General Secretary
Ronnie Draper addresses workers at Samworth’s, Leicester
INSIDE THIS ISSUE:
Editor’s Notes .............................. 2
National President ......................... 3
Fast Food Day of Action ................. 5
Region 4 H&S Conference ............... 6
HeartUnions Week .......................... 7
Recognition Agreements ................. 8
Poles in British Trades Unions .......... 9
Journal of the Underpaid ............... 10
D-I-V-O-R-C-E ............................ 12

HEALTH & SAFETY
The Common Strategy ..................... 13
H&S Campaigns ............................ 15
Workers Memorial Day ................. 16
Climate Change and Insulation ......... 16
Inter-Union 5-a-sides ....................... 17
Awards and Presentations ............... 18
40 Years Interview with Pat Green .... 19
Contact Details ............................. 20

FOODWORKER is published for BFAWU by:
Ronnie Draper at Stanborough House
Great North Road
Stanborough, Welwyn Garden City
Hertfordshire AL8 7TA
Tel: 01707 260150/259450

FOODWORKER is designed and produced
for BFAWU by:
Inscape Solutions Limited
3 Long Hedge Lane
Worthington
Ashby de la Zouch
Leics LE65 1RL
Tel: 01530 222657

EDITOR’S NOTES
"... another outcome [of endless attacks on
pay and conditions] has been that abused
workers are turning back to trade unions"

Ronnie Draper @ronniebfawu

AS ANOTHER ANNUAL CONFERENCE LOOMS LARGE ON THE HORIZON, THOUGHTS TURN TO WHO WILL BE REPRESENTING BRANCHES IN SOUTHPORT THIS YEAR – AND WHO WILL BE ELECTED TO OUR NATIONAL EXECUTIVE.

It is important that both questions are answered in a positive way. Conference is definitely no holiday camp (despite the fact that it is held by the seaside), indeed it is anything but an easy time. Branches should give consideration to who will do the best job for the members back at the ranch before putting nominations forward.

At the time of writing there are 118 motions, covering a vast amount of subjects, and the expectation is that we can all find something to get our teeth into, besides what appears on the dinner plate. Consideration should also be given to ensuring that we get young activists on the nomination list, particularly as we give an extra place to each branch who nominate a young delegate ('young' being under the age of 27).

A new Executive Council
Conference 2016 will also elect a new Executive Council and regions play a major role in this. It is an absolute honour to be elected to the executive, but that honour has to extend beyond the title.

Bear in mind that executive members are unpaid volunteers who at times are asked to deal with difficult issues – covering the 361 days that conference doesn’t sit. It is a difficult job carried out alongside full time employment – it can impact on social life, work life and, most importantly, family life. At times, it can be the most frustrating job in the union.

It is the easiest thing in the world for members to criticise the Executive without first understanding the role.

So, please think hard before you nominate individuals for the Executive. Consider that you are nominating someone who will add value to the position. Change for change's sake brings only confusion and does not always improve a situation.

WHAT ISSUES DO WE FACE?
Some of the biggest debates will centre around terms and conditions and their effect on industrial relations in the workplace.

As we move towards the inception of the government's so-called 'living wage', we see companies jumping on the passing bandwagon of poverty pay opportunity. I’m not sure what was in Osborne's head when he coined the phrase 'living wage', but I see first-hand the devious, underhand attacks that some greedy employers are waging to ensure that workers are kept on the breadline (forgive the pun).

I've seen employers who believe they have been forced into paying the princely sum of £7.20 per hour and who respond by trying to slash overtime payments, weekend premiums and Bank Holiday rates.

Champion of the underpaid!
Osborne clearly did not predict this underhand response by these greedy employers, or did he? No mention of legislating against these devastating attacks and protecting long-established and, in many cases, negotiated terms and conditions. Osborne’s living wage comes in at £1.05 per hour below the rate set by the Living Wage Foundation for most of the UK and £2.20 below the London rate and excludes everyone under the age of 25.

His reasoning was to reduce reliance on in work benefits. If some employers are allowed to force down wages to the extent that they want to, we will see an increase in those needing to draw on the state.
Consequences...
The result has been that we are seeing an increase in the number of industrial action ballots as workers seek to protect what is, in many cases, a meagre standard of living, under ever-increasing attack from their employer. Be assured, we will give all the support we can to ensure our members are not forced further into poverty.

A return to Trade Unions
Another outcome has been that abused workers are turning back to the trade unions.

In February this year I had the pleasure of addressing around 400 workers from Samworth Brothers in Leicester, a company that employs thousands of people and one that has proposed major cuts to all premium rates of pay. The upshot of these workers joining our ranks is that it has brought about a twofold response from the company.

Firstly, at some sites they are now relooking at their proposals and looking to move implementation dates back. If anything demonstrates what can be achieved when we are together, joined in strength, then this is it. The workers now need to ensure that they grow the union and grow their protection that collective strength brings.

The second point that has come out of these savage threats has been that a member of their HR staff has castigated the union as nothing more than an undemocratic love-in of their employees. This is in many cases, a meagre standard of living, under ever-increasing attack from their employer.

How does this affect us?
This involves issues like food safety law, environmental legislation, banking regulations and the sovereign powers of individual nations.

So what is at risk from TTIP? Public services, especially the NHS are in the firing line. One of the main aims of TTIP is to open up Europe’s Public Health, Education and Water services to US companies. This would essentially mean the privatisation of our NHS. US companies would also have the power to sue countries who don’t toe the line, thus strengthening America’s imperialistic grip on other nations.

The EU currently bans around 1200 substances from use in cosmetics – the US bans just 12

Opening the door to GM?

Another consequence of TTIP could be the impact on food, as EU standards on food safety and the environment would more than likely be brought closer to those of the US. Why is this a problem? US regulations are far less strict, with 70 per cent of all processed foods sold in US supermarkets now containing genetically modified ingredients, something our Union has been campaigning against for a number of years.

The BFAWU’s stance is that there is no place in the food chain for ‘Frankenstein’ elements. Who knows what medical problems we could be creating for future generations?

The US also imposes fewer restrictions on the use of pesticides and allows the use of growth hormones in beef, which are restricted in Europe due to links to cancer.

