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GENERAL

486

Equality & Diversity Mandatory Training for Branch Officials – North West

In line with Conference policy, we now require branches to submit applications for the following mandatory Equality & Diversity courses being held in the North West region:

Tuesday 30th October – Manchester

Thursday 1st November – Liverpool

Tuesday 6th November – Preston

Thursday 8th November – Bootle

Tuesday 13th November – Manchester

Thursday 15th November – Stockport

Further dates and venues for other regions will be published in due course.

Nominations should be made on an application form for union courses and returned as soon as possible to **Trish Lavelle**, Head of Education & Training, CWU Education & Training Centre, Alvescot Lodge, Alvescot, Bampton, Oxon OX18 2PY. Telephone: **01993 843373**; Fax: **01993 840960**; email: **mtodd@cwu.org**

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Postal Agreements & Procedures & Union Skills I Courses – North West

Branches are asked to submit application forms for the following courses being held in the North West region:

22 – 26 October:

Postal Agreements & Procedures – Preston

5 – 9 November:

Union Skills I – Manchester

19 – 23 November:

Postal Agreements & Procedures

– Manchester

Nominations should be made on an application form for union courses and returned as soon as possible to **Trish Lavelle**, Head of Education & Training, CWU Education & Training Centre, Alvescot Lodge, Alvescot, Bampton, Oxon OX18 2PY. Telephone: **01993 843373**; Fax: **01993 840960**; email: **mtodd@cwu.org**

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Turn Out for Trade Union Freedom!

Trade unionists across the country will converge on **London** on **Thursday October 18** for a national rally in support of the Trade Union Freedom Bill.

The timing of the rally is critical because

the following day John McDonnell's Trade Union Freedom Bill is due to be debated in Parliament.

Maximum pressure needs to be applied to supportive Labour MPs, at least 100 of whom need to turn up on the day for the Bill – which would sweep away the most damaging parts of Thatcher's anti-union laws – to stand any chance of proceeding to the next legislative stage.

Speaking at a TUC fringe meeting the Bill's sponsor John McDonnell MP, conceded it was likely that similar Government blocking tactics to those that scuppered Paul Farrelly's Temporary Agency Workers' Bill despite its support by a third of the Parliamentary Labour Party would be tried again.

But he stressed that it is now incumbent on trade unionists to make it as hard as possible for the Government to derail the Bill – and the first hurdle to be crossed means trade unionists lobbying hard to ensure that sufficient MP's turn out on the day.

"We have the rally the night before, and we need people to turn up to that, but even more importantly we need them to get their MPs to come along the next day," he stressed.

"If we can get the debate I think there is a good chance we can carry the vote.

"Then we will have got ourselves into a negotiating position with the Government."

The MP for Hayes & Harlington stressed that above all it was vital that trade unions reclaimed the right to take solidarity action, and rounded on claims by some that the Bill was seeking 'theoretical' trade union rights when more effort could be made to enforce existing rights.

"This is about the core justification for the existence of trade unions," he said. "There is a secret that we discovered 150 years ago that, whether it was agricultural workers in the fields or workers in their workshops, that solidarity gives us strength.

"These (anti-union) laws are preventing us from exercising solidarity to protect the weak from the strongest employers, and on that basis it is fundamental to the role of the TUC and each and every trade unionist.

"We have this inequality in our society, and if we really do as a Labour Government want to tackle inequality and poverty we have to give people the empowerment to do that – and one form is in their trade union rights."

"On October 19 we expect Labour MPs to turn up and speak in support and vote for this Bill. Subsequently we expect a shift from the Labour Government, and if there is no shift it does not deserve the name 'Labour'."

From the outset the CWU has been a staunch supporter of the Trade Union Freedom Bill which has been drafted with the help of the union's Standing Council John Hendy, chair of the employment law think-tank, the Institute of Employment Rights.

Mr Hendy told the fringe meeting that without the legal rights to, amongst other things, solidarity action which unions secured in 1906 but lost during the Thatcher years, British trade unions would continue to be severely hampered.

Earlier TUC affiliates unanimously agreed, passing a motion demanding the repeal of the anti-union laws.

