and safety.

The briefing starts out by explaining how to properly identify agency workers including specific reference to the Health & Safety Executive's advice to employers about their obligations.

It also highlights relevant health and safety law, examples of how Unite has fought back for agency workers in the workplace and provides some key links of interest.

In addition Unite has compiled

an agency workers' checklist for health and safety reps covering union organisation, risk assessments, welfare and many other issues which can be sued to make sure your employer and any agency that is also involved meet their obligations.

The whole pack is topped off by a 'make sure you're protected' poster to direct workers to reps in the workplace.

PDF copies are available from the health and safety pages on the Unite website and supplies have also been sent to regional offices.

For more information contact Susan Murray on 020 7611 2596 or email susan.murray@unite-theunion.com.



DITCH DODGY LADDERS

DO YOU work at heights? Then you know that health and safety is essential and that you shouldn't treat ladders lightly. In 2006/7 45 workers died and almost 3,750 suffered serious injuries because of a fall from height. And ladders bear the blame accounting for almost a third of all incidents.

That's why Unite is supporting the HSE's ladder exchange campaign that was launched last September.

The campaign is focused on making sure you use the right ladder for the job. There's a simple message.

If it's broken, damaged or bent, then exchange it!

It makes a real difference because dodgy ladders shatter lives. Just talk to Gary. He worked for a brick cleaning firm using harsh chemicals. The only requirement at the end of the day was to wash the ladders but there were no real checks.

One day he was at the top of the ladder and it snapped, he hit the wall sending him spiralling to the floor; he broke two vertebrae in his back.

Gary's never been the same.

"You're a totally different person, I'm not as active as I used to be... at the hospital one of the nurses said to me jobs like that don't normally come in the front door, they come in the back. I can't do the job I used to do."

The ladder exchange aims to stop this. The campaign is designed to help prevent ladder accidents by encouraging businesses to remove 'dodgy' ladders from the workplace and provide an opportunity to review pre-use checks, training, supervision and other arrangements for ladder work.

A number of companies including HSS, Hire, Speedy Hire and the Ladder Association are working with the HSE on the Ladder Exchange and some are offering discounts to replace old ladders with new ones.

The aim of the scheme is to remove 5,000 dodgy ladders from the workplace.

So if you are using a ladder in the workplace then remember these top tips:

- Use the right ladder for the job
- Always check the ladder before use, if it's broken, damaged or bent then replace it
- Use the ladder safely and for a short duration, if the task is longer than 30 minutes consider alternative equipment

Remember, if it's broken, damaged or bent, then exchange it!

For more information on safe ladder use, ladder maintenance and materials for your workplace just visit <http://www.hse.gov.uk/falls/ladderechange.htm>

PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST THE HIDDEN **KILLER**

Are you at more risk than **YOU** think?

ASBESTOS kills. It is as simple as that.

But many workers, particularly tradesmen, think they have no risk of exposure to asbestos and the diseases it can cause.

They think that since asbestos was banned years ago, the problem has been dealt with.

The reality is very different.

Every week, asbestos related diseases kill 20 tradesmen. Every week six electricians are struck down by diseases due to this small fibre, every week three plumbers are struck down.

That's why Unite is backing the Health and Safety Executive's new campaign to remind tradesmen about the dangers of asbestos.

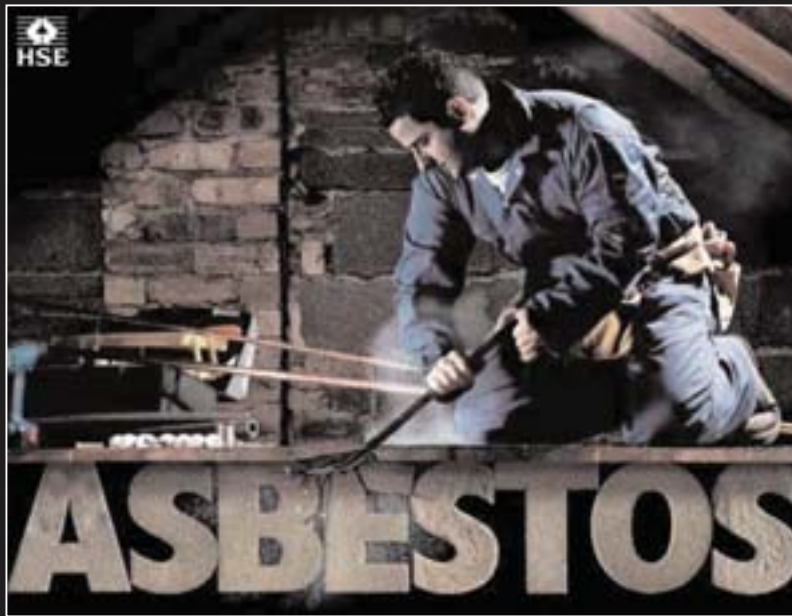
Any building built or refurbished before 2000 is likely to contain asbestos. Electricians, plumbers, heating and ventilation engineers, joiners, plasterers and other trades are likely to come across this hidden killer at work, and the asbestos dust could kill them.

So always make simple checks, they could save your life.

The most important thing is to be prepared when working with asbestos, and you can only start working with asbestos if you have been trained. See the box for things to remember.

The HSE has produced information packs for tradesmen which includes a guide to working with asbestos, practical information as well as a reminder card to keep in your toolbox.

The packs are available from Unite regional offices or by contacting Susan Murray on susan.murray@unitetheunion.com. For more help on asbestos phone the HSE's infoline on 0845 345 0055.



ASBESTOS DOS

- Stop and ask if you are suspicious something may be asbestos
- Follow the plan of work and the task guidance sheets; and use the right sheet for the job
- Use your protective equipment, including a suitable face mask, worn properly
- Clean up as you go - stop waste building up and wash before breaks and going home
- Make sure waste is double-bagged and is disposed of properly at a licensed tip

ASBESTOS DON'TS

- Use methods that create a lot of dust, like using power tools
- Sweep up dust and debris - use a Type H vacuum cleaner or wet rags
- Take home overalls used for asbestos work
- Reuse disposable clothing or masks
- Smoke, eat or drink in the work area

Make a difference for hand-arm vibration

LET'S BE clear about one thing hand-arm vibration (HAV) related occupational diseases aren't choosy. All they generally require is several years of exposure to well known and publicised risks before it's too late. The chances are that you already know someone who is suffering.



by Colin Chatten

After all, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) estimates that around five million workers are exposed to HAV in the workplace with two million of those exposed to levels of vibration where there are clear risks of developing the disease.

Since early 2006 the HSE's Noise and Vibration Programme has been working closely with 20 volunteer companies to test whether embedding a culture of worker involvement could bring real benefits to the control of risks.

The aim was to ensure that the identification and control of these risks was understood by all involved

and that systems for regular exchange of information and ideas would be developed between managers and workers.

All the companies involved stated that they gained benefits in terms of health and safety, staff welfare and morale and some identified real financial and productivity savings.

Some of the achievements were in training, communications, and health outcomes:

- most companies set up HAV and noise training for workers and managers
- one company measured vibration emissions for all its equipment and produced posters for each tool type with a picture of the tool and key information about vibration levels and limitations on daily use
- We've also learned a great deal from the exercise, including:
 - trust between management and workers is essential. In particular, efforts must be made to engage trade unions and their representatives from the outset
 - everyone in a company from the top down has

a part to play in reducing risk, not just workers and their line managers, so all should be trained and engaged

• improved efficiency and productivity can result from workers suggestions
So where do we go from here?

There are an awful lot of businesses and workers we've yet to reach and that's where you come in. If the company/organisation you work for hasn't considered worker involvement as a means of helping to address health and safety challenges perhaps it's something reps can discuss with management.

It'll certainly help save a lot of pain and suffering in the long run and probably improve their business into the bargain.

For further information on vibration please visit the HSE website which outlines the dangers of hand arm vibration syndrome and how to spot it. See: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/vibration/index.htm>.

Colin Chatten is a policy adviser at the Health and Safety Executive.

LORRY DRIVER GETS £4,000 PAYOUT FOR NOT 'SMOKING' IN CAB

SACKED FOR 'NOT SMOKING'



SCOTS lorry driver Thomas Leckenby is celebrating receiving £4,000 for not smoking in his cab.

But this was not a new scheme to bribe smokers to stop, it was justice thanks to Unite's legal services.

That's because back in 2006 Tom was sacked by his employer, Carntyne Transport, for allegedly smoking while at work.

It all started when a letter came from West Lothian council claiming that Tom had been seen smoking in his cab.

The result, Tom was summoned to a disciplinary meeting and told he was

being sacked for smoking on the job in contravention of Scotland's Smoking, Health and Social Care Act.

But Tom denied the claims, telling the hearing he had stopped smoking.

To prove his point he produced his 'fake cigarette' which he was using to cope with withdrawal symptoms.

However the employers ignored Tom and, even though the council provided no supporting evidence or other witnesses, they sacked him for gross misconduct.

That's when Unite regional industrial organiser Tony Trench put Tom in touch with the union's legal

team.

They took up the case, helping him prepare for the employment tribunal, that eventually proved his case. The tribunal found that Tom has been unfairly dismissed and that he had not received a fair hearing.

Said Tom: "None of this would have happened if I had not been a member of the union."

"I could not afford legal costs myself, so without Unite I would not have been able to clear my name."

Said Tony Trench: "Even if the union does not have recognition at the plant, we can still defend our members, and

the more that are in the union the stronger we become."

And that fact is supported by a senior steward at the company: "This win is acting as springboard for us at the company."

"More people are joining the union and we'll aim to get recognition even if the company keeps putting barriers in our way."

"We owe it to the workers, for example we have more than 190 people working for the company, but no health and safety rep, we need to change that, make this company move with the times."

advertisement



UNITE'S LEGAL SERVICES DELIVER MASSIVE PAYOUT FOR MOTOR MAKERS

MEMBERS who worked for the Norwich based motor maker Laurence Scott & Electromotors are celebrating after Unite's legal services helped secure compensation totalling almost £500,000.

The 40 Unite members were sacked in May 2007 when the company, which develops and manufactures top of the range high voltage electric motors, principally for the oil and gas industry, went into administration.

The tribunal ruled that the company failed to consult with the union over the redundancies.

Unite regional officer, Mark

Robinson, said: "We welcome the decision of the tribunal and we are pleased our members will receive some compensation for the treatment they suffered."