NATIONAL PRESIDENT
IAN HODSON

Like every year since the Tories have got back into power, 2016 proposes to be another twelve months of cuts, more relentless attacks on workers’ rights and a further undermining of our public sector

There is so much for people to be angry about that it’s actually getting confusing as to which area we should be concerned about the most.

Is it the In/Out referendum? Or is it David Cameron’s dehumanising attitude towards refugees fleeing war-torn countries that the West continues to bomb? Is it Ian Duncan Smith’s apparent, systematic manslaughter of the disabled and people on benefits? Or is it the rising use of foodbanks? Or is it the state-sponsored tax avoidance for big businesses and the wealthy?

Let’s start with the EU

There’s a dizzying array of issues hitting us from all sides, to such a degree that we’re in danger of becoming punch-drunk. However, as the subject of the European Union is the burning issue of the day and the one that always seems to hamstring the Tories, we should probably start there.

The original idea of the EU was to bring about a harmonious, Utopian European community with people’s interests at the heart of it. However, over time it’s become nothing more than an undemocratic love-in for banks and big businesses with only their own narrow interests at the heart of it. Just ask Greece.

For further proof, it’s worth considering the fact that eighty of the one-hundred FTSE businesses are in favour of staying in the EU. To underpin the view of just how much the EU has mutated into one huge business cartel, you only have to read about the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP for short) which are a series of trade negotiations being carried out between the EU and the US. As a bilateral trade agreement, TTIP is about reducing certain regulatory barriers for large organisations.

The result has been that we are seeing an increase in the number of industrial action ballots as workers seek to protect what is, in many cases, a meagre standard of living, under ever-increasing attack from their employer. Be assured, we will give all the support we can to ensure our members are not forced further into poverty.

A return to Trade Unions
Another outcome has been that abused workers are turning back to the trade unions.

In February this year I had the pleasure of addressing around 400 workers from Samworth Brothers in Leicester, a company that employs thousands of people and one that has proposed major cuts to all premium rates of pay. The upshot of these workers joining our ranks is that it has brought about a twofold response from the company.

Firstly, at some sites they are now relooking at their proposals and looking to move implementation dates back. If anything demonstrates what can be achieved when we are together, joined in strength, then this is it. The workers now need to ensure that they grow the union and grow their protection that collective strength brings.

The second point that has come out of these savage threats has been that a member of their HR staff has castigated the union as nothing more than an undemocratic love-in of their employees. This is in many cases, a meagre standard of living, under ever-increasing attack from their employer.

How does this affect us?
This involves issues like food safety law, environmental legislation, banking regulations and the sovereign powers of individual nations.

So what is at risk from TTIP? Public services, especially the NHS are in the firing line. One of the main aims of TTIP is to open up Europe’s Public Health, Education and Water services to US companies. This would essentially mean the privatisation of our NHS. US companies would also have the power to sue countries who don’t toe the line, thus strengthening America’s imperialistic grip on other nations.

The EU currently bans around 1200 substances from use in cosmetics – the US bans just 12

Opening the door to GM?

Another consequence of TTIP could be the impact on food, as EU standards on food safety and the environment would more than likely be brought closer to those of the US. Why is this a problem? US regulations are far less strict, with 70 per cent of all processed foods sold in US supermarkets now containing genetically modified ingredients, something our Union has been campaigning against for a number of years.

The BFAWU’s stance is that there is no place in the food chain for ‘Frankenstein’ elements. Who knows what medical problems we could be creating for future generations?

The US also imposes fewer restrictions on the use of pesticides and allows the use of growth hormones in beef, which are restricted in Europe due to links to cancer.

FOODWORKER

Consequences...
The result has been that we are seeing an increase in the number of industrial action ballots as workers seek to protect what is, in many cases, a meagre standard of living, under ever-increasing attack from their employer. Be assured, we will give all the support we can to ensure our members are not forced further into poverty.

A return to Trade Unions
Another outcome has been that abused workers are turning back to the trade unions.

In February this year I had the pleasure of addressing around 400 workers from Samworth Brothers in Leicester, a company that employs thousands of people and one that has proposed major cuts to all premium rates of pay. The upshot of these workers joining our ranks is that it has brought about a twofold response from the company.

Firstly, at some sites they are now relooking at their proposals and looking to move implementation dates back. If anything demonstrates what can be achieved when we are together, joined in strength, then this is it. The workers now need to ensure that they grow the union and grow their protection that collective strength brings.

The second point that has come out of these savage threats has been that a member of their HR staff has castigated the union as nothing more than an undemocratic love-in of their employees. This is in many cases, a meagre standard of living, under ever-increasing attack from their employer.

How does this affect us?
This involves issues like food safety law, environmental legislation, banking regulations and the sovereign powers of individual nations.

So what is at risk from TTIP? Public services, especially the NHS are in the firing line. One of the main aims of TTIP is to open up Europe’s Public Health, Education and Water services to US companies. This would essentially mean the privatisation of our NHS. US companies would also have the power to sue countries who don’t toe the line, thus strengthening America’s imperialistic grip on other nations.

The EU currently bans around 1200 substances from use in cosmetics – the US bans just 12

Opening the door to GM?

Another consequence of TTIP could be the impact on food, as EU standards on food safety and the environment would more than likely be brought closer to those of the US. Why is this a problem? US regulations are far less strict, with 70 per cent of all processed foods sold in US supermarkets now containing genetically modified ingredients, something our Union has been campaigning against for a number of years.

The BFAWU’s stance is that there is no place in the food chain for ‘Frankenstein’ elements. Who knows what medical problems we could be creating for future generations?

The US also imposes fewer restrictions on the use of pesticides and allows the use of growth hormones in beef, which are restricted in Europe due to links to cancer.
On the environmental side, the US allows companies to use substances until they are proved to be harmful, rather than making sure they are safe before flooding the market. As an example, the EU currently bans 1200 substances from use in cosmetics; the US bans just 12. Of course, Americans aren’t the only villains of the piece.

**More power to the bankers!**
The British Government has its own agenda as well, that of loosening of US banking regulations. America’s financial rules are tougher than ours. They were put into place after the financial crisis to directly curb the powers of bankers and avoid a similar crisis happening again.