CWU speaker Dave Wilshire poured scorn on claims by Freedom Bill's all-too-predictable opponents that such a measure would result in irresponsible actions by unions, pointing out that the scope of what is being demanded is actually very modest.

"All we are asking for is to have what we had before the anti-union laws were introduced, and what is enjoyed in much of the rest of Europe. I don't think that is radical!"

Dave pointed out that recent experiences in the postal dispute had highlighted the fact that the shackles on trade union rights had actually allowed and encourage employers to "abrogate their responsibilities".

"We've been faced with bosses illegally employing agency workers to do the jobs of those on strike... this has caused further local disputes on top of the national strike. We have been faced with bosses scrutinising notices of strike action and having the nerve to accuse us of taking illegal industrial action despite the fact that we have had a national ballot.

"We've been faced with the bosses enticing people to work at remote locations and moving vans and other vehicles to those locations so scabs won't have to cross picket lines. We cannot legally picket those sites even though our work is being performed at those locations – and that is a ludicrous situation.

"In fact it is a lack of trade union freedom that gives employers the confidence to do these things and abrogate their responsibility to hold sensible dialogue with trade unions."

More at www.cwu.org/links/freedomrally

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

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Harassment Complaints Database: Union Policy

Branches are again reminded of the need to fill in the Harassment Complaints Database (HCD) Forms, as illustrated in LTB 450/04.

Please ensure that all reps have a copy of LTB 450/04 as it contains useful guidance as well as the form itself. Branches may also find LTB 289/04 useful which contains information on the Harassment Helpline and the Harassment Advice Network as well as the HCD. The completion of the HCD forms is part of our agreement with the Equal Opportunities Commission and is, therefore, CWU policy (the full agreement can be found in LTB 292/04).

The Equal Opportunities Commission has raised concerns with us regarding the completion rate, which we need to address, otherwise we will fall foul of the agreement. Therefore, please ensure that any complaint raised with branch reps by members that involves possible harassment should be notified to HQ via these forms.

We appreciate that this will add to an already busy work schedule for those reps that have the responsibility for completing them, but there is no scope for non-compliance. We must accept that this will become an accepted culture in terms of harassment reporting.

The data that will come through to HQ will be vital in enabling us to analyse and identify any obvious patterns where problems exist. We extend our appreciation to all those branches already complying with the policy and look forward to the co-operation of all branches in this matter.

Any enquiries regarding this paragraph please contact **Michèle Emerson** at CWU HQ, 150 The Broadway, Wimbledon, London SW19 1RX.

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Mandatory Equality & Diversity Training

Branch secretaries are requested to ensure that any person in their branch who has CWU rep responsibilities and has not yet completed their mandatory Equality & Diversity training are enrolled in the courses that are planned throughout the regions in the forthcoming months.

All reps must do the training – this includes divisional reps, area reps, unit reps and branch officers. For clarification on dates please contact your regional secretary.

The training has been running now for over three years and there are still a substantial number of reps who have not completed the training. Your co-operation in this matter is greatly appreciated.
Equal Opportunities Department.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

491

CWU HQ Crane Collision Incident Involving Adjacent Construction Site

In response to a number of enquiries regarding an incident involving a crane being operated on to CWU/HQ, the outline details of the incident is as follows:

Early on 6 September steel cable in two ton bundles was being unloaded by a crawler crane

from a lorry in the street running between CWU HQ and an adjacent construction site.

Two of the 2 ton bundles had been secured together and as the crane operator tried to lift the load the machine which was certified to lift 3.75 tons in weight and was standing on soft ground began to sink and topple over. The operator attempted to release the load but the machine fell against the lorry, which was damaged as it absorbed the majority of the impact. The crane's jib then crashed into the side wall of the CWU HQ building at the height of the second floor and finally came to rest.

Damage was caused to the fabric of the CWU/HQ building and falling brickwork, rubble and masonry caused substantial damage to a parked car in Stanley Road below. Staff on the second floor, ironically in the Health and Safety department, reported hearing a large bang and feeling a heavy shudder.