"Our members, many with 20 or 30 years service were sacked by telephone or not allowed entry when they turned up to work."

The tribunal's decision ensures all dismissed members will receive at least £2,000 with some claims totalling as much as £35,000.

And the good news didn't stop there. Austrian motor manufacturer ATB

subsequently bought the company and not only are there plans to build a new electric motor test centre, but the company has taken on its first apprentices in five years, and has also agreed to take on a number of the dismissed workers.

Said Mark: "We are pleased ATB has done a great deal to re-employ a number of our members following their dismissals and our working relationship with the new owners of the business remains strong and healthy. The future for ATB Laurence Scott looks bright."

SUPPORT THE UNITED CAMPAIGN FOR TRADE UNION FREEDOM

UNITE is fully behind the United Campaign to repeal the anti-trade union laws introduced by the Conservative government between 1979 and 1995.

The ongoing campaign is calling for these repressive laws to be replaced with a framework of positive rights for ordinary working people.

Labour law in the UK is now worse than that of 100 years ago, that's why the campaign continues to demand a change in the law. With the employment bill currently going through parliament the campaign is arguing for justice for UK workers including:

- Better protection for striking workers
- Prevention of the use of replacement labour during strikes
- Fairer industrial action balloting procedures

And, after recent rulings from the European Court of Justice, the threat to workers' rights across the continent is also rising.

Said joint general secretary Derek Simpson: "The citizens of Europe and throughout the world need sound collective rights to fight against poor working conditions, poverty and discrimination."

Two recent ECJ decisions highlight moves in the opposite direction.

In the Laval case the ECJ ruled that unions cannot take action against companies employing imported workers at rates below those for local workers, except to defend wages up to a universally applicable minimum. For the UK this means no more than the national

minimum wage.

In the Rüffert case the ECJ cut member states' power to make law to protect workers' rights. It overruled the German regional government of Lower Saxony, which makes its contractors ensure that local union-backed labour standards are maintained. A Polish contractor was allowed to get away with paying less than half the rate of pay of German workers. It may not long before more and more employers try to exploit that ruling.

Said Derek: "I have raised the issue personally with union colleagues in Europe and the prime minister and MEPs. Unite will be putting resources behind the drive to overcome the effect of these ECJ decisions."

Concluding with a call for action, Derek said: "We've got a fight on our hands to reclaim Europe for workers' rights instead of for bosses. Join Unite in taking up this issue and seeking urgent change."

Help support the fight for trade union freedom!

- Send a letter to your MP asking them to sign EDM 1604 and support the Trade Union Freedom bill campaign
- Encourage your union branch to join the United Campaign or invite a speaker from the campaign to your next union meeting

For further information, model letters to MPs, sample motions, flyers and newsletters go to: <http://www.unitedcampaign.org.uk> or to order postcards email: info@unitedcampaign.org.uk

WELDER WINS 30 PER CENT MORE THANKS TO UNITE

A UNITE member working as a welder with road trailer manufacturer Montracon has been awarded £32,500 after Unite took up his case when he sustained a serious hand injury while using a saw at work.

Even though he had not received any training the member was expected to use a bench circular saw to prepare wood for cutting.

But as he was feeding the wood through the saw his hand became caught in the machine causing serious injuries to his fingers. Even with several sessions of physiotherapy the member continues to feel numbness and pain, which is worsened by cold weather.

It was after these events that the member was approached by a legal consultancy. Highlighting a 'fast-track

policy' they put in an offer of £22,500 to settle his claim.

But when Unite solicitors' Rowley Ashworth held a legal surgery session he approached the union's solicitors to seek advice about the value of his claim. The solicitors told him to take his case forward with Unite so that he could receive advice from a personal injury specialist.

The result. He got a final settlement of just over £32,000, almost a third more than if he had not used Unite's free legal services.

Said Sukhdev Gill of Rowley Ashworth: "This case clearly highlights the importance of members approaching the union from the outset to ensure the maximum level of compensation is recovered."



DID YOU KNOW ?

UNITE MEMBERS RECEIVE FREE LEGAL SERVICES:

- **Accidents at work and outside of work**
Free legal advice and representation for you and your family for any personal injury at or away from work including road traffic accidents
- **Industrial disease**
Free legal advice and representation on any industrial disease or illness due to work
- **Free legal advice***
Free initial legal advice on non-work issues such as landlord disputes, neighbour disputes, matrimonial and consumer issues
- **Conveyancing**
Reduced rates for conveyancing
- **Wills**
Free wills
*Subject to rules and NEC decisions

Call Unite legal services

0870 240 4545

www.uniteunion.com



TIME FOR A A PLAN TO PROTECT ALL WORKERS



THE global economy is in crisis. Over the past year the collapse of the financial markets, the loss of confidence in the banking system and the impact of declining growth coupled with sharp rises in unemployment all indicate trouble ahead.

Unite believes that this calls for a re-evaluation and renewal of UK economic policy founded on the principles of fairness and equality.

A new plan

That's why Unite is calling for a new plan for the real economy, a plan that will help the millions of ordinary working people and their families who will bear the brunt of the crisis. Unite's plan seeks to protect working people from the triple danger of redundancy, repossession and rising prices.



email us: reporter@uniteunion.com

Britain's biggest union has set out five key areas where action is needed. These include a freeze on repossessions on homes and the creation of one million new affordable houses, the introduction of a fair tax regime, an increase in public spending and support for manufacturing through procurement and investment. The submission also calls for a new order of regulation in the finance sector.

Unite joint general secretary, Derek Simpson, said: "We are calling on Gordon Brown to save our homes and do everything possible to protect people's jobs. As times get tougher, Labour must continue to command the economy and support those people most likely to suffer because of the greed and irresponsibility of the bankers."

"Gordon Brown has already taken decisive action to bail-out the banks, he has re-established himself as the best man to steer the UK through these troubled times, but Labour now needs to go beyond the banks to support the real economy."

"Our priorities seek to put an end to the unchecked free market greed that led to the current crisis and to introduce a new economic order which takes our economy out of the hands of the super rich and puts it back under democratic control."

Key challenges

Unite is demanding that the government takes action as follows:

LABOUR MARKET:

Help support people to ensure that the voice of working people is heard, make sure flexible working rights are retained, support the right to take lawful industrial action, simplify strike ballots and end the Working Time Directive opt out.

SUPPORTING BUSINESS:

Unite is calling on government to support Britain's manufacturing industry in a similar vein to

the French and German governments, to direct policy and procurement to support the development of modern and sustainable industry and to ensure retraining and assistance for workers that lose their jobs and enable workers to meet the demands of the changed economy.

PROTECTING PUBLIC SERVICES:

Abandon PFI and privatisation and support a vibrant state sector including paying workers a fair inflation proofed wage.

FAIR TAXATION AND INVESTMENT:

Establish a windfall tax on excess energy profits, introduce a progressive tax regime including a higher rate of tax for those earning above £100,000 per year and clamp down on tax avoidance.

Unite is also calling for the government to direct investment to large scale capital projects. In addition to Crossrail and the 2012 Olympics, Unite is calling for more social and council housing to be built and demanding that cuts in interest rates are passed on to ordinary people and small businesses.

CAPITAL RESTRUCTURING:

Unite argues it is time to rein in the excesses of the City and demands an end to short selling, greater and more consistent financial regulation, and transparency.

By delivering on these five key areas, Unite believes the government can help ordinary working men and women to get through the economic downturn.

Said Unite joint general secretary Tony Woodley: "Millions of families are facing a winter of economic fear, haunted by the triple danger of redundancy, repossession and rising prices."

"This is the government's chance to maintain the momentum of recent months by using its control of the banking system - driven to bankruptcy by the city fat cats - to put the people's priorities first."

"This includes aid to manufacturing industry, as is currently being considered by the incoming Obama administration in the United States, a halt to home repossessions and a major programme of house-building, control on energy prices and immediate investment in infrastructure to get industry moving."

"Government action based on the economics of hope will change the political landscape for the better."

UNITE'S TOP 10 PRIORITIES

1. Freezing repossessions on homes and creating one million new affordable houses
2. The introduction of a fair tax regime to address the poverty gap, including closing tax loopholes and tax cuts for lower earners
3. Increasing public spending levels to create demand
4. Supporting manufacturing through procurement and investment
5. A price commission for energy and a windfall tax on windfall energy profits
6. Maintaining a commitment to full employment
7. Restoring and defending collective rights for workers
8. Advancing investment in public infrastructure
9. Further reductions in interest rates to stimulate investment
10. Introducing proper regulation into the finance sector



www.uniteunion.com

NEW DEAL

MOTOR MANUFACTURING MATTERS

THE crisis in the banking sector and the impact of the credit crunch have seen concerns about jobs in the City rise to the top of the agenda.

But pressures are not just restricted to the City, manufacturing is facing a fundamental struggle and the car industry is at the forefront.

With a slump in car sales as consumers postpone purchases due to a combination of the downturn and the unwillingness of banks to provide credit, the demand for - and hence production of - cars has collapsed.

With expectations that the motor industry will sell 500,000 less cars next year, down from 2.4 million in 2007, leading car companies have been forced to adjust their production plans.

Temporary closures

In the past few weeks Honda, Ford, Bentley, Vauxhall and BMW have all announced plans to temporarily close factories. Supplier companies are also facing pressures, tyre manufacturer Michelin is suspending production over the Christmas period as it has accumulated too much stock.

Unite is calling on the government to help this key industry which provides high skilled and well paid jobs.

This is all the more important when considering that for every job with a car manufacturer there are another five in the supply base, meaning tens of thousands of jobs are on the line.

Dave Osbourne, national officer for vehicle building and automotive, said: "It's an unprecedented time in the industry, the collapse in consumer confidence and the fact that banks are not lending money to people or businesses means demand is dropping rapidly.

"And it is our members that are paying the price in reduced wages or downtime, and even the loss of jobs. That's why we are working hard to get the government to take action."

A dual approach

Unite has a two pronged approach as a first step to support car manufacture.

- The first step is a fiscal stimulus to support consumer confidence and renew demand, the changes announced in the government's recent pre-budget report mark the start of such a plan.

- The second step is to free up capital so that companies have the funds to invest in the future. This will enable Europe to remain at the forefront of developing the next



Car production counts: For every worker employed in car production a further five are employed by suppliers

generation of vehicles and help support growth and investment throughout the whole supply chain.

The European dimension

And action is not only happening at a national level, Unite has been working with sister unions across Europe and held a high level meeting with Gunter Verheugen, European Commission vice-president, at the end of November.

