

# Amicus Women



IN PRINT, PAPER, PUBLISHING AND THE MEDIA



**2007**  
**International Women's Day**  
**Thursday, 8th March 2007**  
[www.internationalwomensday.com](http://www.internationalwomensday.com)



As part of our activities to celebrate International Women's Day 2007 we are trying to ensure all our women members working in printing, paper, publishing and the media are aware of the opportunities within Amicus to participate and be involved in the wider union and its democracy.

International Women's Day is the universal day that connects all women around the world and inspires them to achieve their full potential. International Women's Day 2007 will again ensure the launch of another year of Amicus working progressively for women's equality worldwide.

## Women around the World

Colombia is the most dangerous place in the world to be a woman trade unionist. In the past year it has become even more so, with a dramatic increase in the number of abuses committed against women. Those responsible for the vast majority of the attacks are paramilitary death squads that work with the Colombian Army. Amicus sent a delegation to Colombia to meet women living in prison; their crime – they were guilty of being members of a union.

In Zimbabwe Amicus has also launched a campaign to raise money through its membership for sanitary products after inviting Thabitha Khumalo, Zimbabwean trade unionist and Secretary of the Women's Committee, to Amicus' conference where she spoke movingly of the daily struggle that ordinary Zimbabweans are facing. Thabitha has also toured Amicus regions and workplaces to speak to members in a number of industrial sectors.

In the United Kingdom Amicus is dedicated to serving the needs and best interests of all its members at all levels through effective relationships both with employers and the government.

Amicus believes all members should be treated with dignity and respect, and is committed to achieving equality not only in the workplace but also within the union.

To ensure that all members are represented within the union, Amicus has implemented an Equalities and Diversity structure to encourage and enable members to participate in their union. The Regional Equalities Forums take place every two years. To find out more information please contact your full-time officer.

Take a look at the international pages at [www.amicustheunion.org](http://www.amicustheunion.org) and you will see the work the union is already undertaking in support of women trade unionists around the globe.



*2007 is set to be a busy year for developing equal rights at work. As the European year for equal opportunities, many trade union members are asking what that means in practice. With new rights to maternity and paternity pay and leave, new age discrimination regulations and equal pay high on the agenda, Amicus is working hard to make the new legislation deliver better terms and conditions of employment for our members.*

*But we recognise that our large network of work place reps need training and information to support their role in negotiating in the work place to make new legal rights a reality.*

*Amicus is putting equality at the heart of the new union with the new role of specialist equality representatives in the work place. In 2003 Amicus set up the disability champions network which aimed to encourage disabled Amicus members to get involved in the union, and become trained representatives negotiating disability access in the work place. The union now aims to widen that role to other fields of equality including race equality, equal pay, age discrimination, work life balance, dignity at work and challenging homophobia among other specialisms.*

*As well as empowering members who experience discrimination at work to get involved and become work place reps, we aim to train existing Amicus reps in the new legislation in these areas. The new role of equality rep will sit alongside learner reps, health and safety reps and shop stewards to work as a team representing Amicus members at work.*

*The Amicus NEC is currently consulting across the union on this issue as part of the Amicus equality strategy so have your say about how you think equality reps will fit in to your union structure at work.*

*Also, if you know anyone who would be interested in becoming an equality rep then please ask them to get in touch, they can contact us at [siobhan.endean@amicustheunion.org](mailto:siobhan.endean@amicustheunion.org)*

*My advice to members is to get involved in the union, it's a rewarding experience, and many members develop a wide range of skills through helping others at work.*

**Siobhan Endean, Head of Equalities**

# Your Union Needs You!

Amicus supports over one million working people and offers much needed advice in all areas of the workplace and beyond. We are adapting to face the changes and problems that our members face on a daily basis.

Members need advice, representation and organisation to protect them in the workplace. Through a system of elected workplace representatives known variously as FoCs/MoCs, shop stewards, representatives and convenors, Amicus tries to ensure that in most workplaces where it has members, a small number take responsibility for dealing with any issues the others may have.

These representatives deal directly with the employer on behalf of other union members in the workplace. Specialist representatives may also be elected to ensure that members' health and safety is protected at work, and a learning representative to provide information and advice about learning or training.

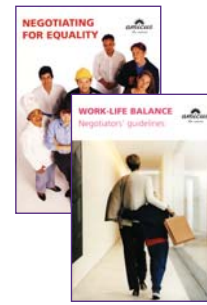
Workplace Reps are supported by experienced full-time Branch/

Regional Officers based in offices throughout the country. A further resource is Amicus Head Office with research, legal, education and policy support teams to provide advice on everything from employment law, latest developments in your industry, to training information.

To ensure that women's issues become union issues it is important that women become active in their union. If you would like to become an Activist or would like more information on getting active within your union speak to your Workplace Reps or contact your Branch Officer.