The Health and Safety Executive attended the scene soon thereafter and issued a "Prohibition Notice" as their investigation got underway, shutting down a neighbouring construction site for nearly a week before allowing work to resume under enforcement action conditions once they were satisfied that proper safety controls were in place and that cranes and machines being operated on site were able to take the weight and be operated safely.

The HSE also banned any further lifting of cables and materials from lorries parked on the road and stipulated that all future unloading must be carried out within the confines of the construction site itself.

Structural Engineers inspected the damage to CWU HQ and declared it safe, advising that the damage sustained by the crane jib's impact is repairable and does not threaten the structure of the building.

The union's priority following the incident and made clear to all concerned by the SDGS who dealt with the matter in liaison with the Police, HSE, Merton Council and the construction site management, made it clear that the union needed to be satisfied that no such incident is likely to reoccur to ensure the safety of the union's staff.

This was a dangerous occurrence, the consequences of which could have been far greater had personal injury occurred. Fortunately that was not the case, however, moving large, heavy loads are high risk operations and can be dangerous if not carried out with extensive workplace precautions. Fortunately no one was injured and all the damage done was to property alone. The delivery lorry took the brunt of the impact and the outer wall of CWU/HQ soaked up the rest. The interior structure of union HQ was not breached thankfully.

By law cranes are to be operated only by qualified and trained personnel who should carefully plan each lift. A designated competent person must inspect the crane before use and periodically. A maintenance

system must be in place.

The law requires operators to be sure the crane is on a firm and stable surface, it must be level and balanced. They must ensure that the load weight capacity is not exceeded while making lifts and that the lift path is clear and free from risk.

The HS&E Department were certainly not convinced that adequate risk control measures were in place on the construction site at the time of the incident and there are questions to be answered around competency, risk control measures and legal compliance which we have no doubt the Health and Safety Executive will fully investigate.

All enquiries concerning the above should be addressed to **Dave Joyce** National Health, Safety & Environment Officer.

TELECOMS

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BT Operate: Project Scot – A Managed Service for BT Health

Attached for the information of branches is an employee communications from Dave Butcher, Director, Operational Integrity, BT Operate and Patrick O'Connell, Managing Director, Health, Global Services, regarding Project Scot which is about undertaking a feasibility study on Operational Integrity creating a Managed Service for BT Health.

Brian Healy
Assistant Secretary

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BT Operate: Security Resilience and Business Continuity

Attached for the information of branches is a copy of a briefing sent out to the BT Operate Security Resilience and Business Continuity teams.

There is currently no impact to any of the CWU represented populations. The current changes are as a result of spans and layers, and all the CWU grade population will retain their current reporting line and manager.

A commitment has been given on the review of the security teams that once management have a view of the direction and likely impact, they will meet with the union so that it can have an input to the review findings.

Brian Healy
Assistant Secretary

EVENTS BULLETIN

October 2007 – June 2008: The London Socialist Film Co-op. There will be a number of films showing the second Sunday of every month. Film(s) includes La Última Cena/The Last Supper all showing Sunday 14 October 2007. Tomás Gutiérrez Alea is best known for his Memories of Underdevelopment. The Last Supper is unfairly neglected, made during the height of 'the cold war', showing a Cuba that was unknown and a history that was

of little interest to audiences of that time. Discussion led by Michael Chanan, Professor of Film and Video at Roehampton University, London, Jacqui McKenzie, Caribbean Labour Solidarity, Dionne Walker and many more. For all enquiries and the full programme contact **020 7278 5764**.

Saturday 6 October 2007: March for Burma – Global Day of Action. Assemble at Tate Britain, SW1P 4RG at 11:00am. Nearest tube Pimlico. March to Trafalgar Square for 12:45pm. Join us for a march and rally in solidarity with the monks and peaceful demonstrators in Burma and demand international action. For more information visit www.burmacampaign.org.uk or call **020 7324 4710** or email demo@burmacampaign.org.uk or call **Crisis Action** on **020 7324 4752/4758**.

Monday 8th October 2007: Royal Mail Dispute – National Rally. Venue: Lecture Hall, Central Hall Westminster, Storey's Gate SW1H 9NH. Nearest Tube St James Park/Westminster. Commencing at 11am.

