



AMICUS GRAPHICAL, PAPER & MEDIA SECTOR

E-BULLETIN NO. 12

Amicus at UNI Graphical Conference

Amicus delegates played a major role at the recent Uni Graphical conferences held in Brighton between November 19th – 24th. The conferences consisted of a Global conference - with delegates from Europe, Africa, South East Asia, India, Latin America, USA and Canada; a Central and Eastern Europe Conference including the new emerging CEE countries; a Collective Bargaining Conference and a Uni Europa Graphical conference.

At the Uni World Graphical Conference Amicus Assistant General Secretary Tony Burke pressed for deepening contacts with Chinese graphical workers and their unions in an action plan for the next four years. UNI Graphical will now map developments in the graphical sector in China, expand contacts with unions and the official umbrella organisation the All China Federation of Trade Unions and ensure that global agreements with multinationals active in China bring labour rights to Chinese graphical workers.

Tony told the conference: *"We need to put pressure on the international institutions to pressure China to abide by the International Labour Organisation's fundamental labour rights. It's not acceptable that China can join the WTO and receive huge foreign investments and deprive Chinese workers of their rights. Chinese workers deserve core labour rights just like other workers in Asia and elsewhere to avoid a race to the bottom."*




Tony also backed call from the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union for protests against the attack on trade union and labour protection laws by the Australian government. Steve Walsh of the AMWU graphical section told the conference: *"The Australian government is imposing individual contracts to undermine collective bargaining and is taking away protection against unfair dismissal for workers employed in companies employing less than 100 workers. The legislation which came into effect in March this year is the culmination of the worst excesses of Thatcher and Reagan. It is clearly ideologically driven by Prime Minister John Howard's hatred of trade unions and collective action."*

Moving support for the socialist Venezuelan Government Matt Smith, FOC at London newspaper printers West Ferry said: *"There has been a new political momentum that has recently swept across much of Latin America, which has seen a resurgence of progressive left politics determining the current and future politics of the region. We should congratulate Venezuela and the Chavez government on their innovative and far reaching oil and social policies that has seen the redistribution of power and wealth towards the working people and the poor, a true act of socialism which should be an example to us all."*

Glen Jackson, FOC at Nampack in Leeds speaking on a motion on developing International Framework Agreements reported on the new global agreement with his employers, South African packaging company Nampack: *"A fundamental principle to us is that of solidarity between workers. Traditionally that solidarity has manifested itself within the workplace, a single company or within national boundaries. However, the world is rapidly changing and to effectively represent the interests of workers in a globalised economy we must develop solidarity between workers across international borders and around the world."*

Terri Miller from security printers Da La Rue in Dunstable spoke in the debate on the recent Buenos Aires Declaration encouraging trade unions and employers will work to establish conditions that are favourable to sustainable economic growth based on social justice in the South America as well as for improving standards in the graphical industry. *"The principle of dialogue between trade unions and employers groups as set out in this declaration should be something that happens in every region of the world. But it doesn't. And frankly that should be an embarrassment to the employers who still resist such initiatives."* he said.



Following a presentation by Professor John Gennard of Strathclyde University on the future of the packaging industry Amicus National Officer Peter Ellis explained the problems faced in the UK packaging industry and the move by some companies to central and Eastern Europe. National Officer Steve Sibbald also described the changes to the UK newspaper industry during a lengthy debate of the future of newspapers, highlighting the development across Europe of free daily "Metro" style newspapers.

At the Europa Graphical Conference, National Officer Vernon Robson pressed for greater solidarity between European unions where workers are under attack citing the work being undertaken by the Uni Gravure Network. This had to be extended said Vernon: *"It is our view that the reinforcing and strengthening of these sectoral networks must go beyond the immediate UNI-Europa Graphical family. The needs of our members in this rapidly changing industry do not stop at the limits of local, national or international trade union structures. In particular there are many areas where the interests of UNI-Europa and its affiliates overlap with those of EMCEF and its affiliates, particularly in the paper and packaging sector. Indeed many of us here are affiliates of both organisations precisely for this reason."*