It is feared that TTIP will remove those restrictions – effectively handing all those powers back to the bankers. This is one of the reasons why David Cameron wants to stay in the EU and it has nothing whatsoever to do with getting a ‘fairer deal for Britain’. There’s more intrigue and skulduggery going on than ‘Game of Thrones’.

**What are the real issues?**
The real debate about our membership of the EU should be the type of Europe we want to live and work in, not an angry conversation rooted in fearmongering about migrants. This is a distraction designed to create division and move any rational debate away from the issues that really matter.

It was a ploy that the Conservatives successfully used to help win the 2015 General Election. They somehow managed to convince enough people that a win for Ed Miliband would result in an army of woad-covered, kilt-wearing Scots, crossing the border waving their claymores, ready to ‘sack’ York again.

It seems absurd now in hindsight, but large numbers of people actually fell for it. They really did believe that Scotland would rule over England if Labour won. It was nothing more than the politics of fear, paranoia and false patriotism. In the event of an In/Out referendum on the EU, we must be wary of falling for the same tactics being used again.

**Kill the Bill!**
Closer to home, in recent weeks I have attended and spoken at a number events aimed at highlighting the attack on UK Trade Unions and in particular, the government’s vile Trade Union Bill.

For whatever reason, my concerns seem to be falling on deaf ears, but just to reiterate – the aim of the Bill is to ensure that your voice is killed off in your workplace and to make it virtually impossible to take any form of industrial action, making it easy for employers to screw their workers over at their leisure.

Politically, opposition parties (including Labour) will have their funding slashed, leaving the Conservatives and their donors free to kill off what remains of democracy in this country. In short, the Trade Union Bill will return the UK to the *Master and Servant Acts of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries.*

**The party of working people?**
This Tory government is not on the side of working people. If it was, we wouldn’t have Workfare, zero hours contracts, foodbanks and endless attacks on Trade Unions.

If the Conservatives were ‘the party of working people’, they wouldn’t allow huge multi-billion pound companies like McDonalds and Google to both exploit and abuse our workers, as well as our tax system. The real picture is this; the economy is only improving for the already wealthy.

CEOs today are paid roughly three-hundred times more than ordinary workers. People in the bottom 10% of the population have an average net income of £8,468. The top 10% have net incomes almost ten times that (£79,042).

In 2012, the top 1% had an average income of £259,917 and the top 0.1% had an average income of £941,582.

In terms of pay, Great Britain is one of the most unequal countries in the Western hemisphere. The richest 10% of households hold 45% of all wealth. In contrast, the poorest 50% own just 8.7%.

So, the impact of the government’s ‘growing and stable economy’ is that the richest have become 64% richer and the poorest became 54% poorer. What a damning indictment of 21st Century Britain!

£10 and a Union!

We need to ensure that every one of our branches is fighting for £10 an hour. It’s not pie in the sky – it’s a reasonable request that our members are paid a wage that enables them to support themselves and their families and live in dignity.

We will fully support any branch fighting for better pay and to prevent the erosion of terms and conditions.

Our members are essential and valuable workers in one of the most important and profitable industries in the world and this should be reflected in their pay packets.

Over the next few months, we will be working on a campaign to highlight those employers who are exploiting workers and supermarkets who continue to squeeze the life out of UK food manufacturing by way of a race to the bottom which results in minimum pay and conditions.

**Solidarity with Junior Doctors**
As a Union, we are always proud to stand with workers in struggle and I know many of you took to the picket lines in support of the fantastic junior doctors, working under pressure within our NHS. The NHS already operates on a seven day week basis. I’ve never known a hospital to be closed at the weekend.

Jeremy Hunt wants a fully-staffed and serviced NHS, running seven days a week. On the face of it, it’s a fair aim. However, he doesn’t want to employ any more staff and doesn’t want to put any more money into it – he wants to fund it by cutting junior doctors’ pay by 37%, giving them then 11% back and calling it a pay ‘increase’. To do so, he must redefine what ‘unsociable hours’ are and when the weekend officially starts.

The thought of being treated by tired and exhausted doctors who are having to spread themselves even thinner is a grim one.

**Bear in mind that Jeremy Hunt once co-authored a policy book calling for the NHS to be replaced by an insurance-based system – it’s probably fair to say that NHS patients and workers are not his primary concern.**

His brief is to whittle the health service down to a point where it isn’t fit for purpose, before finally selling it off. He’ll then be given a peerage and a consultancy role with a private medical company. The rest of us, meanwhile, will have to re-mortgage the house to pay for an operation. I stand with the junior doctors, and I hope you do, too!

**In solidarity!**

Ian Hodson
National President
On Wednesday 13th of January, the Fast Food Rights campaign hosted a forum at Parliament in London, with a delegation of US fast food workers and organisers who are leading the inspiring Fight For $15 strike movement. The meeting followed a protest held outside a McDonalds in Whitehall with fast food workers from all over the UK campaigning for £10 an hour, union rights and recognition and an end to zero hours contracts. The day was filled with excitement and enthusiasm and was a real boost to the campaign.

Around the base of young workers that have been growing in Glasgow in recent months, we have been using the film project Serving Up Change as a way of attracting more young people to our union and to the Fast Food Rights Campaign. Through our weekly film meetings, we decided to build a strategy around January 13th and come up with colourful, creative tactics to add to the day of action. We did this primarily through designing evil Ronald McDonald costumes, complete with scary face makeup that seemed to spook even some of the protesters!

We also wrote some FFR songs which were adaptation’s of David Bowie hits. To the melody of Rebel Rebel we sang ‘Ronald, Ronald! Hear us say, we want, union rights and a decent wage!’ To the melody of Space Oddity we sang ‘this is fast food rights to McDonalds, it’s really not okay, that you pay your staff in the most peculiar way’ etc. Sung by evil Ronald McDonalds, this added a slightly surreal element to the proceedings but was welcomed none the less. We have since incorporated the songs into our local choir rehearsals and plan on having the choir sing them at the next global day of action on April 15th.

Draped in hand-made ‘un-happy meals’, filled with zero hours contracts and low pay, we sang, shouted and experienced the might of collective power. The atmosphere was electric. The US workers were well experienced in turning up the volume of a protest as they chanted ‘and if we don’t get it? Shut it down!’ Hardly able to contain my excitement, I tried my hand at a US chant I’d learned that day: I shouted ‘I believe that we CAN win!’ – I was promptly corrected by the US delegation that we ‘WILL win’.