Monday 8th October 2007: Eastern Regional Retired Members' Committee Meeting. To be held in Community, Swinton House, 324 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8D at 11am. For more information contact **Nobby Clark** Eastern Region Retired Members Secretary on **07713 155575**.

Monday 8 October 2007: Organising in the UK and Beyond. 10:30 to 16:00. To be held at the TUC Congress House, Great Russell Street. On October 8 the TUC will host a one-day free seminar exploring how well unions in the UK have grasped the organising agenda. A key focus of the seminar will be the work that unions have done to build practical organising alliances with unions in Europe and beyond. For more information contact Paul Nowak: pnowak@tuc.org.uk or Alison McGarry: amcgarry@tuc.org.uk

Tuesday 9th October 2007: Retired Members' Advisory Committee. The next Retired Members' Advisory Committee will take place in Room 1 at CWU HQ commencing at 1.30pm.

Friday 12 October 2007 – Sunday 14 October 2007: National Youth Education Event 2007. The National Youth Education Event is the primary youth event run by the CWU. It brings together young (under the age of 30) activists over the course of a weekend in which they gain knowledge, skills and confidence about their role in the union and the union's work in general. For more information contact **Jo Thair** on jthair@cwu.org or **020 8971 7487**.

Saturday 13th October: CWU Lesbian, Gay,

Bisexual and Transgender Conference. Will be held in the Best Western Wellington Park Hotel, 21 Malone Road, Belfast BT9 6RU. There will be a social function the night before in the same venue, which all delegates, observers and visitors are encouraged to attend. Further information can be obtained from the **Equal Opportunities Department** or dgittens@cwu.org

Friday 16th November 2007: CWU Disability & Special Needs Conference Social Event. All those attending the conference are invited to a social event, which will be held at the The Prince of Wales Hotel, Lord Street, Southport PR8 1JS. Further information can be obtained from the **Equal Opportunities Department** or dgittens@cwu.org

Saturday 17th November 2007: CWU Disability & Special Needs Conference. The conference will be held in the The Prince of Wales Hotel, Lord Street, Southport PR8 1JS. Further information can be obtained from the **Equal Opportunities Department** or dgittens@cwu.org

Wednesday 17th October 2007: National Pensioners Convention Eastern Region Meeting. will be held at Moreton Community Centre, Symonds Road, Bury St Edmunds Suffolk at 1pm. For more information contact **Nobby Clark** Eastern Region Retired Members Secretary on **07713 155575**.

Wednesday 17 October 2007: A Minimum Social Wage: the 2007 TUC Poverty Conference. 11:00 to 16:30. To be held at Congress House. On 17 October, the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, the network of TUC Unemployed Workers' Centres will host the 2007 TUC Poverty Conference. The theme is 'A Minimum Social Wage', and we will be developing minimum demands for benefit levels, social housing and social services. For more information contact Emma Richards **020 7467 1258**, you can download a booking form from <http://www.tuc.org.uk/extras/minimumwageform.pdf>

Thursday 18 October 2007: A Rally for Trade Union Freedom and Against Inequality. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation published a report into poverty on 17 July 2007 showing that inequality between rich and poor has now reached levels not seen in Britain for 40 years. A second report, published simultaneously, found that the public thinks the gap between rich and poor is too large. This is an issue relevant to trade union freedom. Unions are a force for good in dealing with such inequality and unionised workers are generally not those who suffer most from low pay. The United Campaign is looking to encourage TUC and others to support the rally and of course we need much support from

members and activists. There is a lot more to do to make even union members aware that trade unions are trussed up by laws in the UK that are unlawful by long standing basic international standards. And we have to go on to ensure that trade unions are free to perform their essential functions to help those who are suffering inequality. Twenty four national unions support the United Campaign and we have many regions, branches and trades councils and individual supporters too. We need your support. Visit our website www.unitedcampaign.org.uk for more information or contact us at info@unitedcampaign.org.uk