That meeting concluded with agreement that Europe's automotive future lies in quality products with strong safety features produced by a highly-skilled and motivated workforce.

And commissioner Verheugen confirmed the European Commission's strong commitment to safeguarding employment in the car industry.

Said Dave: "It's important to remember that this is not a bankrupt industry, it is an area where Europe leads the way and the UK has attracted investment from car manufacturers around the world.

"We have to make sure we safeguard this important industry and the jobs that go with it."

Said joint general secretary Tony

Woodley: "As recession grips the UK we need our leaders to take swift and significant steps to protect our remaining manufacturing jobs.

"Our government must do all in its power ... we urge it to make every possible use of its stake in the

banks and its power to leverage in financial support to our manufacturing sector through these tough times - otherwise we will have no industrial base from which to revive our economy."

ROVER: WHAT HAPPENS WHEN HIGH QUALITY ENGINEERING JOBS ARE LOST?

The closure of Rover is one example where, following the collapse of the company, many of the workers were forced to abandon finding another manufacturing job and take hefty pay cuts to stay in work. Said Tony Woodley: "The real lesson from the Rover experience, and one that we urge government to pay close attention to at this time of tremendous economic uncertainty, is that we must never again allow highly skilled, well paid manufacturing jobs such as these to be lost from our communities."



JOHN HARRIS/REPORT/DIGITAL

PETE'S PRAISE FOR LEARNING AT AIRBAGS INTERNATIONAL

MAKING A BIG DIFFERENCE

Unite learning rep Alison Martin talked to *The Rep* about the difference learning in the workplace makes

ALISON highlighted the story of Pete, who joined Cheshire based safety equipment and buckles manufacturer Airbags International early last year.

After Pete (name changed) came to work at Airbags International, the training team noticed that paperwork issued to him was taking a long time to be returned.

At the same time union learning reps at the company were in the process of establishing a new learning centre and they began to run courses. Some of the early courses included literacy and numeracy, with tutors from colleges in Macclesfield and Stoke on Trent helping out.

The centre opened in early 2008, holding open days for all shifts in the following months.

It was at this time that Pete came up and spoke to Unite learning organiser Helen Osgood.

Listening to Pete's story she got in touch with Alison and she approached him about getting some training.

Having taken an initial assessment Pete understood he would need extra tuition, and in January of this year he went along to Macclesfield College and joined his first class.

And it has really made a difference. Pete was really positive about the fact that the college would work around his shift patterns.

Pete not only learned how to skim read and scan along with close reading, he enjoys reading. During his breaks Pete, who always used to sit in his car playing games on his mobile phone, brings a book to work and reads instead.

Pete's course has now come to an end and he has received his first certificate; he's looking forward to returning to complete the next level.

Said lifelong learning organiser Helen Osgood: "This is fantastic news as when Pete first approached me he said to me that he was nervous about coming into the centre, and there was no point giving him any forms or information as he would not be able to read them."

"Alison and the team of ULRs at Airbags International have done excellent work in raising the skills levels of Unite members at the workplace."

Want to get educated? Then why not contact your regional learning organiser to find out more details.



Unite members at Airbags International with their certificates to show they have successfully completed their learning course at the company's learning centre (above and below) and (right) the whole team at Airbags International at the launch of the new learning centre



UNITE'S EDUCATION AND TRAINING DEPARTMENT PROVIDES A RANGE OF SERVICES TO WORKPLACE REPRESENTATIVES AND MEMBERS

FOR MORE DETAILS:

EMAIL [REPORTER@UNITETHEUNION.COM](mailto:reporter@unitetheunion.com)
OR WWW.UNITETHEUNION.COM/EDUCATION

EARNING & LEARNING AT NAMPAK



Unite union learning rep Glenn Jackson (left) with Unite regional learning organiser Russell Morgan at the new Nampak learning centre

A JOINT initiative by Nampak Cartons, one of the longest established employers in Leeds, and Unite saw the opening of a learning centre for workers at Nampak's Leeds factory earlier this year.

The learning centre was opened by local councillor Angela Gabriel, and is to be used for a range of safety, vocational and individual development courses.

Steve Campbell, site director at Nampak Cartons, said: "We take training very seriously. First of all, it is the key factor in making sure we have a safe workplace. Secondly, it means that our people are developed to their full potential, whatever their current job. This partnership with Unite is a really positive one because it means more people can access more training."

The initiative was a result of Unite asking major employers like Nampak to provide support and facilities to establish continuous learning centres inside workplaces. Glenn Jackson, Unite union learning representative at the plant has been one of the main champions of the project.

Said Glenn: "Many people have put a lot of time and effort into making this possible. This learning and training agenda, in conjunction with a working partnership between Nampak and Unite, bodes well for the company. Employees will be able to enhance existing skills and develop new ones that will influence, shape and strengthen the future of our industry."

The Learning Centre at Nampak will initially be used for work related courses run by the company, as well as being used by Unite to run courses for members. The longer term aim is that the facilities will be made available to employees who want to further their skills by taking self-study courses in IT and, perhaps, other subjects such as languages.

It is attached to the plant's risk management centre, which was established last year with four staff, including two full-time trainers, and is responsible for all aspects of health, safety and training at the plant.

Sharon Ward, human resources manager, said: "I think it is really positive that we are doing this together with Unite, because it not only builds the skills of our staff, it also furthers the relationship between us and the union."

Concluded Glenn: "Working with Unite Nampak has made learning and training a priority and the opening of this centre marks a significant commitment to the Cockburn Fields' workforce."

EVERYONE'S A WINNER AT AYLESFORD NEWSPRINT

ADULT learning was celebrated earlier this year when workers at Aylesford Newsprint were given time off to test their skills.

Unite union learning reps at Aylesford Newsprint had prizes for everyone at the event they organised during the last Adult Learners Week.

More than 70 people took part and the workforce was able to test their skills in literacy and numeracy with the support of funding from Unionlearn and SEEDA (South East England Development Agency), and time off given by the company.

Every person who took part was given a free memory stick and an entry into a free prize draw as a bonus.

The bonus prizes included a digital camera, a DAB radio and two MP3 players.

Kent adult education representatives were on hand to help people check their skills and offer the chance to take part in numeracy and literacy brush up classes, which the ULRs organised on Tuesday and Thursday evenings.

The response was so good, that the courses are now oversubscribed.

Aylesford Newsprint is fully behind the scheme and giving people paid time off to attend the classes.

One learner commented: "After the numeracy classes I've got the confidence to do rough sums to check my calculations for his job and feel that I will be able to minimise errors. At the same time I've gained general and achieved a qualification."



Getting ready to present some of the prizes to the workers who were given time off to brush up their skills at Aylesford Newsprint

Unite regional learning organiser, Michelle King, said: "We were all very pleased with the response on the day, and all the ULRs are now planning their next courses covering for IT, numeracy and literacy and digital photography."

Summing up the day, Paul Baker, Unite branch secretary, said: "I was

pleased to see our members being given the opportunity to brush up their skills and gain confidence and qualifications through the union, and would like to thank the company, Michelle King and all the local reps for their generosity and support in making this event happen."

THE SKY'S THE LIMIT



Unite members celebrating the completion of their City & Guilds 259-7 aerospace qualification.

The Welsh Union Learning Fund funded 26 Unite members at British Airways Maintenance Cardiff on a course which is a requirement for technical advancement in the aviation industry. It was so successful that a new recruitment drive for more students has now been launched. The course takes place at Barry College at the International Centre for Aerospace Training (For more details see <http://www.part66.co.uk/>)

UNITE JOINS CELEBRATIONS – BUT IS STILL MORE TO DO

TUC ACADEMY IS 10

HUNDREDS of Britain's organisers and union activists came together at Congress House last October to celebrate 10 years of the TUC Organising Academy and outline the next steps in organising for the union movement across Britain and Ireland.

They were joined at the 'Building Stronger Unions' conference by unionists from around the world to discuss how to organise and represent the next generation of union members.

An analysis of the academy, commissioned by the TUC, estimates that since its launch in 1998, organisers have recruited around 50,000 new union members and 4,500 new trade union activists during their training. 270 new union organisers have also been trained and recruited.

And the TUC has also launched a new programme, the Activist

Academy. This was proposed by the Organising and Representation Task Group which is chaired by Unite joint general secretary Tony Woodley.

Said Tony: "The academy aims to tap into the vast potential of a new army of shop stewards and lay reps as we train well over 1,000 lay organisers during the next three years, which is really exciting. Unions, I hope, will continue to prioritise organising and growth because the stakes could not be higher.

"Let us not forget those colleagues who are meeting the organising challenge today. It is not just about organisers, but about general secretaries, lay reps, national officers and all of us trying to change the culture of our movement."

Concluding on a high note, Unite assistant general secretary Tony Burke, who chairs the



10 years on: TUC deputy general secretary Frances O'Grady (front row centre) with the original organising recruits including Unite's Roz Foyer (front second from right). Inset: Tony Woodley

Academy's governing board, said: "We are here to stay, we are going to grow and we

are going to win."

The Activist Academy is to be piloted in the Yorkshire & Humber,

Midlands and Southern & Eastern TUC regions from September 2008 and will be rolled out

nationally in early 2009.

To find out more visit www.strongerunions.org.

STEWARDS HELP SECURE FIRM'S FUTURE

DESPITE the current financial doom and gloom Sheffield engineering company DavyMarkham is upbeat about its future.

And that's down in part to the spirit of co-operation between management and the union.

The 180-strong workforce have built such a good relationship with the company that both sides are working closely to address the challenges the company faces in an increasingly global marketplace.

"Our company is heading towards a much brighter future, thanks to the efforts of our MD, Kevin Parkin. We

want to work with him in a spirit of collaboration and reach acceptable agreements that benefit the workforce and the company," said Mick Jay, secretary of the joint shop stewards committee.

"We feel we can find the right solutions to the challenges we face by working collectively, in order to achieve our ultimate goals of secure jobs and better pay."

Mick, along with committee chair Sam Wragg and deputy Andy Tuohy represent the workforce at the company's Darnell works in Sheffield.

But while the company has an enviable manufacturing heritage, dating back to the 1830s, in more recent times there were definite management shortcomings, as Andy Tuohy recalls: "It used to be more of an 'us and them' situation and many of us joined the union to prevent being pressured by management and to secure help in negotiating improved pay and conditions.

