Jeremy Corbyn addresses the 100th BFAWU Conference
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EDITOR’S NOTES

" Why, according to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation are 14 million people, mostly children, living in poverty"”

Ronnie Draper @ronniebfawu

AS THE FESTIVE SEASON approaches fast, the debacle of Theresa Mays’ Brexit continues unabated like a Noel Edmonds gameshow (Deal or No Deal?).

The difference is that on the gameshow the least you win is a penny, but under the Tory version it is difficult to see any winners other than the super rich with their offshore bank accounts, tax dodge arrangers, hedge fund managers and a multiplicity of directorships.

The architect of it all, David Cameron, took the option of washing his hands of it all by resigning – safe in the knowledge that he is financially secure for life and now we are seeing the start of a trickle of resignations that has the potential to become a torrent.

The question remains, however, will dear old Theresa jump before she’s pushed and will the Tories cling to power?

We can’t wait that long, Jake!

Personally I don’t care what May does, but I do care when toffs like Jacob Rees Mogg make statements that ‘all will be fine in 50 years time’.

With the greatest stretch of my imagination I’m not going to be here in 50 years, my children are unlikely to be here and my grandchildren will be knocking on. The only consolation is that Jacob could well have joined me.

We need a General Election

I much prefer the scenario where May resigns and a general election is called, giving Jeremy Corbyn and Labour the opportunity to form a government that actually cares what happens to the less well off in this country.

In the 6th richest economy in the country, why are more than a million people dependent on foodbanks to feed themselves and their families.

Why, according to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation are 14 million people, mostly children, living in poverty, why are the injured and seriously ill languishing on waiting lists and hospital trolleys and why is homelessness increasing as we come to the coldest season of the year?

None of these are as a result of an ‘unforeseen budgetary oversight’ – instead they have been a deliberate, orchestrated, politically-driven attack on the working class.

Austerity – all in it together?

Austerity was a political choice by the Tories not a financial necessity. The decision to repeal protective employment legislation was a heinous conspiracy to drive down wages while hampering the ability to fight back. The introduction of Universal Credit has driven people to poverty and despair.

The selling off of the lucrative parts of our NHS to their rich friends has been nothing but a shameful scandal. It is no surprise as it is merely replicating the sell off of all our nationalised industries, now in the hands of the powerful and wealthy, giving them the opportunity to exploit the poor even more and, of course, the scandal of selling off council housing stock, perpetrated by Thatcher, has driven many into the greedy hands of Rachmann type landlords charging usurious rents or, even worse, onto the streets to sleep rough.

It is a national disgrace that is showing no signs of improving.

Safe on our streets?

The latest debacle is that many crimes that were once arrestable offences are now not even investigated due to cuts of 21,000 to our Police Force.
This follows on from cuts to Fire Services, library closures, crumbling schools, savage cuts to social services and closure of the Sure Start programme – all of which begs questions of how much more are we prepared to take? What will be the straw that breaks the camels back? When will we wake up and smell the coffee and when will we rise like lions from slumber?

But what can we DO?
These clichés point to the predicament that millions are facing on a daily basis. We need a Labour government in league with strong, campaigning trade unions to start the fightback.

We had the skeleton of a manifesto on which we could have taken the country forward. We could have rebuilt a waviering economy whilst giving millions hope for the future.

Commitments on earnings, housing, student costs, employment protective legislation and the pledge to go after tax avoiders were obviously not enough to convince the majority of constituencies to vote for Labour in 2017, but just 16 months later, plummeting living standards, combined with the certainty of more of the same to come, must surely concentrate the mind.

Austerity was a political choice by the Tories – not a financial necessity
If we need a tie breaker or game changer, let’s pledge to introduce a new criminal offence for members of the Tory government of crimes against society where those who sit on the jury are those who have slept rough, those who have suffered under universal credit, those deprived of medical or mental health care, those forced to beg to survive and the millions of others whose lives have suffered because of the ‘X’ being put in the wrong box.

Seasonal thoughts
So as we come to the festive season and our thoughts turn to families, friends and associates also thing of those who will be suffering, often in lonely silence, condemned to a life of poverty by some of the richest in our society and think about what we can do to change their plight.

May I take this opportunity to wish all our members, their families, our FTOs and office staff, our learning project workers and our many service providers a very merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous new year.

Ronnie Draper
General Secretary

NATIONAL PRESIDENT
IAN HODSON

“There seems to be a real appetite in our workplaces for building our Union and getting organised and we must take advantage of this opportunity to recruit workers in order to improve our conditions and carry our progressive ideas forward with the weight of a healthy membership”

As I’m writing this, the Tory government is falling apart before our eyes. Their half-baked deal on Brexit has unravelled and the Prime Minister, Theresa May has lost all authority. She appears to be naked and alone – not just in the EU but in her own party. She is clearly incapable of delivering a Brexit deal that commands even the support of her own Cabinet, let alone the hardened Tory Eurosceptics on the back benches.

The general election result of 2017 amounted to a vote of No Confidence in Theresa May and her government. The lack of a parliamentary majority and a divided country galvanised the negotiating position of the European Union and left them holding all the aces. The problem won’t be solved by changing the Tory leader, and a ‘People’s Vote’ will only keep the Tories in power and divide the country even more.

In May’s defence, the whole reason we are in this chaos is down to her predecessor, David Cameron. Fearful of the rise of UKIP, he put his party before his country and promised an EU referendum during the run-up to a general election that he never expected to win. No sooner had the EU referendum result been announced, he ran away from all responsibility, despite still holding a parliamentary majority. Cameron is a hypocrite, a narcissist and a coward of the highest order and he will never be forgiven for this shameful betrayal of UK citizens.