We marched and sang our way down to Parliament, making sure we were heard. It was fantastic to link up with fast food workers from other parts of the UK and hear their stories of organising and fighting back. This was perhaps one of the best aspects of the meeting as it would have encouraged and inspired other workers present, from any industry, to start unionising and organising.

The contributions from the US fast food workers were inspiring. Their commitment to the struggle and their expression of solidarity was felt by all present. US fast food worker Ashleigh said ‘our fight is your fight and your fight is ours, and we’re not gonna stop until we win fast food rights for workers everywhere, for workers all over the world!’ How they have organised, linked up with workers in other countries and built a strategy to develop and strengthen the campaign offers many lessons for us in the UK. Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell, who founded the campaign alongside the BFAWU in 2014, and other leading figures from the trade union and anti-austerity movement also made insightful contributions that expressed the breadth and power of the movement.

The success of the day of action demonstrated that the Fast Food Rights campaign has the potential to be a powerful driving force behind a broader movement for workers rights more generally.

There were workers from all industries that day: hotel workers, call centre workers, service industry workers. This shows the campaign’s ability to bring together workers, regardless of what industry or union they are in, because it tackles issues that are widely experienced like zero hours contracts and low pay. The breadth of the campaign and it’s potential to grow was clear on January 13th. Our young delegation from Glasgow were so influenced by the event that we have decided to launch a Fast Food Rights branch in Glasgow with its first meeting on the 17th of February. This organising meeting will be crucial to building for the next Global Day of Action on April 15th 2016, recruiting to our union and to building the campaign in Glasgow.
REGION 2 HEALTH & SAFETY CONFERENCE

I was surprised when looking at my records, to find that I have been running these Conferences for 20 years. Each year gets harder to find new subjects to cover.

The 2015 Conference was a great success, very well attended. Excellent facilities were provided by Thompson Solicitors in their offices in Cardiff. Many subjects were covered by Thompsons including Stress and Bullying in the Workplace, Occupational Asthma, Manual Handling and Being aware of your surroundings if an accident occurs. We also had three special guests: Hilda Palmer from the Hazards Campaign, and Robert Wood from Stress Network and, of course, Ian Hodson, the National President.

My thanks go to Thompsons who sponsored our Conference, to all the speakers, and the Health and Safety Reps who attended to make it great. I am now looking for the subjects we should cover in 2016.

Dave Dash
Regional Officer, Region 2
A WEEK OF ACTION, organised by the TUC, highlighted attempts by the Tory Government to restrict further working people's rights in the workplace.

The week engaged hundreds of thousands of Trade Unionists with many workplaces taking part in discussions over the impact of the Tory attacks on your workplace rights.

We took the opportunity in the Region 5 Health and Safety Conference to discuss the Government's attempt to restrict Safety Representatives' rights, contained within the bill. Our union also took part in many public meetings during the week. The Week of Action coincided with a strike by junior doctors fighting to save our NHS.

This dispute would pass the Government's threshold requirements for industrial action but it still hasn't led to a fair settlement.

**The bill is not intended to avoid disputes, it's real intention is to criminalise and silence working people.**

The question remains that what is the point of a threshold if the employer (in this case the Tory government itself) then refuses to engage with its employees? It demonstrates that the bill is not intended to avoid disputes but it's real intention is to criminalise and silence working people.

Also during the Week of Action, Frances O'Grady, the TUC General Secretary, took part in a live broadcast beamed into many workplaces discussing the impact of the bill.

It coincided with some workplaces holding branch meetings under the banner of the Big Workplace meeting. Social media was abuzz with images of the positive achievements delivered by unions, from the right to vote to the minimum wage, from the birth of the NHS and the Welfare State to legislation on pay equality and equal rights. It's our movement that has nurtured democracy and as Trade Unionists we should be proud of the role we have played.

Ian Hodson
National President
Left: Mark McHugh puts pen to paper having just signed the recognition agreement at Johnstones in East Kilbride.
The first of many in Scotland hopefully!

Below: Region 3 is delighted to sign a recognition agreement at Tulip Foods Coalville, Leicester.

BFAWU would like to thank all the members at Tulip Foods, together with CAC and ACAS for support throughout the recognition process (The Union gained automatic recognition through CAC).

The agreement was signed on 11th January 2016 by Lukasz Bemka (Organising Regional Secretary), George Atwall (Regional Officer) and Andrew Simmonds (Company Director).

Members at Tulip proved that some determination, patience and goodwill is enough to organise themselves and to finally be heard. They’ve already had a chance to ballot (and reject!) on a pay offer for the first time in the company history.

The Region would like to remind all our members of Helen Keller’s words: “Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much”. We wish the new branch all the best in the future.

Lukasz Bemka
Organising Regional Secretary,
Region 3

Lukasz (centre) with George Atwall (right) and Andrew Simmons (left), Company Director at Tulip Foods
POLES IN BRITISH TRADE UNIONS

A LOT OF POLES are leaving their country looking for a job and are arriving in the United Kingdom. It is important to remind them that when they work abroad there are also trade unions. Our nationals, working there legally can join and count on them when in need of help and support.

On Tuesday 19 January 2016 in the office of Region 1 Malopolska NSZZ Solidarnosc in Nowy Sacz, Poland we held a meeting between BFAWU rep Damian Sawa (shown in the photograph, middle) with Malgorzata Tokarczyk (left) and the Region 1 Officer and Council Member of the NSZZ Solidarnosc, Mr Krzysztof Kotowicz (right).

During the meeting we shared information about the functions of trade unions in both countries. We talked about our structures, membership rates, financing union activities, leading campaigns and political sympathies. We explained member representation, the role of the union in defending the interests of the members. Both unions, BFAWU and NSZZ Solidarnosc, have members across industries that have origins such as in the bakeries.

We talked about the Fast Food Rights campaign led by the BFAWU, explaining issues with zero-hour contracts, minimum and living wages. We agreed that unions will be strong mainly in the workplaces where they have high membership density and properly-built structures.