Listening to the union

"But since Kevin became managing director we've developed a good working relationship with management. He's the kind of bloke we can talk to and, if there are changes to be made, we sit down and discuss things with him and try to reach acceptable agreements."

Kevin has been keen to involve the union in the day-to-day running of the company and, according to Andy, maintains a genuine open door policy, so that staff can raise queries and concerns, even walking the shopfloor most mornings to sound out employees.

Chair of the stewards committee Sam Wragg said: "Kevin's a strong believer in unions and we have established a very sound working relationship. The

committee are certainly not 'yes men', but we appreciate that we have shared goals with management, in that we all want DavyMarkham to succeed."

Investing for the future

One move in that direction was last year's reintroduction of the company's apprenticeship scheme with the help and support of Unite regional officer Doug Patterson, and MetSkill, a skills body for the metals industry.

"The apprenticeship scheme has been welcomed by everybody, especially because an aging workforce meant we had to introduce new blood," said Sam, "but factory jobs are often highly technical and many youngsters lacked the necessary mathematical skills, because they hadn't been taught them at school. So to bring them up to speed one of our members is teaching them maths and trigonometry in his spare time. That's what the union is about, helping each other."

Said Mick: "Kevin has a fresh vision to succeed and, as a union, we will work with him. At times in the past, it has been hard to keep a demotivated workforce on board, but Sam and Andy, have done an excellent job and now we're seeing the positive results."



Left to right: John Watson, Sam Wragg, Kevin Parkin and Andy Tuohy

CHAMPIONS COME TO IRELAND

A NEW wave of disability champions is spreading across Ireland thanks to a Unite driven initiative.

Disability champions, union reps with a strong interest in disability issues, are instrumental in raising awareness of disability in the workplace. The project originally emerged from joint work between Unite's amicus section and TUC Education back in 2003.

Since then more than a 1,000 reps have become disability champions across the UK, and the initiative, which trains reps on disability issues, is now being rolled out across Ireland.

A training and awards ceremony held in Derry over the summer saw over 50 delegates come together to find out more about disability champions in the workplace.

Taryn Trainor, Unite's Ireland women's and equalities organiser, said: "I am delighted that 10 Unite members have completed the disability champions' training course. I hope that this will empower them to enlighten and help other members with disability issues within the workplace."

And Unite will remain instrumental to the roll out of the project. Bernie McRea, chair of Unite's disability committee in Ireland, explained how Unite lobbied the FAS (the Irish government's employment and training body) and secured funding for training courses on disability.

Said Bernie: "Cross-border funding enabled the appointment of a project officer, Jane Clare, to the Dublin office. Two five-day courses were held in Dublin and one in Belfast and 55 champions received training. Further training courses are planned as the FAS has agreed to continue the funding for another year."

Presenting certificates at the ceremony, ICTU assistant general secretary Peter Bunting, told delegates: "Disability Champions have a tough job to do, but the task they have chosen is as important as those who sought and fought to integrate all workplaces to all workers."

And now is the time to get involved. Why not join the roll out and help to make a real difference in your workplace?

So, if you are based in Ireland and interested in becoming a disability champion then contact Pauline Buchanan or Clare Moore at the Belfast ICTU office, or the ICTU's dedicated disability champions' officer, Jane Clare, at jane.clare@ictu.ie, or on +353 1-889 7777.



ICTU assistant general secretary Peter Bunting (left) presents Unite member Sam Foster with his disability champion certificate. Also pictured is Jane Claire, project officer for disability champions.

DELIVERING PAY PARITY



HDNL workers celebrate at a recent meeting in Birmingham

ALL'S FAIR AT THE HOME DELIVERY NETWORK THANKS TO UNITE

UNITE members at the Home Delivery Network (HDNL) have been celebrating an equal rights' windfall thanks to the union's actions.

Under a settlement agreed between the employer and Unite, members have received payouts ranging from £100 to £10,000 following a claim that workers doing the same job should be paid the same rate.

Some 240 members, managerial staff employed across the country, benefited after the company caved in to the pay parity claim and agreed to an out of court settlement last July.

Mel Palmer, lead official at HDNL, explained: "This all started about a year ago when we raised a test case over pay."

"HDNL was formed in 2005 following the merger of the Reality Group and Business Express (part of the Littlewoods group). The company

employs around 3,500 drivers operating out of some 52 depots, but Unite also represents managers.

"The 90 delivery team managers were doing the same job but were on different salaries.

"We knew we had to challenge this. That's why we took forward our case and fortunately with the strong backing of our members the company saw sense.

"The result saw all 90 managers on the same basic salary, with the deal backdated to the original merger date of May 2005. This also led to a job evaluation process and in July 2008 the base salary was again increased to £25,100. This job evaluation process resulted in salary increases for the 240 first line managers."

In total, the company has had to shell out about £200,000 to meet the claims.

Ian Callaghan from the Oldbury depot said: "The pay parity win has meant a

substantial amount of back pay for me and me family."

Union rep Carl Haughton agreed: "Unite has done the members proud by not giving in to HDNL in inequality of pay, and making sure that everyone is treated fairly."

And Unite is not stopping there.

Continued Mel: "The win has given a real boost to the union and we've contacted all people that have benefited and used that to build our membership further."

Standing outside Unite's Birmingham office, with many of the members that have benefited from the win, a smiling Mel concluded: "This major success shows the difference Unite makes in the workplace."

"Our recruitment campaign continues and our next aim is to make sure we have a rep at every service site, this is just the start of things to come."

UNITE TAKES PRIDE

RIGHT across Britain and Ireland, in fact throughout the whole world, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people get together at Pride festivals to celebrate equality and diversity and the contribution of the LGBT community.

Events across the UK and Ireland range from the giant London and Manchester events to smaller scale parades and parties in many major towns and cities.

Thousands of people took part in the day of celebrations at this year's Belfast gay pride festival.

Enjoying the day out at the Belfast Gay Pride Festival were (left to right) Geraldine Kelly (Ireland disability committee); Teresa Mackay (Unite's London/south east women's/equality officer); Betty Gallagher (chair of the T&G section LGBT equality campaign), Maggie Ryan (vice chair of T&G section national LGBT committee) and Irish regional secretary Jimmy Kelly with his wife Mary while Unite equalities officer for Ireland, Taryn Trainor, looked after the union's stall (inset).



BARGAINING FACTS@YOUR FINGERTIPS

Pay settlement analysis

JUST over two fifths of new deals are at 4.0 per cent or above for the three months to the end of September 2008 (Incomes Data Services).

The median pay settlement level for the whole economy for the three months to the end of

3.8%
Average pay deal

September 2008 has remained steady at 3.8 per cent.

- The median settlement for the manufacturing and production sector has risen to 4.2 per cent.
- The private services sector median has also risen this time, from 3.5 per cent to 3.7 per cent, with deals ranging as high as 5.5 per cent.
- A broad range of

the new settlements reflects the implementation of inflation-linked increases under long term deals, for example the deal for university staff increased pay by 5 per cent. This was the final stage of a five stage three year deal.

2.7%
Public sector average

LRD's latest pay deals

THE overall mid point for pay deals in the three months up to and including October 2008 is 3.8 per cent according to LRD. The

figure stands at 3.9 per cent in the manufacturing sector, 3.9 per cent in the private sector and 2.9 per cent in the public sector.

3.8% average LRD deal

Earnings & employment

Earnings

MANUFACTURING average earnings (excluding bonuses, not seasonally adjusted) rose 2.5 per cent in the year to September 2008.

Similar earnings rose by 3.6 per cent in the whole economy, by 3.6 per cent in the private sector and 3.9 per cent in the public sector.

Average earnings in services rose by 3.8 per cent, and earnings in private sector services rose by 3.8 per cent.

Manufacturing average earnings (including bonus, not seasonally adjusted) rose 2.9 per cent in the year to September 2008.

Similar earnings for the whole economy rose 3.3 per cent, private sector earnings rose 3.1 per cent, public sector earnings rose 3.9 per cent.

Average earnings rose 3.5 per cent in services and private sector services earnings rose 3.4 per cent.

£578.90
average weekly earnings (all workers)

Employment

There has been a fall in both the number of people in employment and the employment rate.

The number of unemployed people, the unemployment rate and the claimant count have all increased.

The number of inactive people of working age has increased but the inactivity rate is unchanged. The number of vacancies has fallen.

Growth in average earnings excluding bonuses is unchanged but earnings growth including bonuses has fallen.

The employment rate for people of working age was 74.4 per cent for the three months to September 2008, down 0.4 from the previous quarter and down 0.2 over the year.

The number of people in employment for the three months to September 2008 was 29.41 million, down 99,000 over the quarter but

up 134,000 over the year.

Although employment has fallen over the quarter, total hours worked increased by 0.9 million to reach 940.9 million. This reflects an increase in average hours worked per week.

The unemployment rate was 5.8 per cent for the three months to September 2008, up 0.4 over the previous quarter and up 0.5 over the year.

The number of unemployed people increased by 140,000 over the quarter and by 182,000 over the year, to reach 1.82 million.

The last time the number of unemployed people was higher was in the three months to December 1997 (when it was 1.87 million).

The claimant count was 980,900 in October 2008, up 36,500 over the previous month and up 154,800 over the year. The last time the claimant count was higher was in March 2001 (when it was 990,900).

£628.20
average weekly earnings (male)

£487.30
average weekly earnings (female)

National minimum wage

THE minimum wage applies to most adult workers working legally in the UK. The minimum wage is enforced by Revenue & Customs and more information on the minimum wage and

HMRC's role can be found on the HMRC website or via a telephone helpline (0845 6000 678 - available Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

You can call this number if you are not sure you are

getting the correct national minimum wage. Unite members concerned about their entitlement to the minimum wage should contact their regional office for advice in the first instance.

£5.73
for workers aged 22 and over

£4.77
for workers aged 18 to 21

£3.53
for workers under 18

Inflation/cost of living data

IN THE year to October 2008 the all items retail price index (RPI) rose by 4.2 per cent, down from 5.0 per cent in the year to September.

Over the same period, the all items RPI excluding mortgage interest payments index (RPIX) rose by 4.7 per cent, down from 5.5 per cent in September.