You can also get involved in Amicus through the Industrial, Political, Regional and Branch structures of the union. Amicus is committed to ensuring a gender and ethnic balance on all committees and delegations.

## Amicus Guides



The Amicus website has a great wealth of information for members and workplace representatives. Many of the resources can be downloaded

directly from the site or you can order the booklets directly from the branch office for distribution within your chapel

Under the Equality links, you will find information and publications aimed at women in the workplace.

- Your rights at work on equality issues
- The equality campaigning that Amicus is carrying out on your behalf
- Amicus equality structures
- Equality events and training both nationally and in your region
- News on equal rights

I have been a workplace rep for about 12 years, a branch committee member for the last 6 years and now the National Sector Committee. I work shift work, have three daughters, am married and do have a home life as well.

**Terri Miller**  
De la Rue, Dunstable



I believe women are natural negotiators (think about the kids fighting). Women see the inequalities in life as well as in the workplace. Although there are traditional issues such as pay disputes, there are also many equality issues in the workplace.

We need to get more women organised, we need more women reps. If I can do it then so can you. Wouldn't it be good to see the ratio of women reps proportionate to the women members of the union? Every one can do something in their own way; help out on the chapel committee get a taste for it and see where it leads.

## Interested in signing up for a course?

The Amicus Education and Training programme provides a range of services for workplace representatives and members including:

- Delivery of a range of nationally accredited Amicus short training courses on industrial relations, health & safety, equality and diversity, etc
- Delivery of sector specific training on request
- Links and pathways to access further education, higher education and technical training
- Bursaries to provide funding to members to assist with career development
- Training needs analysis for developing workplace representatives' skills when representing members
- Advice and guidance on all health and safety matters

Courses are to be delivered throughout 2007, across all the regions and in the national residential training centres that we have. To find out more about attending a course and securing time off from work, contact your local branch office or check out the education section of our website at

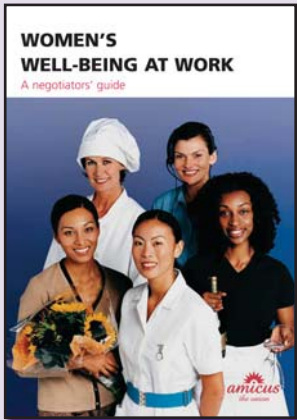
[www.amicustheunion.org](http://www.amicustheunion.org)

### On-line courses

If you are not able to take advantage of one of the regional or national courses due to work or domestic commitments then speak to your local branch officer who may be able to provide you with an online course through the local TUC.

## WOMEN'S WELL-BEING AT WORK

### A negotiators' guide



includes:

**Women's health and safety at work**

**Sexual harassment**

**Domestic violence**

**Fertility treatment**

**Pregnancy and new mothers at work**

**The menopause-Cancer screening**

Get your copy from [amicustheunion.org](http://amicustheunion.org) or from your Regional/Branch Office

unionlearn  
with the TUC

## Women Officers' Summer School

UnionLearn will be running this course in July this year. It will have a particular focus on organising and women's participation in the work of unions.

The course will take place in a number of venues in different areas of the country. For more information please visit [www.unionlearn.org.uk/courses](http://www.unionlearn.org.uk/courses)

Last year's summer school for women officers was a real success, involving women from nine unions in work on trade union priorities in a supportive classroom setting.

This year's course will have a particular focus on organising and women's participation in the work of unions. Guest speakers, visits and social events will make for a fun and hard-working week.

Flo Ormesher  
Waygoose, Sleaford



I was in my late forties when I became active in the Union and that was only by chance. The Branch Secretary asked if I would like to attend a Women's conference. I was a bit reluctant as I didn't know anyone that was going but I went, and what an experience. I met strangers that are now friends, but most importantly, I learnt how the union works, what the union can do for you but also how to change things.

I am now a Workplace Rep, Chair of the Branch Committee, on the Sector Committee and the National Women's Committee. My only regret is that I wish I had been encouraged to be more active when I was younger. The help and support of the Branch Officers and other activists in the union has given me the confidence to take up new opportunities in our union.

I urge all women to get active in their union and raise the profile of women.

## Electronic Equality

Did you know that the Amicus Equalities Department produce an e-bulletin providing you and your colleagues with useful information about changes to equality legislation.

The latest issue contains items on Sexual Orientation Regulations, Sex and Power: Who Runs Britain and news of Equality and Discrimination Law.

If you would like to receive the e-bulletin each month please email [karen.cole@amicustheunion.org](mailto:karen.cole@amicustheunion.org).

Shabana Maqsood  
The Daily Jang, London



I got involved in my chapel as I think it is important that we have an independent voice in the workplace. It is also very important that we educate our members on their rights and at work so that they do not just take the word of the employer which could be in our experience wrong or misleading.

## Freedom for jailed women in Colombia

Two women political prisoners have won their freedom and hundreds more have been helped thanks to an Amicus-backed social project in Colombia.