We explained the reasoning behind creating a Polska-UK website and Facebook group. You can see one feature of this -- the chance of a year's free subscription to the Union if you 'like' our Facebook page -- encouraged by the leaflet below (still working -- give it a try!). All of that is aimed at helping organise workers within workplaces. We explained the principal benefits of joining BFAWU, like help with grievances, disciplinaries, equal pay, health and safety, discrimination and legal support.

The mutual exchange of information was both instructive and helpful and we won’t rule out future meetings to develop further cooperation.

Damian Sawa

www.polska-uk.com

Masz problem w pracy? Jesteśmy tu by Ci pomóc.
Any problems at work? We’re here to help YOU.

Like and share us on FB

For a chance to win union membership for a year!!!
Prize draw for all the people who will like and share Facebook/polskajukej on their profile
You can win union membership in BFAWU for a whole year and enjoy all the benefits of being a member!!!

*Terms and conditions apply
My Song:

Do not forget me
If the unpaid rent stings you
If cheese on credit shames you
If the child’s whine inside your tired body is faded
The spite towards my hope that has faded
My fading hope.

JOURNALS OF THE UNDERPAID

A worker in a bottle plant

I am standing next to the bottles’ rail. The bottles quickly reach my tired hands one after the other and I quickly have to put tops on the ones that are missing them or label them. Slowly I am being hypnotised and I think of this morning involuntarily.

When leaving home I was saying to myself ‘I wish the neighbourhood’s general store is shut or the assistant is busy and doesn’t notice me’. That is because I have not been paid for three months and all that time I have been getting the stuff I need from this shop. But bad luck – the minute I am walking past the shop the assistant, with a telling look, waves me goodbye.

I count my last bits of money. It will not be enough to hitch a ride in a car and I will have to walk to the works bus service. I quicken my steps. I wish that at least today I am safe from the landlord’s phone calls. I run quickly and catch the bus at the last moment. But it seems that the hardships my workmates are having to bear are more agonising than my own. When you sit in the bus you forget your own agonies.

One of them does not have the money to buy the medication for his child and another has a bed-ridden wife, with no money to operate on the slipped disc. One has rent arrears and another has missed the payments on his loan and will, any day, face a seizure of assets sentence.

The foreman’s shouting makes me lose track of my thoughts and it is as if, through a few bottles breaking, I have made a few kilos of surplus value fall out of the boss’s fat belly on to the floor...

But why does it have to be like this? Why is a worker’s wage a third below the poverty line? Is it because we have no organisations? That we have no leadership? And other questions that are true and make our hopes fade.
Hello, my name is Ali. I work in an Iranian factory producing vehicle spare parts.

I assemble the rear brake shoes. Every month a thirty-day contract is written and I am paid 400 tomans (the equivalent of 9 pence) for every brake shoe I produce (every set of shoes has four linings). This wage represents about two per cent of the sale price of the commodities I produce!

I work 12 hours a day and the factory provides us with a medium to low quality lunch.

I produce both small and large brake shoes: the small ones are for cars like the Kia Pride and the large ones for cars like the Peugeot 405 and Peykan (Hillman Hunter). During the twelve hours, considering that I work really professionally and that all idle moments have been cut to less than half a minute, I can produce 110 Pride (small) brake shoes and 55 large brake shoes if necessary. Their price is the same even though one is twice as hard to make.

During my work I am directly in contact with adhesives and resin, and indirectly, with paint and materials that make up a front brake pad that is made in other parts of the factory. Neither I nor any other worker has access to any type of industrial-grade safety mask. The safety gear allocated to each worker every week is a pair of cotton gloves, or a heat-resistant pair according to their work section, and a plain mask with a strap.

The works bus service picks the workers up at 6:30 from a set route. For me that means I have to catch a shared taxi to get to the pick-up point and then on the way back catch two shared taxis.

Usually the wages are paid late, or partly paid in cash and partly as a post-dated cheque. That is because some of the company’s customers have not paid up. The workers have to cash these to get paid.

Two years ago 108 workers were sacked and a few of the production lines became idle. The lowest amount of unpaid wages owed to a worker is 7 million tomans (£169) and the highest is 35 million (£8195).
LAST YEAR, JOANNA McCLEAN OF WALKERS UNION GAVE US AN INSIGHT INTO THE LEGAL SIDE OF DIVORCE

Here, she provides an update to reflect recent changes

For those married in 1968, 20% of marriages had ended in divorce by the 15th wedding anniversary whereas for those married in 1998, almost a third of marriages (32%) had ended by this time.

Divorce is said to be one of the most stressful life events and this is heightened when couples are uncertain of their rights. Divorce is simply the formal legal process that brings about the end of a marriage and it often includes sorting out arrangements for children and dividing family finances including the family home. Every divorce is different but we have set out some frequently asked questions below:

When can I apply for a divorce?
It is not possible to apply for a divorce within the first year of marriage.

What are 'grounds for divorce?'
You must be prove that your marriage has broken down irretrievably -- there’s no prospect of a reconciliation. This is done by establishing one of five factors:
1. Adultery
2. Unreasonable behaviour
3. Desertion for 2 years or more
4. Two years separation where both parties consent to a divorce
5. Five years separation. The other party’s consent is not required after five years separation.

How do I start a divorce?
After deciding which factor is most appropriate the divorce is started by completing a Court form called a Petition. You also need the original marriage certificate or a certified copy (a photocopy will not do) and the Court fee, currently £410. It is possible to apply for a fee exemption in very limited circumstances.

What happens next?
The person that starts the divorce is called the Petitioner, the other person is called the Respondent. Proceedings are started in the Family Court. Once the Court has all the documents and the fee, a copy of the divorce petition is posted to the Respondent who is required to complete a form to confirm that they have received the divorce papers. This is called an 'acknowledgement of service'. The Court will then send the Petitioner a copy of the acknowledgement of service. The Petitioner then signs a statement and the Court examines all the paperwork and decides whether the divorce can proceed. If so, a date for Decree Nisi is issued to confirm that the divorce can proceed (but is not the final decree of divorce).

When can I get re-married?
Six weeks and one day after the Decree Nisi, the Petitioner can apply for the Decree Absolute. This is the final Decree.

