



Working Class Movement Library

Registered Charity No. 501286

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51 The Crescent, Salford M5 4WX

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Dear Secretary

I am writing to invite your branch of UNISON to affiliate to the Friends of the Working Class Movement Library, and help to support this marvellous and unique collection.

Put simply, the library tells the story of how working people have worked together over the last 200 years to change society for the better. The collection includes holdings on the Peterloo massacre of 1819; the trade union movement, which has campaigned for a living wage, decent working conditions and full employment; Chartism, which campaigned for the rights of the people; the Suffragettes, who campaigned for "Votes For Women"; the International Brigaders, who went to Spain in 1936 to fight for freedom against Franco, and many other movements.

The library is a national collection and is recognised as one of the most important working class historical archives in the country. It is a registered Charity, and run in a democratic manner by a voluntary Board of Trustees in partnership with the staff and our volunteers. It is open to all to use without charge, and has many visitors and researchers.

The late Ruth and Edmund Frow started the library in their own home in the 1950s because they believed that working people should remember and value their own history. For forty years this remarkable couple spent their spare time travelling the country with their caravan and collecting thousands of rare items. In 1987 the library moved into a beautiful Edwardian building, where it has continued to grow and now fills forty rooms with books, pamphlets and much else.

Recent activities at the library have included

- An exhibition on the *1913 Dublin Lockout*
- A celebration of *International Women's Day* with the novelist Livi Michael and community activist Ruth Eversley

- A May Day lecture by Owen Jones

The running costs of the library are met by contributions from individuals and trade unions and by an annual grant from Salford Council. The Council have now told us that they are cutting our grant by 33%. This means that to keep the library going in its current form the Trustees will have substantially increase the amount that we raise from other sources.

I am a Trustee of the WCML and am supporting the library's financial appeal because I believe that these stories should be saved for future generations, and celebrated. Lee Hall, the writer of "Billy Elliott" and "The Pitmen Painters", is a Friend of the library and wrote to us to say that "what you represent and protect is incredibly important to me. So much of my work is about celebrating the politics and creativity of working class people. I feel it is only right I should support others doing the same."

The Trustees are asking trade union branches who share the aims and ideals of the library to affiliate to the Friends of the Working Class Movement Library. There are already a number of trade union regions and branches affiliated, including CWU, FBU, GMB, NUJ, NASUWT, NUT, UNISON and UNITE.

The suggested annual affiliation fee for trade union branches is between £50 and £100.

All Friends receive a copy of our quarterly newsletter *Shelf Life* and invitations to events. They will also be sent a free copy of our DVD which tells the story of how this unique library was set up by Ruth and Eddie, with a commentary by Christopher Eccleston.

I enclose further information about the library and hope you will be able to help.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Peake'.

Maxine Peake