Agricultural workers' union worker Vitelivina Vargas and Maria del Rosario, a branch secretary of the Colombian municipal workers union, had both been incarcerated under the catch-all crime of 'rebellion' which includes trade union activities.

Vitelivina Vargas was freed after the lawyer hired by the project successfully argued in court that there was no evidence against her. Speaking after her release, Vitelivina Vargas said: 'I was unjustly imprisoned for five months simply because I am an active trade unionist. I'd like to thank the British trade union Amicus for their solidarity with our struggle. It really warms my heart to know that there are people thousands of miles away, who I have never even met, who are thinking about us.'

A spokesperson for *Justice For Colombia*, which partnered Amicus Foundation on the project, said the two women would have 'almost certainly spent many more months or even years behind bars were it not for the project'.

He added that a third trade unionist, Edilma Firacative, could soon win her freedom and that the project had helped another 220 female prisoners by distributing reading materials, sanitary products, nappies and powdered milk.

For more information please visit [www.justiceforcolombia.org](http://www.justiceforcolombia.org) or view the @ctivist newsletter at [www.amicustheunion.org](http://www.amicustheunion.org)



# Second Partnership Agreement Secured

Amicus GPM Sector has now secured its second new style partnership agreement with the Confederation of Paper Industries, the employer's federation for the papermaking industry. It follows closely on the heels of the agreement secured over a year ago with the British Printing Industries Federation.

The agreements have both been endorsed by the GPM National Sector Committee and have been rolling out across the sector in print houses and mills to bring a new approach to employment relations across both industries.

This new style agreement will be of particular interest to our women members and potential members, setting out modern approaches to aspects such as work-life balance, dignity at work, learning and skills, flexibility and productivity.

Amicus Assistant General Secretary, Tony Burke, said: *"The new agreements are 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 significant inclusion of the Dignity At Work policy gives out the clear message that bullying, harassment and discrimination in any form will not be tolerated in an Amicus workplace and members suffering in this way will receive the full support of the workplace reps to resolve these issues,

The dignity at work model agreement has been designed so that it is relevant to each and every workplace in our sector. So if your company is not covered by the national agreements above, contact your full-time officer and discuss how it can be introduced within your own workplace. Discrimination and harassment at the workplace is still commonplace and raising the profile of this agreement and ensuring it becomes best practice is the first step.

The model agreement can be downloaded from the Amicus website [www.amicustheunion.org](http://www.amicustheunion.org)

## Campaign launched for modern abortion law

On Saturday 3rd March women gathered at the Houses of Parliament to spell out the message that it was time that the pro-choice majority was heard.

40 years after the 1967 Abortion Act, it is time to celebrate the social, economic and educational advances that reproductive rights have allowed women.

Yet 40 years on, women in the UK still don't have the right to make their own abortion decisions. Women are obstructed and

delayed and current rights are repeatedly challenged.

In this 40th anniversary year, Abortion Rights is coordinating a major push for a modern law. We are joined by MPs, Peers, doctors, nurses, sexual health organisations, trade unions, students and pro-choice supporters in calling for a law in line with majority public opinion.

For more information, or to add your support, visit [www.abortionrights.org.uk](http://www.abortionrights.org.uk)

**Derek Simpson,**  
**General Secretary,**  
**says:**



International Women's Day is a day when the women members of Amicus can celebrate the work they do all year round and share that celebration with women all over the world.

Amicus is committed to supporting women in the workplace and promoting opportunities for more women to become active in the union.

Amicus produces a wealth of literature to enable our representatives to provide the best service for their members.

On behalf of Amicus, and all our members, I offer the fervent hope that this day of solidarity will further the cause of women around the world and bring nearer the day when all trade unionists are treated equally with respect and dignity at work.

## TUC Women's Conference & Rally

**14 March – 16 March 2007**  
**Spa Complex, Scarborough**

The TUC Women's Committee will be hosting a rally in honour of International Women's Day on Thursday 15 March between 5.30 and 7pm in the Spa Complex, Scarborough, during the Women's Conference. All trade unionists are invited to attend.

The rally will focus on the issues that matter to women such as equal pay, affordable childcare, violence against women, protection of women's pensions and a living wage for all workers across the global supply chain.

Please contact Rebecca Gill,  
020 7467 1303,  
or Amanda Ling  
020 7467 1260



**SIGN UP FOR REGULAR E-BULLETINS FROM AMICUS**

Equality e-bulletin email [karen.cole@amicustheunion.org](mailto:karen.cole@amicustheunion.org)

Amicus GPM Sector e-bulletin email [ashraf.choudhury@amicustheunion.org](mailto:ashraf.choudhury@amicustheunion.org)

Amicus GPM Sector Health & Safety e-bulletin email [bud.hudspith@amicustheunion.org](mailto:bud.hudspith@amicustheunion.org)

  
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