It’ll take your mind off things...
The timing of the EU referendum in 2016 was designed to distract us from the real issues that we faced in our country – widening inequality, a huge growth in homelessness, a crisis in our NHS, division in our communities and public services at breaking point. Whilst the BFAWU holds a long-standing position in relation to the lack of democracy within the EU, we didn’t feel that a referendum was the most important issue of the day. It was the social issues at home, along with the endless attacks on the working class that needed our attention. The EU referendum, its result and subsequent toing and froing for the last two years has ensured that virtually every other issue affecting working class men, women and children has been conveniently kicked into the long grass.

We need to ignore the spin from the mainstream media and accept the fact that the blame for the whole sorry situation the country finds itself in, is down to the Conservatives. They subjected us to needless austerity and then offered us a Referendum – which amounted to nothing other than an illusion of choice between two different types of dog-muck.
They put party before country and furthered the interests of the wealthy above those whose lives are hell on wheels. We’ve had eight painful years at the mercy of quite possibly the worst political class the country has ever seen. These sociopathic, ignorant, arrogant and vindictive Tories have failed us spectacularly and should be punished with extreme prejudice at the ballot box, not thrown another lifeline by a ‘People’s Vote’.

So let’s have a general election, wipe them out and consign their disgusting racist, anti-working class political agenda to the wastebin of history, where it belongs.

**BFAWU: making a difference**

I have recently met some of our members and representatives whilst visiting sites up and down the country. I’ve listened to their concerns about our industry whilst seeing some of the good work they are doing on behalf of our Union.

I can’t praise them enough for the work they are doing in these difficult times. The BFAWU’s long history of radicalism and our progressive agenda for change has seen our Union punch above its weight time and again against an extremely negative backdrop. Some of the excellent media coverage of our recent campaigns has demonstrated that there is a real interest in what we are doing.

There seems to be a real appetite in our workplaces for building our Union and getting organised and we must take advantage of this opportunity to recruit workers in order to improve our conditions and carry our progressive ideals forward with the weight of a healthy membership.

History shows us that the collective strength of working people can achieve amazing things and the Labour Movement can be an unstoppable force when mobilised.

There has never been a better time for Trade Unions to get their mojo back. Let’s make it so, and ensure that the BFAWU are at the forefront of it.

**Looking forward**

So, what are we planning in 2019? We intend to build on our current campaigns in relation to fast-food workers and zero hours contracts, along with the development of our safety and environment reps.

**The environment**

We will be supporting the good work that Sarah Woolley (No.5 Regional Organising Secretary) is doing around the Union’s ‘Green Stuff’ programme, with the aim of possibly holding a Conference where representatives, employers and experts can get together in order to discuss the environment and how we can collectively raise standards in our workplaces.

**Organising and recruitment**

In addition to this, we will be looking at effective membership drives in all our current sites and how we can modernise to ensure that the Union is here for the next one-hundred years. We need to rebuild our structures and use better means of communication, rather than the ‘grapevine’.

Our representatives and members need to be pro-active rather than reactive, with regular branch meetings taking place and better training programmes. A strong shop steward system is the backbone of the Union. It makes us visible to workers and to management. It enables communication, representation and mobilisation within the workplace. For these reasons, it is vital that we have effective BFAWU representatives in our branches. All our members must be represented on site and every member must know who their shop steward is.

**Sexual exploitation**

In January, we intend to launch a campaign to end the normalisation of sexual harassment in the workplace. We will be working with ‘Women Against Rape’, who will be helping us to develop a plan of action that means we can support our members properly and tackle this desperately important issue.

We have been hearing disturbing stories of how precarious workers are put in unacceptable situations where managers have the ability to decide how many hours a person can work, who have then offered cash in return for sexual favours. We will be demanding prosecution and conviction for this kind of exploitation.

Treating workers with dignity and respect has become a lost art in this country. The endless race to the bottom with regard to people and their terms and conditions has led to a culture of de-humanisation where employees are seen as nothing more than commodities – reflected in terms such as ‘human resources’ or ‘natural wastage’ when talking about workers. Again, we must use our collective strength and stop it.

**We shall remember them**

In November this year, we commemorated one hundred years since the end of World War I. As usual, documentaries of the horrors of that war poured forth from our TV screens, our newspapers and political classes glorified it and the poppy police were out in force, condemning anyone who didn’t wear one, deciding which colour poppy people should wear and whether or not they were disrespecting the dead.

The First World War was an unnecessary conflict with squabbling royal cousins at the heart of it. Our own royal family changed their surname from the German ‘Saxe-Coburg Gotha’ to ‘Windsor’ because they feared a UK revolution similar to that in Russia. Millions died for the vanity and bloodlust of elites and to see people like Tony Blair, David Cameron and members of the royal family in their fineries ‘honouring’ the dead at the Cenotaph is sickening.

Make no mistake; if these people had the chance to send people to their deaths all over again in the interests of a network of wealthy families or big corporations, they would. ‘Never again’ must mean exactly that, and if we’re serious about commemorating our fallen and the industrial scale loss of life in all wars, we must ensure that it’s reflected in our foreign policy and in terms of which countries we decide to sell arms to. **Otherwise, Remembrance Sunday will amount to nothing but mawkish window-dressing for flag-waving jingoists.**

I would like to thank all our clerical staff at Head office and across all regions, along with our Full-Time Officials, representatives and members for their work and support this year. On behalf of the Executive Council, I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

**In solidarity**

Ian Hodson
National President
JEREMY CORBYN'S ADDRESS TO CONFERENCE

This Union is a vital part of our movement and I say movement because Labour is no longer just a political party centred within the walls of Westminster. We’re now a real mass movement. We have a record number of members and affiliated members across the UK, full of energy, full of ideas on how we can improve our society and make it work for everyone.