If you are planning to re-marry it is sensible to wait until you have this before setting any dates. Things seldom go wrong but it is not unheard of!

How long does it take?
Usually between 4–6 months if the divorce is uncontested and there are no hitches. It is not usually necessary for either party to actually attend any Court hearings.

What if we have children?
As parents, it is generally better for you to calmly discuss and try to agree where and with whom the children will live and when they will spend time with the other parent. There is a legal presumption that both parents will be involved in the children’s lives. Discussions should include child maintenance. Advice about maintenance can be obtained from the Child Maintenance Service (previously the CSA). If an agreement can be reached there is no need for the Court to be involved.

What if we can’t agree?
The Court may have to become involved if it is decided that there is no alternative way to resolve the dispute outside of Court, for example by mediation. Mediation is about trying to reach a fair solution by discussion. An independent mediator will help you to communicate face to face in an attempt to reach an agreement. Mediators cannot give legal advice and both parties are still entitled to seek advice from their own solicitors.

What if there are financial issues to resolve?
It is advisable for both parties to disclose to the other documents such as payslips, bank statements and pension details to prove their financial position. This makes it clearer to see what is ‘in the pot’ before deciding how to fairly divide the assets. Finances can still be negotiated by agreement and need not be acrimonious however, financial affairs can be complicated and anyone who feels financially vulnerable should seek independent legal advice.

Can I protect myself before marriage?
Whilst they are still not technically enforceable in England and Wales it is possible to enter into a pre-nuptial agreement that sets out how property should be split in the event of a divorce. Each agreement is individually tailored and couples wanting to consider this route should both seek independent legal advice.

Despite the recession and the end of public funding (legal aid) for family matters, family breakdowns, separations and divorces are still a sad reality for many married couples.

According to the most recent Office for National Statistics (ONS) there were 114,720 divorces in 2013

For friendly, sympathetic expert advice and reduced rates, BFAWU members should contact Joanna McClean at Walkers Union on 0844 346 3227 or e-mail her: jmcclean@walkersunion.com
A COMMON STRATEGY FOR IMPROVING
HEALTH AND SAFETY IN THE FOOD AND DRINK
MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES 2015–2020

The 2015–2020 Common Strategy for improving health and safety in the food and drink manufacturing industries builds upon the successes of work previously done to reduce the incidence rate of occupational ill health and injury in the sector. It recognises and builds upon the achievements of those who have signed up to the ‘Recipe for Safety’ initiative and aims to further improve the sector’s health and safety performance.

The Food and Drink Manufacture Forum (FDMF) is a partnership between Trade Associations, Trade Unions and HSE and has worked hard since the first ‘Common Strategy’ was agreed to deliver events, initiatives and programmes to support and deliver the strategy.

The FDMF will continue to work in partnership to proactively take forward health and safety improvements through targeted initiatives and programmes that support delivery of the 2015–2020 Common Strategy. This is a forward-looking industry strategy for the wider H&S system, not a regulatory strategy and will not be enforced by HSE. A key driver should be proportionate health and safety management which supports and enables business productivity and innovation as well as protecting people.

Effective health and safety leadership, a focus on continuous improvement and the sharing of good practice will be required to achieve the strategy objectives. This strategy recognises that organisations are at different points on their health and safety journey and those already managing health and safety effectively may have less scope for improvement than others. However, a collective approach needs to be taken to improve the whole industry performance.

This document outlines the main objectives for delivery between 2015-2020 and outlines the different roles and responsibilities of the FDMF, Trade Associations, HSE, Trade Unions and individual companies in ensuring delivery.

The 2015-2020 Common Strategy has been agreed by all members of the FDMF and sets the key priority areas for the food and drink manufacturing sectors for the duration of the strategy.

Progress under Common Strategy

Injury Rates
Between 1990/1991 when the Common Strategy was first conceived and 2014 significant progress has been made in reducing the food and drink manufacturing sector’s injury rate.

Overall injury rate
(Over-7 day absence + specified injuries combined (3 day prior to RIDDOR 2013))
This has reduced significantly from an overall injury rate of 2805/100,000 workers in 1991 to 1135 /100,000 workers in 2014. This represents a 60% reduction in 23 years.

Major/specified injury rate
This has reduced significantly from an overall injury rate of 345 /100,000 workers in 1997 to 230/100,000 workers in 2014 . This represents a 33% reduction in 17 years.

Fatal injuries
Over the last 5 years there has been an average of 2 fatalities per year

Occupational ill health
Progress in relation to the reduction of cases of occupational ill health over the past 20 years is more difficult to measure because of the wide variety and changes of reporting and recording methods. It is also difficult to quantify the considerable progress the sector has made in recognising and managing its occupational health issues that may have resulted in preventing illness. However, there are some indicators of performance that can be used:
The occupational ill health rate for food/drink manufacture averaged over the 5-year period ending 2013/14 indicated 2850 cases/100,000 workers, below the 3240 cases/100,000 manufacturing average. In addition, during this period:

- attributable cancer registrations in food/drink manufacture were the lowest of any manufacturing sector;
- cases of occupationally-induced asthma remain above average mainly due to exposure in small or medium sized bakeries and other premises handling flour and associated ingredients.

### Objectives 2015–2020

The sector should be proud of its achievements to date, however the overall occupational injury rate is still over twice that of the manufacturing sector as a whole.

It is recognised that the food and drink manufacturing sector needs to build on its previous success and accelerate the reduction in occupational ill health and injury, closing the gap with the manufacturing sector as a whole. This is the goal over the next 5 years.

To achieve this aim the 2015-20 strategy has 4 specific objectives, which focus on the key causes of ill health and injury and promotes effective occupational health management.

These 4 objectives highlight the importance of effective leadership at all levels of the industry. Effective leadership is essential for success and needs to be demonstrated at Board level eg. via a board level H&S Champion or individual board level champions for each of the Common Strategy’s four priority areas. Leadership will also need to be demonstrated from the FDMF through to individual company directors, supervisors and team leaders to ensure a competent and engaged work force that can deliver the objectives outlined below.

Through good leadership, engaging with the workforce and targeting the main causes of sector ill health and injury then significant reductions in ill health and injury rates should be achieved.