The prices of many essentials have been rising at a far higher rate than RPI inflation:

- Oil and other fuels up 26.7 per cent
- Fuel and light up 39.0 per cent
- Electricity up 35.0 per cent
- Gas up 51.9 per cent
- Water and other charges up 6.5 per cent
- Petrol/oil up 12.1 per cent
- Motoring expenditure up 6.8 per cent
- Maintenance of motor vehicles up 5.4 per cent
- Food prices are also rising rapidly with overall food inflation standing at 10.1 per cent.
- eggs up 17.1 per cent

- butter up 12.7 per cent
- milk up 11.3 per cent
- cheese up 14.5 per cent
- cereals up 15.8 per cent
- beef up 21.1 per cent
- lamb up 20.4 per cent
- potatoes up 22.7 per cent
- bread up 16.5 per cent
- poultry up 15.1 per cent
- lamb up 20.4 per cent
- pork up 23.0 per cent
- vegetables up 11.5 per cent

bacon up 11.1 per cent

fruit up 5.5 per cent

fish up 17.8 per cent

And if there's any money left, the cost of a foreign holiday has gone up by 6.7 per cent.

Unite is also monitoring any reference by employers to the new target measure the CPI rather than the RPI. Let Steve Martin in research know - email: steve.martin@unitethenion.com

For the complete breakdown of how prices have been rising go to the following link: www.statistics.gov.uk/pdffdir/cpi1108.pdf

FOOD UP
10.1%

MILK UP
11.3%

BREAD UP
16.5%

FRUIT UP
5.5%

GAS UP
51.9%

FUEL UP
39.0%

ELECTRICITY UP
35.0%

Annual change	RPI	RPIX	CPI	PPI
May 2007	4.3%	3.3%	2.5%	2.4%
Jun 2007	4.4%	3.3%	2.4%	2.5%
Jul 2007	3.8%	2.7%	1.9%	2.5%
Aug 2007	4.1%	2.7%	1.8%	2.4%
Sep 2007	3.9%	2.8%	1.8%	2.9%
Oct 2007	4.2%	3.1%	2.1%	4.0%
Nov 2007	4.3%	3.2%	2.1%	4.7%
Dec 2007	4.0%	3.1%	2.1%	5.0%
Jan 2008	4.1%	3.4%	2.2%	5.8%
Feb 2008	4.1%	3.7%	2.5%	6.0%
Mar 2008	3.8%	3.5%	2.5%	6.5%
Apr 2008	4.2%	4.0%	3.0%	7.6%
May 2008	4.3%	4.4%	3.3%	9.1%
Jun 2008	4.6%	4.8%	3.8%	9.8%
July 2008	5.0%	5.3%	4.4%	9.9%
Aug 2008	4.8%	5.2%	4.7%	9.0%
Sep 2008	5.0%	5.5%	5.2%	8.5%
Oct 2008	4.2%	4.7%	4.5%	6.8%

Notes: RPI=Retail prices index; RPIX=RPI excluding mortgage interest payments; CPI=consumer prices index; PPI=producer prices index

Best in practice deals

Babcock Marine Devonport

2,300 workers
5.3 per cent increase,
effective date 1st October

Details:
Second stage of a two stage 24 month agreement with an increase of 5.3 per cent on salaries (based on August 2008 RPI of 4.8 per cent + 0.5 per cent).

Furniture JIC

120,000 workers
5.59 per cent increase,

effective date 1st October

Details: Second stage of a two stage one year deal with a further increase of 1.57 per cent from 1st October 2008.

Morrison's

34,300 workers
5.32 per cent increase,
effective date 1st October

Details: Settlement date moved from August to October in 2008. The 2008 deal is a two stage 12 month agreement the first stage

due on 1st October 2008.

Securitas (CVIT)

2,000 workers
6.5 per cent increase,
effective date 1st October

Details: Third stage of a four stage 29 month agreement with a further increase of 2.25 per cent giving a new hourly rate of £9.70.

The final stage of the agreement due on the 1st April 2009 will increase the hourly rate by 3.0 per cent to £10.00.

Send details of best in class section deals - better pay, pensions, shorter working time etc via email to reporter@unitethenion.com

Meeting of minds with Morales



Derek Simpson and Evo Morales meet in Bolivia

Joint general secretary Derek Simpson was Bolivia bound earlier this year as a high profile delegation from the UK's biggest union cemented the close working relationship that has built up between Unite and the Bolivian government over the last two years.

Unite's delegation, which met president Evo Morales, himself a former union leader, was there to show solidarity for the president and the changes he has made since his landslide election victory in December 2005.

Since his election Morales has nationalised the country's large natural gas reserves and the telecommunications sector and redistributed government funds to the country's poor through ambitious social programmes, including a universal old-age pension and annual payments to young school children to encourage parents to keep them in school instead of working from an early age.

Unite's visit was timed to coincide with a national recall referendum held last August which put the mandates of the president, vice president and the country's regional governors to a public vote.

In a press conference following Unite's meeting with the president, Derek Simpson commented: "We are very interested in the developments that are taking place in Bolivia."

"We've come here to express our solidarity with president Morales. We believe that his programme of government is for the benefit of all of the people of Bolivia."

Morales was reconfirmed in the referendum with a resounding 67 per cent of the national vote and is emboldened in his plans for a new constitution, to be ratified in a national referendum.

The high margin of victory should encourage the government to press ahead with a referendum on the new constitution early next year, although Morales faces strong opposition in the eastern part of Bolivia by right-wingers that oppose his efforts to redistribute wealth to the poor.

Said Derek: "When looking to create a more equal society there will always be some people who are unhappy about losing the privileges they are used to."



ALL PICTURES BY HELEN MARGANIS

Olga (left) and Adriana at the vigil outside the US embassy

MIAMI 5: Visitation rights now!

WITH the tenth anniversary of their imprisonment marked by a series of high profile events, the Miami Five and their families still hope that justice will prevail in this highly political case.

Following two successful fringe meetings at the Labour and TUC conferences and a emotional candlelit vigil outside London's American embassy the campaign for visitation rights for the wives of the Miami Five and their eventual release is moving forward.

There are several reasons for hope. Firstly, the election of Barack Obama could lead to a change the way the US relates to Cuba.

Secondly, the 500,000-strong Cuban-American community in Florida is no longer wholly against Havana.

While many, particularly in the older generation of émigrés, still lobby the US government to take a hard line, there is an increasingly vocal number looking for a more pragmatic approach.

The decision by the US government to restrict the amount of money Cuban-Americans can send to their families and only allowing them to visit every three years backfired on the Bush administration. The policy is proving hugely

unpopular with many who maintain strong ties with their families living in Cuba.

And when hurricanes devastated much of Cuba recently there were calls from many sections of the Cuban community to lift the blockade for humanitarian reasons. This was seen as a step forward by supporters of the Miami Five.

Cuba Solidarity Campaign director, Rob Miller, said: "The way many Cuban-Americans reacted after the hurricanes was significant. Many were already unhappy with the tightening of the blockade that the Bush administration introduced earlier in the year, and there have been significant protests by the community demanding a temporary suspension of the blockade to allow Cuba to purchase much needed goods to alleviate the effects of the hurricanes."

What you can do...

The campaign has produced a short film telling the story of the Miami Five to show at branch meetings. For further campaign materials including a postcard to the US secretary of state, or to donate funds and get more involved then simply visit:

<http://www.cuba-solidarity.org.uk>

But possibly the most important reason for hope is that support for the Miami Five and their families is growing. America's labour movement has joined the call for justice.

The two largest US unions, the SEIU and the USW have both pledged support, and their relationship with Barack Obama could prove influential in persuading a new democratic administration to review its position.

Amnesty International has also recently announced that it will launch a world wide campaign among 2.2 million members for visiting rights for the wives describing their treatment as 'unnecessarily punitive and contrary to standards for humane treatment of prisoners and a states' obligations to protect family life.'

Unite has also raised the campaign and has worked effectively with the TUC and other major UK unions in highlighting the case. Tony Woodley, Unite joint general secretary said: "We will be pushing this case even further through our sister unions in Europe and around the world and will not rest until the US government respects family rights and allows Adriana and Olga to visit their husbands."



From top: The vigil starts outside the US embassy, Tony Woodley and Olga and Adriana, a demonstrator with a simple message, and the well attended vigil draws to a close

Listening to Unite members

POLITICS these days is a fast moving environment. Who would have thought a few months ago, for example, the banks would be nationalised? After Labour's by-election setbacks in Crewe and Glasgow and the party trailing in the polls over the summer, the party conference and dealing with the credit crunch was a good starting point for Labour to take the political fight for the future back to the Tories.

But whilst the headlines are all about the economy Unite members have also highlighted a range of issues in one of the biggest surveys ever done by a UK trade union. Over the summer we asked a

comprehensive set of questions of our members across some of the key parliamentary 'battleground' seats. Thousands of forms were returned by post and online and thousands of telephone calls were made.

The results showed a big majority saying they wanted to see the Labour government re-elected for an unprecedented fourth term. Members said many issues would affect their vote. Crime, the health service, work/life balance, housing, anti-social behaviour, job insecurity, pay, pensions, immigration and local transport all featured high up

the list of issues they felt were important to them, their families and local communities.

Unite members' views provide some comfort for the Labour government and stress the challenges of keeping a focus on 'bread and butter' issues. In the coming months we'll use the survey results to inform our political lobbying of ministers. But we'll also be following up with a series of local meetings with Labour MPs, MEPs and local candidates to make sure our members' messages are being heard in government and the Labour party.

All to play for - Unite survey shows members in marginal constituencies lean strongly to Labour



Key:
Outer ring - have voted Labour
Inner ring - want a fourth term for Labour
Inner ring - likely to vote Labour at next election

Get your voice heard

CALLS for a windfall tax on the oil and energy companies, made with passion and vigour at the Labour party conference by Tony Woodley, will now go into the Labour party policy making process. But what does that mean for Unite members who want to see action?

The reality means we need Unite members to make sure the issues don't go away. The price of oil may have fallen leading to lower petrol prices, but gas and electricity bills don't seem to have dropped. Those on pre-payment meters are still being penalised. Social tariffs, special rates for those in fuel poverty who face the choice of heat or eat, still don't go far enough.

The consensus amongst the 45 local Labour CLPs and the unions who put the issues to conference was the whole system needs an overhaul. This requires not just a long, hard look at policies but may require legislation.

Over the next year the Labour party's Prosperity and Work Policy Commission will study the issues and make recommendations. These will go to next year's conference. The Policy Commission draws on evidence presented by local Labour parties so Unite members need to make sure the issue is put on local meeting agendas. If your local branch isn't affiliated to your local Labour party, now is the time to address that. No place at a meeting means no say for our members locally on an issue which affects their daily lives.

