



REMPLOY MEMBERS UPDATE

1. Pay

The next meeting on pay is scheduled to take place on the 7th July 2008 when the Company will respond to the Trade Union Claim made on the 23rd of May.

2. Modernisation

To say that the Company has miss handled the so called modernisation programme is an horrendous understatement. During the programme any grievance was totally ignored, to make matters worse any shop steward that lodged a grievance received a letter from John Waterhouse stating that the Company would not consult with the trade unions on any matter and to put bluntly, would do as they liked.

As a result of this stupidity, very many cases have been lodged with the Employment Tribunals and have brought the Company back to the negotiating table. To date the value of settlements made at the stage 5 hearings has been *well in excess of £250k*. Who says it doesn't pay to be a trade union member?

The GMB are also set to take litigation against the Company because of lack of consultation by the Company and the way they have handled the whole situation. There has been a considerable amount of money put aside for the GMB to fund the litigation and the whole process has been put in the hands of Thompsons the Solicitors to correlate the strategy.

3. Conferences

There have been three major conferences, this year which will be of interest to Remploy Workers;

- The Remploy Conference. This took place on the 28/29 of April 2008. From this conference the Pay Claim was formulated and the Consortium policy for the current pay year was agreed. The conference was obviously smaller than in previous years due to the closure of factories, nevertheless, the feeling of anger and of frustration by the delegates was palpable. This year for the first time there was a delegation from the CCTV operation that made good contributions to the debates on that they had an interest in. This year's conference was also one of the most Political I have seen, which is not really surprising because of the closure of our

factories by a right wing Labour administration. There were many contributions calling for an end of Union support for the Labour Party and calling for an end to factory closures. In a passionate and deeply political debate Ray Ludford from the T&G condemned the Neo Liberal free market philosophy of Brown's Government whilst Mark Holloway from Barking followed up in his own inimitable fashion by quoting the last two verses of the *Red Flag*

*It suits today the weak and base
Whose minds are fixed on self and place,
To cringe before the rich man's frown
And haul the sacred emblem down*

*With heads uncovered swear we all
To bear it onward till we fall
Come dungeon dark or gallows grim
This song will be our parting hymn*

Phil Davies presented tokens of appreciation to the Consortium Members who had left the Consortium because of the modernisation. In presenting the engraved glassware Phil paid tribute to the hard work, dedication and valuable contributions of;

John Hawkshaw Community Leeds
Tony Peppard Unite Amicus CCU
Dave Reed Unite Amicus (GPMU) Aintree
Paul Bragg GMB CCU
Alison Henderson GMB York

Phil also presented Kathleen Walker-Shaw the GMB European Officer and paid tribute to Kathleen's work in Europe and the UK to secure the legislation and implementation of the Public Procurement regulations.

On the 22nd May I had the honour of moving Motion 8 on behalf of the GMB at the TUC Disability Conference at the TUC in London. In the hall was a delegation of workers from the closed York factory, who are still fighting a dogged campaign to have their factory re-opened in York at another location. Motion 8 called for the TUC to instigate an inquiry into the whole modernisation and the way it was allowed to be carried out by the Government. The Motion was seconded by Sean McGovern of the T&G and was supported by Unison. I am happy to report that the motion was unanimously carried. I will be raising the issue at the next TUC Disability Conference to see what progress will have been made.

The GMB Congress took place in Plymouth from the 8th of June to the 12th of June. The Remploy Campaign and the fight for Justice for Remploy Workers had a very high profile. The fight to re-open the York factory took centre stage and there wasn't a dry eye in either the Manufacturing Conference or the main Congress when the DVD "*Tracey's Story*" was played. This is a

powerful short DVD of how the closure of the York factory has affected one lady with particular needs and requirements. Anyone wishing to obtain a copy of the DVD or indeed the Crusade DVD should contact me and I will arrange despatch. The support we have from the GMB, the officers and backroom staff has been absolutely magnificent. The Remploy debate in the Manufacturing Conference included re-affirming the sacking of the current Board of Directors. Phil Davies moved the CEC statement on Remploy and had a standing ovation for his powerful and emotional speech.

Whilst things may have seemed very quiet during the last couple of months, I hope members will realise that there has been a lot going on behind the scenes which take up resources in terms of time and commitment.

We are now in the throes of organising a demo and mass lobby of the Labour Party Conference between the 20th and 24th of September, which takes place this year in Manchester. We will need to start planning this event immediately. Please let me know as soon as possible if your factory/site/membership has an interest in attending and on what days. Further details will be released in the near future.

Finally we still have a lot to do, to secure a new factory for the York workers, to secure more work for our factories from Public Procurement, to ensure that the factories we have left have a viable future. We still need to be contacting politicians; Local Councillors, MPs MEPs MSPs Welsh AMs. I know we have all done it but it needs to be done again and the central question must be what you can do MR/Mrs Politician to get Public Procurement contracts for Remploy? The Remploy 3 Trade Union alternative Plan is still on the table, though it may need re-vamping in certain areas to take into account current issues.

Attached with this Report is a petition on behalf of the York factory and a letter to Gordon Brown. Please get the petition filled in and sent back to me;

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The letter to Gordon Brown should be used as a guide only and re-written in individual's own words. It is vital that we do not let Gordon Brown conveniently forget his commitment made at the Spring Labour Party Conference
This concludes my report.

Les Woodward
Remploy National Trade Union Convenor