#### 1 Injury reduction

Aim to reduce the overall food and drink manufacturing sector HSE RIDDOR reportable injury rate of 1135 by approximately 10% year on year between 2015 and 31st December 2020.

Target injury rate reductions per year are:

- Starting point 1st May 2015
- By 1st May 2016
- By 1st May 2017
- By 1st May 2018
- By 1st May 2019
- By 1st May 2020
- By 31st December 2020 (5% reduction as half a year)

4 specific objectives will also need to be demonstrated from the manufacturing sector needs to build on its previous success and accelerate the reduction in occupational ill health and injury, closing the gap with the manufacturing sector as a whole. This is the goal over the next 5 years.

To achieve this aim the 2015-20 strategy has 4 specific objectives, which focus on the key causes of ill health and injury and promotes effective occupational health management.

#### 2 Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSD)

This includes manual handling and upper limb disorders

- By 31st December 2020 all FDMF trade associations will have identified their key MSD hazards, and will have in place and will be following an action plan to reduce the number of MSD injuries. Areas to focus on include:
  - Demonstrate leadership of MSD issues at Board level
  - Secure commitment to the Recipe for Safety guidance
  - Assess MSD risks using an effective risk assessment method eg. use the ART MAC, VMAC, RAPP assessment tools or others
  - Remove or, where not reasonably practicable, reduce the MSD risks as low as is reasonably practicable eg. redesign tasks, change workstation design and layout, mechanisation, job rotation
  - Actively involved affected employees in the assessment, removal and reduction of MSD risks
  - Provide practical, task-specific MSD training
  - Apply root cause analysis to the investigation of MSD injuries

#### 3 Slips and trips

By 31st December 2020 all FDMF trade associations will have identified their key slip and trip hazards and have in place and will be following an action plan to reduce the number of slip and trip injuries. Areas to focus on include:

- Demonstrate leadership of slip and trip issues at Board level

#### 4 Occupational Health

‘Recipe for safety’ identifies the key occupational health issues for the food and drink manufacturing sectors. By 31st December 2020 all FDMF trade associations will have in place and will be following an action plan for continuous occupational health development and improvement. Areas to focus on include:

- Demonstrate leadership of OH issues at Board level
- Identify health issues relevant to their individual business circumstances
- Implement a programme to reduce their biggest cause of work related ill health
- Develop closer links with occupational health providers to involve them in the risk assessment process
- Involve employees in the management of occupational health – employees engaged in the process
- Specify Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for occupational health
- Establish procedures for monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of the OH management system

#### Delivering the strategy

The FDMF will:

- promote the Common Strategy, ensuring a consistent message on the four objectives
- develop an action plan to encourage delivery of the Common Strategy objectives
- monitor progress with the strategy objectives and plan until 2020
- introduce initiatives in line with the strategy
● use its experience and knowledge to determine and communicate the best ways to further reduce injuries and occupational ill health in the food and drink manufacturing industries
● act as a catalyst for positive change, evaluating new and original ideas in addition to the tried and tested methods
● encourage member organisations to adopt, promote and support best practice and initiatives agreed by the Forum
● work together and develop workplace level partnerships within the Forum.

HSE’s Food Manufacturing Sector will:
● support the sector in delivering action plans which aim to achieve the Common Strategy objectives
● chair and administer the FDMF
● update, maintain and develop the HSE food manufacture website
● ensure HSE inspectors are aware of the significant risks to target, and the guidance and tools available to tackle these
● participate in food industry H&S conferences and events.

Forum member organisations will:
● promote the Common Strategy with their members
● promote ‘Recipe for Safety’ guidance
● be encouraged to develop and implement an action plan which aims to deliver the Common Strategy objectives

This is reported in such detail as BFAWU is a major participant in the development (and implementation) of the Common Strategy.

We are running a number of campaigns to improve Health and Safety in the Workplace and, as well as the A4 posters you can see next to this article, we are gathering information about how Health and Safety issues are being recorded and how they are subsequently dealt with.

We need your help!

Your Shop Stewards and branch representatives have been provided with copies of a short questionnaire which we would like all members to complete. Please ask your representative for your copy.

To promote awareness of Health & Safety issues in the workplace, we have produce a series of A4 posters on the theme of Safety Matters!

If you would like a copy for your workplace, please contact the National President: ian.hodson@bfawu.org
Every year more people are killed at work than in wars. Most don’t die of mystery ailments, or in tragic ‘accidents’. They die because an employer decided their safety just wasn’t that important a priority. Workers’ Memorial Day (WMD) commemorates those workers.

Workers’ Memorial Day is held on 28 April every year. All over the world, workers and their representatives conduct events, demonstrations, vigils and a whole host of other activities to mark the day.

The day is also intended to serve as a rallying cry to ‘Remember the Dead, but Fight for the Living’.

In 2016 the theme for the day is Strong Laws – Strong enforcement – Strong Unions because across the world we are seeing growing attacks on health and safety protection – including in Britain, where the Government have removed protection from millions of self-employed workers. Across Europe, the European Commission pursues an equally dangerous deregulatory strategy.

Strong laws are not enough if they are not enforced. We need proper inspections and enforcement action against those who break the laws. Here in the UK the number of inspections has fallen dramatically in the past five years. In many other countries, enforcement has always been non-existent.

That is why we also need strong unions. Unionised workplaces are safer, yet the Government is trying to stop unions protecting the health and safety of their members by restricting the rights and actions of health and safety representatives.

A lot of people forget to insulate their windows and doors. For doors, there is a rubber self-adhesive weather strip you can stick to the inside of the door frame, and letterboxes that have brushes on to stop draughts. All these can be bought for a relatively small amount and be fitted quite easily. Windows can be double- or triple-glazed or, if they can’t, then fixing film over the windows can help stop the drafts. DIY stores supply this for a small cost and it can be fitted easily with some double sided tape.

If you take these simple steps, you are helping out with climate change by not losing as much heat from your home, and saving your money in the long run. Fuel poverty can cause anxiety to people who get frightened they cannot pay for their heating. They turn their heating off and , as a result, these already vulnerable people are at risk of illness and even death. Think of how these people are going to survive this and future winter. Keep an eye on them and make sure that they are OK. On television there is a great advert for the Co-operative where a young person sees that an elderly person cannot get out of his house because of the cold and ice and he goes and gets them their shopping. This is what we should all try and do, to bring our communities together, not ‘I’m alright Jack, see to yourself’.