Affiliating your branch and sending delegates to Labour party meetings means Unite has a direct say at the all-important grassroots level to make sure our members' voices are heard. You can also have a say in who the parliamentary candidates should be in your local area and influence the local campaigns the party runs.

It's about putting Unite views forward at all levels of the party. At the same time, because we expect our delegates to report back to their union branches, it is about holding the Labour party to account.

If you want to find out more about affiliating, please get in touch with the Unite Political Department: john.o'regan@uniteunion.com or andrew.dodgson2@uniteunion.com.

JUST THE JOB FOR JIM



Coventry councillor Jim O'Boyle (second from right) celebrating Coventry's contribution to the motor trade

FORMER Peugeot convenor Jim O'Boyle knows the ins and outs of local election campaigning. In 2007, after six attempts, he won the marginal seat of St. Michaels for Labour on Coventry city council through sheer hard work, motivating trade union colleagues to join in and putting a focus on the difference the Labour government has made.

"People forget with a Tory council that a lot of what is good happens locally because of the Labour government," he told the *Workplace Reporter*.

"In my ward it was the Tories who wanted to close the local library. We made that an election issue. Since I was elected we've won. Delivering for local people on local issues does work."

St. Michaels was a solid Labour ward in the early 1990s but a mix of local factors, not the least of which

were divisions in the Labour vote, saw the seat slip away to a breakaway left candidate. The make up of the ward, with around half the people moving on after a couple of years, a big student population, many unemployed and a significant number of ethnic minority communities, changed the situation.

"We tried negative messages but they weren't getting through," said Jim. "Working with trade union colleagues and Labour activists we knocked on the doors and kept talking up the way Labour in government was delivering for our area. We turned the ward round. Showing local people that the new school and SureStart in our area were because of Labour and nobody else really worked for us."

Getting trade union members involved was crucial to the campaign. Local people talking

positively about Labour to their own community and delivering on what they said was all important. But above all it was identifying Labour voters and keeping in touch with them that made the difference.

"Voter ID is absolutely vital and key to successful campaigning," said Jim. "Building a relationship with the people in the ward does pay dividends especially with the European elections and the general election coming up."

If you want to get involved in the 2009 elections, you'll be very welcome. The members' pages on Labour party website carry details of local activities at www.labour.org.uk or contact the Unite Political Department: andrew.dodgson2@uniteunion.com or chris.weldon@uniteunion.com

Increasing the union's influence

"UNIONS must hold the Labour party to account at a local level," Sheila Murphy, Labour party regional director, told Unite activists at a recent weekend school held in York.

"We want you to do that so you know the money you are spending from your political fund is being put to good use.

"You must make sure we are contacting voters locally, delivering leaflets and direct mails and promoting Labour and trade union messages."

The weekend event for key activists across Yorkshire & Humberside and the North East discussed the key political messages we need to put across to our members in the run up to the European and local elections next year.

The union's new DVD reminding us of the destructive 18 Tory years provided a motivating backdrop as we prepare for the key European elections next year and then the general election.

"With 250,000 members across our region alone, Unite can make the difference," Unite regional secretary Davey Hall told the meeting. "It's vital that we promote Labour which is the only party to deliver the union agenda and take on the Tories."

Three key conclusions came from the weekend which should be afforded a wider audience:

- A commitment to contacting our members in our branches and workplaces with positive messages of why it's important to vote Labour in the European and local elections next year to defend the union interests on key social legislation, to combat the BNP and to deliver for local people

- Organise joint meetings between Unite branches and workplaces with local Labour party branches and constituencies to promote postal voting amongst our members and to encourage them to join the Labour party to advance the Unite policy agenda

- Increase the number of Unite branches affiliating with delegates to Labour constituencies CLPs across the region

Why not show the video at your next branch meeting? The complete film has been uploaded on YouTube, for more details go:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MkSd7wNMsY8>

Europe counts



Derek Simpson (top right) addresses the meeting of Labour MEPs at Unite's new Brussels office (main picture)

UNITE joint general secretary Derek Simpson and chair of the Unite executive Tony Woodhouse led a delegation of Unite officials who met with Labour MEPs in Brussels in mid October.

In a lively meeting they discussed the forthcoming European elections as well as pressing issues for Unite members on employment rights, working time and temporary and agency workers as well as how best to

deal with the controversial European Court ruling which affects unions' ability to take collective action.

"Our MEPs have done a first rate job in Brussels and Strasbourg," said Derek Simpson. "We need to make sure we do all we can to get them re-elected and more besides. That way we can really get to grips with how to deal with the European Court ruling which has the potential to undermine our

raison d'être."

At the same time Unite's office in Brussels was formally opened by John Monks of the European Trade Union Confederation who spoke alongside Derek Simpson, Gary Titley, leader of the Labour Group of MEPs, and Tony Woodhouse.

"This excellent facility puts Unite at the heart of Europe which is where we need to be as well as the heart of Westminster," Derek Simpson

told a packed audience of guests from the European Parliament and the wider labour and trade union movement.

"We need our voice to be heard in these corridors of power, to speak up for the social agenda which has delivered so much for our members, and defend our people against attacks from the Tories who would seek to unravel much of what has been achieved."

Don't leave it all to the market

IMAGINE a Britain where no-one is entitled to paid holidays, part-time workers have no rights, agency workers have no protection and maternity rights depend on the generosity of your employer. No sane political party would campaign on such a platform. Or would they?

David Cameron has one European policy - withdrawal from the Social Chapter, which the incoming Labour government adopted in 1997. This gave workers new legal rights like four weeks paid holiday a year. By taking Britain out, Cameron would turn the clock back to the bad old days.

That's no accident. Despite the window dressing, the Tories are still fiercely anti-European. This stems from their obsession with an utterly free market, unfettered by the kind of social and environmental protection that is central to Europe's social market model.

This is the battleground for the European Elections next year.



Why the European elections matter

by Gary Titley MEP, Leader of the European Parliamentary Labour Party

And the dividing lines are clear. A fair and just society with Labour. Weaker social and environmental standards under the Tories.

Since the last Euros in 2004, a right-wing majority has dominated the European Parliament. That's why social policy has hardly figured. The conservative right has constantly frustrated our fight for

progressive policies, like opposing better health and safety laws and improved rights for women. Tory MEPs even voted against greater energy efficiency!

Despite this, we have enjoyed some successes. We have pushed through important social protection measures, placed the fight against fuel poverty centre-stage and helped to forge a new deal for agency workers. Above all, we have forced the European Commission to table proposals for a new social agenda.

The catch is turning these proposals into laws after the next European Elections. If the conservative right does well on June 4th, there's not a cat in hell's chance of anything meaningful reaching the statute book.

And just imagine the boost David Cameron would get here from a strong performance in the Euros. The Tories would use that as a springboard for the next general election. That's why we need to stop them in their tracks next June.

As well as the Tories and Lib Dems, we'll also be fighting the far-right BNP and under the proportional representation system for the Euros, every vote counts. The BNP only need about 8 per cent of the vote to win a seat. That would mean money, power and influence - and damage to Britain. If people don't vote in these elections, the BNP will win a seat. That is why trade unions need to come out fighting.

And there's another good reason too. Some recent European Court judgments have cast doubt over workers' rights. The new parliament will need to put that right, but without a strong Labour presence, it simply won't happen.

The European Elections will be a battle for the very future of Britain. In these difficult times, do we want a society based on fairness, where everyone has a chance to thrive? Or do we leave everything to the market and beggar our neighbours, both at home and abroad?

TIME TO TAX THE

Join the Unite campaign demanding a windfall tax on excess energy profits



Tony Woodley says now is the time to take on the energy fat cats

WHAT DO rising gas and electricity prices really mean?

"I now have to decide whether to heat our flat or put food on the table." says Annie, mother of one

"More money for us." says Mark Owen-Lloyd, executive for energy company E.ON

Two different voices, two different messages, Unite knows which side it is supporting.

It's time for a windfall tax

That's why Unite has launched a campaign calling for a windfall tax on energy companies making excess profits.

Unite says it is simply unacceptable that in the world's fourth richest economy, millions of households will be faced with an inhumane choice this winter: whether to heat or eat.

And this choice is being made in the face of a jump in energy company profits, up from £557 million in 2003 to more than £3 billion currently, a staggering increase of 538 per cent.

What's more, the same energy companies are set to reap another £11 billion over the next four years, a windfall profit resulting from the EU's emissions trading scheme.

Unite says it is time to act.

A modest tax on this windfall by the government could generate £3.8 billion, enough to give over six million of the poorest households an extra £250 towards their fuel bills this winter.

That is why Unite has drawn up a seven point plan to end fuel injustice [see box right].

Said joint general secretary Tony Woodley: "Greedy energy companies are putting the squeeze on ordinary

people with even energy bosses coming clean and admitting that rocketing customer prices mean massive profits for the companies. This abuse must end.

"Only a windfall tax can provide the urgent help necessary, that is money to help make ends meet. That money must come from those responsible for the criminal charges in the first place, the greedy energy giants."

The first step in the plan is to implement a five per cent tax on last year's oil company profits which would generate over £2.5 billion to hand back to people facing fuel poverty this winter.

The plan also calls for an end to the threat of more double-digit price jumps common in recent times. A system of rigorous price caps, similar to those in place to protect customers in other European countries, must be implemented.

Said Unite joint general secretary Derek Simpson: "Winter is approaching and in the coming months low paid families will be forced to switch their heating off because they won't be able to afford the bill.

"The heartless excuses from the energy companies for not fulfilling their social responsibilities have been swallowed hook, line and sinker by the government. It's time for action, the situation is dire."

Continuing the call for action, Tony Woodley said: "The greedy oil companies have made billions and in the next four years they will make an extra £15 billion from the British public. The government must intervene and intervene now. Our case for a windfall tax is compelling. It is morally right. So I say to the government, it's time to do the right thing and protect the most vulnerable in society."

And that is why Unite is taking this campaign right to the heart of government.

Get involved

Want to make a difference? Here's what you can do...

What will high fuel prices mean for your members this winter? If you or any of your members are worried about your electricity or gas bills, let Unite know by emailing us. Contact pauline.doyle@unitetheunion.com and help Unite win the case for a windfall tax this winter.