We have over 550,000 individual members of the Party, the biggest in my lifetime and I want it to grow, to 600,000 and then beyond that. But we have also made some changes and fantastic new initiatives such as our Community Organising Unit, bringing people together to organise in local communities around the issues that matter to them; wages, housing for young people, secure housing for older people, safer streets, better health service, better social care, campaigning in our communities, recognising that behind every community centre, every library, every nursery, every park, there has always been a popular campaign that brought that about. Our Community Organising Unit will be part of those campaigns all over the country, it’s making politics real, every day, to the lives of people, every day.

[APPLAUSE]

And we also have new types of political events, such as the Labour Live Festival, which is happening next week on 16th June in Tottenham. You’ll have musicians, speakers, active people from all kinds of communities, Trade Unions, all coming together in one place, to learn from each other, enjoy ourselves, whilst reflecting on how far our movement has come and how much further we have to go and we’ll be hearing from some of your very own strikers, who will be speaking alongside other activists on their experiences, young workers fighting against the reality and injustices of the economy.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

Anyone can buy tickets at www.labour.live and I would encourage everyone to do so and don’t miss out and I can assure you the weather next Saturday, it’s going to be just fine, it’s going to be just like here in Southport …

[APPLAUSE] …because north London’s always sunny, you know that.

Well, Tottenham, anyway, I won’t talk about football – I come from the other bit of North London.

[LAUGHTER]

…because it’s by bringing people together and developing our ideas, getting active in our workplaces and in our local communities, that we can genuinely bring about the lasting change that we want to bring to our society, our country and indeed our world and that’s why Trade Unions are an integral part of both our movement and our democracy as a whole.

Earlier this week I joined friends and colleagues to celebrate 150 years of the TUC, 150 years ago all the elements of the Trade Union movement came together in Manchester to form the TUC. They brought together different traditions, traditions of guilds, traditions of high skilled Unions, traditions of general Unions, they came together to form the TUC and it was historic in every sense of the word. But we have to learn our history, we have to learn the struggles of the past, the sacrifices that were made and those that went to jail as part of those sacrifices. We do understand and remember those, but we also have to learn from those in order to make sure that the future is bright for Trade Unions and the Labour movement as a whole. We learn from the past, the better that we can form the future for ourselves.

You have a unique and extremely powerful potential strength for bringing about the changes we want. It’s no wonder then that Unions are so regularly attacked by the privileged few, who are doing very well for themselves out of the status quo, while everyone else is forced to work in an economy dominated by stark inequalities. Low quality jobs, low wages and slow economic growth.

The richest 10% of the people of this country own, wait for it, 45% of the nation’s wealth. I’ll just give you those figures again, the richest 10% own 45% of the nation’s wealth and at the same time, we have energy bills through the roof, the scrouge and the immorality of rough sleeping homelessness continually on the rise, a National Health Service and social care system on its knees, with examples, awful examples of NHS nurses having to resort to food banks just to survive. What does that say about modern Britain?

Skilled, dedicated nurses in the NHS having to access a food bank just to make ends meet. These are not complicated or academic issues, these are problems that are hampering the lives of real people all around us, everyday. People that go through the most incredible stress about how they’re going to feed their children, care for those elderly people that need support that are not getting the support they need and they are issues which must be tackled by our movement at the earliest electoral opportunity we get. I’m ready for it, as soon as they call another General Election. We’re out there, we’ll do it and we’ll win it.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

And we’ll win it because there’s so many issues we want to address, as soon as we get into government. We want to bring utilities and industries such as water, rail and Royal Mail into, back into public ownership.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

I did ask Theresa May on Wednesday which would last longer, her premiership or the franchise for Northern Rail.

[LAUGHTER]

It was too difficult a question, she couldn’t possibly answer it.

[LAUGHTER]

Too complicated. But beyond that, we want to do a lot of other things, one of which is to create a National Education Service. I want the legacy of the Labour government to be a National Education Service in the same way that the legacy of the 1945–1951 Labour government, despite all the difficulties was, and is the National Health Service. A National Education Service that fundamentally says there has to be free education up to degree level for everybody, education from cradle to grave, education as a right, not a privilege, not a commodity, as a right.

[APPLAUSE]

And to make sure that during those very, very important, very early years, from two onwards, there is a nursery place for every child and there is a free meal on the table for
every child in nursery and primary schools. Hungry children don’t learn.

Free school meals makes a massive difference to the health and wellbeing of so many children and I am determined that we achieve that. But we also want young people to be offered the training they need for the jobs they want to do in the future, so we don’t create a division between academic education and training and vocational education, they are one and the same. You need surveyors, you need engineers, you need lawyers, you also need electricians, plumbers and electronics engineers. We need to have all of our young people getting the chance and the opportunity, not to be exploited through second-rate apprenticeships, but to get top quality training, either academic or vocational or a combination of both, but above all an opportunity for every young person to get the education they need and can benefit from and not be threatened with £50,000 worth of debt because they wanted to get an education.

[APPLAUSE]

But it’s also about living standards, it’s also about what the real living wage should be. It’s expected to be at least £10 an hour by 2020 and that’s what we want to do in government. We want to achieve £10 an hour by 2020 for everybody in the country.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

And that’s what we can do in government, but we also must remember that, as a Trade Union, you don’t have to wait until then. You can and do act now. That’s why the recent action taken by Bakers Union members at McDonald’s was just so impressive. You took action in an industry that has relatively little history of Trade Unionism in Britain, the Fast Food Campaign. This is so important, in an ever-changing, volatile capitalist economy such as ours, it’s essential for Unions to push into new industries as they appear or disappear to represent wherever they earn their living and that our Unions develop even more into a participatory society which includes everybody and excludes nobody, giving individuals genuine power over their own lives.

We’re not just fighting for a redistribution of wealth through our economy, but a massive redistribution of power to workers and non-workers alike, because everybody is creative, everybody has something to offer, something to teach and something to learn. Why shouldn’t people have a right to decide as much of their own lives as possible?