Raffiq Moosa, FOC at packaging giant Chesapeake in Leicester also urged greater and quicker co-operation by unions across multi-national companies. He told the conference: *"The ability for unions affected by a major restructuring to come together quickly and determine a common response, can be crucial in stopping multinational companies attempting to pit worker against worker."*

Bernie Rutter Head of Organising, Learning & Skills in the Amicus GPM sector moving a policy motion on Lifelong Learning and Social Dialogue across Europe with employers told delegates: *"Regardless of their job, workers need support to learn new skills, they need guidance, and they need the very best information so that they, not their employer, can determine their own future. And trade union involvement in vocational training is also essential if we are to ensure everyone gets the access they need in order to improve their skills at work – for now and for their future. But at the European level there is far too little social dialogue, particularly within the printing industry. Without effective discussions at EU level we are unable to ensure that all employers within the industry, across all countries in Europe, support the training and development of their workforces."*

Amicus DGS Tony Dubbins, President of Uni Europa Graphical attended his last Uni conferences. It was an emotional time for "Dubbo" - with delegates giving him a standing ovation. Saying farewell to an organisation he has influenced and helped shape he reviewed the work of Uni Graphical over recent times citing in particular the work done in helping unions in Central and Eastern Europe develop and South Africa and ensuring that collective bargaining is now co-ordinated across the EU by Uni.



Incoming President of Uni Europa Graphical Simon Dubbins, Amicus International Department Director looked forward to the work programme for the coming year. This will include strengthening European Works Council's in the graphical sector, continuing the work in Central and Eastern Europe, securing more International Framework Agreements with multi-nationals as well developing closer links with graphical unions across Europe and the world.

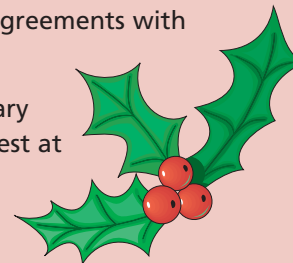
For more detailed reports from Uni Graphical please click [here](#).

Alternatively visit: <http://www.union-network.org/unigraphical.nsf/Meetings?OpenPage&Start=1&Count=30&Expand=2>

Australian workers solidarity demo

Incoming President of Uni Europa Graphical Simon Dubbins, Amicus International Department Director looked forward to the work programme for the coming year. This will include strengthening European Works Council's in the graphical sector, continuing the work in Central and Eastern Europe, securing more International Framework Agreements with multi-nationals as well developing closer links with graphical unions across Europe and the world.

After promising support at the Uni Conference in Brighton, Amicus activists including General Secretary Derek Simpson (centre) held a demonstration outside the Australian Embassy 30th November to protest at anti-worker and anti-trade union labour laws introduced by the Australian government.



Derek has also written to Australian Prime Minister, John Howard opposing the laws and Amicus' activists will be writing to their Australian counterparts to pledge their solidarity and support. Derek told protesters: *"The extraordinary attack that the Australian government has made on workers has had a devastating impact on peoples pay, working conditions, their job security and their family life.*

"We're protesting to demonstrate our solidarity with Australian workers and trade unions but also to say that anyone in the UK that is under the illusion that a Tory government would not do the same here, need to think again."



Mike is Labour Chairman

Congratulations to Amicus National Officer Mike Griffiths! At the recent Labour Party Conference Mike was elected by the Labour Party NEC as the Chairman of the Labour Party. Mike who is Amicus' National Political Officer had previously worked as a GPMU officer predominantly in the packaging industry. Alongside his heavy political brief Mike undertakes industrial work on the main Amicus/BPIF National Agreement and as one of our reps on the main board of Vision in Print.

Papermaking News - New national agreement in papermaking on the way

Amicus, the TGWU and GMB along with the Confederation of Paper Industries have reached a new national agreement for the paper-making industry.

Employers and national officials from the unions under the independent chairmanship of Professor Frank Burchill worked out a new Partnership Agreement to 'work together, grow together, and stay together' setting out modern approaches to aspects such as work-life

balance, dignity at work, learning and skills, flexibility and productivity.