Bring the community together and we will bring the country together and the union will get stronger, to fight this appalling Tory government.

Environmental issues are now union issues and we should take it into the workplace. We have to start thinking about reducing our carbon footprint. We as unions are under pressure and have to focus on saving jobs and cutting costs, but if we fail to combat climate change all that will eventually prove futile.

Employers now claim they are facing tight budgets and they are looking to save every penny that they can, so with union action to buck the trend of job losses within the industry, we should look at greening the workplace, with energy savings through better efficiency that can help with the financial savings of the business.

Please follow the link below for help with home insulation.

The TUC coordinates activities across the country, publishing a comprehensive listing of events and suggestions.

A listing of the global activities is available from the Hazards website.

Find an event near you
See our list of 2016 WMD activities to find out what’s happening in your area. If you are organising an event for Workers Memorial Day and would like it displayed on the TUC website, then please email the details to:

healthandsafety@tuc.org.uk.

Resources
For resources on Workers Memorial day – including ribbons and car stickers – please contact the Greater Manchester Hazards centre at:

mail@gmhazards.org.uk.

SPRING 2016
On Friday 2nd October 2015 members from Region 5 took part in Thompsons/Inter-Union 5-a-side football match.

We had been invited to this event previously but we were unable to get a team together. This year, however, thanks to members from Rathbones Branch 558 we were able to take part.

The eight members of the team were Sean Molloy, Kyle Cleobury, Shaun Penn, Daniel Tewolde, Martin Monieth, Scott Sharp, Tim Upton and Tesfamariam Teweldemedmin.

Most of the members had been on the night shift and again that evening too also they had never played together as a team. We started our first match playing Thompsons Solicitors which we lost but we fought well.

The following 3 matches we played were with GMB, ASLEF and Unison. We were the victors in all these matches which resulted in our team qualifying for the semi-finals.

In the semi-finals we played Unison and this was a nail-biting round which resulted in a draw. This took us to a penalty shootout – which we won 4 -1.

The final was between the Bakers Union and Thompsons Solicitors. We fought a tough battle – however we just missed out, losing 2 -1.

Well done to all those who took part and bring on next year where we will undoubtedly bring the trophy home. Maybe we should have 2 teams next year! Strength in unity!
On the 7th December 2015 it gave me great pleasure to present Steve Hanson from Hovis, Bradford with his 40 year badge.

I have known Steve for over 33 years and he has always been a loyal, fully-committed and dedicated member of the BFAWU. On only his second day of employment with the company, he went on strike. Steve went on to say how much things have changed over the years and most of it is for the worse.

I would particularly like to thank the management team of Hovis, Bradford for their hospitality and for generously matching the cheque for £150 that Steve received.

Ian Wood
Region 5 Organising Secretary

The photo shows Ian Wood with Steve Hanson and Dave Suddards.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

Christina Simpson, (below) who is soon to leave Thompson Solicitors, attended the Region 4 Regional Council meeting and was presented with flowers, a Region 4 T-shirt and a Region 4 Diary by Roy Streeter (Region 4 Regional officer) in appreciation of the help, advice and support she has given to our members in the past few years.
Well Patrick, thank you for agreeing to have this interview with me and massive congratulations on this huge achievement. How does it feel to part of a very exclusive 40 year service club?

Well it’s very hard to say really, I am just really happy to have worked for this company for so long and been part of the union since I started 40 years ago.

My first question for you is what is your single most memorable moment in your 40 years here at Stoke?

Strangely enough it had nothing to do with actually making cake here. It was many years ago. I came to work as I would normally, but when I arrived I saw a large gathering of people outside the bakery. I thought it was a strike or something. But as I got closer to the factory I realised there had been a fire. There was quite a significant amount of damage to the building.

What I really remember about that incident was how the whole workforce and business pulled together as a group to get the factory back open and running, within what I remember only being a week or two.”

Now that you’re in your 40th year as a member of the BFAWU, is there anything you would like to highlight on how trade unions have made this site a better place to work?

I think the main thing I have taken from being part of the union, is the peace of mind that no matter what happens in the workplace, if I was in trouble for something, I would not have to face it alone, I knew I would have one of my trade union reps fighting my corner.

Comfort in knowing if I ever had an accident, I could always rely on the legal backing my union provides for me, not to be exploited by NO WIN, NO FEE high street solicitors!

With all your experience, what advice do you have for those just joining the world of work?

Deny everything, and blame the night shift! [both laughing]

No really! [more laughter]

Seriously though I think I have been incredibly lucky over the years. I do enjoy my job, working with people that I like.”

This factory has been a very stable workplace for many families in this area, we have seen many generations of the same family working here (myself included), which I think adds to the relationship we all have here at Stoke.

We have seen the likes of the Pot Banks, Wedgewood’s, the Coal Mines and Rists all be shut down or moved to other parts of the world… but Stoke Bakery is still here and still going strong.

And I think you should be proud of being a big part of the success that is Mr Kipling Stoke, Bro. Green.

Well there is only one other thing left to do. And I am immensely honoured to be the one to present you with your 40 Year Service Award. You have my maximum respect.

Once more Congratulations!

Solidarity, Sisters and Brothers!
JOIN THE BAKERS, FOOD AND ALLIED WORKERS UNION
Application forms from any Shop Steward or, to find out more, complete the form below

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

BAKERS, FOOD & ALLIED WORKERS UNION
FREEPOST RTKG-RJRE-CJAT
Stanborough House
Great North Road
WELWYN GARDEN CITY
AL8 7BR

I would like to know more about the benefits of belonging to the Union:

Name (Block letters) ..........................................................................................................................................................
Address ..........................................................................................................................................................................
Postcode ..........................................................................................................................................................................
Contact Phone ............................................................ Email address ..........................................................................
Where employed at present ...................................................
Occupation ..........................................................................................................................................................................
Signature ..........................................................................................................................................................................
Date ..............................................................................................................................................................................

Please complete details above and hand to your local representative, Branch Official, Regional Office (for addresses see above) or send to Head Office at the FREEPOST address shown.