I go around talking to people all the time and it’s obviously, obvious to me, that people are fed up with always being talked down to, fed up with being told their jobs don’t matter, that’s why they’re stuck on £8.00 an hour while others earn millions or even billions. Fed up of being told their lives don’t matter, which is why our NHS has been cut year on year, while others, the wealthy ones, can rely on private healthcare. Or fed up of being told their children’s futures don’t matter, which is why they’re being denied apprenticeships, opportunities and forced to pay thousands for a degree, instead of being recipients of free education, that everybody deserves. That’s why we must take back control from the old boys’ network in the city of Leeds and give it to the people.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

That was why seeing the McStrikers getting organised, taking action and taking power into their own hands was so inspiring. It’s been an inspiration to other working people in similar positions and for other activists across the Labour movement and your work has inspired many of us and inspired us in the Labour Party as well. It’s always been said that the Labour movement, that the big ideas needed and the big changes in history don’t come from the leaders or those at the top, the big changes always come from below, from the grass roots. That’s always been the case and it’s absolutely the case today, inspired by your actions and the work of other activists across the Union movement, such as your colleagues and your Sisters and Brothers in Unite the Union and the action they’re taking at TGI Fridays at the moment.

[APPLAUSE]

And I’m very happy and very proud to work with the Bakers Union and Unite the Union in all of these campaigns, because it’s Unions coming together and all of us coming together that will achieve change. So I’m today announcing that Labour’s five-point plan for hospitality, restaurant and fast food workers is a reality. These are the five main points which we believe workers in that sector absolutely deserve.

Firstly, we’ve committed to a real living wage of at least £10 an hour by 2020 for all workers.

[APPLAUSE]

Whilst abolishing the lower youth rates, because we believe that if you’re 18, you’re old enough to work …

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

... and you’re old enough to be paid decently for the work that you do. We want regular hours for all, everybody in work. That means we will ban zero hours contracts …

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]
...and require all workers to be given contracts with a guaranteed minimum number of hours that reflects the average worked each week. Thirdly …

[APPLAUSE]

we will legislate to ensure that full rights of Trade Union representation and collective bargaining comes with your work. This means we will repeal the Trade Union Act …

[APPLAUSE]

which was only ever designed to suppress the power of organised labour. And we will roll out Sectoral Collective Bargaining. This will be very significant to many industries, including your own, allowing Unions to set fair wages and fair conditions across the whole sector, that will also have the effect of encouraging …

[APPLAUSE]

many more in organised workplaces to join a Union.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

And we have listened to campaigns run by yourselves and other Unions, such as Unite and we want 100% of tips that you receive to go to the staff themselves and not be controlled or kept by the employer.

[APPLAUSE]

So we will legislate to stop employers deducting tips and introducing false administration fees and pocketing so-called service charges that are automatically added to bills, using tips to cover the cost of breakages …

[APPLAUSE]

till shortages, customers not paying or even credit card transaction fees. We believe these are all part of running a business. It should be paid for by the business and not by the staff and the tips that they receive.

[APPLAUSE]

And fifthly, fifthly, we will take strong action, very strong action to tackle harassment and in particular sexual harassment in the workplace, which is brought about through inequality of power and is a scourge for far too many in the service industries.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

This means we will give statutory rights to Trade Union Equality Reps, reinstate third party harassment provisions which made employers liable for harassment experienced by staff at work and make sure that when people experience harassment, their contracts don’t stop them from speaking out against those that have harassed them.

[APPLAUSE]

We want all five of these pledges to be available to all workers in the hospitality, restaurant and fast food sectors, as well as further afield where applicable, regardless of whether the worker is on full-time, part-time, temporary or permanent contracts. Recently I was in Glasgow and I met with a large group of young hospitality workers, from mainly Bakers Union and Unite. They came together in protest at the sort of abuses that I’ve just mentioned. I was very impressed, I was moved by their determination to stand up to the exploitative practices and equally by their strong vision of reformed labour market. Young women who stood up and explained the harassment they had suffered, the abuse they had suffered, particularly amongst very small employers. The isolation of young workers in small restaurants, cafés, pubs and so on, that need that support of a Union and collective action. That’s why a Labour government will make these your rights as workers, to make your work pay and make work secure for you, to redress the imbalance of power, the imbalance where an isolated worker is left to fend for themselves because nobody’s speaking up for them. So my message to anyone listening or watching this speech, either here today or online, if you’re not in a Union, join one.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

Get in a Union and become a Union member.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

The changes that I’ve outlined are ones that can be brought about when we work together, the Labour Party and the Trade Union movement. They are the opportunities that can be made real, instead of just accepting what little we are given, we stand up together as a movement to demand our fair share. The establishment will oppose us, much of the media will deride us and indeed occasionally some newspapers are personally quite critical of me, I can’t believe it, but they are.

[LAUGHTER]

But I’ll tell you what, when you’re being attacked by billionaire bosses living in tax havens, I’m proud of it, I don’t care …

[APPLAUSE]

… because we’re standing up for what is right.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

And unscrupulous employers will discourage us, but we cannot let that stop us, because ours is a message of hope and optimism, of a better, more equal, fairer society. It’s not just possible, but also very necessary here and all around the world. I don’t know when the next election will come, we are not in control of that, but we’re individually in control of what we do, whether we join a Union, whether we organise in our workplace and our community, whether we start changing peoples’ lives for the better right now. It’s only by doing this that we can go further than any generation of Trade Unionists or any Labour government has ever gone before. To create an economy and a society that really does reflect the democratic socialist aspirations we have of a society that works for the many, not the few.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]
BFAWU members took action at the Ivy House after 4 of their colleagues were sacked for no reason other than they were on zero hours contracts.

