



Welcome to the latest edition of my department's e-bulletin.

Since I last wrote to you at the beginning of the year we have again seen a hive of activity relating

to Equality. As I write to you now the General Election has come and gone and the mechanics of a hung Parliament are now clear. The union movement will be bracing itself for the proposed £6 billion of cuts and the gloomy prospect of Royal Mail privatisation announced by the 'Cleggcons' coalition.

One of the most significant developments has to be the introduction of the new Equality Bill and I would like to place on record my appreciation to Harriet Harman for her dogged determination to ensure the Bill was passed before the General Election took place. We have seen many equality events and conferences come and go including International Women's Day and our Equality Officer's Seminar, both of which have been excellent successes. We will be reporting on these in more detail later on in this bulletin.

In my last bulletin I commented that I will be making it one of my big strategic ambitions to try to effect some positive change to make our union more representative of the people we strive to represent. I do stand by this. Our union has already made it clear that financially there will be some tough times ahead. What we must ensure is that, if and when financial cuts are being made, Equality issues are not disproportionately affected by them.

The incoming advisory committees will be making this their joint priority and before time we hope to be able to show some concrete proposals vis-à-vis this area of importance.

In closing, I would also remind you that updates can also be found on my personal blog, which you are all more than welcome to visit. It can be found at: www.equalitylinda.blogspot.com
I always welcome feedback on the e-bulletin so if there

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is anything you would like us to feature in a future edition please do not hesitate to let me know.



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The Equality Bill: looking at multiple discrimination

The Equality Bill is finally here! We have seen the culmination of 9 different pieces of discrimination law and almost 100 other statutory instruments. This union will be making sure all our equality representatives understand the full benefits of the new Bill and exactly how it will operate in the workplace. In truth there are many more pluses for the public service areas and while it can be strongly argued that many of our members work in these areas the employers in question i.e. BT and Royal Mail currently have managed to get themselves exemptions to the full equality duty!

The issue of multiple discrimination has for long periods annoyed trade unionists. The classic scenarios, for example such as a gay disabled black woman, who felt she had been discriminated against on a number of grounds would only be able to complain of single discrimination. i.e. race, sexual orientation, gender or disability.

The new process, as defined within the proposed Equality Bill, is by no means perfect but it is a significant step in the right direction as it will allow for dual characteristics of discrimination to be applied.

The issue of dual discrimination remedy is an issue that has been highlighted by this union at the recent CWU Disability Conference and as soon as this Bill comes into play, we will enact on a process of suitable capacity building to ensure our union is well prepared to play its part in making sure workers know their rights vis-à-vis this new development.



There is a staggered roll-out in relation to the Bill so do not be fooled into believing that everything begins to come into play with immediate effect. For example, the main provisions do not come into play until October 2010. April 2011 sees the integrated public sector Equality Duty come into play (and the dual discrimination clause). The ban on age discrimination in provision of goods and services and public functions is 2012. Lastly the private and voluntary sector pay transparency regulations is due to commence in 2013.

For more info go to: www.equalities.gov.uk/equality_bill.aspx



Chainmakers Festival: 100th Anniversary of the 1910 strike

The CWU have for a long time been one of the main sponsors and supporters of this wonderful event, which has grown over the years to be something that is enjoyed by all generations who appreciate the sacrifices made by the Cradley Women Strikers of 1910.

This year the celebrations start on Friday 17th September 2010 and will run through to Sunday 19th September 2010. The significance of this celebration should never be forgotten. The striking women of Cradley went on a strike that lasted an incredible 10 weeks and this ultimately led to these women receiving the right to a minimum wage.

