

Conference Special

Thursday 1st July 2004 - Scarborough.

1. David Fleming, National Secretary Finance Sector gave a report to delegates.

- David Fleming informed delegates that as a result of the successful 'yes' ballot of Unifi members, they would shortly be an integral part of the Amicus Finance Sector. The transfer of Unifi will make the finance sector the largest sector in a 1.2 million trade union. This clearly a very exciting time for the sector. He said that this would give the sector the opportunity to fulfil the promise of being a campaigning and organising union. He told attendees that he is looking forward to working with them to ensure that the sector is significant in Amicus and significant in the financial services industry "lets take advantage of this great opportunity".
- Unifi visitors were thanked for attending the first Amicus Finance Sector Conference. The merger with UNIFI has also triggered conversations with other unions and staff associations. For instance, The Bank of Baroda, staff association has approached Amicus regarding their future. This is clear evidence that Amicus is the 'finance sector union' and other players are now considering their own prospects. It is therefore from a position of strength from which the sector will move forward.
- He then posed a question to delegates, "so what do we do with this muscle?" This is now the key question that must be addressed by the sector. He outlined that the industry is still under considerable pressure, ranging from job cuts to downsizing. Other challenges include: the offshoring of jobs abroad and the facts that union membership numbers are still not large enough. In addition the Information and Consultation Regulations are presenting some workplaces with a number of challenges where employers try to use the directive to ring fence and marginalise the union. While these are real challenges, effective organisation would ensure that we are able to overcome them.
- The National Secretary reported that the treat of offshoring is a key issue in the finance sector. The Amicus campaign has had a huge profile over the past months and has had some significant achievements. For instance, it has put some major companies and the government think twice about their approach to offshoring. Importantly, we have made clear that we are not protectionist. He reiterated that Amicus has a zero tolerance approach to both offshoring and compulsory redundancies. Amicus has a number of minimum expectations whenever jobs are lost, whatever the cause. These standards, which are also applicable to the offshoring campaign, are based on basic trade union principles. Therefore these will not be compromise and hence pursued aggressively.
- David outlined to conference that over 15,000 jobs have been lost in the financial services sector since last September, as a consequence of offshoring. However, the trickle still has not yet become a deluge. Nonetheless Amicus is not convinced that organisations are taking the decision to offshore job functions on the basis of clear business arguments. He stated that companies must explain themselves and prove the benefit of offshoring. "Amicus will not allow organisations simply to simply follow a trend, the principle of offshoring must be explained. Transparency is essential". There are a number of organisations that have

refused to offshore jobs. This is a clear indication that it is incorrect when an organisation presents offshoring as the only possible option.

David made clear that there must be a long-term strategy to deal with the impact of such economic migration. The financial services sector is now experiencing the same phenomenon that took place in the manufacturing industry, with no economic or social strategy to recover the job losses that these sectors experienced. Ensuring retraining is provided, is a key element of this campaign.

-
- Financial services companies were warned that while it takes many years to build a brand, it only takes moments to destroy it. He made clear that Amicus has the strength to do this, both politically and also by using the media.
- It was made clear that the current lack of confidence in the financial services sector is having a detrimental impact on Amicus members as employees. The union has a role to play in improving this position as a partner. David talked to of the influence that the union has in the successful campaign to raise the 1% cap on pension products. “Confidence in the industry is currently at an all-time low. Good and well-managed pension and savings products must be made available to all. Amicus must lobby so that all, including the low income and young, can enjoy the benefits of such products. Our union does not wish to merely be involved at the level of collective bargaining. We have a clear role in supporting the financial services sector”.
- Delegates were warned that there remains a large gender pay gap in the finance sector, and that disappointingly the glass ceiling has still not been broken. “This is appalling and we can not let this injustice be ignored”. The voluntary approach to equal pay audits is proving to be inadequate and therefore legislation is essential. He told delegates that the sector is continuing its partnership with the Equal Opportunities Commission to address these issues.
- Conference was told that Amicus remains committed to the impact of globalisation on workers all over the world. Basic ILO standards are being abused and that this is disgraceful.
- The conference also heard that the sector must continue the campaigning work on issues such as dignity at work, corporate social responsibility, and engaging young people in the trade union movement.

The National Secretary report was concluded with an emphasis on the importance of organising and the potential danger of allowing membership decline. David told delegates that he is looking forward to working with them to overcome the challenges and difficulties that the financial services sector faces.

2. Ed Sweeney, General Secretary of Unifi then addressed the conference.

3. Motions

Delegates then debated motions on a range of issues that currently impact the finance sector. Motions were carried on:

- a) **Mandatory equal pay audits** - Amicus to campaign to make pay reviews mandatory.
- b) **Upskilling** - Amicus to lobby the financial institutions to introduce legislation to ensure that the term “upskilling” is categorically clarified. Also to ensure that the same institutions must provide free certified qualifications (i.e. FPO) for their staff.

c) Corporate social responsibility - Amicus to campaign to force companies to uphold and demonstrate their corporate and social responsibilities to the UK.

d) Offshoring - A major concern for delegates to the finance sector conference was the offshoring of jobs from the UK. A composite motion was carried. It stated:

“This Policy Conference is extremely concerned about the growing menace from the “outsourcing” of thousands of service sector jobs overseas leading to the potential loss of jobs for our members in the United Kingdom.

Conference instructs the NEC to:

- a. Monitor the development of overseas outsourcing.*
- b. Raise the issue with the TUC nationally and work with the TUC to lobby the government to prevent companies exporting jobs and closing sites in the UK without proper consultation with the affected workforce and without providing proper compensation for the area affected*
- c. Obtain guarantees of suitable alternative employment for those staff in the UK affected by the transfer of work overseas.*
- d. Ensure that the union develops strong links with Trade Unions & staff in countries to which UK work has been transferred.*
- e. Publicise the Union’s activity in dealing with this issue to enable members to understand the benefits of International Trade Union Solidarity.*

Conference further resolves that this union will actively oppose compulsory redundancies as a result of “globalisation” by whatever means are necessary.

The union will also seek to negotiate Globalisation Charters with employers covering:

- No compulsory redundancies*
- A minimum of 12 months notice of any plans to globalise UK jobs*
- Joint employer/TU management of the process of change arising from plans to globalise UK jobs*
- Encouragement of Life Long Learning reps to develop transferable skills & enhance employability*
- adoption ethical employment practices by employers in all global sites”.*

e) Time off - Amicus to negotiate formal agreements with employers to allow all Accredited Representatives the necessary reduction in work commitment, be this paid time off and a reduction in targets as appropriate, in proportion to the required time needed to perform their TU duties and undertake necessary training.

4. Elections

- Elections were held for delegates to the Amicus 2005 Policy and Rules Conference.
- The Finance National Sector Committee was also elected. The committee is:
 - Allianz - Ireland yet to decide
 - Aviva - Eileen Woods
 - AXA - Steve Gooden
 - CIS - Frank Tobin
 - Friends Provident - Helen Willis
 - Hibernian - Ireland yet to decide
 - Legal and General - Pam Edwards
 - Prudential - Chris Gray
 - Royal and SunAlliance - Keith Livesey

- Scottish Widows - Allyson Allan
- UISL - Paul Gallagher
- Small Companies - John Allard

This bulletin has been produced by Saba Mozakka Finance Sector Research Officer.

For more information on any of the items featured, or if you have any comments please contact me at:

7939 7071

Saba.Mozakka@amicustheunion.org

Tel: 020