Tuesday 23 October 2007: Greening the Workplace: The Role of Trade Unions Seminar. 1.30pm – 4.15pm. To be held at the UCU Conference Centre, Britannia Street, London WC1. Climate change is most definitely a union issue. Workplaces burn energy, consume resources and generate waste. Industry alone is responsible for over half of carbon dioxide emissions increasing the greenhouse effect every year. Speakers include: Paul Hampton, Research Writer at the Labour Research Department; Carolyn Jones, Director of the IER since its inception in 1989; Caroline Morley, Green Workplaces Project Leader at the TUC; Penny Morley, Researcher at the TGWU and Chair of the Working Level of TUSDAC and Nigel Morter, lecturer in Environmental issues at London Metropolitan University. For more information contact the **IER** on **0151 702 6925** or office@ier.org.uk or visit www.ier.org.uk

Wednesday 24th October 2007: National Pensioners Convention. National Rally & Lobby of Parliament for Pensioners' Rights at Central Hall, Westminster, 12noon. Speakers include: Kate Hoey, MP; Kelvin Hopkins, MP; Joe Harris, NPC; Tony Kearns, CWU; Mark Serwotka, PCS; Richard Ascough, GMB; Prof Peter Millard; Sue Bott, National Campaign for Independent Living and Hilary Fisher, End Child Poverty. Lobby of Parliament at 3pm room 16, Houses of Parliament. All CWU supported MPs invited. Further more information contact **Brian Lee/Ron Cooper**, London Regional Office, 31-41 Dallington St London EC1V 0BB.

Friday 26 Oct 2007: TUC Work In Freedom Conference. Time 09:30 to 17:00. Location Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS. Cost £20 (includes lunch and documentation). A TUC conference to commemorate bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade 25 March 2007 marked 200 years – to the day – that a Parliamentary Bill was passed to abolish the slave trade in the then British Empire. This Act outlawed the slave trade throughout the former British Empire and made it illegal for British ships to be involved in the trade. Contributions to the conference will be made by speakers from Africa, American and the Caribbean and the UK. A number of workshops will be organised

on: Captialism, Slavery & Abolition; Slavery, legacy and Education; Forced Labour and the Olympics; Black Women & Slavery; Forced labour & Domestic Workers and Trafficking. The conference will highlight the role that slavery had as a system of forced labour and the legacy that is left today with racism and exclusion in the labour market. The conference will also discuss modern day slavery, forced labour and exploitation of workers in the UK and internationally. Register interest or request more information with Wilf Sullivan – wsullivan@tuc.org.uk or Carol Ferguson – cferguson@tuc.org.uk

Tuesday 20 November 2007 – Wednesday 21 November inclusive: CWU Union Learning Representatives National Workshop. This will be the fourth national event for union learning representatives in the Communication Workers Union. There will be opportunities: To meet with other CWU union learning representatives, to

attend specialist workshops, to hear from guest speakers, to learn about the latest CWU learning developments and to celebrate your achievements. To book your place please contact **Laura Wright** on **020 8971 7416** or **Michelle Simpson** on **020 8971 7340** or email learn@cwu.org with your contact details.

Wednesday 5 December 2007: Update on Equality Law – Are we Catching Up?

While we have travelled a long way in terms of equalities legislation recent reads. The complexity of discrimination legislation still make it very difficult to tackle the deep issues of inequality in the workplace. The conference will be of interest to trade unionists, employment lawyers, academics and students. Cost IER subscribers and members £75, Trade Unions £90 and Commercial £220. For more information contact the **IER** on **0151 702 6925** or email office@ier.org.uk

Tuesday 11 December 2007: Plain English

Day. Organised by the Plain English Campaign, promoting the use of clear language in government departments, local councils and business. For more information contact the **Plain English Campaign**, PO Box 3, New Mills, High Peak SK22 4QP. Phone: **01663 744409** Fax: **01663 747038** Email: info@plainenglish.co.uk

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If you have anything for the events bulletin page please send your contribution to:

Marcia Murray

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150 The Broadway
Wimbledon SW19 1RX
Tel: **020 8971 7497**
Email: mmurray@cwu.org

Details must arrive nine days before publication and must include a contact phone number, brief summary of the event, email and website address. Listings are free, but inclusion is not guaranteed.