The CWU will be playing a pivotal role in the Chainmakers Festival and Billy Hayes is scheduled to make one of the keynote speeches. For more information on the Festival please go to: www.bclm.co.uk/events9.htm

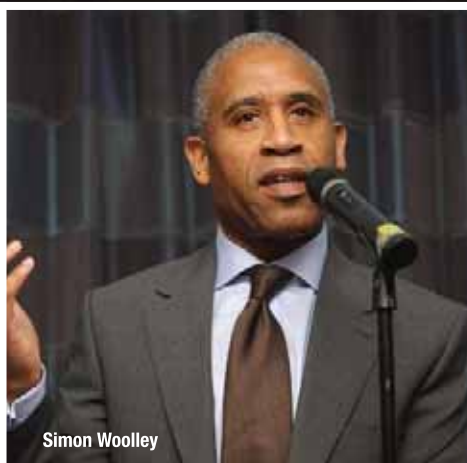
CWU Equality Conference Update



Left to right: Graham Colk, Linda Roy, Colin Bell & Greg Amisshah



Michelle Bridgeman



Simon Woolley



Piara Power

Photographs by Sam Makwana 2010

The latest cycle of equality conferences under my remit have come to an end and I believe that everyone who took part have taken something positive away.

Our guest speakers ranged from Ely Barnes and Michele Bridgeman at the LGBT Conference, Robin Hood from the DEBRA charity at the Disability Conference, the inspirational Simon Woolley and Piara Power who attended the Black Workers Conference, and the Women's Conference was graced by Professor Mary Davis.

There is clearly a big debate going on in relation to the future of the equality conferences and it would be inappropriate for me to add to the vibrant debates going on within the social networking world. There were a number of motions on the pad which potentially have an impact on this issue so we will be guided by what annual conference decides.

What I will say is that it has become more and more difficult to find a location that ticks all of the boxes and falls within the budget that is awarded to me. With the help of my dedicated staff I have been able to consistently do this and we will continue to do so until otherwise instructed.

The Black Workers Conference social saw the launch of the 'Obama Shield' which was won by the Marcus Garvey Team. They very kindly donated their winnings to the 'Just a Drop Appeal'.

See page 5 of this bulletin for news about the 'Just a Drop Appeal'.

LEGAL CASE UPDATE

First, the not so good news...

A Catholic adoption society has won a High Court battle over laws forcing it to consider gay couples as parents.

Leeds-based Catholic Care had warned it would be forced to give up its work finding homes for children if it had to comply with the legislation. Its plea to be allowed an exemption was opposed by the Charities Commission. However, Mr Justice Briggs has allowed Catholic Care's appeal and ordered the commission to reconsider the case in the light of his judgement.

The High Court ruling was met with dismay by gay rights charity Stonewall. Jonathan Finney, head of external affairs at Stonewall, said: "It's unthinkable that anyone engaged in delivering any kind of public or publicly funded service should be given licence to pick and choose service users on the basis of individual prejudice. "It's clearly in the best interests of children in care to encourage as wide a pool of potential adopters as possible." (*Story from the BBC website*)

Now for the better news!

Paternity Enhancements: The House of Lords has approved various draft regulations pertaining to the new right to paternity leave. The most important is the Additional Paternity Leave Regulations 2010, which specify that additional paternity leave will be for a maximum of 26 weeks and minimum of 2 weeks, that it must not start until at least 20 weeks after the birth or placement for adoption and must end not later than 12 months after the birth or placement for adoption, and that it may only be taken in multiples of complete weeks.

The regulations came into force on 6th April 2010 but will have effect only in relation to children whose expected week of birth (or matching for adoption) begins on or after 3rd April 2011.

Under the regulations fathers will be entitled to up to six months additional paternity leave provided the mother has returned to work, thus giving parents the option of dividing a period of paid leave entitlement between them. To the extent that additional paternity leave is taken during the mother's 39 week maternity pay period it will be paid leave, paid at the same rate and in the same way as Statutory Maternity Pay (which increases in April 2010 to £124.88 per week from the current £123.06).

What's happening at the Equality & Human Rights Commission?

The BNP's efforts to show the world that they are a credible political party has run into the rocks again with the news that their attempt to get their constitution endorsed as legally viable has failed miserably.