"I have left it as long as possible to turn on my central heating and know I will only be able to put it on for a couple of hours a day. It seems so unfair that all these companies are making so much profit and yet continue to make increases in fuel prices!" Sandra

"I think ministers have neglected us for far too long. They must show some backbone and stand up to the energy fatcats, we need that windfall tax this winter and a much better deal for the future." Lavinia

FUEL FAT CATS!

“ It is only right that the energy companies should give some of their astronomical profits back to the consumer. ”

Brenda

“ The profits of energy companies are obscene. ”

Steve



Unite's plan to end fuel injustice

- ❑ Implement a five per cent tax on oil company profits (2007) generating in excess of £2.5 billion
- ❑ Impose a 10 per cent windfall tax on energy profits derived from the European Union emissions trading scheme over the next four years netting a further £1.1 billion
- ❑ Set aside a proportion of this £3.6 billion to provide immediate financial assistance, with a minimum payout of £250 to each of the 5.7 million people facing fuel poverty this winter
- ❑ Discontinue winter fuel payments for those in the higher income tax bracket generating an extra £200 million for government to add to the fund for those facing fuel poverty
- ❑ Introduce a mechanism for the distribution of financial assistance. This could include a combination of the benefit and pension system or vouchers depending on individual circumstances. Those homes in need of assistance can be readily identified using existing government information
- ❑ Require all energy companies to offer social tariffs to their poorest and most vulnerable customers. These social tariffs should be at least the cheapest energy price that the supplier offers and should be available regardless of how the consumer pays for their bill. Minimum eligibility standards should be set to ensure equal access for all customers and provision should be expanded to include pensioners. Energy companies should not discriminate between prepayment and standard credit consumers
- ❑ Price cap powers to be taken by and used by government to stop spiralling prices in the future

Unite's seven point plan (above) and the advertisement which appeared in national newspapers (right)

ENERGY PRICES
Up 38%
(in 2008)

BRITISH GAS PROFITS
£640 million
(in 2007)

NPOWER PROFITS
£544 million
(in 2007)

E.ON PROFITS
€4.2 billion
(first 9 months 2007)

EXXON MOBIL PROFITS
\$40.6 billion
(in 2007)

WHAT WILL HIGH FUEL PRICES MEAN THIS WINTER?

"I have heard its doubtful whether its heat but that is your head on the table?"
Auntie, mother of one



CORPORATE GREED OR PEOPLE'S NEEDS: IT IS TIME FOR GOVERNMENT TO CHOOSE

Time to give back **£250** to every needy household this winter.

Time for a Windfall Tax and price cap on greedy energy companies.

Time to put social justice ahead of fuel giants who made 538% increase in profits in recent years.

We know that the Tories would never put people's needs before corporate greed. Their silence speaks volumes. A Labour Government should not have to be asked twice to do so.

News from the 2008 Trade Union Congress

UNITE AT THE H THE MOVEMENT

EVERY year trade unionists gather at the Trade Union Congress, the British union movement's policy making body.

And at this year's Brighton conference Unite, as Britain and Ireland's biggest union, was at the forefront of debate helping to shape the union movement's agenda and activities for the year ahead.

Conference kicked off against a backdrop of concern as the economic downturn gathered pace. Inflation and rising unemployment, combined with paltry pay rises and attacks on workers' rights saw a conference hall eager to debate the way forward for Britain's workers.

And there was a lot to discuss with over 20 Unite speakers taking part in the four day conference.

WINDFALL TAX

The economy loomed large. Joint general secretary **Tony Woodley** called for protection for ordinary working people: "Our people and country are being damaged by the economic crisis that has been caused by the super-rich and City speculators. There is no doubt that it is our duty to press for policies which protect the most vulnerable in our society. The government must intervene. There should be a windfall tax and we should legislate and regulate to cap price increases.

"If the markets still do not get the message this government should consider taking these absolutely essential public industries - water, gas and electricity - back into public ownership. If it is good enough for the banks, it is good enough for the utilities. This is not rhetoric of the past; it is fairness for the future."

Conference also debated employment rights. Joint general secretary **Derek Simpson** called for workers' rights to be brought into line with those in other European countries: "There is a deep concern that here we are, late in the third term of a Labour government, still beset by the laws that Thatcher introduced. We need to pressurise the government to undertake what they should have done some time ago, we need the right to be able to use our strength sensibly and properly when faced and confronted with an attack by employers."

And all workers should be protected. Said deputy general secretary **Jack Dromey**: "The government was wrong to drag its heels on equal treatment of agency workers and the directly employed but at last has moved, it was right to introduce the Gangmasters Licensing Authority to stamp out exploitation in agriculture and fisheries.

Now we look to the government to act to wage war on bad employers, sending an unmistakable message that there will be no hiding place for bad employers in the 21st century."

DON'T JEOPARDISE SAFETY

That also means no cut to regulations and workplace safety. **Graham Goddard**, deputy general secretary, said: "During the past year 228 people died in the workplace. The big issue is that 70 per cent of those deaths could have been prevented as they were down to management and director failure. It is a fundamental right that our members can go to work, come home in a safe and sound manner and not run the risk of having to face death in the workplace. Let's make sure that health and safety continues to be taken seriously."

And in the midst of an economic downturn the fight for equalities must remain on the agenda. Said **Hyacinth Palmer**: "Unemployment for black workers is nearly twice the level of white workers and black people receive less pay for the work they do. We must do more to challenge discrimination and fight inequality wherever we can."

Assistant general secretary **Diana Holland** warned of the threats of the Conservatives: "The last 10 years have seen advances on equality not matched since the 1970s and we must make sure that no one is fooled by the Conservatives dressing themselves up in the language of equality when they want to slash public spending, give billions to the rich, oppose flexible working, family leave, and even the right to a well-earned holiday."

And the union movement can act as the means to ensure workers' rights are protected, but how can unions deliver?

DELIVERING FOR MEMBERS

Organising is key. Said **Tony Woodley**: "During the past ten years, we have stopped the rot, we have stabilised trade union membership and we have begun to get a sense of confidence back into our workplaces, a sense that unions are on their way back and are starting to win again for working people. However, it is not enough just to stabilise decline. We need to grow."

And unions need to be seen as a force for change. In an impassioned speech on the Miami 5, assistant general secretary **Len McCluskey**, called for trade unionists to get involved: "Thanks to our contacts with US unions we have managed to get the Miami 5 on the agenda in the US but we need to ensure our Labour government puts pressure on the US to stop this persecution and to



Unite delegates in the congress hall (above) listen to speakers (right)

see justice is done. We want you to get involved, donate money from your branches to the Cuba solidarity Campaign, write to the Miami 5 themselves and let this congress' voice be heard."

And the international fight goes on, not just for the Miami 5, but also in Europe. Praising many of the benefits from Europe, **Derek Simpson** warned about recent judgments by the European Court of Justice: "These pose the biggest

challenge to the trade union movement in a century, far worse than Thatcher's laws, striking at the very heart of collective bargaining, damaging unions' abilities to fight for improvements in working conditions and making it not only preferable to employers but legally protected to introduce cheap labour into any sphere, any sector and any corner of the economy."

And it is the collective power of unions that can change this.

EART OF

T



▲ Derek Simpson



▲ Tony Woodley



▲ Graham Goddard



▲ Jack Dromey



▲ Hyacinth Palmer



▲ Len McCluskey



▲ Diana Holland

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Concluding with a call to arms Derek said: "We have to work to get our government to make clear it is not prepared to accept these ECJ cases to worsen employment law in the UK. We must work with MPs and MEPs to reverse the ECJ cases and work with our members to join the fight."

As congress closed for another year Unite remained at the heart of Britain's union movement driving forward the progressive

agenda and supporting workers in the world of work. The key message for delegates returning to the workplace - get involved and get active.

Other speakers included: Tony Burke; Tamsin Piper, Lorene Fabian, Marjory Broughton, Monica Taylor, Sharon Hutchinson, Niki Constantinou, Dave Lovelidge, Bob Fromant, Tim Davidson, Pat Stuart and Yvonne Swingler (see Unite website for full details).

Labour party conference

GORDON, "THROW OFF THE SHACKLES - PUT PEOPLE'S NEED ABOVE CORPORATE GREED"

Andrew Dodgshon reports on a rousing Labour party conference for Unite

SEEMINGLY seething revolts on the backbenches, rampant rises in fuel and food prices, lack of credit crunching the economy and persistent poll leads for the Tories all conspired to make this year's Labour party conference in Manchester a test for Gordon Brown, the government and the party. So how did it go for Unite?

In pre-conference statements both Tony Woodley and Derek Simpson put the focus on policy direction and addressing people's needs. "Throw off the shackles of new Labour and reveal the real Labour," said Derek. "Gordon, put people's need above corporate greed," urged Tony Woodley as he called for a windfall tax on the greedy oil and energy companies who have raked in the profits and hiked up prices. For Unite the leadership question was not one of personality but policy.

Unite was the pre-eminent union at conference. We led the charge on tackling the massive inequality caused by rising fuel and energy prices. We demanded action to protect our finance workers jobs as it was becoming clear the government was set for a radical, publicly financed solution. We raged against the opt-out on the Working Time Directive which hadn't been discussed in the policy forum process but had crept into the policy papers like an uninvited house guest.

Fairness for the new present and future Britain was Gordon Brown's theme. It went down well in the conference hall. His barbed "no time for a novice" attacks on David Cameron and, it was suggested, putative Labour leadership candidates were lapped up by a media keen to play up divisions and real political battles.

But fairness for the future needed to be put in the context of sorting out current unfairness as hundreds of Unite members in local government took to the streets demanding an end to pay cuts for public sector workers. "Our members are angry that central government wants poorly paid public sector workers to carry the can for inflation," Derek Simpson told the enthusiastic

crowd gathered just outside the conference centre. "Low paid workers are hit especially hard by spiralling fuel and food costs," said Tony Woodley warming to the theme, "this pay deal (of just 2.45 per cent) will push them onto the breadline and force many into debt."

It was a powerful, confidence buoying message as the union led the debates on the windfall tax (we want one and conference delegates agreed) and ending the long hours' culture (we want the opt-out ended and conference delegates backed us). Unite also called for decisive action on the recent European Court of Justice ruling which will give employers a "license for social dumping" and prevent unions from taking action against the erosion of UK workers' pay and conditions in the context of globalisation.

On the fringes too Unite spoke up for our members. Packed meetings called for action to win a fourth term for Labour recognising the Tories now pose a potent threat. Unite speakers addressed a whole host of issues including housing, the health service, exploitation in the workplace and the international agenda was to the fore as well. The wives of the Miami 5 came to Manchester at our invitation to make their case to the UK Labour government for justice so they could at least see their husbands currently locked up by the American government for attempting to protect their Cuban homeland from terrorist attacks.