Workers at the Ivy House pub in Nunhead SE15, the first co-operative pub in London, took wildcat action to call for the reinstatement of their workmates; for the abolition of zero hour contracts and for the BFAWU to be recognised by the employer.

The strike lasted 3 days and ended when the management committee of the Ivy House agreed to meet the workers' demands.

Workers at the pub have already started talking to other workers in the area (many of whom are on zero hours contracts themselves) to encourage them to join the BFAWU.

We welcome our new members and our latest recognised branch and congratulate them on their success.
Fast food workers around the world rise up for their rights

Fast food workers around the world showed their determination to fight for rights and recognition on October 4, the IUF’s International Fast Food Workers’ Day. Across the globe, workers and unions held strikes and rallies and demonstrated mutual solidarity and support in the struggle for decent pay and conditions and union recognition.

In the US, on October 4, fast food workers in Chicago went on strike and rallied outside the McDonald’s headquarters, where some 50 protestors were arrested. In Milwaukee, workers also walked off the job, shutting down a McDonald’s outlet during the rush lunch. Their actions followed walkouts by McDonald’s workers two days earlier in Flint and Detroit, where demonstrators were also arrested. In the UK, workers at McDonald’s and TGI Fridays restaurants and Wetherspoons pubs took industrial action and held rallies, and were joined by striking Uber Eats and Deliveroo couriers. Labour Party Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell joined the union picket line and rally in London’s Leicester Square.

In the Asia/Pacific region, IUF affiliates in Hong Kong, Indonesia and the Philippines, among others, showed their support for the global fight for fast food workers’ rights, while trade unionists and Burger King workers in Spain demonstrated against the recent dismissals of union members and activists.

On October 3rd and 4th, IUF member unions representing fast food workers in Argentina, Barbados, Belgium, Brazil, Canada and the USA, Colombia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Italy, New Zealand (by skype), Spain, Thailand and the IUF’s Scandinavian affiliates organised in the Nordic HRCT Union came together in an international fast food union meeting convened by the IUF in London to share experience and strategy.

Participants joined the London rallies, expressed their support for the growing number of strikes at Marriott hotels in cities across the US and affirmed their opposition to the ILOs proposed ‘partnership’ with McDonald’s through the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth.
**PCL Transport**

We are proud to announce that on 22nd August 2018, PCL Transport 24/7 signed a Recognition Agreement with Bakers Food and Allied Workers Union (BFAWU).

Over the past 12 months PCL has undergone significant changes from a network and structure perspective, focusing heavily on creating a safer working environment, being a great place to work and on improving service to our customers through innovation and effective engagement with our employees and agencies. This being further supported with the launch of our values, which are:

- Protect our people, we put the safety of ourselves and each other first
- Pride in our manners and in how we behave
- Provide great service to each other and our customers
- Partner with all our teams, community and Union

The partnership with BFAWU is a fantastic and essential step forward in supporting the new direction of PCL and helps us further improve and build upon our values and in making PCL a great place to work for all of our employees.

The Bakers Food and Allied Workers Union are a trusted and well-respected Union of over 150 years. They offer great support to workers not just within the working environment, but also at home. They lead the way in representing the workers and are forward thinking in championing learning and development for everyone, not just for their members. In addition, their own values very much mirror ours.

As part of our new partnership the BFAWU will also be opening a learning centre at the Head Office of PCL in Hatfield. The learning centre will offer a wide range of free courses such as English and Maths City and Guilds, which is open to every PCL employee. They can also offer bespoke learning on any hobbies or interests too and have a suite of courses, which enables both employees and managers to complete training and development in business and leadership skills, which supports our succession planning.

This is a momentous and proud day for all concerned and we look forward to working in partnership with BFAWU going forward.

Paula Stenning  
PCL Head of HR

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**Quorn Foods**

A new Recognition Agreement was signed on 23rd of August 2018 by Quorn Foods in Methwold! After constructive dialogue between the union and the company over the last couple of years, common goals within Learning, Equality and Diversity and Health and Safety were identified and both parties committed to deliver them.

We would like to thank all members on site for their patience during the process and all involved in the campaign for their support and dedication.

The company was originally conceived in 1985 by Marlow Foods, a joint venture between RHM and ICI. In 1990, RHM sold its shares to ICI. In 1993, Marlow Foods became a part of the newly formed Zeneca group, later AstraZeneca.

In 2003 AstraZeneca sold Marlow Foods, including the Quorn business, to Montagu Private Equity for £72m. Montagu sold the business on to Premier Foods in 2005 for £172m.

In 2011 Premier Foods sold Quorn to Exponent Private Equity and Intermediate Capital Group for £205 million. In 2015, the owners put the company up for sale via a business auction process, attracting bidders such as Danone, Kerry Group, McCain Foods and Nomad Foods. It was eventually sold to Monde Nissin Corporation (Philippines) for £550m.

Lukasz Bemka  
R3 Organising Regional Secretary

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**RECOGNITION AGREEMENTS!**

John McNamara (General Manager of Operations), Paula Stenning (Head of HR), Paul Winter (Business Unit Director) with George Atwall (R3 Regional Officer) and Lukasz Bemka (R3 Organising Regional Secretary)
In 2019 we will be campaigning to make all our workplaces a no go area for any form of sexual harassment. We will be working with an organisation called Women Against Rape – an organisation that will be advising and offering training and support across the whole of our union. We will be developing policies that we want our employers to sign up too.

It can no longer be acceptable to ignore this issue either by pretending it didn’t happen, blaming the victim or by just trying to reassign the perpetrator.

We will be demanding those found guilty face dismissal and prosecution. As a union we represent across many wide and varied employers some that deal directly with customers and some that don’t and we want those that deal directly with the public to be protected in their workplace also and so we will be calling for a zero tolerance against those that feel it’s OK to sexually harass/abuse in our shops, stores pubs or anywhere our members work.