The Commission has won its enforcement case against the BNP, after a ruling on 12 March that the party's new revised constitution is indirectly racially discriminatory. The Commission had already told the court that the BNP needed to alter its previous constitution because it was directly racially discriminatory. Both kinds of discrimination are unlawful.

The Commission wrote to the BNP Chairman, Nick Griffin, in June 2009 regarding its 11th Constitution which the Commission considered unlawful as it permitted only white members. However, he refused to change the constitution and the Commission then applied to the Court for an order that the membership criteria be changed.

The CWU's National Equality Officer Linda Roy commented "it is very good to see the EHRC challenging the constitutional validity of the BNP. The fact that they won their challenge demonstrates unequivocally that the BNP is a group with an unconstitutional rule book and one which breaks the Race Relations Act."

Source: EHRC website.



The Just A Drop campaign is still going strong. My department is absolutely committed to getting the well built in the Tanzanian village. So far the branches have made a brilliant effort and we have raised almost £3,000 – we are half way there as we need the best part of £6,000.

The Equality Disco, which took place on the Saturday night of Conference, raised a magnificent £1,016. We will be dedicating all the proceeds towards the Just A Drop campaign.



Branches wishing to make any donations should send cheques payable to CWU for my attention at HQ, marking the reverse of the cheque with 'Just A Drop'. This project is in conjunction with our own CWU HA.

Equality Officer's Seminar

The Seminar took place on Tuesday 4th May 2010 at CWU HQ and representatives from all over the UK were present to hear some of the latest developments on equality. Guests from the TUC, Kick It Out and Operation Black Vote ensured the day was very varied and interesting. The representatives were also shown a new video which was aimed at raising awareness on the issue of homophobia in sport.

A new feature to the Seminar saw the Heads of both the Telecom and Postal come and address the equality representatives to update them on vital industrial developments.

I would like to say a special thanks to our guest speakers Linda Stewart, Simon Woolley, Piara Power, Joy Drummond, Dave Ward and Andy Kerr. Thanks also to Jane Latymer at Simpson Millar who kindly made sure our reps did not go hungry on the day!

In addition I would like to say thank you to Essex Amal who have invested in equality in the sense that they have directly commissioned four pull-ups, one for each strand. These were launched at the Equality Officer's Seminar and I would strongly encourage other branches to consider following suit.



Linda Roy with Eric Parker from CWU Essex Amal

International Women's Day

The date was the 4th March and the setting CWU HQ. The event was our own contribution to the massively important International Women's Day. Previous years had seen us hold a joint WAC and RWC meeting with a large gang going off to the TUC event but this year we wanted to hold our own event, which was well publicised within our own union.

Invited guest speakers included Grace Mitchell, Ruth Breslin from EAVES Poppy Project and our President Jane Loftus.

Issues touched on by the guests were varied and certainly had an international flavour, from the production of the KitKat chocolate and the exploitation of women's labour to the issues concerning the horrific practice of Female Genital Mutilation. EAVES also touched on the well publicised issue of women being trafficked illegally into the sex industry.

All in all it was a very successful event and my thanks goes to all those who actively participated.



Grace Mitchell addressing the meeting



Lynn Hart, Ruth Breslin and Linda Roy



Jane Loftus addressing the meeting



Left to right: Mary Murray, Sinead Fitzpatrick and Linda Kietz

TUC Equality Conferences

The TUC Black Workers Conference took place on 23-25 April 2010 and Ian Taylor was successfully returned to the TUC Race Committee. Our motion on representation was also carried overwhelmingly.

The delegation all played an active part and there was a real sense of camaraderie.

Similarly there was some very good news at the TUC Women's Conference. I am pleased to report that I was successfully elected on to the TUC Women's Committee and it will be an honour for me to serve in the name of our union at this prestigious level.

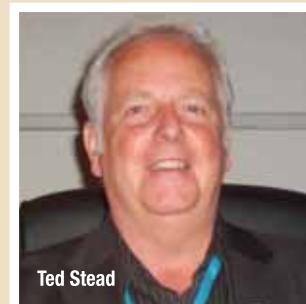
The TUC Disability Conference took place from the 19-21 May at TUC Congress House. The CWU delegation led by the National Officer Linda Roy all played an active part. It is fair to say that the motion put forward by the CWU brought a level of discussion never previously seen by this particular conference, certainly in recent memory.