Success for Unite? Conference backed our calls for a windfall tax which would pay £250 to each of the millions of families in fuel poverty. Delegates backed our calls for safeguarding finance sector workers' jobs, for protecting trade union rights and extending employment rights, ending the working hours' opt-out and working for a voice for trade unions in Bolivia. Yes, success. But only the first throw of the dice as Labour and the union fight back against the Tories.

"In the USA, Barack Obama has ignited the hopes and dreams of working Americans," said Derek Simpson. "If Gordon takes a radical line and shows he is on the side of hard-working families, he will fire the starting gun for a fourth Labour term." After Manchester it is very much "on your marks"...

RAISING A GLASS TO FUNDRAISING

THIS summer Unite members once again braved sun, rain and portaloos to raise funds for the cause. They did this by working at major music festivals, pouring pints for thirsty punters in one of the Workers Beer Company's many onsite bars.

The Workers Beer Company was set up in the mid 1980s by members of Battersea and Wandsworth Trades Union Council. Over the years it has helped unions and other organisations raise thousands of pounds.

Eamon Pryle, chair of Battersea and Wandsworth Trades Union Council, said: "We established server groups to encourage trade union branches, campaigning organisations and community groups to provide people to staff the bars. In return they gain money for their own activities. We've found it an ideal way to involve young people, galvanise groups into action, and ultimately raise funds."

Steve Atwill, Unite organiser for the South of England graphical section, has organised members into server teams for over eight

years. "Working with the Workers Beer Company has been really positive, both in terms of raising funds, but also in by helping members bond outside of the workplace."

"The group has raised money for the Cuba Solidarity Campaign, the Tolpuddle Development Fund, Levellers Day and a youth football league in Weymouth. I reckon we must have raised about £16,000 from serving at bars at just three events a year; Glastonbury, Reading and Tolpuddle."

"Over this period we must have had 30-40 union members involved in pouring pints. I always try to ensure that new servers work with experienced people and everyone seems to enjoy the work, most coming back for more the following year."

Gavin Day, who has organised a Unite team in West London for four years, said: "The great thing about working with the Workers Beer Company is that it doesn't feel like work a lot of the time. There's good time off, so you get to see a lot of the festival and it's a very sustainable way of earning money for your branch."

Volunteer servers work six hour

shifts, earning £6.50/hr for their group. Included are food, drink and secure camping, but also benefits beyond festival entry and raising money, as Steve explained: "It's a great way for union members to meet like minded people, they gain a sense of contributing to the wider movement beyond the workplace. It's a good way to network and find out what other branches, unions and organisations are up to."

Steve said that the work has provided him with some great memories, even some of the hardest times have been inspiring: "A personal high point for me was the great Glastonbury flood of two years ago. Despite the weather we were able to pull together, keep the beer flowing and festival goers happy, against all the odds."

"I'd really recommend it to any branches who feel they have a group of reliable members, and would like to raise money for either their branch or campaigns they support."

To find out about the Workers Beer Company contact the office on 020 7720 0140



PETER ARCELL

RETIRED MEMBERS ASSOCIATION PRIZE DRAW: 2008 WINNERS LIST

Top prize winners

Prize	Winner/ticket no.
1st Prize £1,000	Ian Durie, Dundee 134173
2nd Prize £500	Mrs K Barratt, Basildon 185033
3rd Prize £250	Dave Silsbury, Wiltshire 098282

10 Prizes of £50 10 Prizes of £25

J Pettet, Basildon 185066	N Alderson, Oxford 173023
W Ensall, Birmingham 034149	Mrs B Hagar, Oxford 192752
J Banger, Oxford 187233	Savita, Hounslow 140228
C Eatwell, Caerphilly, South Wales 082124	D De Lacy, 024770
T&G branch 5/606 023670	T&G Derby branch 172655
Lana Rees, Caerphilly, South Wales 195730	J Durrant, Okehampton 143946
C Rogers 102697	Robert Ellen, London 103588
A Gilraine, Thornaby 117646	A Taylor, branch 8/9/653 160252
Oxford RMA 192972	A McGoekin 170323
Brian Young, Bridlington 179347	T&G Ayr DC 196598

POPULAR ON THE GROUND



Members from building supplies firm Marshalls kept up the fight at the company's open day earlier this year. Convenor Chris Haigh was joined by colleague Dougie (pictured) as they raised awareness of the work of the union and also had a bit of fun with a raffle and more at the union's stall. Said Chris: "We were very popular on the day, it's important we attend events like this, it shows we are fighting the good fight."

So don't forget to take advantage of open days, Unite holds a wide range of supporting materials that you can use to help publicise the union including posters, guides and more. Contact your regional office for details.

SUPPORTING YOUTH IN THE CITY

BRINGING the message to the masses has been one of Unite's key aims, and that was exactly what happened early last month when Unite sponsored Manchester's 'In the City' music festival.

Unite member and organiser of the event, Mark Murray, said: "It's fantastic news that Unite has agreed to sponsor this event in Manchester. The festival is aimed at uniting young people from all over the UK in the hope of catching a glimpse of the next big thing, but also allows us to promote Unite and the importance of unions across the north west."

Local, national and international unsigned bands and artists were joined at the Unite event by legendary Mancunian figures including Peter Hook - ex of New Order, Kavana, the 1997 winner of Smash Hits' best male artist award, as well as soul diva Rowetta of Happy Mondays and X Factor fame. Across the city other bands playing

included The Fratellis, Edwyn Collins and Romeo from The Magic Numbers.

But it's not just about the music.

Welcoming the initiative north west regional secretary, Kevin Coyne, said: "This is a great opportunity for Unite to raise its profile among young people and to recruit new members. Over the three nights Unite representatives spoke directly to young people about trade unions and protecting their rights at work."

"Young people are the most vulnerable people at work, often victims of age discrimination, and not in a union. We want to help young people understand the role of the trade union as many young workers have little knowledge of what a union is or how it's relevant to them. Recruiting young members and getting them involved in the union is the best way of getting their voices heard."



Kavana takes to the stage at Manchester's In the City festival (above) and Unite member and event organiser Mark Murray (right)



FORD BRIDGEND BRANCH BRINGS CHARITIES CHEER



PETER KNOWLES PHOTOGRAPHY

Gareth Jones (back row third left) with the Ford works committee including convener Steve Rees (front row left) and plant manager Graham Edwards (front right)

THE 1,800 members of Unite's branch 4/6 did their bit for local charities in mid September when they made three donations of £2,000 each to local charities picked by the mayors of Swansea, Neath and Port Talbot, and the branch's own Bridgend.

Unite senior regional industrial organiser Gareth

Jones, who was at the presentation, said: "I was delighted that the three chosen charities all acknowledged that the money donated was from Unite members."

"It was heartening to hear local dignitaries praising the generosity of ordinary working men and women."

WHAT WILL YOU BE DOING IN 2009?

WHATEVER it is, you will need a Unite 2009 diary in your pocket.

The 2009 members' diary can now be ordered and comes packed with pages of essential union information, contact details for all the Unite regional offices, a colour map section and more.

The 2009 members' diary is superb value at just £1.65 per copy and discounts are available for quantities.

The new Unite diary for 2009 is now available to order from Charles Letts (order form enclosed with this issue).

Please note that the new 2009 diary begins on Monday and not Sunday.

This is a new design to reflect the new union and we would appreciate feedback so simply email us at the usual address below.

Organise
the future

Get yourself a

Unite
2009
diary
available now

Order from your
BRANCH SECRETARY



Together
Stronger

ONLY
£1.65



HELP IS AT HAND

Check out Unite's membership services

Although the two Unite sections, Amicus and T&G, have not fully integrated the more personal membership benefits, they are very close to doing so. In the meantime both sections offer an excellent range of services.

Amicus

The Amicus section has organised a range of benefits, of which extensive details can be found on www.unitewithus.org or through the Amicus web site see: www.amicustheunion.org

Car Insurance: LV= Frizzell 0800 748 748

Home Insurance: UIA 0800 345 7799

Personal Accident

Plan: AIG 020 8662 8100

Travel Insurance: AIG 0800 072 6400.

WellWoman

Insurance: AIG 0208 662 8102

Income Protection

Insurance: UIB 0800 072 4990

Life Insurance: LV= Frizzell 0800 587 3057

Airport Parking/Airport

Hotel: Essential Travel 0870 343 0319

Wine Service: Intervino 01472 220006

Fair Trade Jewellery:

Argentum 0845 4747 925

The Lottery: online

Members' Weekend

Break: Quorn Grange 01509 412167

Gardening Service:

Jersey Plants 01534 871 113

Eyecare: Vision Express 0800 73 80 90

Cancer Support:

Macmillan 0808 808 2020

Personal Accident

Plan: AIG 0208 662 8119

Union Energy: 0800 027 9000

Free Debt Advice: PayPlan 0800 3893302

Credit Card: HBOS 0800 032 2036.

Personal Taxation

Services: PTS 0845 058 2288

'Do-it-Yourself' Financial

Check Up: LV= Frizzell – online

Car Purchase:

Corporate Partners 0845 249 1622

Emergency Service:

08000 HelpMe 0845 257 2273

Lifelong Learning: Tom Beattie

Equality: Siobhan Endean

Education: Tom Beattie

T&G

For more details on the full range of excellent T&G members' services see www.tgwu.org.uk

T&G Care

T&G Care is a comprehensive package of benefits and services available, with support at work as well as special deals to let members make the most of their income. The union also offers a unique support service to professional drivers in its DriverCare scheme.

T&G CareXpress

For other difficulties members might face including minor injuries and coping after deaths in the family, help is at hand. T&G CareXpress is a confidential freephone helpline, for members to get answers to their questions.

Call 0800 709 007 anytime.

FamilyCare services include

- **Financial Advice** - see website
- **Motor Insurance** - see website
- **Home and Contents Insurance** - see website
- **Term Life Assurance** - see website
- **Personal Accident Insurance** - Call 020 8862 8102
- **Writing a Will** - Please contact your regional office
- **Mortgages** - Call 08708 352 255
- **Pet Plan** - Call 0800 783 9659
- **RAC motoring services** - Call 0800 197 7822
- **Travel Insurance** - see website

Unless specified, all details can be found at www.tgwu.org.uk