Amicus is busy meeting FoC's and Shop Stewards across the industry and the Agreement is to go to ballot vote of members in the Spring of 2007.

Amicus National Officers, Peter Ellis and Alan Harvey, who worked alongside other full time union officers and lay reps will be strongly recommending the Agreement to workers in the industry.

Amicus AGS, Tony Burke, said: *"The new agreement is an important step in securing modern working terms across the industry, such as work-life balance, actively promotes learning and skills, provides a safer workplace, promotes dignity at work and gives employees an opportunity to be informed and consulted and actively involved in improving the performance of their workplace."*

The papermaking industry employs over 10,000 people at over 60 locations in the UK but has struggled to remain competitive in the face of strong international competition and soaring energy prices. Papermaking along with printing is one of the few industries in the UK to have industry-wide bargaining arrangements and a national dispute over pay in 2004 prompted employers and trades unions to consider better ways to work together, and the DTI gave support to the project that included assistance from ACAS to consult managers and trade union representatives on the way forward.

Amicus members win 3.5% increase at Impress, Norwich

Amicus members working at metal packaging company Impress in Norwich have won a "no strings" 3.5% pay deal after warning the company they would ballot for Industrial Action.

The deal covers all Amicus members on can manufacturing lines, maintenance and graphical staff. Pete Willard, Amicus Officer who lead the negotiations, said: *"Our members at Impress rejected an offer of 3.3%. The company were not prepared to go higher during the meetings which lead to a ballot. Further negotiations lead to an overall package worth 3.5% over the year. The offer was without any 'strings' and also applied to all pay and is back dated to July. The deal shows what can be achieved by all of Amicus members working as one."*

Publishing News

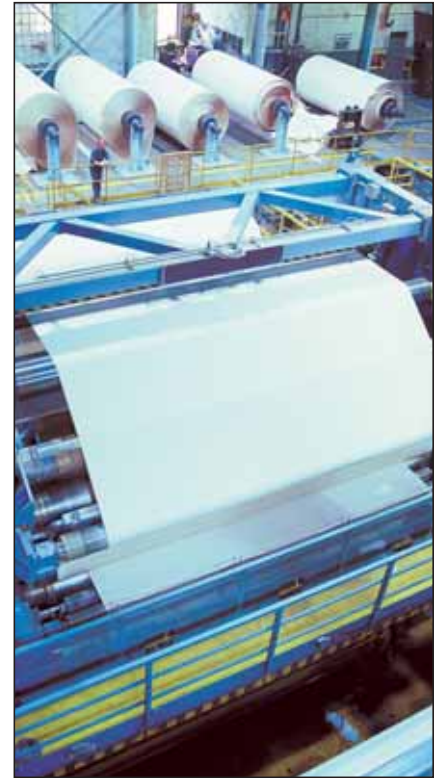
Amicus signs deal at publishing giant Macmillan

Amicus has signed a union recognition agreement with publishing giant Macmillan for their Swansea-based warehouse where 140 people will benefit from this deal which has come about after an Amicus campaign which lasted 18 months.

Bernard Rutter, Head of Organising within Amicus Graphical, Paper & Media Sector led the talks with the company. He said: *"Amicus was approached last year by employees at the Swansea site who wanted the same rights to negotiate terms and conditions as employees at other Macmillan sites. This campaign was not an easy one for our members as Macmillan's management had initially refused meetings to discuss the wishes of our members working at the site."*

Amicus secured the deal when the union was granted legal recognition by the Central Arbitration Council (CAC) which handles claims for statutory trade union recognition. Union recognition is a legal right if supported by the majority of the workforce.

Amicus has been organising staff within Macmillan during the past year and has been campaigning for proper Information & Consultation rights under the new Information & Consultation Directive.



Equalities - Amicus calls for a new single Equality Act

Amicus has launched a negotiators guide on equality for their workplace reps at the annual Equalities Conferences in Blackpool. Union reps discussed how to achieve equality at work for Black and minority ethnic, disabled, LGBT and young members. Amicus representatives have been working to negotiate equality in the workplace.