The CWU focused on the issue of 'Assisted Suicide'. The motion read as follows: This conference notes the ongoing public debate over assisted suicide taking place across the United Kingdom. Conference recognises that a debate over assisted suicide raises profound legal and social issues for trade unionists in their daily lives and also, for some, within their working lives.

It calls upon the General Council to draw up a document outlining the current legal position. It should also draw on the international position, in particular, with reference to the law in Switzerland and other countries in the European Union – the arguments on both sides of the debate for those who believe in assisted suicide and those who do not.

The document should be circulated to affiliated unions and their views sought.

Ted Stead from Oldham & Rochdale Branch moved the motion and a number of speakers followed both in support and against the



motion. The Conference was clearly split on the controversial issue. Our union has always been at the forefront of not shying away from controversial subjects and this was a classic example. The Chair of the Conference found it too tight to call when the hands went up in the air for the vote and a card vote was subsequently called. The result saw the CWU motion carried.

No doubt there will be more news on this issue in the months to come and we will endeavour to keep you posted.

ASSISTED SUICIDE CASES IN THE MEDIA



Debbie Purdy, who suffers from Primary Progressive Multiple Sclerosis, and her husband, Cuban violinist Omar Puente, have finally had the law on assisted suicide clarified by the Director of Public Prosecutions. *Photo from Mail online.*



Daniel James who died at a Dignitas clinic. No charges were brought against his parents *Photo: PA*

Author Sir Terry Pratchett calls for assisted suicide to be made legal saying we should all "have a death worth dying for". The writer, who has Alzheimer's disease, is offering himself up as a test case.



JUST IN CASE YOU WEREN'T SURE...

Being a union member has many advantages

Union members get higher wages, better sickness and pension benefits, are much more likely to be able to take advantage of flexible working and are able to take more annual leave, according to the TUC.

The TUC report cites official statistics showing that workers in a union earn 12.5% more an hour than employees in a non-unionised workplace, taking home average hourly earnings of £13.07 compared to £11.62.

The 'Union Advantage' is part of a set of new materials produced by the TUC to help unions attract new recruits and also to demonstrate the value of unions to employers. Alongside a new leaflet aimed at encouraging workers who have never thought about joining a union to do so, and a guide to show union reps how to research the employers they deal with, the TUC has also released a new report looking at the positive advantages unions bring to the UK economy.

By cutting down on accidents at work, unions could be saving employers as much as £371 million a year, says the TUC, and because they feel involved and listened to, unions help workforces become more productive, benefiting the UK economy to the tune of between £3.4 billion and £10.2 billion a year.

Source: LRD

UP AND COMING EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY

TUC LGBT Conference

1-2 July 2010

Bi-Con Event

26-30 August 2010

Women's STUC Conference

1-2 November 2010

www.cwu.org

Meet the Equality Team...

We are very keen to hear what you have to say and to offer as much help and support to everyone. You all do a brilliant job in the branches and it is up to us at CWU HQ to service your enquiries as professionally and as speedily as possible.

Just so you know who you are likely to speak to when you phone our department, we thought we would offer you an insight into all of the team....



Dionne Gittens-Noel
020 8971 7356

Dionne has been in the department since 1998 and offers excellent support on a daily basis to the whole team. She is the events organising guru and is the person responsible for negotiating the excellent deals we get at our Equality conferences



Julie Rodrigues
020 8971 7309

Julie is the second of the two PAs and again offers very good support to both myself and Fevzi. She has been in the department previously working to Al Crisp and it will be either hers or Dionne's voice you hear when you call us.



Fevzi Hussein
020 8971 7388

Fevzi has been the Policy Assistant in the department since May 2005 and his knowledge and support is vital to helping me deal with all aspects of work undertaken in the department.