What is sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature.

It has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a worker, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

Something can still be considered sexual harassment even if the alleged harasser didn’t mean for it to be. It also doesn’t have to be intentionally directed at a specific person.

Experiencing sexual harassment is one of the most difficult situations a worker can face.

All workers are protected from sexual harassment in the workplace. This applies to one-off incidents and ongoing incidents. This protection comes from both employment law and criminal law, depending on the circumstances involved.

How does sexual harassment happen?

Sexual harassment can happen in any number of ways, including:

- written or verbal comments of a sexual nature, such as remarks about an employee’s appearance, questions about their sex life or offensive jokes
- displaying pornographic or explicit images
- emails with content of a sexual nature
- unwanted physical contact and touching
- sexual assault.

An employer should make clear to workers what sort of behaviour would be considered sexual harassment and that it is unacceptable.

Sexual assault and physical threats

Some types of sexual harassment, such as sexual assault and other physical threats, are a criminal matter as well as an employment matter.

Criminal matters should be reported to the police.
What If I report someone who is facing a criminal action?

If a complaint is reported to police, or criminal court proceedings are being pursued, an employer must still investigate the complaint as an employment matter. An employer may then follow its disciplinary procedure, without awaiting the outcome of criminal proceedings, provided this can be done fairly.

Who can it happen to?

Sexual harassment can happen to anyone at any time, in any place. This includes the workplace. However, there are many things an employer and its workers can do to minimise the risk.

Sexual harassment can happen to men and women.

Workers can be sexually harassed by people of the same sex or the opposite sex.

Sexual harassment can come from anyone, including:

- someone on the same team
- a supervisor or manager
- another member of staff
- someone else that a worker comes into contact with while they are working.

Sexual harassment can come from the owner or someone in a position of power or influence. This might limit the ability of an organisation to deal with the problem internally. In these circumstances, a worker should check if workplace policies address the situation. For example, a complaint of harassment against a head teacher could be handled by the school governors.

Where this doesn’t appear possible, workers are advised to seek further advice and support.

Historic allegations

Complaints of sexual harassment will usually only be considered at an employment tribunal if the worker makes a claim within three months of when the incident took place.

Sometimes a complaint of sexual harassment will be reported much later than this. An employer should always take such a complaint very seriously.

They should handle things in a way that is sensitive and fair to the worker who has made the complaint, anybody who has witnessed it and anybody who is being accused of sexual harassment. It is usually helpful for the worker and the employer to discuss what outcome is desired in these circumstances - sometimes it might be that the worker now feels confident enough to speak out and wants to make sure nobody else in their workplace experiences what they went through.

Where complaints of sexual harassment include sexual assault or physical threats, they could be considered under criminal law and this can involve different time limits. Workers are advised to seek further advice and support here.

Making a complaint of sexual harassment

Any worker who feels they have been sexually harassed, or any worker who feels they have seen sexual harassment take place, can make a complaint of sexual harassment.

A worker should check any policies their organisation might have on sexual harassment to see who they should make their complaint to. Many organisations will suggest complaints can be made by writing a grievance letter to appropriate supervisors or managers, but there might be others too, including a:

- member of Human Resources or Personnel with specialist training
- named ‘fair treatment contact’
- local trade union representative.

Before speaking to someone, it is often useful for the worker to make notes about the incident involved, especially if recalling the incident is particularly upsetting.

Workers are usually expected to try and resolve the problem in the workplace first.

Handling a complaint of sexual harassment

All complaints of sexual harassment should be taken very seriously and handled fairly and sensitively.

Experiencing sexual harassment is often extremely emotional and distressing for the worker involved. This means an employer should make reporting such a matter as stress-free as possible. In most cases this involves simple things like making sure there is plenty of time to discuss the matter and finding a private space to meet.

Employers must allow the worker to be accompanied by a work colleague or a trade union representative at a grievance meeting involving allegations of sexual harassment. Sometimes it can help to allow the worker to be accompanied by a friend or family member but only if the employment contract permits it, or at the discretion of the employer.

It is also likely to be very distressing for a worker to be accused of sexual harassment. Whilst a fair and thorough investigation will need to be carried out, accused workers should also be offered support and sensitivity.

All complaints should be handled consistently in line with existing policies.

Getting support

Contact your Shop Steward or Full Time Official
GDPR ABUSE

We have heard from some safety representatives of attempts by employers to use the new GDPR requirements to stop you from getting access to information from accident books.

So the BFAWU welcomes news that the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has produced a new accident book that confirms safety representatives must have access to information on any injuries that happen in the workplace, regardless of GDPR.

No employer can now use GDPR as an excuse, and the new regulations do not make any difference to the employers’ duties to provide the information that they are required to give union representatives under the Safety Representatives and Safety Committee Regulations.

Make sure you are up-to-date and your employer has the recently-released new version of the HSE Accident Book, that the TSO, have published the 2018 version of the Accident Book, which emphasises it is GDPR-compliant.

What it says reinforces the need to ensure that health and safety representatives are given information on any accidents that occur in the workplace. The introduction to the book makes it clear that:

- Employers must disclose the personal information and details of the accident to safety representatives and/or representatives of employee safety, if the person ticks the tick box and signs.
- If the injured person does not consent to the disclosure of this personal information, you must anonymise the information before disclosing it to safety representatives and/or representatives of employee safety.
- The arrangements to pass on this information should be discussed between employers, employees and/or their representatives. The aim should be to make the best use of this (and other information) to meet health and safety objectives.

This shows that there is no doubt that union health and safety representatives are entitled to details of any accidents recorded in the Accident Book, and that employees should be asked to consent to the information being passed on (although they have the right to ask that their personal information is not revealed).