Amicus Head of Equalities, Siobhan Edean, said: *"Amicus demands that the Government takes action to reduce the 50% unemployment rate for disabled people. Our Amicus Disability Champions are working hard to reform the workplace and negotiating disabled access, but could do so much more if equality representatives had statutory rights."*

The Government has implemented a whole new agenda in the field of equality since coming to power in 1997, but there is still a long way to go and much more to be done to make equality a reality for working people in the UK. Amicus has also got a strong campaign to tackle homophobia in the workplace and our negotiators' guidelines in this area emphasises the importance of employers developing policies in this area and ensuring that they are implementing them in practice.

Health & Safety -

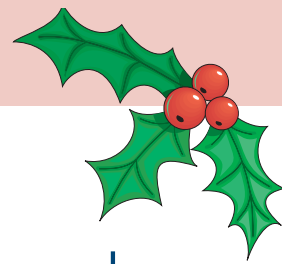
Amicus hits out at HSE reductions in health and safety enforcement and prosecutions

The latest statistics from the Health and Safety Executive show that enforcement notices and prosecutions have now fallen for the last three years. Workplace safety inspections in the UK have plummeted to a new low, increasing the chances of workers being killed, made ill or injured by their jobs. While the overall number of injuries and ill health cases at work continue to decline, the enforcement figures suggest this fall could have been much greater if HSE was more effective.

HSE enforcement notices fell from 11,335 in 2003/4, to 8,471 in 2004/5, and now to only 6,383 in 2005/6. Prosecutions have shown a similar decline. These figures confirm that UK employers are now less likely to be inspected, less likely to be prosecuted, less likely to be convicted of safety crimes, and less likely to receive a notice from an HSE inspector demanding safety improvements.

Amicus DGS, Tony Dubbins, said: *"Amicus wants a strong HSE and strong Local Authority Inspectors. We want more inspections and more enforcement. All the evidence shows us that it is the most effective way to stop employers breaking the law."*

"We want an effective Corporate Manslaughter Act, and specific health and safety duties on Directors. Unless business leaders feel the heat of the law they will not change their behaviour on health and safety."



IRELAND

Ditch redundancy terms say Dublin print workers

Amicus print sector members in Dublin have unanimously thrown out restructuring plans by Lithographic Web Press which would give some staff little more than the statutory minimum redundancy pay and require others to work nights and weekends for no extra pay. The move follows an announcement by the company that its sale of print and finishing equipment would result in the loss of 40 jobs.

Brendan Byrne, Amicus Officer, said: *"We believe the company must increase its redundancy offer considerably and needs to look again at its shift pattern."* The case has been referred to the Labour Court.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Union Worldwide Organise

Delegates from trade unions worldwide have launched a new global trade union federation aimed at ensuring workers' rights are not forgotten by economic globalisation. The International Trade Union Confederation - formerly known as the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions - is to modernise itself to better tackle fresh challenges to the rights of workers and to strengthen its efforts to stamp out forced and child labour.

Guy Ryder, recently appointed to head the ITUC after the old union and the World Confederation of Labour were formally dissolved, said: *"The strong tradition of solidarity will continue. Trade union unity at the international level is now essential to ensuring more effective representation of the rights and interests of workers in the global economy."*

Officials said the new umbrella group, touted as the worlds largest dedicated to workers' rights, would represent more than 150 million members from 241 affiliated organisations in 156 countries. It replaces the Brussels, Belgium-based ICTFU, which was founded in 1949 to work on the enforcement of international labour standards. The new confederation brings together a wide and diverse range of major unions, including the UK's Trades Union Congress, the United States' AFL-CIO, France's CGT union, Germany's DGB trade union federation and dozens of other union groups from five continents. It staked out a tough position against globalisation in its charter, which decried violations of what members insist is a universal right to strike for better pay and working conditions and engage in collective bargaining.

Season's Greetings

The National Officers and Staff in the Amicus GPM Sector in King Street and Moreland Street send season's greetings to all officers, staff, union reps and activists and wish you all a Happy and Prosperous 2007