So don’t let your employer claim that GDPR stops you getting the information you need.

The first thing you should do after reading this blog is check your accident book and make sure that it is GDPR compliant!
At the beginning of 2018 the union looked to have more of a focus on sites under the 2sisters banner ‘working together better’. We’ve held a number of proactive meetings through the year with branch secretaries, full time officials and the National President, where we have discussed common issues, successes, organising and how to sell the unions benefits better.

The meetings have led to a number of initiatives that if successful could potentially be rolled out to other national groups of branches – including roadshows across the sites, talking about the credit union, learning services and solicitors benefits to members and non-members alike.

These were implemented in September across most of the 2sisters sites where we have branches and the feedback was great! People signed up to the Union, the Credit Union and for courses via the Learning Services. A national facebook group is being set up by John James so that information can be shared outside of the workplace as well as inside via notice boards.

We printed targeted 2sisters leaflets about the services that can be accessed through the solicitors as we had a number of conversations around how best to advertise the services provided.

A questionnaire for employees (members and non-members) to fill in helped us develop campaigns and strategies. These have been handed out in paper and electronic form to branches, the idea being that by having them filled in and returned we can build a better picture of the issues on sites, what the union looks like from the shop floor and what positives there are.

Ultimately this will help us, as a union, build meaningful campaigns around the issues faced on the sites by the people working there, whilst identifying our weaknesses as an organisation and then working to improve them.

We covered challenging media bias – how it is important not to get drawn into aggressive arguments around articles the S** may write, but to give alternative views. For example, we discussed an article with the headline ‘TAX PAYERS PAYING TRADE UNION OFFICIAL’S WAGES’ and explained that actually, union members’ subscriptions pay officials’ salaries, nothing to do with taxes at all!

We looked into detail at why people aren’t joining the union — is it purely down to cost? Not being asked? Or is it because they don’t understand what a trade union is? How do we combat this?

The reps shared ideas such as having photos of them on noticeboards rather than just a list of names, as new members are more likely to approach a familiar face than ask loads of people who so and so is!

Social media as an organising tool was covered, looking at the internet minute was eye-opening – the number of emails and WhatsApp messages sent in 60 seconds is astounding!

We all agreed that some extra training was needed, bringing the reps together from each site, encouraging networking and support for each other, but also learning from each other and sharing experiences. After completing a course at the beginning of the year around developing trade union training sessions through the GFTU I put together a day-long course.

We began each session with introductions and a discussion on the issues the reps were facing at their site, as you can imagine there were a few but the main ones were agency levels, release for trade union duties and communication issues between the union and different levels of management on site.
We all agreed that, whilst social media is a great tool to be used, nothing beats face-to-face communication.

There are some fantastic success stories from the sites that aren’t shouted about enough, including:

- A proper functioning extraction system put into the mixing room at Foxes Batley (after a 3 year campaign by Mark Dickens) making it safer for the workers in there
- The company putting on transport for bank holidays and Christmas working at Pennines to reduce the cost to workers who would have otherwise had to fork out for taxis
- An issue at Kirkham around safety shoes being resolved
- Not to mention accident pay outs, successful representation, wage negotiations, learning centres and English classes.

Some major things, some minor but all that have had a positive impact in some way on our members lives!

We discussed campaign ideas and set up a WhatsApp group so the reps can continue to communicate with each other and building those links, having the ability to communicate with each other regularly, share their successes and learn from each other. We didn’t manage to reach all the reps, but as the feedback is so positive we will catch the rest in the new year and hopefully have a catch up at conference!

Sarah Woolley

Thanks to Debbie Lay for loaning us the learning centre room at Pennine. Everyone agreed it was the ideal setting.

GREEN SURVEY

We are trying to improve the impact that your employer has on the environment.

We need YOUR views to help us!

Please take a few minutes to visit the BFAWU.org website and visit the BLOG section where you will find a link to this green survey headed BFAWU Green Strategy. Please download and complete the attached survey and return it to sarah.woolley@bfawu.org or your branch secretary/regional office as soon as possible. Thank you.

12. Lastly, would you be interested in becoming more involved in making [employer/site] a greener place to work – for example, by attending an on-site training workshop?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Maybe

Thank you for your time – please either email your completed questionnaire to sarah.woolley@bfawu.org or pass onto your branch secretary/regional office.

Adapted from Go Green at work - a handbook for union green representatives, TUC 2008

4. Do you think any of the following have improved their environmental performance over the past year?
   - Your employer
     - Yes
     - No
     - Don't know
   - My department
     - Yes
     - No
     - Don't know
   - Me (at work)
     - Yes
     - No
     - Don't know

5. Are you a trade union member?
   - Yes
   - No
   - if yes which trade union?

6. If yes, how good do you think the union is at tackling environmental issues?
   - Very
   - Quite
   - Average
   - Not very
   - Don't know

Have you any examples or ideas that could be used?

7. Are you aware of [insert organisation name]'s environmental policy?
   - Yes
   - No

Thinking about energy use at work, we’d like to know…

8. ONE thing you think you could do at work to be more ‘green’?

9. ONE thing you think your employer could do to be more ‘green’?

And thinking about waste/rubbish, water and travel use, we’d like to know …

10. ONE thing you think you could do at work to be more ‘green’?

11. ONE thing you think [insert employer/site] could do to be more ‘green’?
General Secretary, Ronnie Draper, commented:

“We are delighted to have secured this contract renewal with Lighthouse, which will enable us to continue to ensure that our members are able to access financial planning assistance from a reliable and well-reputed organisation, on a truly national basis.

We look forward to continuing to develop our relationship with Lighthouse and ensuring that our members are able to secure quality service and consistent professional financial advice”.

Malcolm Streatfield, Chief Executive Officer of Lighthouse, commented:

“The Board is very pleased that we have secured this contract renewal with the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers’ Union (BFAWU), which further serves to endorse provides further endorsement of the quality of service and financial planning support which Lighthouse Financial Advice provides to all participating members of our affinity group partners.

We very much look forward to progressing further our relationship with BFAWU over the years ahead.

The Board remains committed to developing further our affinity partnerships throughout the UK”.

Any members wanting to arrange a complimentary, no obligation, initial appointment with one of their advisers should:

call 08000 85 85 90,
or email appointments@lighthousefa.co.uk

More details can be found on the BFAWU website at:

www.bfawu.org/lighthouse_financial
SIX SIGNS OF A PENSION SCAM

Pension scams are on the increase in the UK. If you are taken in you could lose your entire pension fund and it would be very hard to get it back. We explain what to watch out for.

A pension scam usually begins with an unexpected phone call, email or text from someone claiming to represent a financial services firm or Government body. Here are a few simple signs that can help you avoid being ripped off:

1. **You are contacted out of the blue**
   
   If you receive an unexpected call, text and email from someone about your pension it could be a scam. You should only discuss your pension with a pension provider, a regulated financial adviser or a Government body, making sure YOU contact THEM using the contact details on their website.

2. **You receive an offer that’s too good to be true**
   
   Schemes that offer exceptionally high rates of returns are usually very high-risk, and fully-guaranteed returns are rare. These types of offers are unlikely to be genuine.

3. **Access to your pension before you turn 55**
   
   Only in very specific circumstances are you able to access your pension before you turn 55. Signing up to a scheme that gives you access to your pension before the age of 55 is likely to land you with tax penalties to pay and you might even lose your money.

4. **You are expected to invest in something unusual**
   
   If you are told you must invest in something unusual – perhaps an offshore hotel development – to take advantage of a pension ‘opportunity’, you may be being scammed.

5. **You’re asked to withdraw money first**
   
   Beware if you are asked to withdraw money from your pension for an investment opportunity. It is important that your money remains within a pension until you start drawing retirement income. If you cash in early you are likely to have tax penalties to pay and you could even lose your money.

6. **You are told to act quickly for the best deal**
   
   Being pressured to reach a decision quickly, perhaps to take advantage of a ‘one-off opportunity’, could indicate that it is a scam. You should take professional financial advice about managing your pension and never be rushed into making a decision you might regret.

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GREGGS, LEEDS

Ruth Marsh, Branch Secretary and Neil Shackleton, Assistant Branch Secretary of branch 580 presenting Bro S Chapman [top photo] and Bro C Durham [middle] with their 40 year badges at Greggs bakery in Leeds.

They each received a cheque, a badge and a Free Membership Card to acknowledge their loyalty and service.

Park Cakes, Oldham

Pauline Nazir presents Michael Fielding [bottom photo] of Branch 467 with his certificate for 40 years' membership of the Union.

Can you help us?

We are looking for Health and Safety Representatives nationally within Greggs shops.

If you’re a member and interested in making your shop (and others) safer then please contact your local shop steward, branch secretary or full time official – their details can be found on the back office under people.

Otherwise, please contact sarah.woolley@bfawu.org …she’ll point you in the right direction.

The union will provide all the training you will need to fulfil the role
PENNINE FOODS IN SHEFFIELD (part of the 2 Sisters Food Group) has had another successful pass rate for their English learners with 27 completions. To commend the hard work we had two celebration days where the learners were awarded their certificates.

The success of this site comes from the support from the Bakers, Foods and Allied Workers Union reps, Chesterfield College and the company management. The support for release from the company is outstanding and the learners are given a 100% paid release to attend classes.

General Secretary, Ronnie Draper, commented, “Enjoyed a great day at Pennine Foods presenting certificates of achievement to all the learners. You can cut the enthusiasm of learners, ULRs, provider, the company representatives and union officials with a knife. So proud of you all, what you have achieved and the collective benefits you will bring too many in the future. Thank you all”

Ian Hodson, National President, added, “It was a pleasure to attend and meet some of the learners. Learning is something that never stops whether the learning is for work or for personal development and completion of any form of learning is an achievement that enhances our lives.

The opportunities that so many are now talking up in many cases is due to the development of trained learning representatives, enabling people to access learning to improve their lives is an incredible gift that one person can give to another and that’s what our learning representatives are doing at Pennine and across the country”.

Attending these classes has had an effect on everyone in some way. One gentleman in particular is sure the classes has helped him dramatically at work.

Thirumeni Thambirasan (also known as John Cena by his workmates) moved over to England from Sri Lanka.

His first job in England was here at Pennine Foods working as an operative within the chilled department. He has always been extremely hard-working but found communicating in English a bit of a struggle.

At Pennine we offer the opportunity to attend English classes on site. His supervisor encouraged him to join and he approached me for advice.

Now he has achieved a qualification he is more confident using English and is now responsible for his own area. He is confident enough to train new team members and use SAP, our online computer system. He is a stand-in team leader with greater responsibility, reflecting the hard work and commitment he has put in to attending class and achieving his qualification.

He really appreciates Pennine foods for supporting his learning with our Union Learning Services. His supervisor is extremely proud of how far he’s come on his journey, he’s a real success and we look forward to helping him achieve his next qualification. Well done John Cena!

Rachel Vine
Lead ULR at Pennine Foods

PS. Learning hasn’t stopped there. On 15th /16th November, the next group of learners started with two classes a day. Again fully supported by the company, a massive thank you is due to them for how they are investing in their staff.

Lisa Greenfield
JOIN THE BAKERS, FOOD AND ALLIED WORKERS UNION

Application forms from any Shop Steward or, to find out more, complete the form below

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WINTER 2018

JOIN THE BAKERS, FOOD AND ALLIED WORKERS UNION

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.